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Supplier Relationship Management and Procurement Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Manufacturing firms face procurement challenges associated with weak supplier collaboration, inadequate trust, and prolonged delivery lead times, which may disrupt production and increase operating costs. This study examined the effect of supplier relationship management on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, focusing on supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, and supplier lead-time reduction. A correlational survey design was adopted, and structured questionnaires were administered to relevant personnel in selected manufacturing firms. Of the 88 questionnaires distributed, 74 were returned, representing a response rate of 84.09%. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression with SPSS version 23. The results revealed that supplier collaboration was positively and significantly associated with procurement performance ($\beta = 0.564$, $t = 17.113$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .456$). Trust-based relationships also showed a positive and significant association ($\beta = 0.849$, $t = 25.662$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .654$), while supplier lead-time reduction had a positive and significant association with procurement performance ($\beta = 0.644$, $t = 19.504$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .522$). The findings highlight the importance of collaborative procurement planning, trustworthy supplier relationships, and effective delivery-time management. The study recommends strengthening supplier collaboration, promoting transparency and mutual trust, and systematically monitoring delivery lead times. However, because the analyses involved separate simple regression models and a geographically limited sample, the findings indicate associations rather than definitive causal effects and may not be generalisable to all manufacturing firms.

Keywords: *Supplier relationship management, supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, supplier lead-time reduction, procurement performance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Procurement is a strategic function in manufacturing because the availability, quality, cost, and timing of production inputs influence operational continuity and the ability of firms to meet customer requirements. Procurement performance therefore extends beyond

purchasing goods at an acceptable price. It also concerns the reliability of supply, the efficiency of procurement processes, the timely availability of materials, and the contribution of purchasing decisions to organisational objectives (Nyamah et al., 2023; Monczka et al., 2020).

Supplier relationship management (SRM) is the deliberate development and management of interactions between buying organisations and suppliers to improve cooperation, reduce uncertainty, and create mutual value. It shifts attention from isolated transactions towards relationships that support coordination, reliability, and longer-term performance. Effective supplier relationships may help manufacturing firms coordinate demand, resolve supply problems, align delivery schedules, and maintain access to the inputs required for production (Dza et al., 2024).

These issues are important in operating environments where transport limitations, infrastructure gaps, supply uncertainty, and cost pressures may complicate the movement of materials Akpan & Uford, 2024). Manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State depend on suppliers for raw materials and other inputs, and disruptions in supplier coordination can lead to idle production capacity, increased costs, and delayed fulfilment of orders. The dissertation underpinning this article identifies supplier relationships as a relevant management issue for firms operating in the state and reports that strategic alliances and communication are associated with effective firm performance.

Although supplier relationship management comprises several dimensions, including; supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, lead-time reduction, information sharing, and supplier quality performance, but for the purpose of creating a more concise and focused article, this paper focused only on the first three dimensions. These were selected because they represent complementary relational and operational mechanisms: collaboration concerns coordinated work between buyer and supplier; trust concerns confidence in the reliability and integrity of the relationship; and lead-time reduction concerns the speed and predictability of delivery.

The article examines these three dimensions in relation to procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. It contributes context-specific evidence from six firms included in the underlying survey and translates the findings into practical implications for procurement managers. The article does not claim that the three selected dimensions exhaust the concept of supplier relationship management; information sharing and supplier quality performance remain important but are outside the narrowed analytical scope of this paper.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Procurement performance is critical to manufacturing firms because it influences production continuity, cost efficiency, and timely delivery. However, weaknesses in supplier relationship management can result in delivery delays, poor coordination, increased procurement costs, and production disruptions (Monczka et al., 2020). Three important dimensions requiring attention are supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, and supplier lead-time reduction.

Weak supplier collaboration may limit joint planning and problem-solving, while inadequate trust can undermine commitment, transparency, and cooperation between manufacturing firms

and their suppliers. Similarly, prolonged supplier lead times may delay the availability of raw materials, disrupt production schedules, and increase operational costs. These challenges can adversely affect procurement performance, particularly where firms depend on reliable and timely supplies to sustain production (Monczka et al., 2020).

