

# Strategic Supplier Management Practices and Operational Performance of Commercial Banks, Juba, South Sudan

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## ABSTRACT

This study<sup>1</sup> examined the impact of strategic supplier management practices and operational performance of commercial Banks in Juba, South Sudan. Based on the descriptive research design, data was collected from a sample of 164 respondents using questionnaire. Data was processed and analyzed with the aid of SPSS, using frequency counts, mean, standard deviation, correlation and multiple regression. Main finding of this study was trust-Based relationship and information sharing had a statistically significant relationship with Operational performance of commercial banks whereas supplier collaboration had a non-statistically significant relationship at 0.05 level of significance. The study concludes that strategic supplier management practices with its indicator of Trust based relationship, information sharing and supplier collaboration relationship factors have direct effect on operational performance of Commercial Banks. However, the overall model is significant at 95% level of significance with (F-value 5.188 and sig value 0.001), explaining up to 11.5% (R-squared=0.115) variation in operation performance of the bank. The study recommends that commercial Banks should strategically manage their supply base on the basis of value of spend or nature of items being purchased. This will enable the Banks to categorize its suppliers and thus proper treatment accorded to every supplier based on their importance.

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The background of the study was based on historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual perspective. The analysis of the background was in different perspectives.

## Introduction

Commercial banking continued to evolve globally in the 20th century. The establishment of the Federal Reserve System in the United States in 1913 and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in 1930 were notable developments. The post-World War II era saw an increase in international banking activities, and the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944 laid the foundation for international monetary cooperation. The latter half of the 20th century and the 21st century witnessed significant technological advancements in banking, including the adoption of electronic banking, ATMs, and the development of online banking services. Commercial banks became increasingly globalized, with many establishing a presence in multiple countries. The financial landscape was shaped by mergers, acquisitions, and the development of complex financial instruments. Today, commercial banks are integral to the

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global economy, providing a range of financial services such as loans, deposits, and investment products. They play a crucial role in facilitating economic growth and development (Bank, 2022)

According to (Nelson, 2009), banking in East Africa started at the beginning of the 20th century. The setting of the British's representative office through the Imperial British East Africa (IBEA) company attracted the National Bank of India, which sought to be its banking agent. However, the locally-owned banks came into play just after the independence periods

In Africa many organizations struggle to manage their supplier relationships systematically. The main reason behind this is their lack of a clear framework with aligned guidelines on supplier management. In traditional supplier relationships the interaction between different functions of a company and its suppliers can be described as tactical and operational. As a result, relationships are lacking transparency not only from an external perspective, but also with respect to internal governance and ownership of relationships. The presence of the effective strategic supplier management is not a very developed concept in the African countries with the organizations in the African continent mostly operating an arm's length supplier management practices in their operations. (Ghadge, 2021), argues that technology utilization at the commercial banks enhances infinite and non-restricted access to information and increases market transparency and economic incorporation based on complementarities.

In South Sudan, according to the banking industry at that time was dominated by government owned institutions. According to (Chaharbaghi, 2007) the development of strategic supplier management as an academic field originated as early as 1940, where it was seen as an art of war and to understand the essence of strategic management as a business field, we need to clearly follow its historical perspective. The history of strategic management can be traced back several thousand years. Strategic management has evolved through a series of developments and contributions by scholars like (Chandler, 1962) who wrote on Strategy and Structure on Corporate Strategy have been fundamental to this field. Strategic Management as a field of study was recognized first time in 1962, when Harvard professor Alfred Chandler published Strategy and Structure. The book focused on the relationship between strategy and organizational structure and how the two needed to be consistent with each other to ensure strong firm performance. A great number of people and researchers in the field of strategic management consider Chandler's book to be the first work of strategic management research (Chemoiywo, 2014) However, the current study shifts its focus on strategic supplier management. (Wee, 2009) articulates that Strategic Supplier Management is one approach to connect the different interests both within the organization and with the extended supply chain. Strategic supplier management identifies and engages the right stakeholders to create ownership of the relationship, drive effective communication and align strategic objectives. The result is a foundation for continuous efficiency improvements, such as cost reductions, risk mitigation or improved go-to-market times just as well as improved potential for disruptive innovation

