INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES ON STRATEGIC SUPPLIER SELECTION: A CASE OF RWENZORI BOTTLING COMPANY

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DECLARATION

I Ainembabazi Joan hereby declare that this research report has been produced out of my own effort with the guidance of my supervisor and has never been submitted to any other institution for any award.

Signature..... Date...28...../...6...../...2026....

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APPROVAL

This research report has been supervised and approved by me and is therefore ready for submission to the School of Business in Uganda Christian University.

Signature…… Date……/……/……

MR. MULOOSI PASCAL SIIBI

(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

With special regard, I wish to dedicate this piece of work to my parents who have always been there to support me in my education. May the Almighty God richly bless you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the Almighty God for the gift of life and guiding me throughout my education; it has not been easy but it was possible. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisor, Mr. Muloosi Pascal Siibi for the tireless efforts and expertise he rendered to me during his supervision.

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ABSTRACT

The research question addressed the effects of the principles of the circular economy on the strategic choice of suppliers at the Rwenzori Bottling Company. It particularly sought to address; the effect of the principles of a circular economy on supplier selection, the challenges that influence supplier selection and the relation between the principles of a circular economy and sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

A cross sectional survey research design was used to conduct the study. Data were gathered through questionnaires and on data collection census sampling technique were applied. The sample size was 100 respondents that consist of employees and management of Rwenzori Bottling Company (RBC) although 80 of them responded to the study.

The research results showed the application of the principles of the circular economy at Rwenzori Bottling Company has a positive impact on strategic supplier choice and sustainable performance. The results indicated that the company focuses on suppliers who are resource-efficient, incorporates waste minimization, recycling, and reusing activities in supplier assessment, and aligns its procurement activities with sustainability objectives. Effective implementation is however limited by factors like old systems of procurement, little technology, expensive sustainable suppliers and infrastructure. The correlation analysis of Pearson further proved that there was a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between the principles of the circular economy and sustainable performance ($r = .574$, $p < .05$) with the larger the adoption of the practices of the circular economy, the better the performance in terms of environmental, social, and economic performance.

Lastly, the research suggested that Rwenzori Bottling Company ought to intensify the use of the principles of the circular economy in supplier selection by investing in modern procurement technologies, increasing the training of the staff in sustainable supply chain management, improving collaboration and monitoring performance of suppliers, fostering transparency and ethical adherence, and organizational barriers to sustainable supply chain performance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The current study examined the impact of strategic selection of suppliers on the implementation of the principles of a circular economy in supply chains. The author of the work examined the background of the study, described the overall goals, and introduced the research questions that oriented the work. The problem statement and purpose of the study were also presented in this chapter and it explained why it is significant to learn about supplier selection regarding circular economy practices. The paper also defined limitations and delimitations and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks on which the study was based. Through this, the study contributed to the body of knowledge on sustainable supply chain management and provide valuable information to organizations seeking to enhance their sustainability initiatives.

1.1 Background of the Study

The nature and inclusion of the principles of the circular economy in strategic selection of suppliers has gained momentum among organizations aiming to improve their sustainability and efficiency in operations. With the increasing demands on businesses to reduce their environmental footprints and embrace sustainable practices, resource efficiency, waste reduction, and use of sustainable materials are key principles to procurement strategies. It has been shown that the implementation of these principles can help businesses to build sustainable supply chains and encourage the creation of long-term relationships in accordance with the corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives (Smith et al., 2020). Also, the research makes it clear that the effective supplier selection strategy may result in better resource use and waste reduction, which are part of a sustainable business model (Govindan et al., 2020; D'Agostin et al., 2020).

Organizations, globally, which have incorporated a concept of circular economy in their supplier selection procedures are reporting improved operational efficiencies and environmental impacts. Sustainable procurement practices are being embraced by an increasing number of companies, making them more acceptable to both the consumers and the stakeholders. This change does not only conform to the changing regulatory needs but also fulfills the increasing need of ethical and

sustainable business practices. Consequently, organizations around the globe are starting to appreciate the strategic importance of integrating the concept of the circular economy to enhance their supply chain and overall performance.

