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Supplier Relations Management and Performance of Companies in Nairobi County that Manufacture Food and Beverages

Olgah Akoth Owino[1]; Dr. Paul Machoka[2]

[1]MBA Student: Management University of Africa
[2]Management University of Africa

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Abstract: Supplier relations management involves fostering close partnerships between organizations and their suppliers, working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. Manufacturing sector has experienced sluggish growth in past decade compared to previous one. Additionally, many firms in this industry have recently reported declining gross earnings and sales revenues. The objective was to examine how supplier relations management affects performance and analyzed effects of: supplier assessment, and supplier development. The research was anchored on RBV, Goal-Setting and Institutional Theory. Study targeted 105 food and beverage manufacturing firms, from which 525 employees were considered. A sample of 255 respondents was selected. Ten industrial companies from Kiambu County participated in a pilot study. SPSS version 28 analyzed data after structured questionnaires were used to gather data. Findings were presented in tables. It established supplier relations management comprising supplier assessment and development, had a significant impact on the performance. To enhance performance, food and beverage manufacturing firms are advised to: Adopt a structured supplier assessment framework that includes, stability, compliance, sustainability, and innovation. Conduct regular audits and use supplier scorecards to track performance, promote transparency, and support continuous improvement. Provide constructive feedback and collaborate with underperforming suppliers to develop corrective action plans, thereby fostering long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. This study was limited to Nairobi City County. It is recommended that future research expand the geographical scope to other counties or conduct a nationwide study to provide broader and more representative insights into supplier relations management and performance.

Keywords : *Supplier Relations Management, Performance, Supplier Assessment, Supplier Development, Manufacturing Sector.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

➢ *Background of the Study*

Supplier relations management involves bringing suppliers closer to the organisation and working together to achieve similar goals. Similar to customer relationship management, a corporation must build relationships with both its customers and suppliers. The ideal consequence is a mutually beneficial partnership (Li, Wu, Goldsby & Holsapple, 2022). Most manufacturing enterprises rely on raw materials that are available elsewhere. Companies rely on their suppliers to provide necessary inputs for optimal functioning. Advantage of allowing the provider to gain insight into the actual needs and demands of the buyer through astute partnerships. This might lead to the optimisation and rationalisation of the company's operations. The evaluation and measurement of such operations is difficult, which benefits the supplier because it allows it to hide from the buyer and exploit it to its advantage (Li, Wu, Goldsby, & Holsapple, 2022).

Globally empirical studies shows a connection supplier relations management and performance of manufacturing firms such as Vanichchinchai (2020) investigated the extent of supply chain relationships (SCR) and lean manufacturing (LM) in the US manufacturing sector and examined the effects of various organisational characteristics on SCR and LM, including firm size, firm nationality, manufacturing system, product brand, export level, customer and supplier nationalities, and the presence of supply chain management (SCM) departments. It was discovered that the SCR and lean manufacturing measuring tools were valid and dependable. Compared to external SCR, manufacturers placed a far more emphasis on internal lean manufacturing at the operational level. Overall, this study found notable variations in lean manufacturing across company size, firm country, production systems, export levels, client nationality, and SCM department

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presence. Significant variations existed for SCR in terms of export level, supplier country, and the presence of SCM departments. Disparities between the various contexts of the lean manufacturing and SCR sub-constructs were examined and spoken about..

Garcia-Buendia, et al (2024) investigated how the supplier linkages of a focal firm affect the use of LSCM and performance in Spain. Strategic supplier performance and supply unpredictability have a major influence on the choice to use LSCM. The results emphasise how crucial strategic supplier performance is to LSCM adoption, but also suggest that situations involving significant supply unpredictability should carefully consider the deployment of LSCM. According to this study, improving key suppliers' performance and strengthening LSCM implementation are essential components of attaining positive operational performance in focal enterprises. In order to promote successful LSCM implementation, practitioners are given advice on how to align their supply relationships, take contextual aspects into account, and leverage strategic supplier performance. The criteria for choosing suppliers, the quality of relationships, and the degree of cooperation in Asian food companies were all examined by Nguyen (2023), who also looked at the relationship between these practices and company performance. Study focuses on food production and exporting businesses in China and Vietnam. There are four groups of different food companies, each with a comprehensive list of references describing their common traits that show their supplier management and commercial performance. Study also affirms that qualifications, dependability, and inspection findings are components of quality-related requirements for food companies. What businesses prioritise when choosing and sustaining partnerships and relationships with suppliers is an intriguing revelation that reflects the real requirements for supplier compliance. The study discloses the business standing of the companies under investigation as well as the particular references of each group, including the standards by which they favour choosing suppliers, the calibre of their relationships, and the degree of cooperation.

Salam (2021) examined how manufacturing techniques affected Thailand's Industry 4.0 supplier performance. Organisations depend on managing suppliers to enhance Industry 4.0 vendor performance because they are crucial to industrial supply chains. The results show that Industry 4.0 supplier performance benefits from increased production quality and flexibility. However, the success of Industry 4.0 suppliers was not statistically impacted by delivery rate or cost reduction.

In South Africa, supply chain potential was investigated by Mafanele, Maziriri, Masakale, and Mabuyana (2025) using supplier relations management techniques. The findings supported the validity of the suggested model, which is predicated on particular standards. This study highlights how important supplier evaluation, development, and segmentation are to pharmaceutical companies' SC performance. Management support acts as moderator in favourable correlation between SCM and organisational success, according to the research. This study is unusual and important because it closely looks at how SRM techniques impact SC and organisational performance in South Africa's pharmaceutical industry, considering the ways in which organisational performance and supply chain management can be moderated by top management support. These results provide insightful information for supply chain management scholars and business experts. In Dodoma, Tanzania, Kisinga, Mchopa, and Mwagike (2024) examined how small-scale grape processing companies' financial performance was affected by supplier relations management (SRM). The study also looks into how logistical expertise affects the connection between SRM and company success. The results showed that supplier assessment, supplier development, and buyer-supplier interactions all significantly impacted performance. Moreover, corporate performance was unaffected by information transfer. However, it was discovered that SRM and performance was influenced by logistics capabilities.