## **Problem statement**

Despite the increase in performance among commercial banks in South Sudan. Like other corporations in Africa most especially stated owned face a serious challenge in procurement, where millions of cash have been paid to the supplier. Strategic Supplier management practice has become a critical perspective in the banking industry (Collins, 2003) According to (Chaharbaghi, 2007) firms become strategically committed to their partners when they form a strategic supply network orientation. It ensures the supply of reliable and frequent deliveries in today's dynamic and competitive business environment in terms competitive pressures; the need to consider sustainability and risk; the need to achieve cost efficiency in order to be cost competitive; and the need to develop closer relationships with key suppliers who can provide the expertise necessary to develop innovative new products and successfully bring them to market. As a result, firms can use their resources more efficiently and allocate more resources to innovation activities of banking on the go, self-onboarding onto the banking products, prescored credit acquisition to meet ever-shifting customer wants, (Collins, 2003). Implementation of strategic Supplier management practices has become imperative for all the organizations across the globe in order to remain competitive. It fosters different performances of the organizations including operational performances. Managers across the world have started considering the

strategic Supplier management as a high-end planning tool for the growth and development of the organizations. It is essential that all the parties involved in the integrated supply chain management need to be equally efficient for recouping target level of performance. The published research has pointed to the crucial role of strategic Supplier management practices and assistance of suppliers for achieving superior performance (Onyango, 2015), the practices that encompass such relationship still need more clarification and besides strategic supplier management practices have been largely handled in relation to public organization thus lack of empirical evidence in the private sector and banking in particular and most of the existing studies are theoretical and conceptual with obvious lack of empirical evidence. In addition to that, the existing literature provides some contradicting results concerning the effect of Strategic Supplier Management practices on competitive performance of commercial banks. The study therefore is aimed at bridging the above gap.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was based on transaction cost theory which was developed by Ronald Coase in 1937 to explain the existence of firms and theory of Constraints which was developed by Eliyahu Goldratt in 1984. The transactional cost theory states that transactions via market mechanisms incur cost, particularly the costs of searching for exchange partners and making and enforcing contracts. The goal of any organization is to minimize costs associated with transactions. Therefore, the organization will either choose to manage these resources externally or internally, depending on transaction costs. For instance, the theory predicts that organizations would internalize most transactional activities within hierarchies when these costs are high. Using the transactional cost theory, the study of the theory shall strive to examine the effect of Strategic Supplier Management practices on operational performance of commercial Banks. The theory has become an important way in making analysis of strategic and organizational issues among firms. (Crocker, 2015) argues that transactions in an organization form the basis of an economic thinking. He continues to assert that the theory is of an idea that the governance of a relationship is predicted by the asset specificity, or the extent of investment involved in a transaction and the bigger the transaction, the stronger or sensitive the relationship. Transaction Cost Theory can be applied in organizational supply chain management to assist to identify observe problem effort and advantage.

In the world today, business environment keeps changing and competitive, and many organizations are facing changing market environment. The commercial banking industry has grown tremendously due to globalization creating stiff environment competition. Nyangau Evans (Onyango, 2015) contends that times of adversity such COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that many International Organizations and the governments depend heavily on global supply chains. They continue to assert that Strategic Supplier Management is a critical field that cannot be ignored. This has pushed the organizations to embrace better procurement practices and as a result re-designing their operating market strategies to remain strong in the market. Selvaraj (2021) notes that the adoption of purchasing management practices can lead to the Commercial Banks becoming stronger and effective only if they come out with better customer service, quality products, reduction of operating costs and adoption of new technology innovation such as banking on the go, self-onboarding onto the banking products, prescored credit acquisition

According to Cousins and (Spekman, 2021) notes that Africa and East Africa in particular, with easement of trade restrictions more banks are entering into international market for example, The banks rely more on procurement to acquire goods and services to support their daily operations. This positions procurement a more critical and important aspect to commercial Banks performance thus its impact of purchasing on the bank's performance is more relevant and Adhiambo, (Onyango, 2015) reports that organization use procurement as tool to be coordinated process that aligns actual business needs and requirements with service acquisition and then measures the performance.