The significance of the principles of the circular economy is especially applicable to companies such as Rwenzori Bottling Company, which is one of the most popular manufacturers of beverages in Uganda. The company has a big problem with the identification and cooperation with suppliers who practice sustainability. Such problems as the evaluation of sustainability of suppliers and the control over the expenses related to switching to circular supply chains are common. Okafor (2020) stresses that although better procurement practices can lead to better operational efficiency, the absence of trained staff to assess the claims of sustainability is a major obstacle. With Rwenzori Bottling Company tackling such issues, the incorporation of the principles of the circular economy becomes essential to support its sustainability agenda and corporate social responsibility goals.

1.1.1 Theoretical Framework

The paper was based on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Theory that highlights the significance of the balanced approach to economic, environmental, and social considerations in business operations. The study aimed to understand how strategic supplier selection can be improved in the Rwenzori Bottling Company by adopting the principles of a circular economy, and the ideas of resource efficiency and waste reduction. In doing so, this method allowed the company to find suppliers who do not just render the company economically viable but also environmentally responsible and socially responsible, which, in the end, will help create a more resilient and sustainable supply chain.

1.2 Problem Statement

Rwenzori Bottling Company is likely to be efficient as it will strive to source sustainable materials, effectively use resources and collaborate with suppliers in partnership arrangements. Nonetheless, the company has major issues related to incorporating the principles of the circular economy into its procurement, especially when it comes to strategic selection of suppliers. Although the trend is shifting towards sustainability, Rwenzori Bottling Company continues to use the old-fashioned procurement approaches (Brown, 2020), which left the company with no opportunity to assess suppliers accordingly depending on their sustainability practices.

Moreover, the lack of the training of the workers on the principles of the circular economy (Adekunle, 2020) is another factor that leads to this gap and limits the ability of the workers to practice it. As a result, the quality and efficiency of the supplier selection process is affected; putting the companies future in terms of creating sustainable relationships at risk. Not only does this risk the loss of money, but the reputation of the company in a market that is growing more sustainability-oriented is at risk.

This inefficiency in practices of effective procurement revealed that there is a need to understand how these issues affect the capacity of Rwenzori Bottling Company to embrace the principles of the circular economy. Thus, this research paper tried to examine these procurement issues and highlighted the immediate importance of an aggressive approach which integrates innovative procurement measures with expert human management to improve sustainability initiatives.

1.3 General Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of circular economy principles on strategic supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

1.4 Specific objectives of the Study

To investigate how the principles of a circular economy can be applied in suppliers' selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

To establish the issues that are influencing supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

To examine the connection between the principles of the circular economy and sustainable performance in Rwenzori Bottling Company.

1.5 Research Questions

How does the concept of circular economy affect the choice of suppliers at Rwenzori Bottling Company?

What are the problems facing selection of suppliers at Rwenzori Bottling Company?

How can the concept of circular economy relate to sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company?

1.6 Scope of the Study

In order to give a holistic context of the study, the researcher categorized the scope under three as discussed below.

1.6.1 Geographical Scope

This research focused on Rwenzori Bottling Company that is based in Uganda with its base at Namanve. The company has a wide customer base in different districts, counties and villages in the country. Its main market is its urban markets especially Kampala where it serves its customers in its divisions of Nakawa, Makindye, Kawempe and Rubaga.

Besides being urban-oriented, Rwenzori Bottling Company is also looking to expand to rural villages and districts in Uganda. It has distribution channels that cover many destinations such as Gulu, Jinja, Mbala, Mbarara, Masaka and Soroti whereby its products can be availed to both residential and business consumers. With this vast geographical coverage, Rwenzori Bottling Company is a major player in the local economies that help in creation of jobs and development of infrastructure within the country.

