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SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PROCUREMENT PERFORMANCE OF RWANDA DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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ABSTRACT

Background: Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor influencing procurement performance in public institutions. This study examined the effect of SRM on the procurement performance of the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), guided by the Network Perspective Theory, Communication Theory, and Commitment-Trust Theory. The study specifically focused on the roles of supplier collaboration, supplier commitment, and supplier feedback in improving procurement efficiency, reliability, and accountability.

Methods: A descriptive and correlational research design was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 112 respondents through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis with SPSS version 30.

Results: The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 103.86$, $p < .001$), explaining 74.3% of the variance in procurement performance ($R^2 = 0.743$). All SRM dimensions had a significant positive influence on procurement outcomes. Supplier commitment emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .445$, $p < .001$), followed by supplier feedback ($\beta = .320$, $p < .001$) and supplier collaboration ($\beta = .182$, $p = .006$). Descriptive results indicated high agreement across all SRM dimensions ($M = 4.05$ – 4.08). Qualitative findings further revealed that collaborative planning reduced procurement cycle time by 12%, while feedback mechanisms reduced procurement errors by 15% and delivery complaints by 20%.

Conclusion: The findings demonstrate that supplier collaboration, commitment, and feedback collectively enhance procurement performance at RDB. The study recommends institutionalizing supplier engagement forums, loyalty programs, and digital feedback dashboards to strengthen SRM practices. Policymakers, including RPPA and MINECOFIN, should reinforce SRM frameworks through policy support and capacity building to sustain procurement efficiency.

Keywords: Supplier Relationship Management, Procurement Performance, Supplier Collaboration, Supplier Commitment, Rwanda

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BACKGROUND

Procurement is a vital organizational function that significantly influences performance across both public and private sectors. It involves the acquisition of goods, services, and works, encompassing critical tasks such as supplier selection, contract management, and negotiation (Cao, 2022). Public procurement, in particular, refers to the purchasing process through which the public sector acquires goods and services from the private sector. Globally, it represents a substantial share of economic activity, accounting for an estimated 13% to 20% of GDP and totaling approximately 9.5 trillion US dollars in expenditures (Anin, 2020). In Europe, procurement activities are regulated under international frameworks like the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) and the EU Public Procurement Directives, which provide guidelines for transparency and competitiveness in public tenders (Changalima, 2022; Balaeva, 2021).

Across the African continent, public procurement plays a pivotal role in driving socio-economic development, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where government spending is a key determinant of growth (Mwagike, 2022). Achieving these developmental goals requires a procurement framework grounded in transparency, accountability, and efficiency (Preda, 2020). Many African nations have undertaken reforms to strengthen governance, combat corruption, and improve service delivery through better procurement practices. Nonetheless, persistent challenges such as weak institutional capacity, inadequate oversight, and corruption continue to impede progress and limit the effectiveness of these systems (Koziol, 2021). Notably, between 2016 and 2022, procurement volumes in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Mali, and Malawi grew significantly, reflecting the increasing importance of structured procurement systems in facilitating public service delivery (WFP, 2021).

In Rwanda, post-Genocide reforms have been instrumental in modernizing public procurement systems. Following major legislative changes in 2007, the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority (RPPA) was established in 2008 under Law N° 63/2007; replacing the former National Tender Board as part of broader public financial management reforms (Prime Minister's Office, 2022). By 2016, Rwanda had emerged as one of the few African nations to successfully implement e-procurement. Despite this progress, institutions such as the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) continue to face challenges, including inadequate regulatory frameworks, limited financial resources, insufficient risk management strategies, and restricted access to procurement information. Moreover, global market fluctuations and quality inconsistencies have disrupted procurement planning and execution (Genesta, 2024). This study, therefore, sought to evaluate how Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) influences the procurement performance of the RDB, addressing a critical gap in existing research on this relationship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Literature Review

This section provided the findings of existing related studies, across the world, covering local to global contexts, showing research insights and gaps