Among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State, effective management of these supplier relationship dimensions is important for achieving efficient procurement outcomes. However, the extent to which supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, and supplier lead-time reduction relate to procurement performance requires empirical investigation. Therefore, this study examines the influence of these three dimensions of supplier relationship management on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, to provide evidence that can guide improvements in procurement practices.

1.3 Objective of the study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of supplier relationship management on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

i. Examine the effect of supplier collaboration on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom state.
ii. Examine the effect of trust-based relationship on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom state.
iii. Examine the effect of lead time reduction on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom state.

1.4 Research hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses were formulated;

Ho_1: There is no significant effect of supplier collaboration on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom state.

Ho_2: There is no significant effect of trust-based Relationship on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom state.

Ho_3: There is no significant effect of supplier lead time reduction on procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom state.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL REVIEW

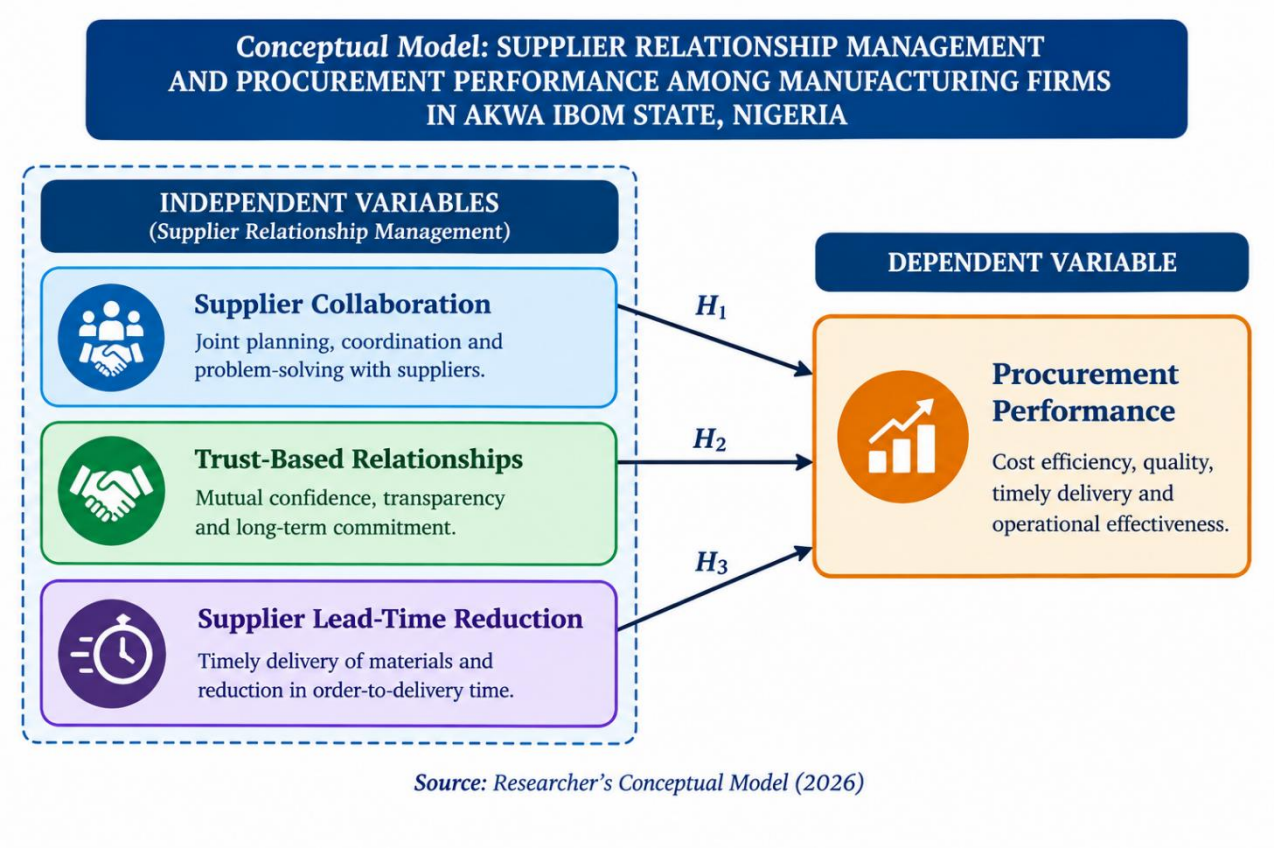
2.1 Conceptual model

The conceptual model illustrates the relationship between supplier relationship management and procurement performance. It shows how the independent variables (supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships and lead time reduction) individually influence procurement performance.