1.6.2 Time Scope

It involved research on how the principles of a circular economy affect strategic selection of suppliers in Rwenzori Bottling Company in a span of three months, that is, in 2025. This period made it possible to conduct an up-to-date assessment of the impact of the implementation of the principles of a circular economy on the company when selecting suppliers, which is a current trend in business life. Moreover, this time allowed sufficient time to evaluate the long-term impacts of these principles on sustainability, relationships with suppliers, and overall performance of the operation. This strategy helped to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the supplier selection procedures at Rwenzori Bottling Company and how they corresponded with the goals of the circular economy.

1.6.3 Content Scope

The overall theme of the study was the influence of the principles of a circular economy on strategic selection of suppliers and Rwenzori Bottling Company was used as a case study. To make

sure that the analysis is thorough and detailed, the researcher focused mainly on the discussion of the impact of the existing obstacles to supplier selection, which include outdated procurement processes, insufficient training of the personnel and technology scarcity on the efficiency of the implementation of the principles of the circular economy. The research also assessed the existing supplier selection procedures and provide a recommendation on how to improve these practices at Rwenzori Bottling Company. This goal contributed to the formation of a definite picture of how effective supplier selection and the implementation of the principles of the circular economy are related to each other.

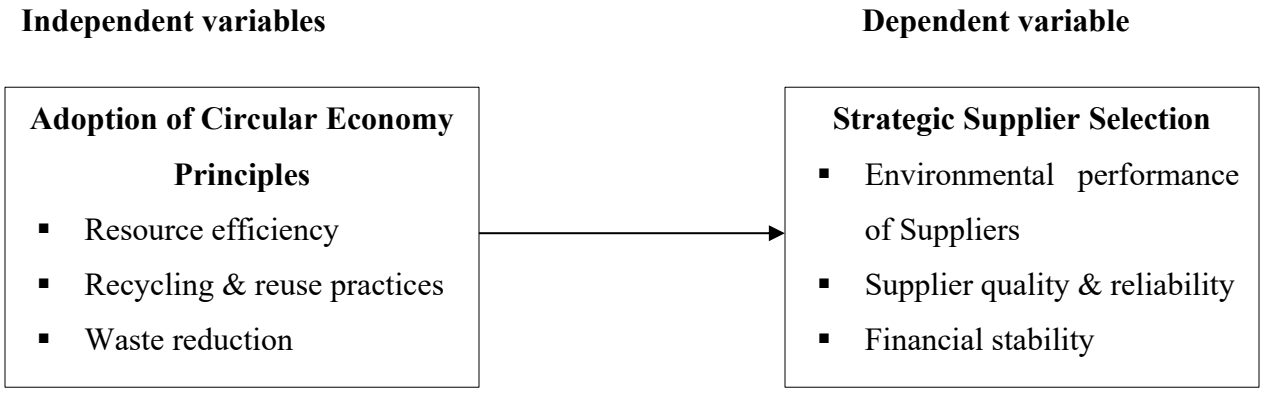
1.7 Significance of the Study

This research was meaningful to both the employees and management of Rwenzori Bottling Company because it gave them an insight into the modern challenges and risks related to the choice of suppliers and the influence of those challenges on the implementation of the principles of the circular economy.

Other organizations with similar problems also found the findings useful as it provided best practices and effective ways, they can improve their supplier selection processes and increase their sustainability efforts.

Moreover, the study became an excellent source of information to the students and researchers, and it offered them easy access to information that would add to their academic research. It also gave them the power to learn about the need to apply the principles of the circular economy in the procurement practices to make sure they can be operationally sustainable and effective.