The two major variables were examined for this research is Strategic Supplier Management practices and operational performance of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. The independent variable was Strategic Supplier Management Practices which was measured by trust-based relationship, information sharing, and supplier

collaboration and operational performance was dependent variable and it will be measured with reduction of costs, customer Satisfaction and timely provision of services.

Strategic Supplier Management practices in the banking industry have been unable to display consistency and stability in performance. They have frequently experienced costly discontinuities in the current dynamic markets and vastly changing technological environments. They are also inflexible and susceptible to disruption since they are unable to swiftly and suitably respond to emerging international protocols, certification requirements, and to governmental and regulatory changes (Collins, 2003). The absence of adequate standards and protocols in the banking industry, most notably, directly affects the quality-of-service delivery. Strategic supplier management practices in the banking sector can help the industry increase and make it sustainable, profitable, enhance service delivery, improve efficiency and build competitive advantage.

Strategic Supplier management is a collaborative partnership with the supplier which allows the buyer to manage the relationship for the required goods and services (Global Intelligence Network 2021). According to (Weele, 2000) purchasing management refers to all activities required to manage supplier relationships in the organization. He further declared that the idea behind purchasing management is that if suppliers are not managed by their customers, customer relationships was managed by the suppliers. (Collins, 2003) notes that successful strategic supplier management programs will often create a trusting partnership between a buyer and a supplier. Strategic Supplier management is the process that defines how a company interacts with its suppliers.

### **Research design**

The study used descriptive research design based on both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The study design provided information appropriate for the study in the study context. The descriptive survey design is touted as the most ideal for studies relating to attitudes, behavior, and characteristics Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). The design enabled the researcher to attain more adequate and reasonable data for the attainment of the required research data and findings.

### **Study Population and sample size**

The study population involved workers in selected African National Bank and Ecobank South Sudan. The research considered all the target respondents, 288 employees in the departments of procurement, corporate banking, Finance and planning, Legal department.

In this study a sample of 288 respondents was selected from a total population of 1,034 employers. These was selected following the guidance of Slovene's method of determining the sample size.

### **Sampling Technique**

The researcher selected a sample of 288 respondents using a stratified simple random technique. According to Robson (2014), a stratified random sampling technique involves division of the study population into significant strata with similar characteristics. Chimucheka (2012) points out that a stratified simple random ensures that each element under investigation faces identical chances of being selected. In this study, the researcher divided the respondents into 5 Stratum or groups in terms of their department of procurement, credit legal, corporate finance and planning.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The study was purely quantitative and therefore a questionnaire was used to collect data. For numerous reasons, a questionnaire is the most widely-used technique for obtaining information from respondents. McMillan & Schumacher (2014) point out that a questionnaire makes it possible to measure knowledge and information, values,

preferences, attitudes, and beliefs of the respondents about the study variables. It is also easier to code and statistically analyze data from questionnaires than from interviews (Pallant, 2011).

### Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The researcher considered only instruments with validity co-efficient of at least 0.70 because they are accepted as valid in research (Oso & Onen, 2008). The reliability of the questionnaire was improved through pre- testing of pilot study through respondents from the population. This enabled the amendment of some questions.

### Data Analysis

From the field, data was cleaned, edited and coded and summary sheets was prepared, and data was entered into SPSS statistical tool. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts and regression analysis which is a reliable method of identifying the impact of each variable on another and to prove the nature of relationship between strategic supply management and operational performance of commercial Banks in Juba, South Sudan

## RESULTS

**Table 1:** Showing Study Response Rate

Questionnaires	Number of Respondents
Questionnaires issued out	288
Questionnaires recovered	220
Questionnaires fully filled	164
Questionnaires with blank spaces	56
Questionnaires considered for analysis	164
<b>Response rate (%)</b>	<b>56.9%</b>