Supplier collaboration enhances coordination and joint decision-making between firms and suppliers, which improves efficiency and reduces procurement challenges. Trust-based relationships promote reliability and commitment, thereby improving consistency in supply. Lead time reduction ensures timely delivery of materials, which supports uninterrupted production processes, and improving overall procurement outcomes.

These variables collectively contribute to improved procurement performance, which is reflected in better quality of inputs, improved reliability of supply, reduced delays, enhanced communication, and increased efficiency in procurement operations.

Diagrammatically, the conceptual model for the study is represented below:



Source: Researcher's Conceptual Model (2026)

2.1.2 Dimensions of supplier relationship management

Supplier relationship management consists of several key dimensions that influence procurement performance in manufacturing firms. These dimensions include supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships and lead time reduction. Each of these variables plays a significant role in improving procurement outcomes (Monczka et al., 2020).

1 Supplier collaboration

Supplier collaboration describes the extent to which a buying organisation and its suppliers jointly plan, coordinate activities, solve problems, and work towards shared operational objectives. Collaboration can include joint forecasting, coordinated inventory decisions, agreed delivery schedules, performance reviews, and early discussion of potential supply disruptions. It enables both parties to align their expectations and make procurement decisions with a clearer understanding of production needs and supplier capabilities.

Collaborative relationships can reduce uncertainty by helping suppliers understand demand requirements and enabling buyers to understand capacity constraints. Joint problem-solving may also shorten the time needed to resolve shortages or delivery problems. Cao and Zhang (2011) discuss collaboration as a source of collaborative advantage, while Prajogo and Olhager (2012) link logistics integration and information-related integration with supply-chain performance. The implication is that procurement is more likely to be effective when the supplier is treated as a partner in planning and execution rather than only as a source of goods.

2 Trust-based relationships

Trust-based relationships reflect the belief that a supplier is reliable, honest, competent, and likely to honour agreed obligations. Trust can encourage the parties to maintain longer-term relationships, communicate openly, and respond constructively when unexpected problems arise. In procurement, trust may reduce the perceived risk of opportunistic behaviour and the need for excessive monitoring, although it should complement rather than replace clear contracts, controls, and supplier evaluation. Morgan and Hunt (1994) identify trust and relationship commitment as central constructs in successful relationship marketing. Doney and Cannon (1997) also examine trust in buyer–seller relationships. Evidence from Akwa Ibom State similarly links salespersons' communication skills and trustworthiness to customer satisfaction in banking relationships**.**

Applied to manufacturing procurement, these perspectives suggest that trust can support dependable supply, more effective negotiation, and continuity in business relationships. Trust is not simply interpersonal goodwill; it is strengthened by consistent delivery, fair dealing, fulfilment of commitments, transparent communication, and prompt resolution of disputes.

3 Supplier lead-time reduction

Supplier lead time is the interval between initiating an order and receiving the required goods. Lead-time reduction involves shortening this interval or making it more predictable. Long or uncertain lead times can force manufacturers to hold additional inventory, revise production schedules, or suspend operations when materials do not arrive as expected. More predictable delivery supports production planning, inventory control, and responsiveness to changes in demand.

Christopher (2016) highlights the importance of supply-chain responsiveness and coordination, while Heizer et al. (2020) discuss the operational significance of process and inventory management. Lead-time reduction may be supported by realistic order schedules, clear delivery expectations, reliable transport arrangements, streamlined approvals, supplier capacity planning, and early escalation of potential delays. Reducing lead time does not mean sacrificing quality or safety; the objective is to eliminate avoidable delays while maintaining the required standards.