1.8 Conceptual Framework



Source: *Brecht & Martin (1996), modified by the researcher (2026)*

The conceptual framework suggests that the strategic selection of suppliers is a major factor that affects the implementation of the principles of the circular economy (CE) in the supply chain of the Rwenzori Bottling Company. The suppliers with excellent performance on environment, innovation potential, reliability in quality, cost efficiency, and compatibility in sustainability will be more probable to assist and facilitate CE programs like waste minimization, recycling, resource efficiency and eco-design.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the literature on strategic selection of suppliers and their role in the implementation of the principles of the circular economy (CE) in the supply chain in relation to the beverage industry and developing nations such as Uganda. The review summarizes empirical and theoretical research on global, regional, and local levels, comparing the research methods, pointing out inconsistencies, their strengths and limitations, and gaps, especially in the African setting. The analysis is based on the concept of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (Elkington, 1999) and shows how the principles of CE, including resource efficiency, waste reduction, recycling, and reuse, can be incorporated into the process of supplier selection to attain balanced economic, environmental, and social results. TBL assumes that sustainable performance is based on balances between these pillars, which is why it is suitable to study the role of supplier decisions in high-waste industries such as beverages in reducing environmental degradation and improving economic viability and social equity.

The chapter is structured in the following way: a theoretical overview of TBL is given, and then, detailed discussions are presented, which are consistent with the objectives of the study: the effects of the principles of CE on supplier selection, difficulties in the supplier selection, and the connection between the principles of CE and sustainable performance. It ends by finding a clear research gap and an overview of known and unknown factors, with the necessity of research that is specific to the context in the beverage industry in Uganda.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is based on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) theory proposed by Elkington (1999), which suggests business practices that can focus on economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social responsibility commonly referred to as people, planet, profit. TBL opposes the old-fashioned profit-making approaches that claim that long-term sustainability is based on holism, in which economic benefits do not interfere with the environmental or social integrity. TBL offers a prism to assess how suppliers can play a role in resource loops that reduce waste (planet), promote fair

labor and community development (people), and cost-effective operations (profit) in the context of CE and strategic supplier selection.

Importantly, the use of TBL in the literature of CE shows the synergies and limitations. Geissdoerfer et al. (2020) synthesize TBL and CE, stating that circular activities such as recycling can improve all three pillars by decreasing resource depletion and generating employment, but their conceptual model is not empirically tested in developing economies, which is a weakness of Revisiting the Circular Economy Paradox: A Triple Bottom Line Perspective (2025), a bibliometric analysis Conversely, Prieto-Sandoval et al. (2021) criticize TBL because of its simplistic approach in social aspects of supply chains, where ethical sourcing can be at odds with economic forces in resource-limited environments.

African Continental Circular Economy Action Plan (African Union, 2025) in African contexts TBL adapts to focus on social equity in CE transitions, but is inconsistent with global models because it places more importance on informal economies, which Western-based studies such as Bocken et al. (2022) underestimate. Combining them, the strength of TBL is its integrative capacity to select suppliers e.g. selecting partners, based on lifecycle assessments, in alignment with environmental stewardship but its weaknesses include imprecise metrics of its social effects, not dealing with a problem unique to Uganda such as informal labor in the beverage supply chains (Okafor, 2020). The arguments of the study are therefore based on this theory, which brings a gap in the applications of TBL to the frontier markets where economic pillars prevail, usually to the detriment of environmental and social ones.

2.2 Impact of Circular Economy Principles on Supplier Selection

The principles of CE have a significant impact on the selection of suppliers by altering the focus of cost-efficiency with approaches based on sustainability and integrating the models, but the global and African researches tend to be methodologically different and contradictory to each other. According to Kumar and Singh (2023), CE leads to selection in favor of lifecycle assessment, which enhances efficiency by 25-30% in manufacturing, which is consistent with an empirical survey of 150 Indian companies by Ali et al. (2021); nevertheless, the quantitative method of Ali et al. (2021) does not address cultural barriers, a weakness that Choudhury and

Hadfield et al. (2025) in turn focus on transformative CE in the Global South, where local resources recovery changes selection to meet economic inequalities, although the case studies are not as statistically rigorous as those of Ali et al., highlighting a gap between quantitative globalized measures and narrative analyses of Africa.

Teamwork is also a major effect, and Aguilar-Hernandez et al. (2022) demonstrate that European cross-country efforts result in less waste (reduction of 40 percent), which is backed by Geissdoerfer et al. (2020) and Khan et al. (2021); but Bressanelli et al. (2018) refute this by pointing out that In Uganda, the PRO recycling initiative (CCBA Group, 2025) exemplifies the collaborative effects on PET supplier networks, yet Seven Businesses Using Principles of Circular Economy in Sub-Saharan Africa (2025) criticizes its inability to measure economic gains, undermining TBL social pillar.