Kimwaki, Ngugi, and Odhiambo (2022) evaluate how supplier relations management affects Kenyan manufacturing firms' performance. The findings demonstrated performance of Kenyan manufacturing enterprises is significantly and favourably impacted by supplier relations management. Involving suppliers and preserving a long-lasting relationship is essential for the manufacturing companies' sustained performance, as the study found that supplier relations management is crucial for firm performance. Kenya Vision 2030 states that the main responsibility of the industrial sector is to create jobs and prosperity. In 2004, this industry, which is run by multinational corporations' subsidiaries, made for 13% of the GDP, the sector's share of the GDP has decreased. Between 2006 and 2013, the sector's real growth averaged 4.1% annually, which was less than the 4.6% average growth of the real GDP as a whole. In 2019, the sector's GDP contributions increased slightly to 10.3% from 10% in 2020. Over the previous five years, the Kenyan manufacturing industry has shown a lack of growth and declining profits, which has been linked to an unpredictable operating environment. The downward trend necessitates improved business practices in the industry. Reducing production and distribution costs is thought to be possible through the adoption and application of strategic alliances throughout the supply chain. Consequently, this improves the industrial sector's performance (Mushi, Mwaiseje, & Changalima, 2021).

- *Supplier Relations Management*

Organisations engage with their suppliers for mutual advantage through a process known as supplier relations management (Amoako-Gyampah, Boakye, Adaku, & Famiyeh, 2020). According to Kisinga, Mchopa, and Mwagike (2024), organisations that have not embraced supplier relations management face threats from supply chain risks brought on by uncertainty. The use of outsourcing and distribution service providers by businesses is growing. According to Changalima, Mchopa, and Ismail (2022), this is a result of the supply chains' changing business environment, which has made them extremely complicated and unpredictable. Building long-term relationships with suppliers has the primary benefit of lowering transaction costs through trust, according to Miguel and Brito (2021). A

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corporation must have a thorough awareness of the buyer-supplier relationship in order to be competitive (Berkowitz, 2004). Businesses now understand that maintaining connections with their suppliers is essential for long-term competitiveness and sustained earnings, which helps them cope with the unpredictable operating environment (Li, Wu, Goldsby, & Holsapple, 2022). Olendo and Kavale (2021) go on to say that trust and dedication are necessary for sustaining relationships with suppliers, and that these qualities will encourage suppliers to provide businesses with important information.

The association and relationships between the company and its top priority suppliers are the focus of managing supplier relations (Mushi, Mwaiseje, & Changalima, 202i). According to Olendo and Kavale (2021), managing suppliers serves as a conduit between the company and its ultimate customers. SRM would be the solution to improving efficiency and operations of company's SC network. By improving the time and cost efficiency of the procurement process, effective supplier relations management may guarantee supply chain alignment (Changalima, Mchopa, & Ismail, 2022). Adopting a favourable competitive environment and possessing supply market intelligence can help develop a successful supplier management strategy. Developing the suppliers and locating a reliable source for supplier performance and evaluation are further factors to take into account (Kang & Um, 2023).

- *Supplier Assessment*

A crucial step in supply chain management and procurement for all businesses, particularly manufacturing companies, is choosing a supplier. It entails locating, assessing, and selecting vendors who can offer products or services that satisfy the organization's needs for quality, price, delivery, and other crucial aspects. Effective supplier assessment is vital to ensure a reliable and efficient supply chain, minimize risks, and enhance overall business performance (Taherdoost & Brard, 2019). Supplier assessment entails; market research, prequalification and request for Information. It involves gathering valuable information to understand market dynamics, consumer behavior, and competitor activities. Market research plays a crucial role in guiding business decisions and formulating effective strategies (Gharakhani, 2020) Prequalification is an essential component of supplier assessment and is often used to streamline the supplier evaluation process. It involves an initial assessment of potential suppliers before inviting them to participate in a more detailed bidding or tendering process. The primary objective of prequalification is to identify suppliers who meet the minimum criteria and qualifications to be considered for further engagement (Huang, 2019). Naibor and Moronge (2018) holds that request for Information (RFI) is another important component of supplier assessment. It is a formal process where organizations gather information about potential suppliers to assess their capabilities, services, and suitability for a specific project or contract. The RFI is typically sent out before the formal Request for Project (RFP) or Request for Quotation (RFQ) to help organizations gather preliminary information about potential suppliers.

- *Supplier Development*

Organizations use supplier development as a strategic endeavor to enhance their suppliers' performance, competencies, and long-term relationships. It entails cooperating with suppliers to improve their systems, procedures, and expertise, which will ultimately benefit both parties and a more efficient supply chain. Supplier development aims to build strong, sustainable partnerships that go beyond short-term transactions and foster continuous improvement and innovation (Femi, Yemisi & Oke, 2017). Supplier development entails; needs Assessment, supplier Recognition and incentives. Needs assessment is an essential component of supplier development as it helps organizations identify the specific areas where their suppliers require improvement and support. It involves conducting a thorough evaluation of the suppliers' capabilities, processes, and performance to understand their strengths and weaknesses. By assessing the suppliers' needs, organizations can tailor supplier development initiatives to address specific gaps and drive meaningful improvements (Wachiuri, Waiganjo & Oballah, 2015).

Supplier recognition is a vital component of supplier development that acknowledges and rewards suppliers for their exceptional performance, contributions, and commitment to the organization's success. It involves formally recognizing suppliers who consistently meet or exceed expectations, demonstrate excellence in their operations. Supplier recognition not only motivates suppliers to maintain high standards but also fosters a positive and collaborative supplier-buyer relationship (Lukhoba & Muturi, 2015). Ochieng (2018) holds that incentives are a crucial component of supplier development programs aimed at motivating suppliers to improve their performance, enhance their capabilities, and contribute to the organization's success. By offering incentives, organizations encourage suppliers to go above and beyond their contractual obligations and actively participate in collaborative efforts to achieve mutual benefits.