2.1.3 Procurement performance

Procurement performance concerns how effectively and efficiently procurement activities support organisational objectives. In the underlying study, it is discussed through outcomes including improved production quality, operational efficiency, continuous availability of products or inputs, and timely decision-making. Procurement performance can also be considered in terms of cost, delivery reliability, quality compliance, and procurement cycle time (Nyamah et al., 2023; Charles & Uford, 2023).

2.2 Theoretical underpinning

The paper is primarily informed by Commitment–Trust Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The theory proposes that trust and commitment support successful long-term relationships. It provides a direct explanation for why firms may benefit from reliable and mutually committed supplier relationships. Trust can facilitate collaboration, while sustained collaboration can reinforce trust through repeated fulfilment of obligations.

Transaction Cost Theory (Williamson, 1985) offers a complementary explanation. It proposes that firms select governance arrangements partly to manage the costs and risks associated with economic exchange. Dependable supplier relationships may reduce repeated negotiation, monitoring, and disruption costs. The Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) also suggests that relational capabilities can become valuable organisational resources when they improve coordination and are difficult for competitors to reproduce. Together, these perspectives support the expectation that supplier collaboration, trust, and lead-time management are relevant to procurement performance.

2.3 Review of empirical studies

Tegbee et al. (2025) conducted a study in Nigeria to evaluate the effect of supplier relationship management strategies on procurement performance. The study adopted a survey research design with a sample size of 439 respondents, of which 416 valid responses were analyzed. A simple random sampling technique was employed, and data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, lead time reduction, and supplier quality significantly influence procurement performance. The study concluded that effective supplier relationship management strategies enhance procurement performance.

Lee (2025) examined the effect of supplier rapport on buyer stability, trust, and transaction continuity in South Korea. The study adopted a quantitative survey design involving 230 respondents across industries. Although the sampling technique was not specified, data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The findings showed that rapport building enhances psychological stability and emotional trust, which significantly influence continuous transaction intention. The study concluded that interpersonal relationships play a vital role in sustaining supply chain performance.

Tukia (2025) assessed the role of collaboration in enhancing transparency and sustainability in supply chains in Finland. The study adopted a qualitative multiple case study design involving three companies and six respondents selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using content analysis. The findings showed that collaboration improves communication, trust, and knowledge sharing. The study concluded that collaboration enhances supply chain effectiveness.

Nguyen et al. (2025) conducted a study in Vietnam to examine the impact of trust on opportunism in buyer–supplier relationships. The study adopted a cross-sectional design with a sample size of 220 respondents. The sampling technique was not specified, and data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling. The findings revealed that

trust influences opportunism differently depending on conditions such as psychological safety. The study concluded that trust dynamics significantly influence procurement relationships.

Kanyepe et al. (2023) carried out a study in Zimbabwe to examine the effect of lead-time management and information sharing on firm performance in the motor industry. The study adopted a quantitative research design with a sample size of 105 respondents selected using random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The findings revealed that lead-time reduction significantly improves firm performance, while information sharing moderates this relationship. The study concluded that effective lead-time management enhances operational performance.

3.0 RESEARCH MODEL AND METHODOLOGY

The research model treats procurement performance as the dependent variable and the following three supplier relationship management dimensions as the explanatory variables: supplier collaboration, trust-based relationship, and supplier lead-time reduction. The three dimensions are analysed separately, consistent with the simple linear regression approach reported in the dissertation.

The conceptual expectation is that collaboration improves coordination and joint problem-solving; trust strengthens reliability and the fulfilment of commitments; and lead-time reduction supports timely availability of materials and continuity of production. These mechanisms are expected to be positively associated with procurement performance.

3.1. METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 Research design and setting

The underlying study adopted a correlational survey design to examine supplier relationship management and procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The design was suitable for examining relationships between respondents' assessments of supplier practices and procurement outcomes at a particular point in time. The article retains the original study setting and survey evidence while narrowing the analytical focus to three explanatory dimensions.

