EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF BUYER-SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPLY CHAIN PERFORMANCE OF CENTURY BOTTLING COMPANY (COCACOLA BEVERAGES UGANDA)

DANIEL OTIM

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UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
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DECLARATION

I, Otim Daniel, hereby attest that this dissertation was completed entirely by myself and has never been submitted to this university or any other higher education establishment for consideration for a degree. Every piece of knowledge is the product of my own research.

Signed: .... Date....28th MAY 2026.......

OTIM DANIEL
REG. NO: KM21M40/003

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research report titled "The impact of collaborative buyer-supplier relationships on supply chain performance in organizations, a case study of Century Bottling Company (Coca Cola) submitted to Uganda Christian University was supervised by;

Signed: Date: 28th May 2026

MR. MULOOSI PASCAL

ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my beloved parents, Mr. Ojede Tom Robert and Mrs. Enjangoria Immaculate, who raised me in the ways of God and guided me to become the man I am today. Their unwavering support, love, and encouragement have been a pillar throughout my journey. I am forever grateful for the values they instilled in me and for their continual dedication to an organized and purposeful life.

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To my brothers and sisters Ogwang Brian, Ongola Pius, Apio Victoria, Ajwang Teddy, Oteng Ronnie, Akot Sara, and Odoch Bonny may your pursuit of self-improvement be endless, driven by strength and perseverance.

As Marianne Williamson profoundly stated: *"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us."* Never forget this truth.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated employees' perceptions of buyer–supplier relationships and supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company, with a specific focus on trust, communication, and cooperation. The objectives were to establish employees' perceptions regarding the influence of trust and mutual understanding, examine employees' views on the role of information sharing, and assess employees' perceptions of how cooperation affects supply chain performance. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was employed, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study targeted 170 employees across various managerial levels and departments, and data were collected from 86 respondents through structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. Reliability of the research instruments was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, with all variables exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, while validity was ensured through expert review and the Content Validity Index.

Findings indicated that employees perceived buyer–supplier trust, communication, and cooperation as having positive relationships with supply chain performance. Correlation analysis revealed strong positive associations between employees' perceptions of trust ($r = 0.896$), communication ($r = 0.744$), and cooperation ($r = 0.652$) with supply chain performance, all significant at the 0.01 level. Multiple regression analysis further showed that employees perceived trust ($\beta = 0.512$), communication ($\beta = 0.284$), and cooperation ($\beta = 0.193$) as positively influencing supply chain performance, with an overall model R^2 of 0.762, indicating that these variables explain 76.2% of the variation in supply chain performance. Communication emerged as the most consistently significant predictor. Multicollinearity diagnostics confirmed that the independent variables were sufficiently distinct.

The study concludes that employees perceive strong buyer–supplier relationships characterized by effective communication, trust, and cooperation as critical in enhancing supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company. The study recommends strengthening structured communication systems, promoting collaborative supply chain practices, fostering trust-based supplier partnerships, and establishing effective performance monitoring systems. However, the study was limited to one organization and a relatively small sample size, suggesting the need for further research across different industries and larger samples to improve the generalizability of the findings.

CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter characterized and justified the study under the following sub-headings, statement of the problem, purpose, rationale and aim of the study, specific objectives, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, conceptual framework, constraints, and working definitions.

1.1Background of the study

The strategic collaboration between buyers and suppliers is a critical factor in enhancing procurement performance. This underscores the growing importance of reliable suppliers to buyers. To improve procurement performance, agencies must recruit the right personnel and foster strong relationships with them. This is especially crucial for agencies, as it ensures the efficiency and reliability of the services they provide. Century Beverages Africa invests significant resources into its beverage products, making each decision vital.

Thus, developing the relationship between buyers and suppliers is essential to achieving organizational goals. Numerous studies, including those by Vonderembse (2019) and Hsu (2016), emphasize that suppliers hold a strategic position within organizations, acting as a competitive force. Their behavior is also a critical determinant of organizational performance.

The relationship between suppliers and buyers is central to economic activity today (Nagurney, 2010) and is vital for achieving competitiveness, performance, and the long-term sustainability of organizations (Veludo et al., 2016). According to Gadde and Hakansson (2010), a firm's competitive advantage and potential business success largely depend on its ability to meet the needs of its suppliers. Griffith and Myers (2015) further assert that effectively managing buyer-supplier relationships is one of the key factors contributing to customer and shareholder value. This assertion is supported by the increasing trend of globalization and service outsourcing (Tang and Musa, 2011), which companies leverage to strengthen their core competencies in the face of competitive market dynamics (Blome and Schoenherr, 2011).

Burt (2013) identifies three primary types of buyer-seller relationships: transaction, cooperation, and alliance. The simplest example is the business relationship, often characterized as an "arms-length relationship," where neither party is invested in the well-being of the other. In such scenarios, trust is minimal, and agreements are often informal. These relationships typically do not yield significant management savings.

Encouraging cooperation at all organizational levels is crucial. Buyers should be empowered to negotiate effectively with suppliers, fostering mutual trust and benefits. This cannot occur in environments where management focuses solely on cost control or where staff are reluctant to delegate tasks to outsourcing providers. Benefits of collaborating with suppliers include reduced costs, improved product quality, shorter time-to-market, and enhanced technology and innovation. Additionally, such relationships tend to be more resilient, as both parties care about each other’s success.

However, these relationships can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Maintaining relationships requires buyers to dedicate time that could otherwise be spent on value-adding activities. Moreover, developing trust with suppliers takes time, and switching suppliers can be costly if issues arise.

The ongoing exchange of sensitive materials and objectives often makes companies hesitant to share information with external entities, fearing compromise. Benton et al. (2005) note that cooperation may be difficult if potential partners feel intimidated by a supplier's dominance. The third type of buyer-seller relationship is partnership-centered, aimed at enhancing strategic communication between businesses.

Unlike cooperation, which may lack trust, alliances inherently rely on mutual understanding and support during uncertainties. While alliances can be beneficial, they require ongoing management of trust and value, or else they may fail. Successful alliances foster specialization of assets and labor, reducing the likelihood of miscommunication across organizations (Burt et al., 2013).

Procurement performance management

Procurement Performance Management (PPM) is method organizations use to evaluate areas of value, understanding how procurement functions support organizational goals. It assesses the efficiency of the procurement team and spending, aiming to raise awareness and improve the procurement function's standing within the organization. According to Dobler and Burt (2016), sourcing and purchasing are often used interchangeably. Van Weele (2010) further argues that managing the buying process is synonymous with supply management, though it can also be referred to as logistics management.

Despite differing definitions, there is consensus among researchers (Scheuing, 2009; Fearon et al., 2002; Lysons, 2016) that these terms entail the acquisition of external goods or services to achieve an organization's objectives (Knudsen, 2009). Performance measurement is essential for organizations pursuing their goals while meeting customer needs effectively and efficiently (Kotter, 2008; Neely, 2019). Cavinato and Kauffman (2019) identify ten methods to analyze and measure purchasing performance, while Van Weele (2019) and Knudsen (2019) offer recommendations based on purchasing efficiency and effectiveness.

Effectiveness in purchasing refers to how well actions meet predetermined metrics. Efficiency, on the other hand, is evaluated through the ratio of planned versus actual sacrifices in relation to set objectives (Knudsen, 2009). Procurement involves a complex array of activities characterized by material supply and information flow between numerous internal customers and suppliers. It is not merely about forwarding requests to suppliers and waiting for deliveries; rather, it involves dynamic processes that influence productivity and effectiveness within purchasing operations.