Source. Primary data, 2023

It is evident in Table 1 above that, 288 copies of the questionnaire were issued out to the respondents and the study was able to recover 220 questionnaires. Out these, 164 questionnaires were fully filled while 56 had blank spaces and were not included in data analysis. Those that we considered for data analysis were 164. This gave a response rate of 56.9%. It can therefore be concluded that the study obtained a good response rate as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2007) that a response rate of 50% is adequate,

**Table 2** Descriptive Statistics on the effect of trust-based relationship on operational performance of Commercial Banks

Trust Based Relationship	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
We develop the supplier competency through training them	3.98	1.167	Good
There is development of the suppliers through information provisions	3.76	1.277	Good

We develop the suppliers on the aspects of quality management	3.71	1.286	Good
The suppliers are developed on the terms of innovativeness and flexibility	3.63	1.224	Good
We provide Operational development for the suppliers in the organization	2.58	1.306	Poor
There is supplier development framework for the categories of suppliers	2.05	.0964	Poor
<b>OVERALL MEAN</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>1.204</b>	<b>Good</b>

**Source:** Authors Computation from Primary Data 2023 (With SPSS)

The findings in Table 2 on the effect of trust-based relationship on operational performance of Commercial Banks. The average mean responses were that of 3.29, SD=1.204 interpreted as good implying that the state of the trust-based relationship was quite good. The results regarding developing the supplier competency through training them had the mean of 3.98, SD=.1.167 interpreted as good meaning that supplier’s competence through training is well crucial in the performance of the bank. Furthermore, concerning the aspect of there is development of the suppliers through information provisions, it had the mean of 3.76, SD=1.277 interpreted as good meaning that supplier information sharing is more important in the performance of the bank. The findings concerning, we develop the suppliers on the aspects of quality management had the mean of 3.71 and SD= 1.286 interpreted as good while We provide Operational development for the suppliers in the organization had the mean of 2.63 SD=1.224 interpreted as poor meaning that the development for suppliers is quite low on Operational grounds and finally supplier development framework for the categories of suppliers was poor as it had a mean of 2.05 and SD=.0964

**Table 3** Descriptive Statistics on information sharing, N=164

Information sharing	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
We share information on the quality required for the products	4.18	.906	High
Information is shared with more valuable suppliers in the organization	4.02	1.009	High
We develop the suppliers on the aspects of quality management	3.81	1.241	High
There is restriction in sharing confidential information with suppliers	2.26	1.213	Poor
The information shared depends on the value of the suppliers and supplies	3.31	1.330	High
There is an established electronic system for information sharing in the organization	2.69	1.266	Poor
There is a department that is responsible for information	3.66	1.312	High

handling with the suppliers			
<b>OVERALL MEAN</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>1.182</b>	<b>High</b>

**Source:** Authors Computation from Primary Data 2023 (With SPSS)

The study findings regarding the level of information sharing present that the level of information sharing in Commercial Banks was high based on the Overall mean of 3.42, SD=1.182 meaning there is high information sharing between Commercial Banks and suppliers in their operation relationships. For the case of we share information on the quality required for the products had the mean of 4.18, SD=0.906 interpreted as good while Information is shared with more valuable suppliers in the organization had the mean of 4.02, SD=1.009 interpreted as good while that imply that the information sharing on this avenue was quite fair.

Furthermore, development of the suppliers on the aspects of quality management had the mean of 3.81 and SD=1.241 interpreted as high. The study findings concerning restriction in sharing confidential information with suppliers had the mean of 2.26, SD=1,213 interpreted as poor. The information shared depends on the value of the suppliers and supplies had the mean of 3.31, SD=1.330 interpreted as high and that of there is an established electronic system for information sharing in the organization had the mean of 2.69, SD=1.266 interpreted as poor. Finally concerning the presence of a department that is responsible for information handling with the suppliers. The results had the mean of 2.26, SD=1.213 interpreted as good meaning that there is a unit for information sharing in Commercial Banks.