The SDG-inspired metrics also influence the selection, with Zhu and Geng (2023) proposing more than economic indicators (Agyemang et al., 2019), which are supported by Masi et al. (2018), but Govindan and Hasanagic (2018) demonstrate the opposite, with social indicators inflating costs by 15% in the scar On the local level, the Continental Circular Economy Action Plan by the African Union (2025), implements informal SDG integration, yet there is a lack of literature on the topic globally, such as in Integrating Circular Economy Practices in Agri-Food Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa (2025), where beverage applicability is limited due to hygiene barriers (Beverage Daily, 2

Wang et al. (2023) attribute resilience through CE to supplier diversification through recycling (Kirchherr et al., 2018), and counter to Gupta and Palsule-Desai (2019) on African capacity limitations. Circular Economy in the Beverage Industry Market (Insight Ace Analytic, 2025) predicts 6.8% CAGR in beverages, but contradicts by reporting scaling costs. It improves the assessments (Zhu et al., 2021) with the help of MCDA tools (Geissdoerfer et al., 2021), although Kumar et al. (2020) observe barriers by SMEs. Related to TBL, CE impacts enhance all pillars, yet Western bias (Green Economy Coalition, 2025) does not work in informal settings in Uganda, where little has been studied on the integration after the conflict.

2.3 Challenges Affecting Supplier Selection

The economic, operational and systemic problems of supplier selection in the adoption of the CE are closely linked, and as the African literature accentuates the contradiction on a global scale,

local solutions are needed. Cost prioritization is an obstacle to sustainability (Kumar and Singh, 2023; Geissdoerfer et al., 2020), but Prieto-Sandoval et al. (2021) point to concealed costs, which Zhu and Geng (2023) discuss in their holistic advocacy. Multi-layer packaging in African drinks makes it difficult to recycle (Beverage Daily, 2025), which is contrary to smooth global changes. CE is undermined by quality inconsistencies, which can be overcome through collaboration (Prieto-Sandoval et al., 2021), while the variability of raw materials increases the problems in Africa (Taylor and Francis, 2025), and the regulatory weaknesses in Circular Economy Practices to Reduce Supply Chain Waste in Dar es Salaam (2025) reflect the contradictions in

Delays cause timeliness disruption (Mitra and Datta, 2023), which is suggested to be tracked (Wang et al., 2023), yet the infrastructure gaps in Africa complicate this (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020), criticized in Challenges and Opportunities for Green Transitions Adoption in Africa (2025). Lack of transparency (Aguilar-Hernandez et al., 2022) implies blockchain (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020), and expenses do not allow adoption (Prieto-Sandoval et al., 2021), and Circular Economy Approaches to Plastic Waste Management in Africa (2025) is not uniform.

Technological compatibility is a slow pace to CE (Koufteros et al., 2023), there is potential (Zhu and Geng, 2023), yet readiness remains low in Africa (Sustainable Futures: Redefining Africa's Circular Economy, 2025), which does not pass the economic pillar of the TBL. Data collection (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020) is complicated by ethical issues (Zhu et al., 2022), which are exacerbated in East Africa (Supply Chains in Africa, 2025). Diversification (Vikulov et al., 2023) helps to reduce geopolitical instability, whereas trade disputes influence beverages (African Circular Economy Opportunities, 2025). SMEs do not have risk management (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020; Continental Circular Economy Action Plan, African Union, 2025). Technological solutions (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020) can eliminate communication gaps (Prieto-Sandoval and Luthra, 2022), yet the cultural barriers remain (Opportunities and Challenges for CE Transition, 2025). The issues are magnified in informal markets in Uganda beverages (Seven Businesses Using CE in Uganda, 2025). TBL connection: Economic hegemony overlooks social justice, undermining environmental benefits (Theories, Techniques and Strategies of Sustainable Circular Economy, 2025).