3.2 Population, sample and respondents

The dissertation reports that questionnaires were distributed to personnel working in procurement/purchasing, supply-chain/logistics, production, and administrative units in selected manufacturing firms. The firms named in the study were Champion Breweries Plc, Uyo; Life Resources Nigeria Limited, Uyo; Kings Flour Mill, Onna; Eddytex Group of Companies, Eket; Semek Group of Company, Essien Udim; and Ubengama Enterprises Ltd, Ikot Ekpene. A total of 88 questionnaires were distributed and 74 were returned, giving a response rate of 84.09%. The article reports this response rate as stated in the source document; it does not infer a larger sample or additional participating firms.

3.3 Instrument and data collection

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included items relating to supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, lead-time reduction, and

procurement performance, alongside other dimensions included in the broader dissertation. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with statements about supplier practices and procurement outcomes. The article relies on the survey data and reported analysis contained in the dissertation and does not introduce new respondents or new measurements.

3.4 Method of data analysis

The study used descriptive statistics and simple linear regression analysis, with analysis conducted in SPSS version 23. The three hypotheses were assessed using the corresponding regression outputs. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% level. The regression coefficient indicates the direction and magnitude of the association in the fitted model, while R^2 indicates the proportion of variation in the procurement-performance measure accounted for by that predictor in its separate model. Reported p-values of .000 in the source tables are presented as $p < .001$, because a statistical probability should not be interpreted as exactly zero.

3.5 Ethical and interpretive considerations

The supplied dissertation does not provide enough information to independently verify formal ethics approval, consent procedures, or instrument validation statistics. These details should be added by the author if documented and required by the target journal. The findings are based on self-reported questionnaire responses and a geographically limited sample; therefore, common-method bias, response bias, and limits to generalisation should be considered when interpreting the results.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Questionnaire response

Of the 88 questionnaires distributed across the six manufacturing firms, 74 were returned. The resulting response rate was 84.09%. This provides a substantial proportion of returned questionnaires for the survey, although the representativeness of the respondents cannot be fully assessed from the response rate alone.

4.2 Regression results

The original dissertation reported separate simple linear regression models for each of the five dimensions of supplier relationship management. This article retains only the results for supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, and supplier lead-time reduction.

HYPOTHESIS 1

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.675[a]	.456	.455	1.73818

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier collaboration (SC)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	884.842	1	884.842	292.869	.000[b]
	Residual	1054.428	72	3.021		
	Total	1939.271	73			

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier collaboration

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.937	.390		12.667	.000
	SC	.564	.033	.675	17.113	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

Table 1. Summary of regression results

Predictor: Supplier collaboration
Unstandardised coefficient (B): 0.564
Standard error: 0.033
t-value: 17.113
R^2: 0.456
Adjusted R^2: 0.455
F-statistic: 292.869
Model significance: $p < .001$
Durbin–Watson: 2.011

HYPOTHESIS 2

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.808[a]	.654	.653	1.38736

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust based -relationship (TB)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1267.527	1	1267.527	658.536	.000[b]
	Residual	671.743	72	1.925		
	Total	1939.271	73			

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Trust based relationship

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.547	.392		3.950	.000
	TB	.849	.033	.808	25.662	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement performance

Table 2. Summary of regression results

Predictor: Trust-based relationship
Unstandardised coefficient (B): 0.849
Standard error: 0.033
t-value: 25.662
R^2: 0.654
Adjusted R^2: 0.653
F-statistic: 658.536
Model significance: $p < .001$
Durbin–Watson: 1.939

HYPOTHESIS 3

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.722[a]	.522	.520	1.63054

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lead time(LT)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1011.396	1	1011.396	380.415	.000[b]
	Residual	927.875	72	2.659		
	Total	1939.271	73			

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Lead time

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.065	.387		10.508	.000
	LT	.644	.033	.722	19.504	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement performance

Table 3. Summary of regression results

Predictor: Supplier lead-time reduction
Unstandardised coefficient (B): 0.644
Standard error: 0.033
t-value: 19.504
R^2: 0.522
Adjusted R^2: 0.520
F-statistic: 380.415
Model significance: $p < .001$
Durbin–Watson: 1.859

Source: Field Survey, 2026, as reported in the supplied dissertation; SPSS version 23.