- *Organizational Performance*

Organisational performance, as measured by job findings, customer link, quality service, and intangible findings, is defined by Aguinis and Kraiger (2018) as the extent to which a job mission is achieved. There are various techniques to measure organisational performance, and the unit of measurement should be viewed as a whole. Operational income, total unit sales, profitability, debt repayment capability, liquidity, solvency, and the institution's financial efficiency are among the metrics utilised for measurement. Organisational performance is impacted by both internal and external factors. The external forces that influence performance include competition, technology, and the working environment while the internal forces are ability, motivation levels, skills, and knowledge (Saeed, Jiao, Zahid, Tabassum, & Nauman, 2020).

Hasani and O'Reilly (2020) categorized performance into business performance, financial performance, and organizational effectiveness. Performance measurement of overall organization effectiveness reflects a broader conceptualization that provides for the achievement of

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organizational goals, organization reputation, organization survival, a perceived overall performance about competitors, and seen as an overall performance.

➢ *Statement of the Problem*

Kenya's manufacturing industry has grown slowly over the past decade compared to the previous one. Many firms have reported declining gross earnings and sales revenues, leading to reduced production, workforce cuts, and consequently, lower government revenue, slower economic growth, and significant job losses. Although raw material availability has remained steady, firms' success heavily depends on suppliers, making effective supplier relationship management (SRM) essential (Amoako-Gyampah, Boakye, Adaku, & Famiyeh, 2019). Despite overall sectoral growth, the performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya remains below expectations, largely due to inefficiencies in supply chain coordination and input sourcing. Weak SRM practices—such as poor communication, lack of trust, and minimal collaboration—have led to production delays, higher costs, and quality inconsistencies. Supply market information, which clarifies competitive dynamics and cost structures, also plays a key role in building strong supplier partnerships (Whan & Teawon, 2021).

The manufacturing industry, Kenya's third-largest economic sector after agriculture and transport, has faced growth challenges. Its growth declined from 4.4% in 2010 to 3.3% in 2011 (KNBS, 2021), and between 2019 and 2023, it averaged 4.1% annually, below the national GDP growth of 4.6% (KPMG, 2023). Previous studies, such as Nguyen (2023), highlight that supplier qualifications, reliability, and inspection outcomes are critical for food firms' compliance and partnership sustainability—indicating a contextual gap in understanding supplier priorities. Mafanele et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of supplier development, segmentation, evaluation, and selection for supply chain success, identifying an empirical gap concerning top management's moderating role. Similarly, Kisinga, Mchopa, and Mwagike (2024) found that buyer–supplier relationships, supplier development, and assessment positively affect business performance.

However, no prior research has specifically examined SRM and performance in Kenyan food and beverage manufacturing firms, leaving a significant knowledge gap. Given the persistent inefficiencies in this sector, understanding how SRM influences firm performance is essential for improving supply chain resilience, reducing costs, and strengthening competitiveness. This need forms the basis for investigating the effect of SRM on the performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya.

➢ *Objective of the Study*

- To determine effect of supplier assessment on performance of food and beverages manufacturing firms in Kenya
- To evaluate the effect of supplier development on performance of food and beverages manufacturing firms in Kenya

➢ *Significance of the Study*

In theory, the study expands existing knowledge of Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) by highlighting its role in enhancing organizational performance and strategic alignment. It identifies gaps in SRM research, offering a foundation for future studies and guiding scholars interested in understanding how supplier relations influence firm success across different contexts. In practice, the findings help managers design effective supplier engagement strategies that improve efficiency, reduce risks, and foster competitive advantage. For food and beverage manufacturing firms, the insights support the development of robust SRM practices that promote collaboration, trust, and sustainable performance. From a policy perspective, the study provides evidence-based recommendations to help government agencies, regulators, and industry leaders formulate policies that strengthen supplier relationship practices. It contributes to creating strategic frameworks that align organizational and national economic goals, ensuring that firms remain competitive in dynamic business environments..

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

➢ *Resource-Based View Theory*

This theory was created by Penrose in 1899, but Wernerfelt's work in 1984 helped to make it more widely accepted as a helpful framework for researching organisational performance (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). Wernerfelt contends that an organization's internal resources are the true determinants of its organisational effectiveness and profitability. "RBV" often denotes a mindset that values resources. This early understanding of the resource-based paradigm is attributed to Penrose's study from that year (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). Resources are arranged to appear as though they are already internal to the company. Jay Barney promoted the advantages of RBV perspective. Barney explained fundamental characteristics of internal resources and their connection to competitive advantages. Kozlenkova et al. (2014) state that a business has a competitive advantage if it can outperform its nearest competitor in a given market in terms of economic worth.

Gills, Combs, and Ketchen (2014) state that the corporation's competencies are different from its capacity to employ corporate resources, which include the company's inventories of immediately usable parts. RBV theory includes the characteristics and types of resources that produce an edge, improved organizational performance, and competitive advantage (Gillis, et al, 2014). Any company needs a wide range of resources if it is to convert its organisational strategy into long-term financial success. RBV prioritises the organization's internal resources when carrying out its plan. Repurposing current resources is better than trying to acquire new resources or talents every chance to increase corporate performance, according to proponents of the RBV theory like Jensen et al. (2016). Furthermore, RBV contends that evaluating suppliers is an essential organisational performance metric that enhances a company's capacity to compete, deliver services, and create and sustain a profit (Hitt et al., 2016). Although core resources are significant determinants of organisational success, the theory is constrained by its

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exclusive focus on the internal environment as a means of optimising a company's superior organisational performance (Gillis et al., 2014). External environment has an effect on the RBV's organisational performance and competitive advantage. In actuality, external factors have an equal impact on a company's organisational performance in the marketplace. When examining variables that could affect the tactics it uses, external resources must be considered. The theory states that when investigating strategies that lead to better organisational performance, it is critical to include both a firm's external and internal resources (Hitt et al., 2016). Though it has flaws, theory was chosen as an extra idea. The theory describes how a business can use its resources to enhance organisational performance.

