

EFFECT OF SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT ON SUPPLIER PERFORMANCE: A SURVEY OF FOOD MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN KISUMU COUNTY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of supplier development on supplier performance in food manufacturing companies. The study focused on the specific objectives of analyzing four methods of supplier development, which are: early supplier involvement, financial support, supplier training and supplier incentive in food manufacturing industries. Data was collected using secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources consisted of publications and literature related to procurement and procurement planning. Primary data was collected using questionnaires which were employed to collect quantitative data in an attempt to answer the research questions. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The data was analyzed and presented in form of tables and pie charts. the study concludes that early supplier involvement, financial support, supplier training and supplier incentives have a positive effect on supplier performance It therefore recommends the use of early supplier involvement and financial support in improving the delivery performance while supplier training and supplier incentives in reducing the lead time and reducing the costs respectively in food manufacturing industries.

Keywords: performance, early supplier involvement, financial support, supplier training, supplier incentives

INTRODUCTION

In the intense business competitive environment, companies are relying more on their supply chain as a source of competitive advantage. Purchasing and supply management has achieved a higher level of importance. There is a greater dependence on suppliers (Kannan and Tan, 2002). Suppliers have played strategic roles in organizations, and have significantly engaged in creating a competitive advantage and their actions have a positive impact on the organisation's performance (Jabbour and Jabbour, 2009). Many companies faced the problems of supplier's inability to improve themselves (Krause et al, 2000). A number of studies suggested strategies to improve supplier performance. Raising the rate of supplier performance expectations, worldwide sourcing strategy, early supplier design involvement, supplier performance improvements rewards and direct supplier development are suggested to improve supplier performance (Monczka et al,1993). Krause and Ellram (1997) defined supplier development as any effort of a buying firm with its supplier to increase the performance and/or capabilities of the supplier and meet the buying firm's supply needs. Supplier development strategies included creating competitive environments among suppliers, supplier assessment and feedback communication, supplier certification programs, promised current and future benefits, site visit and training program (Krause, 1997). The buying firm involved in supplier development programs in order to help the firm meet company's objectives (Krause and Ellram, 1997). Several studies supported the positive effect of supplier development strategies on buyer and supplier performance improvements (Monzcka et al, 1993; Humphreys et al, 2004; Wagner 2006a; Modi and Mabert, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

In order for firms to compete effectively and survive in the global market, they must maintain and build relationships with a capable and competent network of suppliers and extract maximum value from these relationships. To create and maintain such a network and to improve capabilities that are necessary for the buying organization to meet its increasing competitive challenges, the buying firm may engage in supplier development (Carr and Pearson(1999) Chidambaranathan et al. (2009); Trent and Monczka, (1999), Cox, (2001). According to Wagner (2006) and Krause et al. (2000), supplier development could be employed to manage problems buying firms may experience in their supply networks. Problems arising within the supply chain may include a current supplier performing below expectation; a non-competitive supplier base; current suppliers unable to support a firm's strategic growth; or capable suppliers not available in a certain market.

The foregoing findings have provided useful insights for understanding the nature of supplier development, but have not established a link between supplier development programs and performance outcomes. Furthermore, these studies have been replicated in Western countries but to our knowledge, limited research has examined the involvement of supplier development in Kenya. This indicates that there is limited literature available on effect of supplier development on supplier performance which has created a gap amongst procurement managers on how to improve supplier performance and thus procurement in food manufacturing companies. It is therefore against this background that this study was undertaken to investigate the effect of supplier development on supplier performance in food manufacturing companies with specific reference to Kisumu County.

General Research Objective

To assess the effect of supplier development on supplier performance.

Specific Research Objectives

1. To determine the effect of early supplier involvement on supplier performance of food manufacturing companies
2. To identify the effect of supplier incentives on supplier performance costs food manufacturing companies
3. To establish the effect of supplier financial support on supplier performance of food manufacturing companies
4. To assess the effect of supplier training on supplier performance of food manufacturing companies

LITERATURE REVIEW

Resource Based View Theory

RBV believes that a firm's resources and capabilities are its most important assets so the primary concern of RBV is about obtaining access to another firm's core competencies to gain competitive advantage.