All three estimated coefficients were positive and statistically significant at the 5% level. The results support rejection of the three null hypotheses in the separate regression tests. The trust-based relationship model reported the highest R^2 (.654), followed by lead-time reduction (.522) and supplier collaboration (.456). These figures describe each predictor's separate model and should not be treated as evidence that trust is necessarily the strongest causal determinant, because the three predictors were not entered simultaneously into a multivariable model.

The Durbin–Watson statistics reported in the dissertation ranged from 1.859 to 2.011. These values do not, by themselves, establish that all regression assumptions were satisfied. The original document does not provide enough diagnostic detail to independently evaluate linearity, residual normality, homoscedasticity, or multicollinearity. Since the models were estimated separately, multicollinearity between the three predictors is not assessed by these outputs.

4.3 Discussion

1 Supplier collaboration and procurement performance

Supplier collaboration was positively associated with procurement performance (B = 0.564, SE = 0.033, t = 17.113, $p < .001$). The model R^2 of .456 indicates that supplier collaboration accounted for 45.6% of the variation in the procurement-performance measure in this separate model. The result is consistent with the view that joint planning, coordination, and problem-solving can improve procurement processes.

Collaboration can help manufacturing firms and suppliers align order quantities, production requirements, and delivery schedules. It may also allow both parties to identify risks early and respond before supply problems interrupt production. This interpretation aligns with the conceptual arguments of Cao and Zhang (2011) and Prajogo and Olhager (2012), who emphasise the contribution of collaborative relationships and integration to supply-chain outcomes. The present finding offers context-specific support for making collaboration a deliberate procurement practice among the firms studied.The result should nevertheless be read within the limits of the research design. A positive regression coefficient does not prove that collaboration alone caused better procurement performance. Better-performing firms may also have greater resources to maintain collaborative relationships, and both measures may be influenced by other organisational factors that were not controlled for in the separate model.

2 Trust-based relationship and procurement performance

Trust-based relationships produced a positive and statistically significant coefficient (B = 0.849, SE = 0.033, t = 25.662, $p < .001$), with $R^2 = .654$. In the separate model, the predictor accounted for 65.4% of the variation in procurement performance. This is the largest R^2 among the three retained models, but it should not be interpreted as a controlled comparison of independent predictive strength.

The finding is compatible with Commitment–Trust Theory, which places trust at the centre of effective long-term relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Where suppliers consistently honour commitments and buyers act fairly, both parties may be more willing to maintain stable relationships, solve problems cooperatively, and make procurement arrangements with greater confidence. Trust may also reduce friction associated with repeated verification and dispute resolution. However, trust should not replace procurement controls, transparent supplier selection, quality checks, or enforceable agreements. In practice, trust is best supported by clear expectations and consistent evidence of performance.

3 Supplier lead-time reduction and procurement performance

Supplier lead-time reduction was also positively associated with procurement performance ($B = 0.644$, $SE = 0.033$, $t = 19.504$, $p < .001$). The R^2 of .522 indicates that the predictor accounted for 52.2% of variation in the procurement-performance measure in its separate model. This result supports the operational importance of timely and predictable delivery.

Manufacturing operations depend on the availability of raw materials and components when required. Shorter and more predictable lead times can help procurement officers coordinate orders with production schedules, reduce emergency purchasing, and avoid unnecessary inventory accumulation. This is particularly relevant where logistical uncertainty and transport delays can make delivery performance difficult to manage. The result is consistent with supply-chain literature emphasising responsiveness, process efficiency, and the coordination of material flows (Christopher, 2016; Heizer et al., 2020).

Lead-time reduction, however, should not be pursued only as a speed target. Unrealistic delivery deadlines may increase costs or compromise quality. Firms should instead identify avoidable delays, agree realistic lead-time targets with suppliers, monitor actual performance, and establish early-warning procedures when delays become likely.

4.4 Implications for Management

The results suggest several practical actions for manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State.