Purchasing encompasses various activities and information flows, making it more intricate than just relaying orders to suppliers. These activities continually evolve in intensity, duration, and quality, directly impacting the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the purchasing department. In many organizations, the relationship between buyers and sellers has become integral to the marketing and distribution of goods and services (Obrien, 2014). Effective supply chain management is essential for any organization and requires establishing long-term supply relationships.

According to Mohanty and Gahan (2015), various transactions between organizations within the supply chain greatly contribute to purchasing and selling success. Thus, managing external relationships has become increasingly important for understanding the mechanics of modern organizations and overall supply chain performance. A comprehensive understanding of the supply chain reveals that separate entities are interconnected through inbound and outbound distributions, facilitating the flow of products and information (Waithaka and Waiganjo, 2015).

In Uganda, Century Bottling Company Limited operates as a bottling and distribution franchise for Coca-Cola products. The Coca-Cola Company is a global beverage corporation, primarily engaged in the manufacturing of beverage concentrates and syrups. It is widely known for producing Coca-Cola, invented by pharmacist John Stith Pemberton in Atlanta in 1886. In 1889, Asa Griggs Candler acquired the rights to the Coca-Cola recipe and trademark, incorporating The Coca-Cola Company in 1892.

The company's main office is located in Atlanta, Georgia, and it has been franchising partners since 1889. The company produces syrup concentrates for sale to territory monopolists worldwide, owning the largest bottling operations in the United States, Coca-Cola Refreshments. In 2022, CCBA’s Ugandan affiliate rebranded to Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU) following the merger of Rwenzori Bottling Company Limited and Century Bottling. CCBU has a 24-year history in the Ugandan market.

In 2020, the Ugandan government mandated CCBA to establish a $10 million Rwenzori pure natural mineral water production line at the Namanve location, capable of producing 24,000 bottles of Rwenzori Pure Water manufactured by Carlsberg each hour. Additionally, CCBA oversees a plastic recycling initiative named Plastic Recycling Industries (PRI) in collaboration with Rwenzori Bottling Company. This initiative is the leading effort in Uganda for the retrieval and recycling of plastics, uniquely managed by a bottling company.

Despite various strategies aimed at optimizing production capacity, Coca-Cola continues to face challenges regarding the supply chain effectiveness of small-scale farmers in the region, where essential brewing materials are sourced (Mbogo and George, 2013). To address this, effective buyer-seller policies must be adhered to.

In Uganda, Coca-Cola has developed a supply chain system with small and medium enterprises that ensures stable supplies of quality raw materials. This is achieved through the buyer-supplier relationships that underpin the supply chain integration of The Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU). To ensure success, high customer satisfaction must be maintained at every link in the supply chain, particularly in light of the rapidly changing retail sector and evolving consumer behavior.

This international business approach presents challenges due to environmental diversity. To mitigate the effects of market turbulence, retailers are advised to cultivate diverse distribution networks, avoiding reliance on a single channel (Ganesan, 2004).

As a leading beverage manufacturer, Century Beverages Africa has a long-standing tradition of enhancing supply chain management effectiveness by actively involving suppliers in all processes. Relevant publications from the company include “The Impact of Collaborative Buyer-Supplier Relationships on Supply Chain Performance: A Case Study of Century Beverages Africa” (2016), “Collaborative Buyer-Supplier Relationships: A Strategy for Improving Supply Chain Performance” (2015), and “The Role of Trust in Collaborative Buyer-Supplier Relationships” (2014). These works demonstrate how collaboration with suppliers can lead to improved supply chain performance. Century Beverages Africa has concluded that such supply chains can reduce costs, enhance quality, and increase speed. They have also identified trust as a critical component of these relationships. Ultimately, Century Beverages Africa aims to enhance its supply chain in collaboration with its suppliers, recognizing that collaborative buyer-supplier relationships are essential for success.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Globally, supply chain performance remains a key determinant of organizational competitiveness and efficiency. Previous studies by Mohanty and Gahan (2019), Alhawari et al. (2016), and Okello and Were (2020) indicate that strong buyer–supplier relationships improve operational efficiency, product quality, innovation, and cost reduction. However, most of these studies were conducted outside Uganda and provide limited evidence on how buyer–supplier cooperation influences supply chain performance within Uganda's beverage industry, particularly from the perceptions of employees.

In Uganda, organizations continue to face challenges related to supplier coordination, communication, trust, and timely information sharing, which may affect supply chain performance. Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited depends on supplier relationships to ensure smooth production and distribution processes. Although the company has implemented supplier engagement and collaboration initiatives, there is limited empirical evidence on how employees perceive the effectiveness of buyer–supplier cooperation in improving supply chain performance at CCBU.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effect of buyer–supplier relationships on supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited, with emphasis on employees' perceptions regarding communication, trust, cooperation, and information sharing. The findings will contribute to existing knowledge and provide recommendations for improving supply chain performance within the company.

Main Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess employees' perceptions of collaborative buyer–supplier relationships and supply chain performance in organizations, with specific reference to Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (operating through Century Bottling Company).

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine employees' perceptions of the influence of trust and mutual understanding on supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited.
2. To assess employees' perceptions of the influence of information sharing on supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited.

3. To evaluate employees' perceptions of the influence of buyer–supplier cooperation on supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

i. How do employees perceive the influence of trust and mutual understanding on supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited?

ii. How do employees perceive the extent to which information sharing influences supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited?

iii. How do employees perceive the influence of buyer–supplier cooperation on supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited?

1.4.1 Hypotheses

H1: Employees' perceptions indicate that trust and mutual understanding positively influence supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited.

H2: Employees' perceptions indicate that information sharing positively influences supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited.

H3: Employees' perceptions indicate that buyer–supplier cooperation positively influences supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited, particularly through long-term commitment and relationship duration.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

In essence, a conceptual framework is deemed as a collection of concepts (which in this context would refer to variables) that a researcher adjusts to fulfill a specific purpose. Mugenda et al (2003) define a variable as a factor in measurement which varies depending on the subject under investigation. According to the definition by Kombo and Tromp (2016) on research, an independent variable is any factor that is controlled or manipulated by the researcher in order to cause a change in another variable. As explained by Kombo and Tromp 2016, independent variables or explanatory variables are considered to be the reasons responsible for the modification of the dependent variable. The purpose of the dependent variable is to explain the overall impact caused by the independent variable Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). This is supported by figure 2.1 which shows the three types of the variables.