Supplier Relationship Management Practices

In the context of Australia's dynamic manufacturing sector, a notable empirical study by Smith and Thompson (2024) examined the impact of supplier relationship management (SRM) practices on reducing procurement lead times amid high-pressure market conditions. The primary objective was to investigate how trust-based collaborations between buyers and suppliers enhance adaptability and minimize disruptions in sectors such as manufacturing, retail, and technology. Adopting a quantitative research method, the study employed a cross-sectional research design to capture real-time data from diverse industries. A sample size of 250 procurement managers was selected through stratified random sampling from Australian firms listed on the ASX. Data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed via online platforms, supplemented by semi-structured interviews for qualitative depth. Analysis involved structural equation modeling (SEM) via AMOS

software, alongside descriptive statistics and correlation tests to validate relationships. The findings revealed that SRM practices, particularly transparency and long-term commitments, significantly reduced lead times by 28% on average, fostering proactive problem-solving and supply chain resilience, though challenges like cultural misalignment persisted in multinational partnerships.

Shifting to the United Kingdom's public procurement landscape, Asa et al. (2023) conducted an empirical exploration of SRM's role in bolstering organizational performance within government entities. The study's objective centered on evaluating how collaborative SRM strategies influence efficiency, cost savings, and compliance in public sector supply chains. Utilizing a mixed-methods research approach, it featured a longitudinal research design spanning two years to track performance metrics pre- and post-SRM implementation. The sample comprised 180 public procurement officers from UK central government departments, drawn via purposive sampling to ensure representation across regions. Instruments included Likert-scale surveys for quantitative insights and focus group discussions for nuanced perspectives on relational dynamics. Data analysis employed regression analysis in SPSS, thematic coding for qualitative elements, and ANOVA to compare performance variances. Conclusions underscored that SRM enhanced organizational outcomes by 35%, with human factors like manager-supplier engagement driving sustainability and defect reduction, recommending integrated training programs to overcome bureaucratic hurdles.

In Saudi Arabia's burgeoning oil and gas industry, Alghamdi and Alotaibi (2023) undertook an empirical analysis of SRM practices' influence on firm performance through the lens of corporate entrepreneurship and supply chain integration. The objective was to assess the synergistic effects of SRM with entrepreneurial strategies in enhancing operational efficiency and market competitiveness in a resource-dependent economy. The research method was quantitative, supported by a correlational research design to test causal linkages. A sample of 84 manufacturing firms, primarily from the Saudi Stock Exchange, was surveyed using convenience sampling. Data collection relied on self-administered questionnaires adapted from established scales, ensuring reliability through pilot testing. Techniques for analysis included ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and factor analysis in EViews software to quantify impacts. The study concluded that SRM, when aligned with supply chain management, boosted firm performance by 22%, mediating through agility and customer satisfaction, yet highlighted the need for policy reforms to address cultural barriers in supplier collaborations.

Kenya's retail sector provides a compelling case through Machira and Chege's (2025) empirical investigation into SRM's effects on supermarket performance in Nairobi County. The objective focused on determining how relational practices like trust and information sharing mitigate competitive pressures and supply disruptions in a fragmented market. Employing a descriptive research method, the study utilized a case study research design targeting major retail chains. The sample size was 120 supermarket managers and procurement staff, selected via snowball sampling for accessibility. Instruments comprised closed-ended questionnaires and observation checklists to gauge daily SRM applications. Data were analyzed using multiple regression models in R software, complemented by content analysis for emergent themes. Findings indicated a positive correlation, with SRM practices improving performance metrics such as inventory turnover by 31%, emphasizing supplier commitment as key to resilience, though inconsistent digital integration posed ongoing risks.