- *Goal-Setting Theory*

Dr. Edwin Locke developed this theory during his 1890s research, building on Kurt Lewin's (1968) seminal study on degrees of ambition (Locke & Latham, 2010). Two main tenets of goal-setting theory show that both positive and negative outcomes cause people to behave in adaptive ways, and that individuals are conscious of the worries brought on by their social interactions and the connections that produce the various results (Amit & Livnat, 2008). The goal-setting theory's cornerstone is motivation, which explains why certain behaviours occur at a workstation. According to Ferris (2007), when conduct is motivated by internal causes, external incentives are seen as motivators that drive behaviour rather than intrinsic motivators. The study calls for maturity, assurance, and accountability. The process of operating an organisation in accordance with its aims is transformed when its goals are established. Now that they are aware of their expectations, workers are able to establish their own objectives. This idea is accepted by the study due to its strong association with an organisational performance metric.

Additionally, it encourages the development of suppliers and the definition of quality. Someone consciously aims to accomplish or obtain something as the anticipated outcome of an action or activity. To achieve the desired outcomes, setting targets requires the conscious effort of selecting performance standards (Latham, 2010). If people or organisations find that their current performance is not producing the desired results, they are typically encouraged to increase their effort or change their strategy (Locke & Latham, 2010). According to Locke and Latham (2010), people who are pursuing particular goals don't seem content until the goal has been accomplished.Establishing objectives to evaluate one's own performance suggests that in order to foster an atmosphere that enables one to realize one's own potential, objectives should ensure that basic needs such as a secure place of employment and a living wage—are satisfied (Ferris, 2007). Ferris (2007) claims that goal-setting is a combination of decision-theory theories that aid in the understanding of motivation and the effectiveness of organizations.

III. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

- *Supplier Assessment and Performance*

Supplier assessment entails; market research, prequalification and request for Information. It involves gathering valuable information to understand market dynamics, consumer behavior, and competitor activities. Market research plays a crucial role in guiding business decisions and formulating effective strategies (Gharakhani, 2020) Prequalification is an essential component of supplier assessment and is often used to streamline the supplier evaluation process. It involves an initial assessment of potential suppliers before inviting them to participate in a more detailed bidding or tendering process. The primary objective of prequalification is to identify suppliers who meet the minimum criteria and qualifications to be considered for further engagement (Huang, 2019).

Pacheco and Clausen (2024) looked into how construction supply chains' sustainable purchasing supply management was evaluated. They also developed and tested a new technique to help businesses in construction supply chains evaluate and control the risks related to sustainable sourcing and procurement of materials. The study developed an integrated method for evaluating PSM methods in the construction industry using a design science research approach. By including nine subdimensions, the method supports the three main purchasing dimensions of material sustainability concerns, profit impact, and supply risks. Within a multinational European construction corporation with its headquarters located in Denmark, empirical validation was conducted. The results of the supplier-buyer interactions verified that the created technique enables the identification of supplier-buyer relationships. According to the research, purchasing professionals and building supply chain managers may assess PSM using the suggested method, which would help them make better judgements. By employing the suggested artefact, construction firms can improve their competitiveness in dynamic construction supply chains by addressing PSM concerns more proactively.

Supplier performance evaluation was studied by Romule, Bak, Colicchia, and Shaw (2020) using data from a manufacturing company in the UK and its suppliers. A UK manufacturing business and its suppliers were examined ten types of performance indicators that were developed. A total of forty-one people responded to the questionnaire. Nett profitability, adaptability and responsiveness, cycle time and delivery performance, and product availability and quality were the only five of the ten categories that received high ratings. These categories were in line with the categories of internal business processes and finance. The connection between a UK-based business and its suppliers, as well as how performance metrics were evaluated in this setting, were subjects of this study. Comparing findings to supplier performance evaluations of other businesses requires more research.

Wangu (2020) investigated the impact of supplier evaluation criteria on Kenyan state businesses' performance. Its cross-sectional survey approach. Kenya's 187 state firms were the intended audience. Using a census technique, the investigation was carried out, questionnaires were used. To ascertain the percentages of respondents' responses, descriptive statistics were employed using SPSS. Tables and graphs were used in the presentation of the findings. findings,

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state enterprises' performance is positively and significantly correlated with suppliers' competence, commitment to quality, financial stability, and capacity. Additionally, the competence and dedication to quality of their suppliers. Furthermore, it was found that the performance of state businesses and the financial sustainability of suppliers had a favourable and significant relationship. Findings demonstrate a favourable and the quality commitment, competence, sustainability, and capacity. this suggested that state companies' performance and supplier ratings fluctuate in tandem. It discovered positive relationship between state companies' success and proficiency and commitment to quality of their suppliers. Conclusion is that state firms' performance in Kenya is significantly impacted by supplier evaluation. As a result, state enterprises must routinely evaluate each of its suppliers' quality, competency, financial stability, and capacity.

- *Supplier Development and Performance*

Supplier development entails; needs Assessment, supplier Recognition and incentives. Needs assessment is an essential component of supplier development as it helps organizations identify the specific areas where their suppliers require improvement and support. It involves conducting a thorough evaluation of the suppliers' capabilities, processes, and performance to understand their strengths and weaknesses. By assessing the suppliers' needs, organizations can tailor supplier development initiatives to address specific gaps and drive meaningful improvements (Wachiuri, Waiganjo & Oballah, 2015). It entails cooperating with suppliers to improve their systems, procedures, and expertise, which will ultimately benefit both parties and a more efficient supply chain. Supplier development aims to build strong, sustainable partnerships that go beyond short-term transactions and foster continuous improvement and innovation (Femi, Yemisi & Oke, 2017).