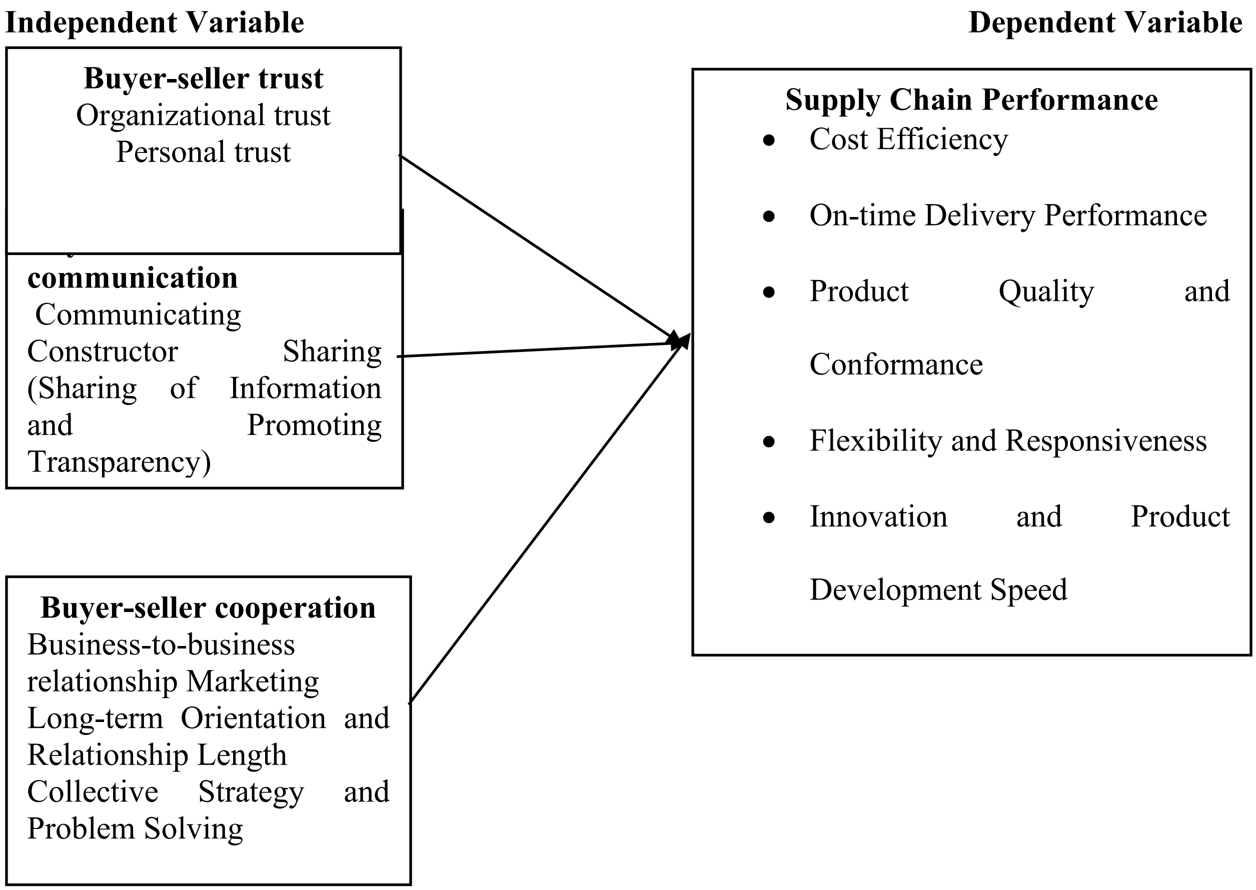

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

The area of study pertaining to interorganizational buyer-seller relationships and their associated purchasing processes appears appropriate for further research on relationship marketing, purchasing, as well as Business-to-Business super-distribution. Among the constituents of supply chain architecture and its integration, linkages between buyers and suppliers are amongst the most crucial ones. Every single interrelation with the supply chain members needs to be built up and subdued for every business survival.

These perspectives of retail spectate high returns which in most times shows the fickle nature of the consumer demand with market trends. Further, ecological variance reveals how challenging the international business atmosphere is.

In consideration of the volatility and the diversity of the market, it covers that retailers need to establish more robust relations with several distribution parties in which unpredictability of the market situations can be managed to decrease It can reduce dependency (Ganesan, 2004).

With such dynamic pieces and forces moving in secession, Ganesan states that new distribution relationships such as a spiraled one which looks as if it holds the movie on topics across contemporaries should be focused on. A good emphasis, for example, is during volatile periods dominated with religious conflicts and political instabilities.

1.5.1 Summary

The foundation of the conceptual framework is based on a thorough review of available literature that offers credible evidences and valid precedents for the major components of purchasing processes and buyer-seller relationships.

For performance assessment of retail products, the outcomes are evaluated based on a set of existing financial and non-financial performance indices. The outcomes would broaden the understanding of the driving forces behind the purchasing and distribution functions of business organizations in the beverage sector and the extent to which retail supply chain execution is determined by key performance indicators. Therefore, this study is expected to offer two contributions. So far, there is no study that has investigated the ways in which relationships between buyers and sellers influence purchasing and supply dynamics in the beverage sector. This research sought to examine how buyer-seller relationships affected the supply chain of the beverage industry in particular Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The management of Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda and other players in the beverage industry will benefit from this study by gaining a better understanding of employees' perceptions regarding buyer–supplier relationships and their influence on supply chain performance. The study will help management identify how factors such as trust, communication, cooperation, and information sharing between buyers and suppliers are perceived by employees and how these perceptions affect efficiency and effectiveness within the supply chain.

In addition, the findings of this study will provide guidance to stakeholders in the beverage industry on the importance of strengthening buyer–supplier relationships in order to improve supply chain performance. The study will also assist organizations in developing policies and strategies that promote positive buyer–supplier interactions, enhance collaboration, and improve operational performance within the supply chain.

Furthermore, the study will contribute to long-term organizational development by providing insights into future policy improvements and managerial practices related to supply chain management. The research will also serve as a useful reference for students, researchers, and scholars who may wish to undertake further studies on buyer–supplier relationships, employee perceptions, and supply chain performance in the beverage industry and related sectors.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The main aim of this study was to examine employees' perceptions of buyer–supplier relationships and supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company. The study specifically focused on how employees perceive factors such as trust, communication, cooperation, and information sharing in influencing supply chain performance within the organization.

Geographically, the study was carried out at Century Bottling Company, operating as Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda, particularly at its head offices and operational facilities located in Namanve. The researcher believed that the selected study area provided an appropriate population and sample size capable of generating reliable findings and conclusions.

Content-wise, the study concentrated on buyer–supplier relationships and their influence on supply chain performance from the employees' perspective. The study examined key relationship dimensions including trust, communication, cooperation, and coordination between buyers and suppliers, and how these factors contribute to efficiency, effectiveness, and overall supply chain performance within the beverage industry.

The study also sought to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on supply chain management by focusing on employees' perceptions of buyer–supplier relationships, an area that has received limited attention despite its importance in organizational performance and competitiveness.

1.8 Justification of the study

This study will be of great value to various stakeholders involved in the supply chain operations of Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda. Supply chain managers and organizational leaders will gain a better understanding of employees' perceptions regarding buyer–supplier relationships and how these relationships influence supply chain performance within the company. The findings will help management identify effective relationship practices such as trust, communication, collaboration, and information sharing that can improve operational efficiency and organizational performance. Employees will also benefit from the study as it highlights their views and experiences concerning buyer–supplier interactions, thereby promoting better workplace involvement and improved supply chain coordination. In addition, researchers and academicians will gain deeper insights into the buyer–supplier interface and its connection to supply chain performance, while also identifying gaps for further study. The research will therefore serve as an important empirical and academic foundation for future investigations related to buyer–supplier relationships and supply chain performance in organizations.

1.9 Definition of Significant Terms

Communication; Communication processes are present in almost every aspect of the behavior of the actors in the organizations and is important for the success of the organizations.

Cooperation: It has been stated that cooperation can be described as: "coordinated actions of firms which are similar or complementary and undertake those actions within interdependent relationships to achieve mutual results or, singular result expecting some return in due course".

Performance; Performance, in a business perspective, is the most favorable output or result of an organization used to measure and evaluate the output(s) intended to be achieved (the goals and objectives).

The overall performance of an organization can be seen from three perspectives, namely financial performance, product performance, and operational performance. The macroeconomic micro perspective of organizational internal rate of return factors include: market share, ROI percentages, net profit margins, inventory turnover rates, and levels of employee productivity, etc.