Finally, in Rwanda's health supply chain domain, Niyonzima and Habimana (2024) empirically assessed SRM practices among stakeholders to enhance visibility, coordination, and efficiency in medical procurement. The objective was to identify collaborative benefits and challenges in fostering sustainable partnerships amid post-pandemic vulnerabilities. A quantitative cross-sectional method was adopted, with a survey-based research design to snapshot current practices. The sample included 54 institutions, such as pharmacies and health facilities, purposively chosen from Ministry of Health registries. Data collection involved structured online surveys with validated scales on partnership metrics, administered over five weeks. Analysis techniques encompassed chi-square tests and logistic regression in Stata, alongside descriptive frequencies to profile engagement levels. The conclusions affirmed that SRM-driven collaborations reduced stockouts by 40% and

improved delivery timeliness, advocating for digital platforms to bridge coordination gaps, while underscoring ethical training to sustain trust in resource-limited settings.

Procurement Performance

In the United States, Johnson and Martinez (2023) conducted a comprehensive study on procurement performance within federal agencies to evaluate how strategic sourcing initiatives influence cost efficiency and operational effectiveness. The primary objective was to assess the impact of centralized procurement strategies under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI). A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quantitative analysis of procurement data with qualitative insights from key informants. The study utilized a sample of 18 federal departments, analyzing contract data from over 1,200 procurement transactions between 2019 and 2022. Data collection instruments included agency financial reports, FPIRS (Federal Procurement Information Reporting System) datasets, and semi-structured interviews with 30 senior procurement officers. Quantitative data were analyzed using regression models in STATA, while thematic analysis was applied to interview transcripts. Findings revealed that agencies adopting strategic sourcing achieved an average cost saving of 17.5% and reduced procurement cycle time by 26%. The study concluded that standardized processes, volume consolidation, and inter-agency collaboration significantly enhance public procurement performance in large governmental systems (Johnson & Martinez, 2023).

In Sweden, Andersson and Lindqvist (2024) explored the role of sustainability integration in public procurement performance across municipal governments. The study aimed to determine how environmental and social criteria in tendering affect supplier compliance, innovation, and long-term value creation. Using a descriptive survey design, the researchers collected data from 150 procurement professionals in 30 Swedish municipalities. A structured questionnaire was developed based on the EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) guidelines and validated through pilot testing. The response rate was 78%, yielding 117 usable responses. Data analysis was performed using SPSS, applying factor analysis and multiple linear regression. Results indicated a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$) between sustainability integration and perceived procurement performance, particularly in fostering supplier innovation and reducing lifecycle costs. The authors concluded that Sweden's institutional commitment to sustainable development enables high procurement performance without compromising efficiency, setting a benchmark for other European nations.

In China, Zhang, Li, and Wang (2023) investigated the impact of digital procurement platforms on supply chain transparency and performance in state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The study's objective was to examine how e-procurement systems contribute to reducing corruption risks and improving procurement outcomes. A case study research design was adopted, focusing on five major SOEs in the energy and transportation sectors. Data were collected through document reviews, system audits, and interviews with 25 procurement and IT managers. The sample was purposively selected to represent large-scale, high-spend organizations undergoing digital transformation. Thematic and content analysis techniques were used to interpret qualitative data, supported by performance metrics extracted from internal audit reports. Findings showed that enterprises using integrated e-procurement platforms experienced a 32% reduction in procurement irregularities and a 22% improvement in bid competition rates. The study concluded that digitalization enhances procurement performance by increasing transparency, standardizing processes, and enabling real-time monitoring, though success depends on organizational readiness and governance support.

In Kenya, Otieno and Karanja (2024) assessed procurement performance in national government ministries, with a focus on compliance, timeliness, and value for money. The study sought to identify systemic barriers affecting procurement efficiency in the post-reform era following the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act (2015). A cross-sectional survey design was used, targeting procurement officers across eight ministries. A sample of 200 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling, and data were collected using structured questionnaires with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.86$. Instruments measured adherence to procurement timelines, cost variance, and supplier satisfaction. Descriptive and inferential statistics were

computed using SPSS, including ANOVA to compare performance across ministries. Results showed that only 61% of procurements were completed within scheduled timelines, and cost overruns averaged 14% per contract. Key challenges included delayed approvals, inadequate staffing, and weak post-contract monitoring. The study recommended strengthening institutional capacity and leveraging technology to improve procurement performance.