Building a learning-to-learn capability was examined by Powell and Coughlan (2020) as a crucial component of successful lean transformation. The study question, "How can suppliers learn to learn as part of a buyer-led collaborative lean transformation?" determines the research design. In order to produce useful insights used action learning research. Powell and Coughlan (2020) discover that building a learning-to-learn capability is a fundamental and crucial success factor for lean transformation, based on the initiative's breakthrough findings. By distinguishing between adopting a learning-to-learn mindset to develop organizational skills in line with lean thinking and practice versus learning about and putting into practice lean best practices, the study advances lean theory and practice. The study also make a methodological contribution by using action research to investigate crucial component of long-term lean transformation.

Toufighi, Vang, Govindan, Lin, and Bille (2024) examine how well university-led knowledge transfer programmes work to improve the skills and output of regional vendors in the apparel sector. This study intends to offer empirical evidence on how UDIs might encourage supplier growth and performance enhancement by analysing the impact of targeted capability enhancement strategies in Myanmar. Nine clothing vendors were evaluated both prior to and following the UDI initiative. According to the report, the UDI programme greatly increased supplier capabilities, which consequently resulted in better performance. The results showed partial mediation, meaning that although UDIs impacts supplier performance, improvement of supplier capabilities greatly increases the impact of UDIs. These results demonstrate the vital role that focused capability development plays in helping local suppliers achieve notable performance gains.

Srivastava, Kumar, and Mateen (2021) examined customers' decisions to engage in supplier development in two different circumstances. First, under a structure for cooperative development, where both purchasers participate in the supplier together and get the same rewards. The second type of investment structure is non-cooperative, in which each customer makes an independent investment in the development of the supplier and receives unequal rewards. The authors employed a game-theoretic technique to evaluate how decisions about supplier development investments affected the profitability of both buyers and the shared supplier. In a Stackelberg leader-follower game created by the authors, the supplier takes the lead and buyers follow their pricing choices in an effort to increase their own profit margin. Additionally, when investing in supplier development, both buyers choose whether to cooperate or not. According to the data, a cooperative investment strategy is always the best one for both suppliers and purchasers. It's interesting that under a system for non-cooperative investments, the effective buyer's part of the investment level is reduced, and he benefits from others' investments. In contrast, non-cooperative investment worsens the situation for inefficient buyers. Additionally, when comparing the two, it can be seen that the buyer who benefits The non-cooperative development investment model is initially preferred by other buyers who have more to gain from their development investment. The supplier begins to charge a greater wholesale price in cases involving non-cooperative investment; yet, in the end, cooperative development investment benefits the same customer more because of collaboration and sharing an equal portion of the provider's development.

- *Research Design*

According to Bickman and Rog (2018), research design referred to the arrangement of the study's goals and methodology; therefore, a theoretical framework was employed to guide the investigation. As a result, a descriptive design was used; this design is suitable since it guaranteed that the information gathered would offer pertinent responses to the goals of the study. It was used to analyse certain problems or to describe the characteristics of the population. One advantage of this approach was that it helped researchers organize and conduct studies that offered a comprehensive understanding of the subjects, settings, or particular problems (Bickman & Rog, 2018).

- *Target Population*

Target population was defined by Cooper and Schindler (2018) as the entire group of variables from which one intended to generalize the findings. According to Saunders et

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al. (2018), population referred to the whole assembly of factors to which the study's conclusions should be generalized. The target participants included senior managers of major manufacturing companies in Nairobi County, Kenya. According to KAM (2025) there are 105 manufacturing companies Nairobi. Therefore, the study focused on senior management personnel from all 105 organizations, including one top management, two middle-level management, and two lower-level management personnel from each organization. Thus, the entire target population consisted of 525 employees, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Target Population

Category	Target population	Percentage
Top Management Personnel	105	20
Middle-Level Management Personnel	210	40
Lower Management Personnel	210	40
Total	**525**	**100**

Source : (KAM, 2025)

➢ *Sample and Sampling Technique*

For the study, stratified random sampling was employed, as it was considered impartial and provided an equal opportunity for selection to every member of the population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Saunders et al. (2018), a sample was a subset used to represent the characteristics of a larger population. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2018) recommended that the sample size be selected randomly to eliminate bias and noted that 1–10% of the target population was considered an appropriate range. Cooper and Schindler (2018) supported this view. Cochran formula was used to determine the sample of 225 at a 5% significance level.

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

Where;

n – sample size

N – Population size

e – Level of significance

$n = 525 / 1+ 525(0.05)^2 = 225$

➢ *Data Collection Instruments*

According to Bickman and Rog (2018), research instruments included surveys, tests, and questionnaires as examples of tools used to collect data. Questionnaire were used for gathering data, having been previously used by researchers in similar fields. It was considered more efficient in labor, time, and cost. Compared to interviews, the questionnaire offered greater structure and facilitated the collection of quantitative data (Thornhill, Saunders, & Lewis, 2018). However, one limitation of the questionnaire was that it could not be administered to individuals who were illiterate or unable to read and write. Despite this limitation, questionnaires were regarded as cost-effective tools that allowed researchers to collect large volumes of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Saunders et al. (2018), questionnaires enabled correlational, descriptive, and inferential statistical analysis, making the data analysis process more manageable. They also contributed to enriching the qualitative methodology. Additionally, questionnaires allowed for respondent anonymity, which was important since many participants preferred their identities to remain undisclosed (Bordens & Abbott, 2017). Primary data was therefore gathered using questionnaires.

➢ *Pilot Study*

According to Hamed (2016), a pilot study made it possible to identify ambiguous questions and unclear instructions within a research instrument. The purpose of this process was to determine if the replies to the instrument would offer required contribution to assist the study in accomplishing its goals. Another important role of the pilot study was to establish the validity and reliability of the research data collection tools (Cooper & Schindler, 2018). The pilot study was conducted with participation of 10 food&beverage manufacturing firms that were randomly selected from Kiambu County. This county was chosen because it shared similar characteristics with Nairobi County.