Supply Chain: Supply chain is an integrated system that encompasses people, activities, information and other resources in order to provide a certain product or service starting from the supplier and finishing with the customer

Trust: Is the belief that allows an exchange partner to be trusted by the firm. In this context, trust is expressed as a belief in the exchange partners with the due regard of their know-how, how predictable they are and their disposition to behave.

Supplier Integration Level Definition: It is the degree in which suppliers are integrated into the activities and procedures of the buyer.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section synthesizes previous findings from various scholars within the same area of study. Notably, Olsen and Ellram (2007) suggested that trust, cooperation, and relationship performance are characteristics of relationships that require further investigation regarding their interrelations. Consequently, this research identifies five critical elements of the buyer-supplier relationship: trust, communication, cooperation, power dependence, and supply contracts. This aligns with the current study's aim to improve the management of relational and supply chains by examining how buyer-seller relationships impact purchasing and supply processes in the soft drinks industry, particularly in light of health issues in East Africa. Thus, this research contributes valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge.

2.1 Trust, Mutual Understanding, and Supply Chain Performance

Trust is one of the fundamental principles in corporate networks that correlates with achieving corporate objectives. However, the development of trust varies across different work environments and cultures. In many corporate settings, trust is built at the individual level, whereas, in Western contexts, it is often developed at the organizational level (Fang and Kriz, 2010; Wong, 2016). Trust can be defined as “the extent to which a person may be relied upon in business or personal matters, considering their position and standing” (Woo and Phrud'homme, 2009). For business professionals, maintaining relationships with potential counterparts is crucial for establishing trust and reliability in their current interactions. Ganesan (2004) found that perceptions of trust within an organization increase alongside a supplier's reputation for fair behavior.

Sullivan and Peterson (1982) describe trust as a factor that encourages buyers and sellers to focus on the value of their relationships beyond immediate transactions (Ganesan, 2004), ultimately enhancing performance in supply chain management by fostering greater competition and lowering transaction costs. Noordewier et al. and Doney and Cannon (2007) suggest that trust significantly influences the duration of relationships, while Morgan and Hunt (2004) found that trust is most effective when cooperation is present.

According to Anderson and Weitz (2009), enhancing trust within conventional channel relationships is vital for their retention. Distributor trust is also linked to cooperative norms and financial performance (Siguaw et al., 2008).

This dynamic underscores a significant relationship between satisfaction levels. Trust comprises two primary components: personal trust and organizational trust. This section aims to deepen the understanding of trust's role in the relationships between Chinese buyers and suppliers.

2.1.1 Personal trust

As Wong (2016) notes, the benefits of trust are not limited to Western contexts; they are also significant among Chinese businesspeople. Trust has historically been crucial for maintaining complex trading activities with other nations. Kiong and Kee (2008) argue that business relationships in China are highly personal and founded on trust. Trusting partnerships have informed many studies on relational dynamics in Taiwanese organizations, particularly in Kao's examination of 'personal trust' in large Taiwanese corporations. The Chinese approach to business fosters an environment where trust exists between parties, often with vague roles and responsibilities (Mavondo and Rodrigo, 2011). In this framework, formal contracts serve merely to secure claims in a court of law. Kiong and Kee (2008) conclude that such contractual agreements may be unnecessary when mutual trust is present.

2.1.2 Organizational Trust and Supply Chain Performance

American companies typically verify the credit histories of primary customers before engaging in business. If a supplier has a clean record with other clients, trust can be established more easily, replacing suspicion. In Western contexts, 'trust' implies a reliable exchange of words and promises between suppliers and retailers (Doney and Cannon, 2007). Interpersonal relationships encompass perceptions of honesty, trustworthiness, and character, which in business contexts translate to a person's credibility (Kiong and Kee, 2008). Numerous studies highlight the importance of interpersonal relationships in conducting business and the positive influence of trust-based exchanges (Kiong and Kee, 2008; Lui, 2008).

DeGlopper (1978) emphasizes the role of social interactions in business transactions, suggesting that trust can reinforce business relationships by assuring parties of safety and honesty. Ganesan

(2004) posits that trust significantly influences long-lasting relationships, making it a competitive advantage in buyer-seller exchanges.

2.2 Information Sharing, Transparency, and Supply Chain Performance

Small businesses often seek to minimize risks associated with seasonality and the short product life cycles of many goods by reducing inventory costs and maximizing revenue from their suppliers. Companies increasingly recognize the value of substituting stock with knowledge as a competitive strategy (Spekman et al., 2009). This underscores the importance of interaction within social and business contexts.

Anderson and Narus (2004) define communication as "the meaningful and timely exchange of information, whether formal or informal, between organizations." Cannon and Perreault (2009) argue that a greater willingness to share important information implies a more open and less restricted flow of communication. However, a lack of trust can hinder the exchange of sensitive information, particularly in Asian cultures (MOEA, 2009).

Mavondo and Rodrigo (2011) discuss the challenges of intercultural communication and information sharing, noting that these can pose significant barriers for businesses. Effective communication in channel relationships enhances coordination, satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Goodman and Dion, 2011; Mohr and Nevin, 2004). For example, in the fashion apparel industry, timely and frequent communication between retailers and suppliers enables rapid adaptation to market changes, reducing costs and forecasting errors (Fisher et al., 2004). When trust and support are present, channel members are more willing to communicate information, thereby facilitating two-way communication (Blair et al., 1995).

Consequently, less contention around supply and demand can enhance profits for channel members. Conversely, when power differentials exist, less powerful channel members may hesitate to share information with more powerful counterparts (Blair et al., 1995). Thus, restrictions on information flow can negatively impact channel relationships and supply chain performance. Timely and effective communication, particularly with clients, is crucial for establishing long-lasting business alliances and supporting high productivity levels (Morgan and Hunt, 2004).

2.3 Influence of Buyer-Seller Cooperation on Supply Chain Performance

Anderson and Narus (2004) define cooperation as the complementary actions taken by interdependent companies to achieve common or specific goals with the intent to collaborate again in the future. Cannon and Perreault (2009) emphasize that cooperation among exchange parties is essential for achieving both common and individual goals in coordination. Trust plays a core role in cooperative business relationships. Professionals often consider personal connections to be more reliable than market research.

Lack of personal bonds can deter suppliers and buyers from sharing information or collaborating. Ambler et al. (2009) suggest a strong correlation between active involvement and increased export sales. Research indicates a significant positive relationship between collaboration and satisfaction (Anderson and Narus, 2004; Skinner et al., 2002). Collaboration among channel members enhances channel efficiency and helps members achieve their objectives.

2.4 Supply chain performance

Supply chain performance is a critical and multifaceted aspect of supply chain management. Performance measurement involves evaluating processes and products against objectives, trends, historical performance, and other benchmarks (Petrovic-Lazarevic and Sohal, 2002). It is essential to identify factors leading to effective supply chains.

In today's fast-paced and competitive global environment, it is imperative to measure productivity and determine actions based on these metrics. Companies increasingly recognize the need for performance evaluation and the measures required to ensure a productive supply chain. The goal of performance measurement is to enhance supply chain performance concerning time, costs, and other resources involved (Beamon, 2009; Gunasekaran et al., 2011), alongside some applied measures (Gunasekaran et al., 2011).

Performance Indicators. This study focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of retail supply chains. The performance measures draw on the classification by Gunasekaran et al. (2011), encompassing both financial and non-financial measures, which are illustrated in subsequent sections.