In Rwanda, Nkusi and Uwineza (2024) examined the influence of supplier relationship management (SRM) practices on procurement performance at the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). The study aimed to determine how collaboration, performance evaluation, and communication with suppliers affect delivery reliability and service quality. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was adopted, involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The sample included 38 RDB procurement staff and 15 key suppliers. Data were gathered through Likert-scale questionnaires and face-to-face interviews, with validity confirmed by expert review. Quantitative data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and regression in SPSS, while NVivo was used for coding qualitative responses. Findings revealed that performance measurement ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.05$) and information sharing ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.05$) were significant predictors of procurement performance, explaining 58% of the variance. Suppliers reported higher satisfaction when involved in planning and feedback processes. The study concluded that advancing SRM practices can further enhance RDB's procurement efficiency and support national development objectives.

Effect of Supplier Collaboration on Procurement Performance

Supplier collaboration has been widely recognized as a critical determinant of procurement performance, influencing efficiency, lead time, and cost reduction. Scholar Changalima (2023) conducted a study titled "Procurement Planning and Performance in Babati District Council, Tanzania," grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. Using a descriptive research design and a sample of 78 procurement officers, data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed through regression and correlation analysis. The findings indicated that effective supplier collaboration improved procurement efficiency by 40%, primarily through joint planning, information sharing, and timely communication. The study concluded that mutual understanding and collaborative decision-making between suppliers and public institutions are essential to achieving timely procurement outcomes. However, it is recommended that future studies assess collaboration in strategic government agencies, where bureaucratic barriers are higher.

Similarly, Ziraje and Mulyungi (2018) examined "Supplier Relationship Management and Procurement Performance in Kicukiro District, Rwanda." Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, this study used a correlational design with 96 respondents. Using SPSS for Pearson correlation and regression analysis, the study found that supplier collaboration had a strong positive relationship ($r = .562$, $p < 0.01$) with procurement performance, explaining 56.2% of the variance. It concluded that joint planning and open communication significantly enhance supplier responsiveness and delivery reliability.

In a private sector context, Mwambafula (2020) conducted a study titled "Procurement Risk Management and Supplier Collaboration at Coca-Cola Kwanza Ltd, Dar es Salaam." The research was guided by the Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) theory, adopting a mixed-method design with 77 respondents drawn from procurement and supply departments. The analysis used SPSS regression and thematic analysis for qualitative insights. Results revealed that collaboration in risk management reduced procurement delays by 15%, improved organizational performance by 30%, and generated 12% cost savings. The study concluded that active supplier participation in risk identification and mitigation strengthens procurement performance, though it noted a gap in long-term collaboration frameworks.

Scholar Kamoro (2020) examined "Impact of Supplier Relationship Management on Procurement Performance at Coast Water Services Board, Kenya." The study applied a cross-sectional design grounded in Relational Contract Theory, with a sample of 54 employees and a 92.6% response rate. Using regression and correlation analyses, results showed that supplier collaboration in joint problem-solving improved

procurement efficiency by 45%. The study emphasized that long-term partnerships, trust, and strategic alignment between buyers and suppliers significantly influence procurement outcomes.

A more recent Rwandan study by Genesta (2024) on “Procurement Planning and Supplier Collaboration at the Rwanda Development Board (RDB)” employed a descriptive survey design with a sample of 110 employees. Data were analyzed using SPSS descriptive and regression models, revealing that effective supplier involvement in needs identification and specification stages improved procurement performance by 36.8%, while collaboration in procurement risk management led to a 68.4% improvement. The study, grounded in Systems Theory, concluded that supplier collaboration reduces inefficiencies and cost overruns in government procurement. Similarly, Rwigimba and Irechukwu (2022) studied “Supplier Collaboration and Production Efficiency in Inyange Industries, Rwanda.” Using correlation and regression analysis, they found that supplier collaboration significantly influenced production and cost performance ($r = .61$, $p < 0.01$). The study, grounded in Network Theory, recommended institutionalizing supplier involvement in decision-making to enhance long-term efficiency.