➢ *Validity*

Validity, according to Saunders et al. (2018), was the ability of a research tool to yield the anticipated results. Prior to administering the research instrument to the sample group. This was carried out during the piloting of the instrument (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2018). The aim of the process was to determine whether the instrument's responses provided the necessary information to support the study in achieving its objectives as outlined in the methodology (Cooper & Schindler, 2018). With assistance from the supervisor and subject matter experts, content validity was applied in the study. Face validity was also employed, as it was considered crucial for offering a simple and quick way to assess the overall validity. It provided an initial indication of whether a new measure appeared useful at face value (Cooper & Schindler, 2018).

➢ *Reliability*

Reliability is described by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2018) as the measure used to assess the consistency of study questionnaires. Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged from 0 to 1, with higher scores signifying the scale's increased dependability. An acceptable alpha value was defined as 0.70 or higher. Cronbach's alpha coefficient criterion of 0.7 determined dependability. According to Saunders et al. (2018), if research instruments were reliable, they would yield

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similar results in the main study as those obtained during the pilot test—a view supported by Cooper and Schindler (2018).

➢ *Data Collection Procedure*

According to Gebru (2020), data collection procedures referred to the various guidelines that researchers followed while collecting, gathering, and measuring information of interest in a systematic manner. This approach enabled respondents to answer the questions posed, test the theory, and assess the results. A methodical and structured approach to data collection ensured consistency and dependability. It involved organizing the process, selecting appropriate techniques, and conducting data collection according to a predefined plan. Although specific procedures varied depending on the research topic or purpose, they generally included setting objectives, choosing suitable methods, and evaluating the information collected. The researcher obtained authorization from NACOSTI, a letter of introduction from the institution, and a permission letter from participating firms. Research assistants were trained by the researcher to assist in distributing the questionnaires that were picked after 5days.

➢ *Data Analysis and Presentation*

According to Cooper and Schindler (2018), data analysis was the process of classifying and organizing raw data collected through research instruments in order to extract relevant and meaningful information. The research produced numerical data for analysis. Version 28 of the SPSS software was used for analysis. Findings derived from descriptive statistics were presented on tables. Pearson correlation matrix. At a significance level of 5%, a two-tailed correlation test was performed. ANOVA was used to evaluate the overall model significance by contrasting the computed F-statistic with the tabular F-value. The model's statistical significance was determined using a critical p-value of 0.05. Multivariate linear regression model was used to evaluate how the independent variables affected the dependent variable. Regression coefficient was represented by β_{1-4}, while the regression constant was denoted by α. dependent variable, EE, represented the composite performance score.

IV. FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

189 respondents out of 225 completed the questionnaire; these valid replies were utilised to analyse the data. This resulted in a high response rate, which, according to Saunders et al. (2018), is considered exceptional. Specifically, a response rate was 84%, it was excellent. The majority of research participants were male, comprising more than half of 189 valid responses. As noted by Saunders et al. (2018), gender can influence individual perspectives on specific issues and may also reflect differences in energy levels, technical proficiency, and the degree of commitment required for certain tasks. In terms of age distribution, the most represented group was 46 years and above, followed by participants aged 40 to 45 years. Age, according to Saunders et al. (2018), significantly shapes how individuals respond to various issues, often correlating with maturity and life experience. With regard to educational qualifications, most had bachelor's degrees, then a notable number with master's degrees. This educational background suggests that the participants were well-equipped to understand and engage with the research topic. Saunders et al. (2018) emphasize that education influences attitudes and shapes how individuals perceive and interpret social and organizational issues. Moreover, the educational attainment of the respondents is indicative of substantial work experience, which likely enhanced their understanding of organizational dynamics. As Saunders et al. (2018) suggest, individuals with extensive professional experience within an organization are more likely to provide informed and authoritative responses to research inquiries.

Table 2 Supplier Assessment

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
My firm focuses more on a supplier's technical ability to deliver goods and services while conducting a supply assessment.	44%	52%	4%	0%	0%	4.09	.752
My firm consider resource availability in supplier assessment	54%	40%	6%	0%	0%	4.10	.858
Energy conservations is major determinant in supplier assessment in our firm .	42%	54%	4%	0%	0%	3.69	.786
Using eco-friendly packaging materials is crucial when choosing a supplier.	43%	51%	3%	3%	0%	3.95	.792
When evaluating suppliers, supplier iso certification is taken into account.	57%	40%	3%	0%	0%	3.92	.823
Average						**3.95**	**.802**

The study established that supplier assessment practices significantly influence organizational performance. As shown in Table 2, 44% of respondents strongly agreed and 52% agreed that their organizations focus on suppliers' technical ability during assessment (mean = 4.10, SD = 0.752). Similarly, 54% strongly agreed and 40% agreed that resource availability is considered (mean = 4.00, SD = 0.858). Regarding energy conservation as a determinant in supplier assessment, 42% strongly agreed and 54% agreed (mean = 3.96, SD = 0.796). For eco-friendly packaging materials, 43% strongly agreed, 51% agreed, and 3% disagreed (mean = 3.92, SD = 0.823). Finally, 57% strongly agreed and 40% agreed that ISO certification is considered during supplier evaluation (mean = 3.92, SD = 0.823). Overall, supplier assessment recorded a composite mean of 3.95 and SD of 0.802, indicating

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that supplier evaluation is a well-recognized driver of organizational performance.

These findings are consistent with previous research. Pacheco and Clausen (2024) demonstrated that structured supplier evaluation enhances sustainability and competitiveness by enabling informed procurement decisions. Romule, Bak, Colicchia, and Shaw (2020) similarly emphasized that robust supplier performance metrics strengthen supply chain effectiveness. Wangu (2020) also found a positive correlation between supplier competence, quality commitment, financial stability, and organizational performance in state enterprises. Results suggest that evaluating suppliers based on technical ability, resource availability, environmental sustainability, and quality certification significantly improves organizational performance. Continuous and structured supplier assessments are therefore essential for enhancing operational efficiency and competitiveness sector organizations in Kenya.