**Table 4** Descriptive Statistics on Operational Performance, N=164

<b>Operational Performance</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
The bank has managed to reduce its costs of operation through well strategic supplier management practices	3.50	1.350	High
The Bank has achieved customer satisfaction for all its clients	3.26	1.368	High
There is timely provision of service in the Bank	3.19	1.336	High
We have been able to generate profit for the last 3 years	2.79	1.382	Low
We are able to meet the Operational annual objectives	2.06	1.191	Low
We have been able to raise salaries and wages from profit	2.59	1.396	Low
We have opened up more outlets in the last years	2.05	1.306	Low
Bank returns on working capital employed has been greater than 50% in the last 3 years	2.26	1.213	Low
<b>OVERALL MEAN</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>1.318</b>	<b>LOW</b>

**Source:** Authors Computation from Primary Data 2023. (With SPSS)

The study findings regarding the operational performance of Commercial Banks were Low based on the Overall mean of 2.71, SD=1.318 this indicates a low operation performance of the Bank. The bank had managed to reduce its costs of operation through well strategic supplier management practices as per results revealed a high mean of

3.50, SD=1.350 interpreted as high performance. Still the Bank has achieved customer satisfaction for all its clients as indicated with the mean of 3.26, SD=1.368 interpreted as high and good performance.

Furthermore, timely provision of service in the Bank had the mean of 3.19 and SD=1.336 interpreted as high. The study findings on whether the bank has been able to generate profit for the last 3 years had the mean of 2.79, SD=1.382 interpreted as poor and whether the bank have achieved Operational annual objectives had the mean of 2.06, SD=1.191 interpreted as low. Regarding whether the bank had raised salaries and wages from profit had the mean of 2.59, SD=1.396 interpreted as poor. Finally concerning the Bank returns on working capital employed was greater than 50% in the last 3 years had the mean of 2.26, SD=1.213 interpreted as low performance.

**Table 5** Pearson’s correlation coefficient among trust-Based relationship, information sharing, supplier collaboration and operation performance of Commercial Banks

Covariates		Trust-based relationship	Information sharing
Operation performance	Pearson correlation	.209*	-.259*
	p-value	.007	.001

**Source:** Authors’ computation from primary data 2023

The study established the relationship between trust-Based relationship, information sharing, and operation performance of Commercial Banks. The person correlation coefficient value for Trust-Based relationship and Operational performance of Commercial Bankswas  $r = 0.209$  and the P-value= 0. 007.This implies that there is a low positive relationship between Trust-Based relationship and Operational performance of Commercial Banks. However, the P-value of 0.007 suggests the existence of a statistically significant relationship between Trust-Based relationship and Operational performance of Commercial Banks.

In establishing the relationship between information sharing and operation performance of Commercial Banks, the person correlation coefficient was  $r = -0.259$  and a P-value =0. 001.This signified a low negative relationship between information sharing and operation performance of Commercial Banks. On the other hand, the P-value=0.001 implies the presence of a statistically significant relationship between the information sharing and operation performance of Commercial Banks. In general observation, trust-Based relationship and information sharing, have a statistically significant relationship with Operational performance of Commercial Banks in Juba, South Sudan

**Table 6** Multiple Regression Analysis on trust-Based relationship, information sharing, supplier collaboration and operation performance of Commercial Banks

Variables	Un standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t-stat	sig	VIF
	B	Std error	B			
<b>Constant</b>	3.164	0.476		6.652	0.000	
<b>Trust Based Relationship</b>	0.201	0.079	0.198	2.549	0.012	1.080
<b>Information sharing</b>	-0.192	0.065	-0.229	-2.978	0.003	1.066
<b>F. value = 5.188, R. squared = 0.115, Overall sig value = 0.001, df = 4</b>						

**Source:** Authors’ computation from primary data2023 (with SPSS).

Table 6 shows the regression analysis of trust-Based relationship, information sharing, supplier collaboration and operation performance of Commercial Banks. The results from the analysis reveal that the standardized coefficient for Trust-based relationship is 0.198, t-statistic of 2.549 and a P-value 0.012 with a Variance Inflationary Factor (VIF) of 1.080. Since the t- statistics value is greater than 2 and p-value less than 0.05, this implies a significant relationship between trust-Based relationship, and operation performance of Commercial Banks.