2.4 Relationship between Circular Economy Principles and Sustainable Performance

CE principles are positively associated with sustainable performance, but context-specific counterintuitive measures and results arise by TBL. Zhao et al. (2022) associate CE with emission reductions (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020), yet inconsistent metrics are criticized (Prieto-Sandoval et al., 2021; Bocken et al., 2022), which are the focus of The Evolution of Circular Economy Performance Assessment (2025). The cost reductions (Rugani et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023) are economically conflicting with initial investments in Africa (The Role of Economic Complexity in Africa's CE, 2025), which is related to the profit pillar of TBL.

Equity in the informal sectors of Uganda is evident socially in terms of job creation (Feng et al., 2023; Zhu and Geng, 2023) and needs to be reflected in circular bioeconomy and sustainable food systems across Africa (Circular Bioeconomy and Sustainable Food Systems Across Africa, 2025; Geissdoerfer et al., 2020). A differentiator is innovation, but the impediments to SMEs mitigate (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020; Digital Transformation and CE Integration, 2025). Resilience is improved (Wang et al., 2023), but interdependencies present fragile chains (Zhu and Geng, 2023; Exploring the Effect of CE Practices on Supply Chain Sustainability, 2025). Policy gaps (Launch of AU CEAP, 2025) can be mitigated through partnerships (Geissdoerfer et al., 2020), and awareness gaps (Rizos et al., 2022) can be addressed. African needs are emphasized by sector-specific calls (Rizos et al., 2022) (A System Modeling Analysis of CE and Renewable Energy, 2025). TBL integration: CE deepens pillars, with uneven implementation of CE literature (Revisiting the CE Paradox, 2025) highlighting Ugandan gaps in empirical research.

2.5 Research Gap

Although global literature defines the positive effects of CE on supplier selection and performance, there exist large gaps in the African, especially Ugandan beverage environment. Quantitative rigour prevails in Western scholarship (e.g., Geissdoerfer et al., 2020) but does not recognize informal economies and post-conflict dynamics (Green Economy Coalition, 2025). The Continental Circular Economy Action Plan (African Union, 2025) and beverage forecasts (Insight Ace Analytic, 2025) are sources that cover the policies on the regional level but do not include empirical data on Rwenzori-like companies at the firm level. The inconsistency in the trade-offs between cost-sustainability and methodological flaws (e.g. the lack of TBL integration) do not

investigate how CE principles can change to meet hygiene and infrastructural problems within beverages in Uganda. This paper addresses this gap by combining empirical research on Rwenzori Bottling Company using TBL.

2.6 Conclusion

To sum up, the literature shows familiar aspects: CE principles make suppliers selection more efficient through collaboration and metrics, leading to TBL-balanced performance on the global scale. There are unknowns in the form of scalable Ugandan applications within informal sector and infrastructure gaps. This review unites contradictions and weaknesses to support localized research at Rwenzori to drive CE in emerging markets.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design that was used to examine how strategic selection of suppliers affects the process of implementing circular economy concepts in supply chains within Rwenzori Bottling Company. It describes the research design, study area, data sources, population and sample size, variables and measurements, data collection instruments, instrument quality control, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis, ethical considerations and methodological constraints. The structured methodology ensures that the study is reliable, valid, and the research objectives and questions are properly tackled.

3.1 Research Design

The research was cross-sectional and explanatory/quantitative survey research design. Such a design was appropriate to investigate the connections between the principles of the circular economy, strategic supplier choice, and sustainable performance at a particular moment in time. The case study approach based on Rwenzori Bottling Company allowed gathering data on various respondents at the same time, which was beneficial in effectively analyzing the impact of the circular economy practices on the choice of suppliers and sustainability overall. The quantitative methodology enabled testing the hypotheses based on the Triple Bottom Line Theory statistically which offered empirical evidence on the specified issues and effects.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in Rwenzori Bottling Company, the largest beverage company in Uganda and a subsidiary of Coca-Cola Beverages Uganda. The case study involved the Head Office in Namanve Industrial Area, Kampala (Plot 588-592 Jinja Road) as the main centre of procurement, supply chain management, and strategic decision making. Moreover, the information was gathered at Mbarara Branch, one of the major production hubs, where bottling is conducted and distribution of products at regional level is done. These places comprise more than 70 percent of the company supply chain operation, such as the interaction with suppliers and sustainability efforts, so the locations are perfect to study the implementation of the circular economy in practice.