Fiscal Measures. Sales growth and profitability are significant indicators of organizational success (Bourne, 2009; Gales and Blackburn, 2004; Tan et al., 2009). Sales growth is assessed based on changes in annual sales volume over the past three years (Gales and Blackburn, 2004; Tan et al., 2008; Tan et al., 2009). Profitability reflects the average retail profit a sportswear distributor can expect. Dollinger and Kolchin (2005) found a positive association between purchasing levels and a firm's economic performance.

2.5 Summary of literature

The literature underscores the critical role of trust, communication, cooperation, and information sharing in fostering effective buyer-supplier relationships, ultimately driving supply chain performance. Scholars such as Olsen and Ellram (2007) emphasize the necessity of further exploration into these relationship characteristics to understand their interconnections. Trust, in particular, is a vital factor for sustaining long-term business relationships, influencing cooperation, reducing transaction costs, and enhancing relationship durability (Ganesan, 2004; Morgan and Hunt, 2004).

The studies by Anderson and Narus (2004) and Cannon and Perreault (2009) reinforce the notion that effective communication and trust are essential for successful collaboration between buyers and suppliers. Furthermore, the exchange of accurate and timely information improves forecasting and reduces supply chain inefficiencies (Blair et al., 1995; Fisher et al., 2004). This research aligns with the imperative to investigate how trust, communication, and cooperation influence the supply chain performance of organizations like Century Bottling Company, providing insights into how these relational dynamics can enhance operational outcomes in the East African soft drinks industry. The study thus fills a significant gap in the existing literature by focusing on Coca-Cola's unique supply chain context, considering the importance of cultural factors, communication practices, and collaboration in shaping supply chain performance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter has disclosed the existing assessment and research approach which include; - Research design, Target population, sampling strategy, Studying variables, Data collection technique, Sources of Data, Instruments administration and Data processing.

3.1 Research designs

The research design put forth served as a guide for the whole process including the choosing of appropriate research approaches. Descriptive cross-sectional design is one that systematically describes an identifiable sample population at a given point in time (Grove, 2011). Through this design, it was possible to gather and interpret information in relation to a particular issue within the strategy. To this end, a self-administered questionnaire was used for quantitative data collection, while quantitative approaches was used to facilitate all round coverage of the topic under research.

3.1.1 Research approach methods

In quantitative research, for example, the connection between the data and the observations is based on mathematical operations measurements taken, as well as statistical analysis performed. Theories regarding real-world events could then be confirmed or disapproved through the application of quantitative approaches.

Statistical conclusions were necessary to turn the drama into some sensible actionable, hence why quantitative research was applicable. Business decisions particularly critical ones are rooted on comprehensive and detailed information hence numbers helped the cause. Also, measuring and processing the data and the problem employed quantitative research design and drew useful conclusions for the future business plan. Quantitative methods gave opportunity to obtain some standard results from larger population and to draft hypotheses that would be statistically acceptable.

3.2 Sources of Data

Quantitative data collection methods were more formal, and employed various techniques that include surveys such as internet, paper, mobile, and kiosk surveys, in person interviews, telephonic interviews, cross-sectional studies, web intercepts, and scientific observations.

3.3 Study Area

The research was conducted at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU), situated in the Buganda sub-region of Uganda, where the target population was located.

3.4 Study population

The definition of population provided by Burns and Grove (2011) was applied, and a list of managers and their subordinates was obtained in accordance with the sampling method developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Random selection was employed to identify participants from this list.

Table 3.1

Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384

Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size *Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970*

3.5 Sampling design and procedure

The researcher utilized a combination of probability and non-probability sampling methods. Stratified simple random sampling was employed to select participants from three managerial levels: top management, middle management, and line management. Within each level, individuals were randomly selected via a lottery method to ensure fair representation.

The targeted population included Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU) employees within specific departments: service inspection, quality assurance, records and information management, human resources, and research and standards. These individuals were deemed to possess the necessary knowledge to contribute to the study's objectives. A total of 170 staff members from various positions, including directors, accountants, and human resources officers, were selected for the study using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) method.

3.5.1 Sample size selection

A sample of 118 respondents was obtained through purposive sampling to identify key staff members. Subsequently, simple random sampling was used to select 86 additional respondents for quantitative data collection.

3.6 Sampling Strategy

The researcher employed purposive sampling to select individuals with expertise or experience in the topic under investigation (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). This approach facilitated the identification of key informants, including Directors, Marketers, and HR staff (n=28), who possessed specific knowledge relevant to the study.

To enhance the robustness of the sample, simple random sampling was used to select Assistant General Managers, Program Managers, and support staff from Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU). This method ensured that each member of the population had an equal probability of inclusion, lending credibility to the findings. A sampling frame was created from a list of 118 primary officers provided by CCBU.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

The investigator used both quantitative data in the study to aid the collection of relevant data.

3.7.1 Key informant interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with selected key informants who held informed perspectives on the evaluation's focus. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with Directors, HR officers, and Marketers.

3.7.2 Survey

A structured survey was utilized to collect data from a targeted group of participants. Pre-testing, validity assessments, and standardized delivery methods were employed to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the findings. The survey facilitated the identification of customer expectations, satisfaction levels, and areas for improvement within the organization.

Data collection instruments

3.7.3 Questionnaire

Previously, a questionnaire served as a data collection instrument to gather information from a substantial sample (Kombo and Tromp, 2016). This standardized questionnaire comprised a series of questions, organized in a structured manner to collect individual responses on specific topics. It was akin to a formal interview, facilitated by the prescribed questions and their sequence. Standardized administration ensured consistent application across respondents. The development of the questionnaire adhered to guidelines from scholars such as Kothari (2005), aligning closely with the research objectives.

3.7.4 Key informant guide

According to McNamara (2009), the researcher's questions during interviews were guided by a key informant guide. The interviews were not rigid and fixed; they were based on a number of topics expected to be discussed. They were more like talking exercises, which allowed ideas to freely move in and out. Interviewers are understood to as rise up to the occasion and ask follow up questions, probe for answers and take down notes to expand on later. In order to gather information targeting specific research objectives, the researcher made interview guide addressed to senior managements (C-Directors and marketers) of coca cola beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU). The guide which enabled inquest into the issues provided in the literature review and conclusions regarding the effects of collaborating buyers and suppliers on the performance of the supply chain in the company also made it possible to ask questions and look for answers to such questions.

3.8 Reliability of the research instruments

Reliability refers to the degree to which a research instrument produces consistent and stable results over time and across different items measuring the same concept. In this study, reliability was used to assess the consistency of the questionnaire items measuring trust and mutual understanding, information sharing, buyer–seller cooperation, and supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company.

The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. This statistical measure determines the internal consistency of items that form a scale. The questionnaire was first subjected to a pilot test among a small group of respondents who possessed similar characteristics to the actual study population but were not included in the final sample. Data obtained from the pilot test were analyzed using statistical software to compute the Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable.

A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable, as recommended by methodological scholars. If any variable returned an alpha value below the acceptable threshold, the items responsible for inconsistency were reviewed, revised, or removed to improve the reliability of the instrument. This process ensured that the final questionnaire used for data collection produced dependable and consistent results.

3.8.1 Validity of the research instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure. In this study, validity was used to determine whether the questionnaire accurately captured the constructs of trust and mutual understanding, information sharing, buyer–seller cooperation, and supply chain performance.

Content validity was used to assess the relevance and adequacy of the questionnaire items. The instrument was reviewed by experts in procurement, supply chain management, and research methodology, including academic supervisors and professionals familiar with collaborative buyer–supplier relationships. These experts examined the clarity, relevance, and coverage of each item in relation to the study objectives.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) was computed to quantify the level of agreement among the experts regarding the relevance of the items. Each item was rated as relevant or not relevant to the study objectives. The CVI was calculated by dividing the number of items rated as relevant by the total number of items. A CVI value of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument had adequate content validity.