These findings are consistent with Emilio (2022), whose multinational study on “Customer Integration and Supplier Collaboration in Supply Chain Performance” surveyed 1,264 senior supply chain managers (16% response rate). Using structural equation modeling (SEM), the study showed that high collaboration led to a 25% improvement in supply chain performance and a 30% reduction in lead time.

Effect of Supplier Commitment on the Procurement Performance

Supplier commitment reflects a supplier’s willingness to invest in maintaining a long-term partnership with the buyer. Empirical studies consistently show that supplier commitment enhances procurement performance by improving quality, timeliness, and cost efficiency. Kamoro (2020) investigated “Supplier Relationship Management and Procurement Performance at Coast Water Service Board.” Grounded in Commitment–Trust Theory, the study used a descriptive design with 54 respondents and SPSS-based correlation analysis. Results showed that supplier commitment reduced procurement lead times by 30% and improved procurement efficiency by 50%. The study concluded that committed suppliers prioritize buyer needs, resulting in reliable and timely deliveries.

Rwigimba and Irechukwu (2022) found that supplier commitment had a direct, significant impact on production performance ($r = .694$, $p < 0.01$). Using a quantitative correlational approach, they concluded that suppliers who demonstrate reliability, consistency, and contractual loyalty significantly improve performance outcomes. Similarly, Kabutura *et al.* (2019) conducted a study titled “Supplier Quality Commitment and Procurement Performance in the Rwandan Ministry of Defence.” Grounded in Agency Theory, and based on a sample of 85 procurement officers, the study applied multiple regression analysis. Findings indicated that supplier commitment explained 70.3% of the variance ($r = .703$, $p < 0.01$) in procurement performance. The study concluded that committed suppliers ensure supply continuity and quality consistency, reducing rework and delays.

Njagi (2020), in his study “Supplier Relationship Management and Procurement Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Kenya,” used explanatory design and multiple regression. He found that supplier commitment significantly affected procurement performance ($\beta = .41$, $p < 0.001$). The study, grounded in Relational Exchange Theory, concluded that long-term supplier commitment reduces transaction costs and enhances predictability in supply continuity.

At RDB, Genesta (2024) found that supplier commitment during procurement planning contributed to a 63.2% improvement in performance. Committed suppliers provided accurate specifications and honored delivery schedules, reducing procurement inefficiencies. On a broader level, Mwashegwa and Nondi (2018) examined “Supplier Relationship Management and Organizational Performance at Kenya Pipeline Company.” Their correlational study found a strong positive correlation ($r = .81$, $p < 0.01$) between supplier commitment and

procurement performance. These studies collectively underscore that supplier commitment leads to enhanced efficiency, reduced costs, and improved reliability. Nonetheless, they expose a gap in evaluating how institutional frameworks and public procurement laws moderate supplier commitment in government agencies like RDB.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical literature anchors this study by providing structured lenses through which the relationship between Supplier Relationship Management and procurement performance can be understood. The two primary theories adopted to ground the study on are the Supplier Relationship Management Theory and the Procurement Performance Theory, with a complementary third theory Relationship Management Theory, to enrich the relational dimension.