According to Steinle and Schiele (2008), suppliers can be regarded as resources in case they are “sufficiently bound to a firm”. With these assumptions they clearly follow the extended resource based view, e.g. the relational view as mentioned in Dyer and Singh (1998), implying, resources can also be obtained through inter-firm connection from the external environment. They proceed by setting suppliers in context with the four resource attributes, mentioned in

Barney (1991), and required to achieve a competitive advantage. Following his logic, suppliers can be argued to contribute to a competitive advantage in case they offer valuable products, are rare in the sense of being not comparable to others, their products are not easy to substitute, and the relationship between buyer and supplier is difficult to imitate Steinle and Schiele, (2008). It is argued, that within an industry only few suppliers exist which offer valuable resources, being a preferred customer of them can have a contribution to a competitive advantage of the firm, which supports the focus of the resource based view Steinle and Schiele(2008). Therefore, the resource based contributes to the decision about the supplier portfolio by considering the relationship between buyer and supplier as the mean to achieve a competitive advantage. Suppliers are seen as valuable resources themselves or as the source to access them, and by becoming their preferred customer, firms do not only gain preferential treatment but also the ability to distance competitors which do not have the same status, that eventually can lead to a superior competitive position.

Supplier Development

Supplier development was defined as any effort of a buying firm on a supplier to increase the performance and capabilities of the supplier to meet the buying firm's short and /or long-term supply needs Krause and Ellram, (1997).

A number of studies have described strategies that buying firms should adopt in order to improve the rate of supplier performance Monczka et al, (1993); Vonderembse and Tracey, 1999; Carr et al, (2008); Krause, (1997). Previous researchers described activities that take place within the context of supplier development. These activities include introducing competition into the supply base, supplier evaluation as a prerequisite to further supplier development activities, raising performance expectations, recognition and awards, the promise of future benefits, training and education of the supplier's personnel, exchange of personnel between the buying firm and the supplier, and direct investment in the supplier by the buying firm (Monczka et al. 1993). The purchasing literature has stressed the importance of supplier development in supporting a firm's operations strategy by ensuring that suppliers' performance and capabilities meet the needs of the buying firm Hahn(1990); Hartley(1996); Monczka et al. (1993). What aspects of supplier development uniquely contribute to buyer-supplier performance? The extant literature has indicated that buying firms typically improve suppliers' performance and capabilities by: (i) increasing supplier performance goals Monczka(1993); (ii) providing the supplier with training Galt(1991); (iii) providing the supplier with equipment, technological support and even investments Galt(1991); Monczka(1993); (iv) exchanging personnel between the two organizations Newman(1990); (v) evaluating supplier performance

Watts(1993), Giunipero(1993) and (vi) recognizing supplier progress in the form of awards Galt(1991). In general, the provision of buyer support in capital investments, advice on organizational procedures and the training of technical staff within an individual supplier is defined as transaction-specific investment by the buying firms Heide(1995). This is also viewed as “direct supplier development” Krause (1999) .Krause and his colleagues have conducted a series of studies on supplier development. Krause and Ellram(1997) reported that the buying firms’ success varied and those who were satisfied with their supplier development efforts appeared to communicate more effectively with suppliers, put more efforts into such activities as supplier evaluation, supplier training and supplier award programs than those less-satisfied firms. Krause and Ellram(1997) also found that the majority of buying firms involved in supplier development perceived their suppliers as partners and placed a greater emphasis on some critical elements than those firms who were not involved. These critical factors, which have been defined as infrastructure factors, included effective two-way communication, top management involvement, cross-functional teams and larger purchasing power. Krause(1999) further developed and validated a set of measures of the antecedent factors of supplier development and used these to test a structural model that postulated the interrelationship among these variables. He found that the buying firm’s propensity to engage in supplier development was affected by its perception of supplier commitment, its expectation of relationship continuity and effective buyer–supplier communication. This research should therefore provide additional evidence for supply managers to take into consideration supplier development strategies that improve supplier performance.

Supplier incentives

Supplier incentives is a strategy which encourages suppliers to improve their performance including increased business volume, priority consideration for future business and recognition of good supplier performance in the form of awards or certificate (Monczka et al, 1993, Krause Ellram,1997). Incentives are important to develop and improve supplier performance. The buying firm provides incentives to motivate suppliers who desire for increased volume of business and priority consideration for future business (Krause et al, 2000). Therefore, this supplier is more likely to continue business operations and open their facilities, extend their resources investment, including provide greater commitment in joint knowledge transfer (Modi and Mabert, 2007).