Table 3 Supplier Development

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std.D
My company supports the development of suppliers' capability in response to procurement .	51%	40%	7%	2%	0%	3.91	.551
Relationship management with suppliers is a crucial component of our company's procurement policy	47%	38%	9%	4%	2%	3.96	.752
My company regularly hosts workshops and training sessions for suppliers on supply chain sustainability.	54%	40%	6%	0%	0%	4.00	.532
Our employees participate in training on procurement as a way to make supply chain operations more sustainable.	55%	40%	3%	2%	0%	4.10	.678
Green procurement is one of the key performance metrics used by my organizations.	46%	51%	3%	0%	0%	3.98	.694
Average						**3.99**	**0.614**

The study found that supplier development has a significant positive impact on organizational performance. As shown in Table 12, 51% of respondents strongly agreed and 40% agreed that their companies support supplier capability development in response to procurement needs (mean = 3.91, SD = 0.551). Regarding the inclusion of relationship management in procurement policy, 47% strongly agreed and 38% agreed (mean = 3.96, SD = 0.752). On whether companies host workshops and training sessions for suppliers on supply chain sustainability, 54% strongly agreed and 40% agreed (mean = 4.00, SD = 0.532). When asked if employees receive procurement training to enhance supply chain sustainability, 40% strongly agreed and 40% agreed (mean = 4.10, SD = 0.678). Similarly, 46% strongly agreed and 51% agreed that service efficiency is attributed to supplier development (mean = 3.98, SD = 0.694). Overall, the supplier development variable recorded a composite mean of 3.99 and SD of 0.614, indicating a strong and positive effect on supplier collaboration and organizational performance. These findings align with prior studies. Powell and Coughlan (2020) emphasized that developing a "learning-to-learn" capability is essential for sustainable organizational transformation, while Toufighi et al. (2024) found that structured development programs significantly enhance supplier competence and performance. Srivastava, Kumar, and Mateen (2021) further demonstrated that cooperative investment strategies between buyers and suppliers lead to long-term performance improvements compared to non-cooperative models. supplier development through training, capability building, and collaborative investment plays a crucial role in improving efficiency, strengthening supplier relationships, and driving overall organizational performance in Kenya's manufacturing sector.

Table 4 Organization Performance

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std D
To increase customer satisfaction, we sufficiently involve our suppliers in the product design process based on their criteria.	43%	51%	3%	3%	0%	3.95	.792
Supplier relations management practices adopted in our firm have resulted in lead time in procurement process	47%	38%	9%	4%	2%	3.96	.752
To improve efficiency and shorten lead times, we have incorporated innovative technology into our supply chain processes.	43%	52%	4%	0%	0%	4.10	.919
Supplier relations management has allowed the business to increase its profitability.	43%	51%	3%	3%	0%	3.95	.792
By concentrating on waiting time and drastically cutting it, we have improved supply chain performance	38%	47%	9%	4%	2%	3.25	.752
Average						**3.84**	**0.768**

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The study assessed the effect of supplier relationship management (SRM) on organizational performance. Results showed that 43% of respondents strongly agreed and 51% agreed that involving suppliers in the product design process enhances customer satisfaction (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.792). On whether SRM practices reduce lead time in procurement, 47% strongly agreed and 38% agreed (mean = 3.96, SD = 0.752). Regarding the incorporation of innovative technology to improve efficiency and reduce lead times, 43% strongly agreed and 52% agreed (mean = 4.10, SD = 0.919). Additionally, 43% strongly agreed and 51% agreed that SRM increases business profitability (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.792), while 43% strongly agreed and 51% agreed that SRM improves client satisfaction (mean = 3.25, SD = 0.752). Concerning whether reducing waiting time improves supply chain performance, 38% strongly agreed and 47% agreed. Overall, SRM recorded a composite mean of 3.84 and SD of 0.768, indicating a strong positive relationship between supplier relations and organizational performance.

These findings reveal that organizational performance is significantly influenced by four SRM dimensions—supplier assessment, supplier development, supplier involvement, and supplier collaboration. This aligns with Mukya (2021), who noted that performance indicators help organizations identify improvement areas and enhance efficiency. Johnson and Scholes (2022) also emphasized that firm performance can be evaluated through multiple lenses such as financial results, market share, and customer satisfaction, while Njiru (2022) and Ondimu (2021) highlighted that profitability, product quality, and productivity are core indicators of organizational success. study concludes that procurement efficiency, supplier engagement, and reliable procurement processes key elements of effective SRM have a significant positive effect on the performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya.

- *Inferential Statistics*

Table 5 Model Summary for Supplier Assessment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.776 [a]	.602	.516	.23415

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier Assessment

Table 5 presents relationship between performance and supplier assessment. The regression analysis results indicate a strong association between supplier assessment and performance. While coefficient of determination (R2 =.602) indicates that changes in supplier assessment account for 60.2% variation in organisational performance, the correlation coefficient (R =.776) indicates a strong positive association.

Table 6 ANOVA[a] Results for Supplier Assessment

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.389	1	21.389	17.194	.000 [b]
	Residual	28.611	197	1.145		
	Total	**50.000**	**189**			

a. DV: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier assessment.

The performance is significantly impacted by supplier assessment, as indicated by the F-value of 17.194 in Table 6. This outcome demonstrates how well the regression model fits the data. The model strongly predicts dependent variable at a significance level of p =.000 (> 0.05), indicating that supplier assessment is a useful indicator of organisational effectiveness.

Table 7 Regression Coefficients[a] for Supplier Assessment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.133	.431		4.119	.001	.449	1.752
Supplier assessment	.602	.179	.822	8.658	.000	.521	.855

a. DV: Performance

Table 7 presents the regression model showing that supplier assessment significantly influences the performance. The model equation is: Performance = 1.133 + 0.602 (Supplier Assessment). This indicates that a unit increase in supplier assessment index results in a 0.602-unit improvement in organizational performance. The relationship is statistically significant, with t = 8.658 and p = 0.01, < 0.05. Therefore, results suggest that enhancing supplier assessment can substantially boost firm performance. The model confirms positive correlation between supplier assessment and organizational performance.