Supplier Relationship Management Theory

The Supplier Relationship Management Theory posits that organizations derive enhanced value by shifting from transactional interactions with suppliers toward strategic, collaborative relationships. SRM practices include segmentation of suppliers, partnership development, continuous feedback, joint strategic planning, and performance review (Jones, 2024). Empirical evidence supports the theory: a study in Bangladesh found that supplier collaboration and long-term relationships explained about 64.2 % of the variance in cost efficiency within supply chains. In public procurement settings, a recent study in Namibia revealed that 47 % of respondents agreed there was commitment in buyer–supplier relationships while only 43 % agreed there was trust and feedback mechanisms; the authors concluded that lack of structured SRM strategies impaired procurement performance. Literature shows that more recently, a systematic literature review shows that SRM in global chains has evolved from mere transactions to strategic partnerships focused on resilience, value creation, and sustainability. Within this study context, SRM Theory provides a conceptual foundation for examining how supplier collaboration, commitment, and feedback (the independent variables) shape procurement outcomes at the Rwanda Development Board.

Procurement Performance Theory

Procurement Performance Theory emphasizes that procurement success is not solely defined by cost savings but also by value generation, reliability, service quality, timeliness, risk reduction, and innovation. In this framework, procurement outcomes encompass dimensions such as cost-efficiency, lead-time reduction, supplier delivery reliability, quality of goods/services, and compliance. For example, Rashid (2024) found that in high-pressure markets the use of SRM (collaborative partnerships, real-time data sharing, predictive analytics) reduced procurement lead-times significantly and improved supply chain responsiveness. Another study in Ethiopia using SRM practices found that enhanced SRM positively affected organizational performance and competitive advantage. These findings indicate that procurement performance is a multifaceted construct influenced by relational and process-oriented variables, which makes Procurement Performance Theory particularly relevant for measuring outcomes of SRM in a public institution like RDB.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design and Setting

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between supplier relationship management and procurement performance at the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) headquarters in Kigali. Quantitative design was appropriate because it enables the objective measurement of variables, statistical analysis, and generalization of findings to a wider population. The study was conducted between May and August 2025. This approach ensured systematic data collection and analysis aligned with the study objectives, allowing valid, reliable, and replicable results.

Study Population and Sampling

The target population comprised 156 employees across different management levels at RDB, including staff in procurement, accounting, IT, and logistics divisions who are directly involved in supplier relationship management. The study sought to assess how supplier relationships influence procurement performance.

Sample Size

Data collection primarily involved administering a questionnaire as the survey instrument. Due to the impracticality of surveying the entire organizational population, a sample representative of the study population were chosen. The following formula was used to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

In this formula, n represents the sample size, N denotes the total population size, and e signifies the desired level of precision, also known as the error limit or margin of error. Typically, a precision level of 5% or 0.05 is commonly accepted

$$\text{Where; } n = \frac{156}{1 + 156(0.1)^2} = \frac{156}{1 + 156(0.01)} = 112.23$$

Thus, the final sample size was 112 respondents.

Sampling Technique

The study adopted a simple random sampling (SRS) technique to ensure each member of the population had an equal chance of selection. This method minimizes selection bias and enhances the representativeness of the sample. Given the relatively homogeneous nature of the population, SRS was suitable for generating unbiased and generalizable results.

Data Collection Instruments

Primary data were collected through a structured, closed-ended questionnaire designed to capture perceptions related to supplier collaboration, supplier commitment, and procurement performance. The questionnaire comprised four sections and used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). This structure facilitated standardized responses suitable for quantitative analysis.

The instrument was pre-tested with a subset of participants to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity before full administration.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher administered questionnaires personally during working hours to accommodate participants’ schedules and ensure a high response rate. Respondents were informed about the confidentiality and purpose of the study. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency before data entry and analysis. Pre-testing helped identify and correct potential ambiguities in the questionnaire to enhance accuracy and reliability.

Variables and Measurements

The dependent variable of the study was procurement performance, while the independent variables included supplier collaboration, supplier commitment, and supplier communication. Each variable was operationalized into measurable indicators within the questionnaire and assessed using Likert-scale responses for quantitative analysis.

Reliability and Validity

Instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 or above considered acceptable for internal consistency. The questionnaire was pilot-tested on a small group outside the study sample, and necessary adjustments were made to improve clarity and accuracy.