Early supplier Involvement in new product development

Involving suppliers in new product development decisions and continuous improvement efforts enables the manufacturers to share knowledge and increase learning so that better solutions can be found to complex, inter-company problems that impact performance (Tracey and Vonderembse, 2000). Dowlatshahi (1997) stated that if a company or a supplier waits until a design specification or a bill of materials is available, it will be too late to reap the benefits of the knowledge and expertise of a supplier without a costly re-design, measured in time and money. As today firms focus on their core competences, they become more dependent on their suppliers to meet ever-increasing competition (Krause and Ellram, 1997). According to Mikkola and Larsen (2003), due to greater complexity, higher specialization, and new technological capabilities, outside suppliers can perform many activities at lower cost and with higher value added than a fully integrated company can. Supplier can have a significant impact on a manufacturer's performance, through their contributions towards cost reduction, eliminate inconsistency in the designer's manufacturing processes, minimize high-cost material items, share technical expertise and processes within each other, enabling the constant improvement of quality, share technology capabilities, and increase responsiveness of buying companies. A buyer's bases of power estimated that suppliers account for 30% of the quality problems and 80% of product lead-time problems (Burton, 1988).

Moreover, by involving suppliers in the process, buying company can access to a wide pool of talent all focused on the needs of its customers (Leenders, *et. al.*,2002). By keeping the customer-partner's future needs in mind, decisions of suppliers regarding investments, new product, new process or system could be facilitated. Thus, the possibility of misjudgment or wrong strategy made would be reduced.

Hahn, *et. al.* (1990) proposed that suppliers involved in partnerships can carry additional inventory to satisfy the buyer's delivery requirements. This is an important feature of the buyer-supplier relationship in achieving Just-In-Time manufacturing, especially when a manufacturer (buyer) does not assist the supplier to revise its system to meet the buyer's shipment dates in a timely fashion.

Supplier training

Programs for supplier development that receive assistance from buyers can be regarded as buyer supported training. The literature suggests that buyers have various ways of supporting their suppliers with some buyers giving more support than others. Some buyers focus on short-term benefits while others look at supplier development as a long-term investment. Thus suppliers have access to different types of supplier development programs depending on their

buyers. This implies that the types of training that would most benefit suppliers could be best assessed through studies focusing on the supplier perspective. By identifying the relevant types of training buyer-supported training programs could increase. This would be because buyers could select the type of training suitable for specific groups of suppliers. The right type of training could then lead to an increase in performance for the supplier which would in turn encourage an increase in buyer-supported training. Buyer may send his employees or group of team to train supplier or he may invite group of suppliers facing same problem for training in his own firm Ambrose et al (2008).

Kadir et al.(2011) made a case study in Malaysian automotive industry on Patterns of Supplier Learning. Here they found that supplier development programs support the development of a supplier's capabilities usually with the assistance of a buyer. Supplier development also depends on supplier's interest and how they explore them self to increase their capabilities. Although local suppliers do receive assistance from their buyers but this type of assistance is still not adequate to improve supplier capabilities. Therefore analyzing environment that provides buyer-support training could help to identify factors that suppliers themselves seem important for development of their capabilities. It is claimed that support from buyers for supplier training has been deficient. Thus there is a need to identify the types of training that suppliers themselves prefer. Buyers themselves have significant knowledge of the training that a supplier might need but as technology development happens the buyer no longer has a hold on all of the technology that is involved or coming. Thus it is important that suppliers looking to develop their capabilities have access to the type of training that they require which may or may not be provided by their buyers. For suppliers that have access to buyer-supported training their training needs might often change as they develop their own capabilities, Nadia et al (2011).