Any items that were found to be unclear, irrelevant, or ambiguous were revised or removed based on the experts' recommendations. This process ensured that the questionnaire adequately represented all aspects of the study variables and produced accurate results.

3.9 Data Management and Analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative data

Collected primary data underwent coding, computer entry, cleaning, and manipulation to support statistical analysis. Cross-tabulation and descriptive statistics were employed to present the findings. Data analysis was done in SPSS version 24 and graphs drawn in Ms Excel.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data collected through interviews and open-ended questionnaire items were analyzed using thematic analysis. The data were first transcribed and carefully reviewed to ensure accuracy and completeness. This was followed by coding, where responses were grouped into meaningful categories based on recurring ideas, patterns, and concepts related to the study objectives.

Similar codes were then organized into broader themes to facilitate interpretation and understanding of respondents' views. The analysis focused on identifying common opinions, explanations, and experiences that complemented the quantitative findings. The results were presented in a **narrative form**, supported by selected verbatim quotations from respondents to provide deeper insights and enhance the credibility of the findings.

3.10 Ethical considerations and data collection procedure

In line with the ethical issues remarked by Callahan (2008), the researcher observed and implemented the following ethical principles: Ethical Clearance: In this regard, ethical clearance was secured from Uganda Christian University, School of Business and Administration. Participant Information: Interviewees before participating in the study were told that the study formed part of the researcher's Master's Degree thesis and the results might be given to officials of Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU) for the purpose of improving performance within the organization. Informed Consent: Seeking each participant's written informed consent was sought following sufficient staff and addressing the risks and benefits of the study and questions for clarification. The researcher stressed that it is a continuous process and not a once off event.

Precautions with Respect to COVID-19 and Monkey Pox (MPOX): The researcher practiced the due operating procedures such as wearing a face mask, using a hand sanitizer, and maintaining a distance of two meters so as to inhibit the spread of COVID-19 and Monkey Pox (MPOX) illness.

Privacy and Confidentiality: The researcher stated that respondents would be assured that any information gathered from them would remain confidential and that furnishing the data would not put them in harm's way, images of resu9lting threats would be sold rather than published. The data obtained was stored in the researcher’s individual computer that was password protected.

Participant Withdrawal: Interviewees were advised against forgetting that their participation in the study could be terminated at their wish even before or within the interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the influence of buyer–seller relationships on supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU). The chapter begins with the response rate and demographic characteristics of the respondents. It then presents reliability results for the study variables, followed by descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression results. The analysis focuses on three independent variables: buyer–seller trust, buyer–seller communication, and buyer–seller cooperation, and how they relate to supply chain performance at CCBU.

Out of 118 questionnaires distributed, 86 were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 72.9%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 70% and above is considered very good. Therefore, the response rate achieved in this study was adequate for analysis and representation of the target population.

4.1 Demographic Information

4.1.1 Level of Education

Table 4. 1: Highest Level of Education

Completed level	Number	Percent
Postgraduate	55	64.0%
Graduate	31	36.0%
Total	86	100%

The results in Table 4.1 show that the majority of respondents (64%) had postgraduate qualifications, while 36% held only a first degree. This indicates that most participants possessed advanced academic training. Such a high level of education suggests that respondents were likely to understand the questionnaire items and the operational issues related to supply chain performance. It also enhances the credibility of the data, since respondents were likely to provide informed and thoughtful responses. The presence of highly educated staff reflects the professional nature of operations at CCBU. Overall, the education distribution suggests that the respondents were capable of giving reliable information about buyer–seller relationships and supply chain performance within the company**.**

4.1.2 Length of Service

Table 4. 2: Respondents' Length of Service

Length of Service	Number	Percent
Less than 1 year	15	17.4%
1–3 years	37	43.1%
3–5 years	26	30.2%
Above 5 years	8	9.3%
Total	86	100%

Table 4.2 shows that most respondents (43.1%) had worked at CCBU for between 1 and 3 years. Another 30.2% had served between 3 and 5 years, while 17.4% had less than one year of experience. Only 9.3% had worked at the company for more than five years. This distribution indicates that a large proportion of respondents had moderate experience within the organization. Employees with 1–5 years of service are likely to be familiar with operational procedures and supplier interactions. This suggests that the data collected reflects practical experiences rather than assumptions. The presence of both newer and more experienced staff also provides balanced perspectives on supply chain relationships at CCBU.

4.2 Reliability of Study Variables

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire items.

Table 4. 3: Reliability Statistics

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Buyer–seller trust	5	0.82
Buyer–seller communication	4	0.79
Buyer–seller cooperation	4	0.84
Supply chain performance	3	0.76

Table 4.3 presents the reliability results for the study variables. Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable for social science research. Buyer–seller trust recorded an alpha of 0.82, indicating strong internal consistency among the items. Buyer–seller communication had a reliability coefficient of 0.79, which is also acceptable. Buyer–seller cooperation recorded the highest reliability at 0.84, showing very strong internal consistency. Supply chain performance had a coefficient of 0.76, which is within the acceptable range. These results indicate that the questionnaire items used to measure the variables were reliable and consistent. Therefore, the data was suitable for further statistical analysis.

4.3 Buyer–Seller Trust

Table 4. 4: Extent to Which Buyer–Seller Trust Affects Supply Chain Performance

Extent	Number	Percent
Very great extent	23	26.7%
Great extent	47	54.7%
Moderate extent	12	14.0%
Little extent	4	4.7%
Total	86	100%

Table 4.4 indicates that buyer–seller trust was perceived as highly influential in supply chain performance at CCBU. A majority of respondents (54.7%) stated that trust affects performance

to a great extent, while 26.7% indicated a very great extent. Only 4.7% believed that trust had little influence. This suggests that most employees consider trust a critical factor in supply chain operations. Trust likely improves coordination, reduces conflicts, and enhances reliability between buyers and suppliers. The small percentage reporting little influence indicates limited disagreement among respondents. Overall, the results demonstrate strong support for the importance of trust in supply chain performance at CCBU.

4.4 Buyer–Seller Communication

Table 4. 5: Extent to Which Buyer–Seller Communication Affects Supply Chain Performance

Extent	Number	Percent
Very great	25	29.0%
Great	44	51.2%
Moderate	17	19.8%
Total	86	100%

Table 4.5 shows that buyer–seller communication is also viewed as an important factor in supply chain performance at CCBU. More than half of the respondents (51.2%) rated communication as having a great influence, while 29.0% rated it as very great. Only 19.8% considered the influence moderate. These findings suggest that effective communication plays a major role in coordinating supply chain activities. Good communication likely improves information sharing, reduces delays, and enhances decision-making. The results indicate that most employees recognize communication as essential for efficient operations. This strong perception supports the idea that communication contributes positively to supply chain performance at CCBU.

4.5 Buyer–Seller Cooperation

Table 4. 6: Extent to Which Buyer–Seller Cooperation Affects Supply Chain Performance

Extent	Number	Percent
Very great	31	36.0%
Great	55	64.0%
Total	86	100%

Table 4.6 shows that all respondents considered buyer–seller cooperation to have either a great or very great influence on supply chain performance. A majority (64.0%) rated it as great, while 36.0% rated it as very great. No respondents reported moderate or little influence. This indicates strong agreement among staff regarding the importance of cooperation. Cooperation likely enhances coordination, joint problem solving, and shared decision-making. It also promotes efficiency and reduces operational conflicts. The absence of negative responses suggests that cooperation is widely recognized as essential for supply chain success at CCBU.