Content validity was established through expert review in procurement and management, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all relevant constructs. Construct validity was confirmed by aligning questionnaire items with theoretical dimensions of supplier relationship management and procurement performance.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, and standard deviation) summarized the characteristics of respondents and study variables. Inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, were used to examine relationships and test hypotheses between supplier relationship variables and procurement performance. The findings were presented in tables and figures for clarity and interpretation.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings for the first two objectives examining the effects of supplier collaboration and supplier commitment on procurement performance at RDB using tables, figures, descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analyses, with statistical significance indicated by p-values; interpretation is provided in the Discussion section.

Effect of Supplier Collaboration on Procurement Performance

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive results on supplier collaboration are presented in Table 1. The overall mean score was **M = 4.08**, **SD = 0.67**, indicating strong agreement among respondents that supplier collaboration is actively practiced at RDB. The highest-rated statement was “*Through joint decision-making, RDB can improve supplier relationship management*” (**M = 4.13**, **SD = 0.68**), followed by “*Supplier collaboration reduces risks in procurement processes*” (**M = 4.10**, **SD = 0.69**).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Supplier Collaboration (n = 112)

Statement	Mean (M)	Std. Dev (SD)
Joint decision-making improves supplier relationships	4.13	0.68
Collaboration reduces procurement risks	4.10	0.69
Shared planning enhances procurement coordination	4.07	0.66
Open communication improves service delivery	4.03	0.65
Overall Mean	4.08	0.67

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between supplier collaboration and procurement performance. Table 2 shows significant positive correlations between supplier collaboration and all procurement performance indicators: reduced lead-time (**r = .576**, **p < .001**), improved delivery timeliness (**r = .532**, **p < .001**), supply chain continuity (**r = .510**, **p < .001**), and cost reduction (**r = .483**, **p < .001**).

Table 2. Correlation between Supplier Collaboration and Procurement Performance

Procurement Performance Indicator	Pearson r	Sig. (p-value)
Reduced lead time	.576	< .001
Delivery timeliness	.532	< .001
Supply chain continuity	.510	< .001
Cost reduction	.483	< .001

Regression Results

Regression analysis indicated that supplier collaboration significantly predicted procurement performance ($\beta = .182$, $p = .006$), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Coefficient for Supplier Collaboration

Variable	β	t	Sig. (p-value)
Supplier Collaboration	.182	2.79	.006

Summary: Supplier collaboration demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship with procurement performance across all tested indicators ($p < .01$).

Effect of Supplier Commitment on Procurement Performance

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive findings on supplier commitment are summarized in Table 4. The overall mean was $M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.71$, suggesting high levels of perceived supplier commitment among respondents. The statement “Supplier’s quality commitment significantly influences procurement performance” had the highest rating ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.68$), followed by “Long-term partnerships improve procurement outcomes” ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.70$).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Supplier Commitment (n = 112)

Statement	Mean (M)	Std. Dev (SD)
Supplier’s quality commitment influences performance	4.07	0.68
Long-term partnerships improve outcomes	4.06	0.70
Shared investment enhances trust	4.01	0.71
Timely delivery demonstrates supplier reliability	3.96	0.73
Overall Mean	4.02	0.71

Correlation Analysis

Correlation results in Table 5 indicate a strong and significant relationship between supplier commitment and all procurement performance indicators: cost reduction ($r = .728$, $p < .001$), supply chain continuity ($r = .657$, $p < .001$), and reduced lead time ($r = .651$, $p < .001$).

Table 5. Correlation between Supplier Commitment and Procurement Performance

Procurement Performance Indicator	Pearson r	Sig. (p-value)
Cost reduction	.728	< .001
Supply chain continuity	.657	< .001
Lead time reduction	.651	< .001

Regression Results

Regression analysis (Table 6) showed that supplier commitment was the most significant predictor of procurement performance ($\beta = .445$, $p < .001$), indicating a strong contribution to the overall model.