Financial Support

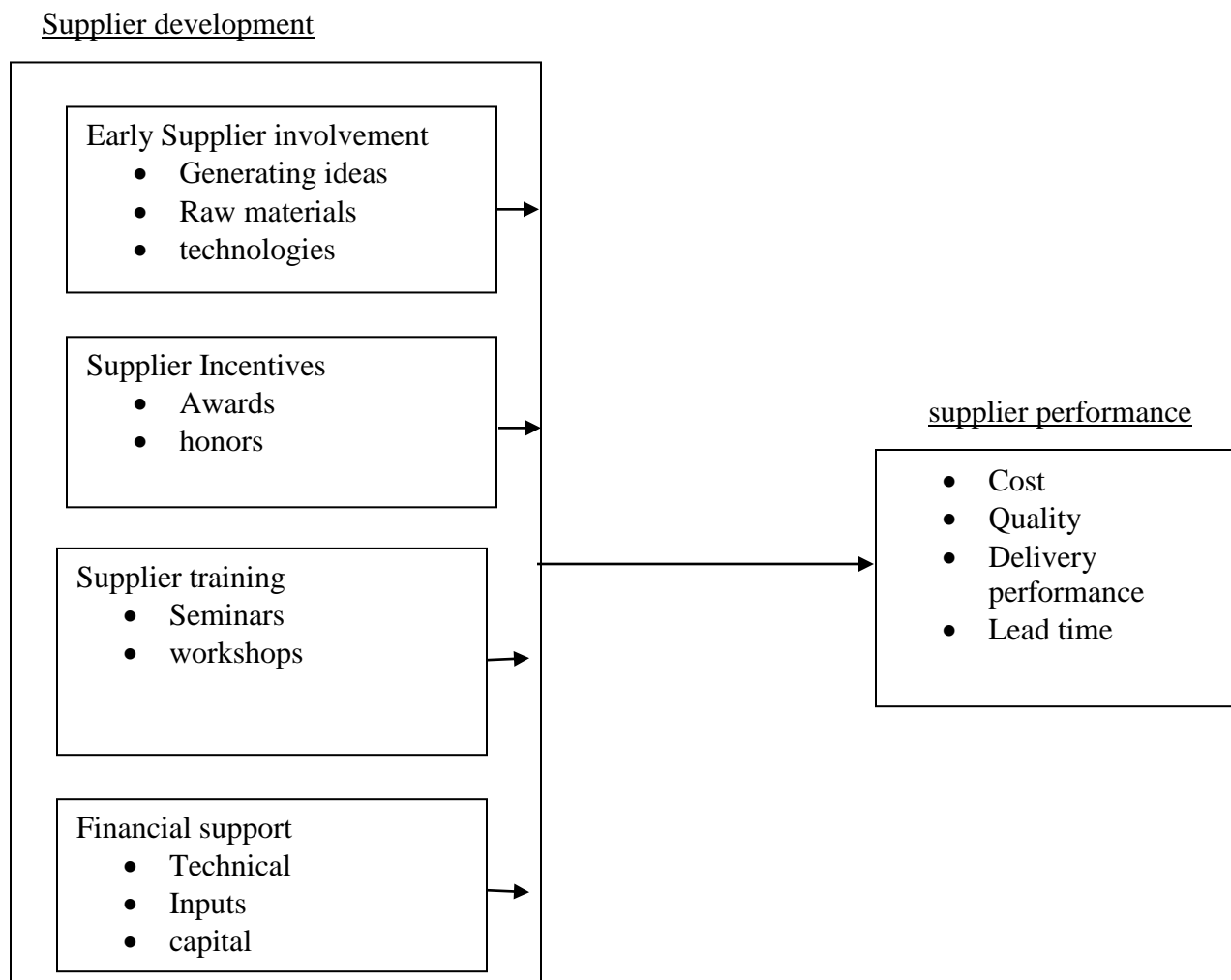
Financial investment refers to the buying firm's effort to develop their supplier by engaging in human and capital resources which includes direct investment in equipment and tools (Li et al, 2007 and technical support at the supplier site (Li et al, 2007).

When the supplier gets evaluation feedback from the buying firm for improvements, the firm needs to provide suggestions or personnel to supplier site (Krause et al, 2000; Prahinski and Benton, 2004). Such action of the buying firm motivates the direct involvement of their potential suppliers including financial resources (Wagner, 2006b).

Supplier Performance

According to a number of studies, supplier performance is measured by various criteria. Several key competitive factors were broadly used to assess the supplier performance. For examples, product quality, delivery performance, price, physical distribution, services, flexibility, relationships are considered to be important factors for measuring the supplier performance Simpson, et al.(2002); Prahinski and Benton, 2004; Modi and Mabert(2007); Humphreys et al, (2004); Gil and Ramaseshan,(2007). The supplier performance improvement was used as the key indicator for the success of supplier development strategies Watts and Hahn(1993). Based on the review of previous work and field interview with the purchasing managers in electrical components industry, this study focuses on buyer's perception on the supplier's improvement in the aspects of cost, quality, and delivery which are the critical supplier improvement areas.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework showing the relationship between supplier development and supplier performance



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design was a descriptive survey as it was concern with describing how supplier development affects supplier performance. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) a descriptive survey is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. The purpose of employing this method was to describe the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the effect of supplier development on supplier performance.