4.6 Correlation Analysis

Table 4. 7: Correlation Between Study Variables and Supply Chain Performance

Variable	Supply Chain Performance	Sig. (2-tailed)
Buyer–seller trust	0.896**	0.000
Buyer–seller communication	0.744**	0.000
Buyer–seller cooperation	0.652**	0.000

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.7 Regression Analysis

Table 4. 8: Regression Results

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Buyer–seller trust	0.512	0.102	5.02	0.000
Buyer–seller communication	0.284	0.094	3.02	0.003
Buyer–seller cooperation	0.193	0.088	2.19	0.031
Constant	0.412	0.121	3.40	0.001

The study examined employees' perceptions of buyer–supplier relationships and supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company. Correlation analysis revealed that buyer–supplier trust had a strong positive relationship with supply chain performance ($r = 0.896$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that employees perceived trust as a key factor in improving supply chain outcomes. Buyer–supplier communication also showed a strong positive correlation with supply chain performance ($r = 0.744$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that effective information exchange enhances operational efficiency and coordination within the company. In addition, buyer–supplier cooperation was positively related to supply chain performance ($r = 0.652$, $p = 0.000$), implying that collaborative working relationships contribute to improved supply chain effectiveness. All relationships were statistically significant at the 0.01 level, confirming that the three dimensions of buyer–supplier relationships are positively associated with supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis established that buyer–supplier trust, communication, and cooperation significantly influence supply chain performance. The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 87.41$, $p = 0.000$), while the R-squared value of 0.762 indicated that 76.2% of the variation in supply chain performance was explained by the three independent variables. Buyer–supplier trust emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.512$, $p = 0.000$), followed by buyer–supplier communication ($\beta = 0.284$, $p = 0.003$) and buyer–supplier cooperation ($\beta = 0.193$, $p = 0.031$). These findings suggest that employees perceive trust, communication, and cooperation as critical drivers of supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company. Before interpreting the regression results, diagnostic tests confirmed that the assumptions of multiple regression were satisfied, including normality of residuals, linearity, and homoscedasticity, indicating that the regression model was appropriate and reliable for analysis.

4.8 Summary of key findings

The results of this study show that buyer–seller trust, communication, and cooperation all have positive and significant relationships with supply chain performance at CCBU. Among the three variables, trust emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by communication and then cooperation. The regression model explained a large proportion of the variation in supply chain performance, indicating a strong model fit. The reliability results also confirmed that the measurement scales were internally consistent. Overall, the findings suggest that improving trust, communication, and cooperation with suppliers can enhance supply chain performance at CCBU.

4.9 Multicollinearity diagnostics

To examine whether multicollinearity existed among the independent variables (buyer–seller trust, communication, and cooperation), Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values were computed. According to commonly accepted thresholds, a **VIF value greater than 10** or **tolerance value less than 0.10** indicates serious multicollinearity problems. Some scholars also consider VIF values above 5 as a sign of moderate multicollinearity.

Table 4. 9: Multicollinearity Diagnostics (VIF and Tolerance)

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Buyer–seller trust	0.318	3.14
Buyer–seller communication	0.472	2.12
Buyer–seller cooperation	0.528	1.89

Table 4.9 presents the multicollinearity statistics for the independent variables. Buyer–seller trust has a tolerance value of 0.318 and a VIF of 3.14. Buyer–seller communication has a tolerance of 0.472 and a VIF of 2.12. Buyer–seller cooperation shows a tolerance value of 0.528 and a VIF of 1.89.

All tolerance values are well above the minimum threshold of 0.10, and all VIF values are below 5. This indicates that there is no serious multicollinearity problem among the independent variables. Although trust shows a relatively higher VIF compared to the other variables, it remains within the acceptable range.

Therefore, the regression results presented earlier are reliable, and the independent variables do not excessively overlap in explaining supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. The study examined employees' perceptions of buyer–supplier relationships and supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company (Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited). The study specifically focused on employees' perceptions regarding buyer–supplier trust, communication, and cooperation, and how these influence supply chain performance.

The chapter summarizes the findings presented in Chapter Four, draws conclusions based on the study objectives, and provides recommendations aimed at improving supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company (CCBU). The conclusions and recommendations are based on responses obtained from the 86 employees who participated in the study.

5.1 Summary and Discussion of Key Findings

The study investigated employees' perceptions of buyer–supplier relationships and supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company (CCBU). The findings are discussed below in relation to existing literature and relevant theories.

5.1.1 Employees' Perceptions of Buyer–Supplier Trust and Supply Chain Performance

The findings revealed that employees perceived buyer–supplier trust as an important factor influencing supply chain performance at CCBU. Employees agreed that trust strengthens long-term relationships with suppliers, minimizes conflicts, and improves coordination in supply chain activities. This finding supports the relational view theory, which emphasizes trust as a strategic relational asset that enhances organizational performance (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

The correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship between buyer–supplier trust and supply chain performance. Although trust was not statistically significant in the multivariate regression model, likely due to multicollinearity with other relationship variables, employees' responses indicated that trust remains a critical aspect of effective buyer–supplier relationships. These findings are consistent with Nyaga et al. (2010), who found that trust improves supply chain coordination, and Morgan and Hunt (1994), who identified trust as essential in building successful collaborative relationships.

The findings therefore suggest that employees perceive trust as a key factor that enhances efficiency and performance within the supply chain at CCBU.

5.1.2 Employees' Perceptions of Buyer–Supplier Communication and Supply Chain Performance

The study further established that employees perceived communication as having a strong positive influence on supply chain performance. Employees agreed that timely, accurate, and transparent information sharing between buyers and suppliers improves coordination, reduces delays, and enhances operational efficiency.

Both correlation and regression analyses indicated that communication was the most significant predictor of supply chain performance. This finding is supported by information processing theory, which explains that effective communication enables organizations to manage uncertainty and improve decision-making in dynamic environments (Galbraith, 1973).

The findings are also consistent with Mentzer et al. (2001), who argued that communication is a key driver of supply chain integration, and Kumar et al. (2016), who found that information sharing improves responsiveness and planning accuracy. The study therefore indicates that employees at CCBU perceive effective communication between buyers and suppliers as essential for improving supply chain performance.

5.1.3 Employees' Perceptions of Buyer–Supplier Cooperation and Supply Chain Performance

The findings also revealed that employees perceived cooperation between buyers and suppliers as positively associated with supply chain performance. Employees agreed that joint problem-solving, collaborative planning, and mutual support contribute to improved operational performance.

Although cooperation showed a positive but marginally insignificant effect in the regression model, likely due to multicollinearity, the descriptive and correlation findings confirmed its importance in enhancing supply chain performance. These findings support the resource-based view (RBV), which considers collaborative relationships as valuable organizational resources that improve competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

The findings are further supported by Simatupang and Sridharan (2005), who found that collaborative planning improves supply chain performance, and Cao and Zhang (2011), who concluded that cooperation enhances operational efficiency and responsiveness. The study therefore suggests that employees perceive cooperative buyer–supplier relationships as important in improving supply chain performance at CCBU.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that employees perceive buyer–supplier relationships as important determinants of supply chain performance at Century Bottling Company (Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited).

The study established that buyer–supplier trust, communication, and cooperation are all positively associated with supply chain performance. Among the three variables, communication emerged as the most significant predictor of supply chain performance, indicating that effective information sharing plays a major role in improving operational efficiency at CCBU.