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➢ *Effect of Supplier Development and Organizational Performance*

Table 8 Model Summary for Supplier Development

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.809 [a]	.655	.652	.589604

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier Development

A regression analysis was conducted with supplier development as the predictor variable and performance as the dependent variable. The results, summarized in Table 8, show relationship between the two variables, with R = 0.809, indicating a strong positive correlation. According to the coefficient of determination, R2 = 0.655, shifts in supplier development account for 65.5% of variation in organisational performance.

Table 9 ANOVA[a] Results for Supplier Development

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	90.374	1	90.374	259.97	.000 [b]
Residual	47.626	188	0.253		
Total	**137.990**	**189**			

a. DV: Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier Development

Supplier development has a significant impact on the performance as indicated by an F-value of 259.97, which suggests that the model fits the data very well. As demonstrated in Table 9, the regression model's statistical validity is confirmed by its accurate prediction of the dependant variable at a significance level of p =.000, <0.05 threshold.

Table 10 Regression Coefficients[a] for Supplier Development

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	0.061	.625		3.993	.000	.809	2.063
Supplier development	.914	.057	.809	16.124	.000	.473	.814

a. DV: Performance

Findings indicates that enhancing supplier development leads to a significant improvement in the performance. The variables have a substantial connection (p < 0.05; P = 0.00). Organisational performance would rise in tandem with a 62.0% increase in the mean supplier development index, according to the report, as demonstrated by the t-value of 16.124 and p < 0.05, indicating significance. Results presented in Table 10 are explained by the following regression model: Performance = 0.061 + 0.914 (supplier development) This model illustrates how supplier development, contributes to improved performance.

➢ *Multivariate Analysis*

Table 11 Model Summary Multivariate Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.702 [a]	.492	.449	.58189

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier Development, Supplier Assessment

Supplier relations management was used as the predictor variable, and performance was used as the basis for the regression analysis. The results demonstrate a positive correlation with R = 0.702 and R2 = 0.492, meaning that modifications to the predictor variables listed in Table 11 can account for 49.2% of the variance in organisational performance. The remaining 50.8% of the variance is explained by other factors not included in this study.

Table 12 ANOVA[a] Results for Model Summary

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	37.843	2	9.461	14.548	.000 [b]
Residual	39.018	187	.211		
Total	**76.862**	**189**			

a. DV: Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier Development, and Supplier Involvement

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The management of supplier relationships has a big effect on output. The findings show that all predictor factors statistically and significantly affect performance, and the model fits the data well (F = 14.548). Table 12 illustrates how well the regression model predicts the dependent variable, with a significance level of 0.000, <0.05.

Table 13 Regression Coefficients[a] for Multivariate Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	.013	. 045		2. 293	.000	.756	2.281
Supplier assessment	.419	. 092	.317	4.539	.000	.123	.592
Supplier development	.175	.068	.172	3.302	.001	.081	.632

a. DV: Performance of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms

The results showed that every predictor variable significantly affected the performance.The findings indicate that supplier relations management and organisational performance are significantly correlated ($p < 0.05$; $P = 0.00$). According to the predictor variables' statistical significance ($p = 0.05$), raising their mean indices would enhance organisational performance. Table 13 summarizes these results.

➢ *Conclusion*

Research concludes supplier assessment significantly influences the performance, accounting for 60.2% of variation in performance. The results confirmed that improvements in supplier assessment lead to enhanced organizational performance due to its strong positive and significant impact. Similarly, supplier development was found to be significantly correlated with performance. This indicates that increasing efforts in supplier development can effectively boost organizational outcomes, highlighting its critical role in achieving operational efficiency and competitiveness. Collectively, supplier development, supplier involvement, and supplier collaboration were all found to have a significant influence on and play a defining role in shaping performance. The overall analysis revealed that these predictor variables could explain 50.8% of the total variance in performance, with the remaining 49.2% attributed to other factors not covered in this study. Among the predictors, supplier assessment had the greatest impact on performance.

➢ *Recommendations*

The study makes suggestions and recommendations to help food and beverage manufacturing companies operate better. Companies that manufacture food and beverages ought to implement a systematic and uniform framework for evaluating their suppliers. Criteria including product quality, delivery dependability, financial stability, regulatory compliance, sustainability practices, and innovation potential should all be part of this. To evaluate suppliers' continuous performance, audits should be conducted on a regular basis. These audits assist in identifying areas that require improvement and ensuring that vendors consistently satisfy the organization's standards. Supplier scorecards that monitor performance over time should be implemented by companies that manufacture food and beverages. By sharing these scorecards with suppliers, relationships are strengthened, transparency is promoted, and continual improvement is encouraged. Underperforming suppliers should get constructive criticism from food and beverage production companies, and they should collaborate to create plans for corrective action. This strategy encourages reciprocal development, enduring partnerships, and Make sure the standards used for evaluating suppliers support the company's strategic objectives, which include cost effectiveness, quality control, sustainability, and market responsiveness, in order to improve overall organisational performance.

To stay up to best practices in supplier assessment and relationship management, food and beverage manufacturing companies should provide their supply chain and procurement staff and suppliers with ongoing training. Furthermore, Use risk management techniques by classifying and identifying suppliers according to possible hazards (e.g., financial, operational, geopolitical). This aids in directing resources and attention towards important suppliers..

When evaluating suppliers, food and beverage production companies should use KPIs such as responsiveness, cost competitiveness, on-time delivery rate, and defect rate. Data-driven assessments increase supply chain efficiency and allow for objective decision-making. Involve several departments in the process of evaluating suppliers, including finance, production, quality control, and procurement. This all-encompassing strategy guarantees that every important supplier touchpoint is assessed for the best possible connection with business goals. Use digital solutions to automate and expedite the assessment process, such as SRM systems. This makes it possible to gather and analyse data in real time and assess supplier performance more precisely.

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