Sampling

The study population of this study was 30 which involved staff from the purchasing, finance, production and stores department of food manufacturing industries in Kisumu county which included: Equator Bottlers, United Milers, Kibos Sugar and Allied Industries, Maspa Enterprises Ltd and Miwani Sugar Company Ltd. This was determined using the saturated sampling technique since the population was relatively small (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003)

Data collection Instrument

Primary data is information gathered directly from respondents. The research used questionnaires. The questionnaires were used to collect mainly quantitative data. However some qualitative data were collected from the open ended questions. Secondary data was involved in the collection and analysis of published material and information from other sources such as annual reports, published data. The research was administered using questionnaires given to each member of the target population. The questionnaire was designed and tested with a few members of the population for further improvements. This was done in order to enhance its validity and accuracy of data to be collected.

Data Collection Procedure

The data used in this research was mainly collected through administration of questionnaires. The questionnaires contained questions on supplier development strategies and supplier performance levels of the various companies. The questionnaires were mainly mailed and hand delivered to the various respondents.

Validity Test

For validation purposes, the research was initially submitted to a sample of the set of survey questionnaires for approval; the survey was initially conducted to five respondents. After the

questions were answered, the respondents were asked for any suggestions or any necessary corrections to ensure further improvement and validity of the instrument. The researcher again examined the content of the survey questions or statements to find out the reliability of the instrument.

Data Processing and Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data were generated and analyzed. Descriptive statistics (percentages) were computed for all the four objectives. The findings were presented in tables, pie charts and graphs.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Rate of response

Table 1. Rate of response

departments	Sample frequency	Response frequency	% response
Purchasing	15	14	93.3
Finance	5	4	80
Production	5	5	100
stores	5	4	80
	30	27	90

The researcher obtained feedback from 27 respondents out of the targeted 30 respondents across several departments of food manufacturing industries in Kisumu County. Purchasing department registered 93.3% response, finance department registered 80% response, production department registered 100% response and the stores department registered 90% response.

Early supplier involvement

Data was further subject to descriptive analysis. A higher percentage of the respondents agreed that they involve their suppliers in new product development (63%). Most respondents agreed to involve their suppliers in generating ideas (55.55%) compared to their influence on technology (44.44%) and deciding on the raw materials to be used (37.07%)

ESI has more effect on improving delivery performance (76.19%) followed by lowering the cost (71.43%), getting materials of the right quality with minimum defects (66.67%) and lastly reducing the lead time (57.14%).

Supplier training

Most organizations train their suppliers to improve their performance (63%). Seminars (71.4%) and workshops (28.6%) were used as the forms of training.

Supplier training has more effect on reducing the lead time (57.14%) and improving delivery performance (57.14%) than getting materials of the right quality with minimum defects (38.10%) and lowering the cost (19.5%).

Supplier incentives

From the research it was found out that most organizations do not embrace the use of supplier incentives as a way of supplier development (33%). The most common practice of incentives used was award recognition by use of certificates (41.2%).

supplier incentives has more effect on reducing the cost (60%) followed by improving delivery performance (50%), getting materials of the right quality with minimum defects (40%) and lastly reducing the lead time (20%).

Financial support

Most companies offered financial support to their suppliers in terms of technical inputs (66.67%), inputs (55.55%) and capital (55.55%). Technological support was mostly used in supporting their suppliers financially

Financial training has more effect on improving delivery performance (68.18%) and lowering the cost (68.18%) followed getting materials of the right quality with minimum defects (63.64%) and lastly reducing the lead time (54.55%).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on findings, it is concluded that early supplier involvement, supplier training, supplier incentives and financial support have a significant effect on supplier performance of food manufacturing industries. Early supplier involvement and financial support had a greater effect on Delivery performance, while supplier training and supplier incentives had a greater effect on lead time and cost respectively. Early supplier involvement and financial support had also a greater effect on getting materials of the right quality with minimum defects than the other supplier development methods.

The study established that the benefits that accrue from supplier development programs include: improved delivery performance, reduced lead time, getting materials of the right quality with minimum defects and lowering the costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the study conclusion, three recommendations are advanced. First, creating a supply base with fewer suppliers with whom to work with closely is likely to effectively carry out supplier development. Secondly continuous improvement in the supply base is critical to maintaining the advantages accrued from supplier development and this can be achieved by carrying out supplier appraisals from time to time. Finally good buyer-supplier relationships and ethical practices are important in order for supplier development to have a positive effect on supplier performance.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Though the study was intended to analyze the effect of supplier development on supplier performance the scope so defined could not be exhaustive for a more objective and reliable generalization. There is a wide range of equally significant issues supplier development that need further scholarly considerations prior to drawing conclusive deductions in regard to variable relationships. In addition, a study on supplier development is suggested but involving a wider population scope than food manufacturing industries so as to generate a more inclusive relational picture.

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