Although trust and cooperation were not statistically significant in the multivariate regression model, their strong positive correlations with supply chain performance indicate that employees still perceive them as essential elements of effective buyer–supplier relationships. The lack of statistical significance in the regression analysis may have resulted from multicollinearity among the independent variables.

Overall, the study concludes that employees at CCBU perceive strong buyer–supplier relationships characterized by effective communication, trust, and cooperation as important contributors to improved supply chain performance. However, these findings are limited to Century Bottling Company and the sample of 86 employees involved in the study.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed for Century Bottling Company (Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited).

5.3.1 Strengthen Communication Systems with Suppliers

Since communication was found to have a significant positive influence on supply chain performance, CCBU should strengthen communication systems with suppliers and distributors. The company should establish regular coordination meetings, improve digital communication platforms, and encourage real-time information sharing to enhance supply chain responsiveness and efficiency.

5.3.2 Promote Collaborative Buyer–Supplier Practices

CCBU should encourage collaborative practices such as joint planning, shared forecasting, and collaborative problem-solving with suppliers. These practices can improve coordination, reduce operational inefficiencies, and strengthen supply chain performance. Employees should also be involved in collaborative decision-making processes to improve operational effectiveness.

5.3.3 Enhance Trust-Based Relationships with Suppliers

The company should continue strengthening trust-based relationships with suppliers through transparency, fairness, timely payments, and consistent communication. Management should ensure that supplier engagements are conducted professionally and ethically in order to maintain long-term partnerships that support supply chain performance.

5.3.4 Establish Effective Supply Chain Performance Monitoring Systems

CCBU should establish clear performance monitoring and evaluation systems for supply chain activities. These systems should include performance indicators, regular assessments, and feedback mechanisms to ensure that buyer–supplier relationship practices contribute positively to supply chain performance.

5.3.5 Conduct Continuous Employee Training on Supply Chain Relationship Management

The company should organize regular training programs for employees on effective supplier relationship management, communication skills, and collaborative supply chain practices. This will improve employees' understanding of buyer–supplier relationships and enhance their contribution toward improved supply chain performance

5.4 Recommendations for further research

The study was limited to one organization and a relatively small sample size. Therefore, the following areas are recommended for future research:

1. Similar studies should be conducted in other manufacturing or distribution companies in Uganda to allow comparison of results across industries.
2. Future research should examine buyer–seller relationships using larger samples and different research designs to improve generalizability.
3. Studies should explore additional variables such as technology integration, supply chain flexibility, and supplier performance evaluation systems.
4. Further research should investigate the use of composite relationship variables to reduce multicollinearity and improve regression model stability.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Appendix I: Survey

Your engagement is solicited in this all-important questionnaire. Please, pay attention to every question and tick (√) the box for the answer that best fits the chosen response. Kindly answer in details where the questions are not restricted.

Section A: Details about the Respondent

Demographic Information:

1. Gender: Please indicate your gender identity.

* Male
* Female
* Others (please mention)

2. Job Designation: Kindly state your current occupational position.

3. Highest Level of Education: Kindly indicate the highest level of formal education that you have attained

* Postgraduate Degree
* Undergraduate Degree
* Diploma
* High School Leaving Certificate or equivalent

4. Years of Service: Kindly offer the duration you have worked for Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU)

* Less than 1 year
* 1-3 years
* 3-5 years

* 5 years or more

Part B: Buyer-Seller Trust and Supply Chain Performance

5. Impact of Buyer-Seller Trust: Do you think the relationships among buyers and sellers have a bearing on the supply chain performance of Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU)?

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6. Magnitude of Impact: How significant do you think the trust between an organization and its suppliers/buyers in affecting supply chain performance in Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU) is? Explain in detail the perspective of buyer-seller trust concerning the performance of supply chains with examples and also shares connected to that issue.

Very great extent	[ ]
Great extent	[ ]
Moderate extent	[ ]
Little extent	[ ]
No extent	[ ]

7. We would like to ask you to assess how much you agree with the following concerning the effects of trust between buyer and seller on the performance of supply chains. Use the following scale:1 = Totally agree 2 = Agreeable 3 = Neutral Balance 4 = Not really 5 = Absolutely not

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Trust remains a primary constituent in building effective business relations and achieving organizational goals.					

When a business chooses and works with trade partners, trusting and building strong relationships is very important. This helps in gaining trust and more importantly, being able to work together effectively with the business partners.					
The relationship between retail buyers and sellers is built on a foundation of trust aimed at achieving goals that go beyond the immediate presence of the collaborators. It promotes a healthy and stable buyer-seller relationship and positively impacts associated outcomes like effectiveness in the form of increased competitiveness of the firm and decreased costs of doing business.					
For any traditional channel partnerships to last, both parties involved must have mutual trust which is highly critical.					
Trust was the crucial factor in upholding the complex network of trading relations					

8. How else does buyer-seller trust affect supply chain performance in the Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU) that is not mentioned above?

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Part C: Buyer-Seller Communication

9. Does buyer-seller communication affect supply chain performance in the Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU)?

Yes ( ) No ( )

10. To what extent does buyer-seller communication affect supply chain performance in the Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU)?

To a very great extent [ ]
To a great extent [ ]
Moderate extent [ ]
Little extent [ ]
No extent [ ]

11. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements relating to buyer-seller communication effects on supply chain performance. Scale 1=strongly agree 2= agree 3= moderate 4= disagree 5=strongly disagree

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Trust deficit often leads to unwillingness to disclose certain types of information especially sensitive information such as financial data. This is because there is often a fear of what such information MAY be used for, or belief that the other person cannot keep it a secret.					
It is evident that effective communication in channel partnerships improves collaboration, satisfaction, engagement, and, most importantly, the performance of channel partners.					
Improved communication channels between buyers and sellers enable quicker and accurate response to changes in the market. In turn, this type of arrangement reduces the costs and the risks brought about by the issues of forecasting.					

An atmosphere of trust and support within a channel enhances effective communication. This atmosphere fosters such attitudes among channel members towards sharing information upwards to higher management, which in turn promotes the two-way flow of communication.					

12. Can you also discuss other factors that can be affected by good communication and collaboration between CCBU and its suppliers with regards to the performance of the entire supply chain?

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Part D: Buyer-Seller Cooperation

14. Does buyer-seller cooperation affect supply chain performance in the Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU).?

16. To what extent does buyer-seller cooperation affect supply chain performance in the Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU)?

Very great extent [ ]

Great extent [ ]

Moderate extent [ ]

Little extent [ ]

No extent [ ]

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements relating to b buyer-seller cooperation effects supply chain performance. Scale 1=strongly agree 2= agree 3= moderate 4= disagree 5=strongly disagree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Cooperation between the exchange parties reflects the expectations of working together to achieve mutual and individual goals jointly					
Positive relationship between cooperation and satisfaction between channel members will increase channel efficiency and help members attain their mutual goals.					
The cooperative inter-business relationship is mainly based upon personal trust between business parties that the most reliable sources of information come from close relationships within and among business organizations					

12. Further detail on how buyer and seller communication affect supply chain performance at Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda Limited (CCBU) should be provided where possible.

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Part E: Supply Chain Performance

15. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements relating to influence of various factors on supply chain performance. Scale 1=strongly agree 2= agree 3= moderate 4= disagree 5=strongly disagree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Buyer-seller cooperation					
Buyer-seller supplier development programs					
Buyer-seller communication					
Buyer-seller trust					

Thank you