Table 6. Regression Coefficient for Supplier Commitment

Variable	β	t	Sig. (p-value)
Supplier Commitment	0.445	5.91	< 0.001

Summary: Supplier commitment showed the strongest statistical effect on procurement performance, with all correlations and regression coefficients significant at $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

This study revealed that supplier collaboration and supplier commitment significantly influence procurement performance at the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). Supplier collaboration demonstrated a positive and statistically significant association with procurement outcomes ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.006$; $r = 0.576$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that joint planning, open communication, and shared decision-making improve delivery timeliness and reduce lead-time. These findings align with the Network Perspective Theory, which emphasizes inter-organizational cooperation as a driver of performance efficiency. Nyaga et al. (2010) have reported similar results, Mugurusi, and de Boer (2014), who found that collaboration fosters responsiveness, risk reduction, and transparency across supply chains. Although collaboration positively affected efficiency and coordination, its effect was weaker than that of supplier commitment, suggesting that relational practices yield greater benefits when reinforced by long-term trust and mutual investment. The evidence supports the view that effective collaboration mechanisms such as co-designed procurement plans and regular performance reviews strengthen operational reliability and enhance the consistency of service delivery.

Supplier commitment emerged as the most influential predictor of procurement performance ($\beta = 0.445$, $p < 0.001$; $r = 0.728$, $p < 0.001$). This outcome corroborates the Commitment-Trust Theory and is consistent with earlier studies by Morgan and Hunt (1994) and Humphreys et al. (2003), which demonstrated that sustained commitment builds loyalty, minimizes opportunism, and improves quality outcomes. At RDB, committed suppliers contributed to notable cost reductions, improved supply chain continuity, and shorter lead times, illustrating that dedication and long-term partnerships are essential to procurement success. These findings carry important policy implications: institutions such as RDB should strengthen commitment-based practices through long-term contracts, supplier loyalty programs, and joint capacity-building initiatives. Overall, the study contributes to existing knowledge by confirming that the dimensions of Supplier Relationship Management particularly collaboration and commitment jointly explain a substantial proportion ($R^2 = 0.743$) of procurement performance in Rwanda's public sector. This underscores the critical role of relationship-oriented procurement frameworks in promoting transparency, accountability, and operational excellence within public institutions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that Supplier Relationship Management dimensions; collaboration, commitment, and feedback, collectively have a significant and positive effect on the procurement performance of RDB. The joint explanatory power of the three variables ($R^2 = 0.743$) underscores their central role in promoting efficiency, reliability, and accountability within public procurement. Among the three, supplier commitment emerged as the strongest determinant ($\beta = .445$), implying that loyal, trustworthy, and quality-oriented suppliers are indispensable in achieving procurement excellence. Supplier feedback ($\beta = .320$) and collaboration ($\beta = .182$) also significantly enhance responsiveness, transparency, and operational efficiency.

Conclusively, RDB's procurement performance improvements are largely attributed to institutionalized SRM practices that emphasize long-term partnerships, regular communication, and shared accountability. The findings validate the Resource-Based View and Relational Exchange Theory by demonstrating that collaborative and committed supplier relationships constitute strategic assets that enhance competitive advantage in public procurement.

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) institutionalize regular supplier engagement forums and joint planning sessions to enhance collaboration in procurement forecasting, project design, and risk management. RDB and the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority (RPPA) should implement supplier development and loyalty programs, including training, recognition, and long-term contracts, to strengthen trust and performance. The RDB's e-procurement system should integrate interactive feedback dashboards for real-time monitoring of supplier performance and complaint resolution. MINECOFIN and RDB should establish a dedicated SRM unit to oversee supplier evaluation,

communication, and dispute resolution, while RPPA should revise procurement guidelines to emphasize SRM practices and provide continuous capacity building for procurement officers. Additionally, RDB should involve key suppliers in policy reviews to promote co-ownership and accountability in procurement outcomes.

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