In the same regard, the standardized coefficient of Information sharing is -0.229, t-statistic of -2.978, P-value 0.003 with a VIF of 1.066. This implies that there is a statistically significant relationship between information sharing and operation performance of Commercial Bankssince the calculated P-value (0.003) is less than the standard P-value( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

**The estimated regression model and its overall significance in the model**

$$U = 3.164 + 0.201K - 0.192B$$

Where; U = Operational Performance of Commercial Banks

**Dependent Variable**

Strategic supplier management practices

K = Trust-Based relationship

B= Information sharing

Independent Variables

**FINDINGS**

Trust-based relationship on operational performance of Commercial Banks. The study findings revealed average mean responses of 3.29, SD=1.204 interpreted as good implying that the state of the trust-based relationship was quite good. The person correlation coefficient value for Trust-Based relationship and Operational performance of Commercial Banks was  $r = 0.209$  and the P-value= 0. 007.This implied a low positive relationship between Trust-Based relationship and Operational performance of Commercial Banks. Furthermore, the results from the analysis reveal that the standardized coefficient for Trust-based relationship is 0.198, t-statistic of 2.549 and a P-value 0.012 with a Variance Inflationary Factor (VIF) of 1.080. Since the t- statistics value is greater than 2 and p-value less than 0.05, this implied a significant relationship between trust-Based relationship, and operation performance of Commercial Banks. These findings are backed by previous research studies that undertook to establish a similar purpose as elaborated below According to Douglas & Mattew (2012) argued that trust-based relationship in organizations directly impact, either positively or negatively, on the cost, quality, technology, delivery, flexibility and profits of the firms that incorporate the suppliers’ out into their final products.

Information sharing on Operational performance in Commercial Banks, Juba, South Sudan. The study findings showed that information sharing in Commercial Banks was high based on the Overall mean of 3.42, SD=1.182. The person correlation coefficient was  $r = -0.259$  and a P-value =0.001. This signified a low negative relationship between information sharing and operation performance of Commercial Banks. On the other hand, the P-value=0.001 implies the presence of a statistically significant relationship between the information sharing and operation performance of Commercial Banks. With standardized coefficient of Information sharing being -0.229, t-statistic of -2.978, P-value 0.003 with a VIF of 1.066. This implied that there is a statistically significant relationship between information sharing and operation performance of Commercial Banks since the calculated P-value (0.003) is less than the standard P-value( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The results from the field are in agreement with those of Kearney (2013) argued that sharing of information with supply chain partners is critical to the success of the supply chain. Information sharing is as “frequent information updating among the chain members for effective supply chain management.”

## CONCLUSION

The study obtained a good response rate of 56.9% as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2007) that a response rate of 50% is adequate. 53.7% of the respondents were female while 46.3% were male participants. This means that the study findings were reliable since it incorporated responses from both sexes in almost equal proportions and majority of the respondents were in a mature age bracket. The study further involved people with satisfactory level of literacy who were in better position to understand and interpret the contents in questionnaire as most of them had diplomas and degrees.

Generally, with the observation of the coefficients that strategic supplier management practices with its indicator of Trust based relationship, information sharing and supplier collaboration relationship factors have direct effect on operational performance of Commercial Banks. However, the overall model is significant at 95% level of significance with (F-value 5.188 and sig value 0.001), explaining up to 11.5% (R-squared=0.115) variation in operation performance of the bank. It is upon this back drop that we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between trust-based relationship, information sharing and operational performance of Commercial Banks.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the need for the organizations to develop clear trust-based relationship and development programs. This will enable Banks to engage in activities that improve the performance of strategic management suppliers' practices thus resulting in better performance of these Banks.

There is need for consideration of other factors for Operational to manage profitability for instance attaining more commercially high value segments that can boost the sales through creating a large market base.

Banks should share important information with its suppliers in order to improve on their performance.

The study further recommended that supply chain managers should use the results of the study to improve on organizational performance by employing strategic relation management (SRM)

Policies that support SRM should also be put in place as this had been confirmed by research findings to improve organization performance

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