First, firms should institutionalise supplier collaboration. Procurement planning should include periodic meetings with critical suppliers to review demand forecasts, production schedules, order status, stock availability, and foreseeable supply constraints. For strategic inputs, buyers and suppliers can agree on shared performance indicators, escalation channels, and responsibilities for resolving delivery problems. Collaboration should be documented so that commitments and follow-up actions are clear.

Second, firms should build trust through verifiable, ethical conduct. Buyers should communicate requirements accurately, honour agreed payment terms where feasible, provide timely notice of changes, and treat suppliers consistently. Suppliers should be assessed on their reliability and willingness to honour commitments, not only on quoted prices. Transparent

dispute-resolution procedures can prevent small disagreements from undermining long-term relationships. Trust-building should operate alongside due diligence, contracts, and periodic performance reviews.

Third, firms should manage lead time as a measurable operational indicator. Procurement units can record order dates, promised delivery dates, actual delivery dates, and the reasons for delays. These records can be used to calculate typical lead times, identify recurrent bottlenecks, and distinguish supplier-related delays from internal approval or transport problems. Firms should share forecasts with suppliers early, establish reorder points for critical inputs, and agree on contingency plans for materials with long or variable delivery times.

Fourth, managers should avoid relying on a single relationship practice. Collaboration, trust, and lead-time management can reinforce one another, but each requires specific management processes. Collaborative meetings will have limited value if commitments are not honoured; trust may be weakened by repeated delays; and shorter lead times may not be sustainable without planning and capacity coordination. A balanced supplier-management approach should therefore integrate relational practices with measurable operational controls.

Finally, firms should use performance evidence to guide supplier development and sourcing decisions. A supplier scorecard may track delivery reliability, responsiveness to urgent requests, fulfilment of agreed terms, and contribution to resolving procurement problems. The results should inform constructive feedback and improvement plans, rather than being used only to penalise suppliers after failures occur.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This article examined the relationship between three dimensions of supplier relationship management—supplier collaboration, trust-based relationships, and supplier lead-time reduction—and procurement performance among manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Using the survey and regression results reported in the underlying dissertation, all three dimensions showed positive and statistically significant associations with procurement performance. Supplier collaboration had $B = 0.564$ and $R^2 = .456$; trust-based relationship had $B = 0.849$ and $R^2 = .654$; and supplier lead-time reduction had $B = 0.644$ and $R^2 = .522$. Each model was statistically significant at $p < .001$.

The findings reinforce the importance of treating supplier relationships as a strategic part of procurement management. Joint planning and problem-solving can improve coordination; trust can support reliable and mutually beneficial exchange; and effective lead-time management can help ensure the timely availability of materials. Because the study was correlational, based on self-reported data, and limited to selected firms in one Nigerian state, the results should not be generalised uncritically to all manufacturing organisations.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the objectives and findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Manufacturing firms should strengthen collaborative partnerships with their suppliers by involving them in procurement planning, product development, forecasting, and inventory management. Regular joint meetings, collaborative decision-making, and long-term partnership agreements should be encouraged to improve procurement efficiency.
2. The management should promote transparency, honesty, fairness, and mutual commitment in their dealings with suppliers. Organizations should honor contractual obligations, ensure prompt payment of suppliers, and maintain ethical procurement practices to build long-term trust and loyalty.
3. Manufacturing firms should adopt efficient procurement planning systems, electronic procurement platforms, and integrated supply chain technologies that facilitate faster order processing and delivery. Firms should also work closely with suppliers to eliminate unnecessary delays throughout the procurement cycle.

5.3 Limitations and future research

The study used 74 returned questionnaires from selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. Responses may reflect individual perceptions, and the cross-sectional design does not establish temporal order or causality. The article retains only three of the five dimensions examined in the dissertation; information sharing and supplier quality performance were excluded to create a focused paper, not because they are unimportant. Future studies could test all five dimensions in a single multivariable model, use larger samples across multiple states, combine survey responses with objective procurement records, and examine whether firm size, industry type, digital procurement capability, or supply-chain resilience changes the observed relationships.

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