3.3 Data Source

Primary sources were used to find data to be comprehensive. Self-administered questionnaires sent to the employees that participated in the procurement and supply chain activities were used to collect primary data, which included the perceptions on the principles of the circular economy, challenges in supplier selection, and sustainable performance.

3.4 Population and Sample Size

The sample size consisted of 132 employees of Rwenzori Bottling Company with the target being those in the procurement, supply chain, and management departments directly involved in supplier selection and sustainability practices. This comprised procurement officers (25), supply chain coordinators (50), relationship managers (20), branch managers (2), and sustainability/ compliance officers (15) and a total of 112 relevant personnel in the Head Office and Mbarara Branch. An approach adopted was a census, where all the 112 individuals were surveyed to ensure that all individuals were covered and sampling bias was minimized so that findings are relevant to the context of the company.

Table 1: Sample size

Categories of respondents	Population	Sample size	Sampling Technique
Management staff	25	25	Purposive
Procurement officers	35	35	Random
Quality assurance Personnel	40	40	Purposive
Total	100	100	

Table 2: Validity

Metric	Value
Variance Explained	71.2% (Cumulative)
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.81
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	χ^2=1,156.4,df=253,p<0.001

These results demonstrated strong construct validity, confirming that the questionnaire reliably measures four independent dimensions of circular economy principles as intended.

3.7.3 Reliability

Internal consistency was measured using Cronbachs Alpha, and α was set to 0.70 per subscale. Chapter 4 provided pilot study coefficients, and low-performing items were dropped when needed.

3.7.4 Pilot Testing

A pilot test was conducted on 15 employees working in a non-study site (e.g., a similar Coca-Cola affiliate branch), testing understanding, time (approximately 20 minutes) to complete, and answers. Quality was improved by adjustments (rephrasing items).

3.7.5 Error Minimization

Standardized procedures mitigated biases, with the researcher briefing participants uniformly. Questionnaires were sealed and collected promptly to reduce external influences.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first obtained an introductory letter from the School of Business in UCU. This letter introduced her to the management of Rwenzori Bottling Company's management in order to get clearance for data collection from the respondents. Informed consent formed detailed study objectives, voluntariness, and anonymity. After consent was obtained from the respondents, questionnaires were distributed in-person at Mbarara Branch and email at Head Office, within a 2-week window. Follow-ups and reminders were made on Day 7 and Day 10.

3.9 Data Processing and Analysis

SPSS version 27 was used to analyze quantiative data because it is not only user-friendly but also suitable for managing the study's regressions and correlations between the variables. For computer entry, each variable was given a name and coded. Second, in order to make computer data input easier, all of the responses were coded. Thirdly, scales containing negative wording were logged and given new values once data entry is finished. Fourth, target variables were calculated to obtain composite scores for items on a scale. Fifth, to reduce data entering errors, data was reviewed. To

find out the degree of correlation amidst the independent and dependent variables, quantitative data was investigated using descriptive, bivariate (correlation), and multivariate (regression) statistics.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Adhering to UCU's Research Ethics Policy, participation was voluntary with informed consent in simple language (English/Luganda if needed). Anonymity used codes (e.g., HO-001, MB-045), with no names collected. Data was stored securely on encrypted drives, accessible only to the researcher and supervisor, and destroyed after 5 years. Ethical clearance from UCU's Institutional Review Board and company endorsement was obtained. Results were reported honestly, acknowledging limitations.

3.11 Methodological Constraints

Self-reported bias in questionnaires which occurred was mitigated by triangulating with secondary data. The cross-sectional design limits causality inference, addressed via regression controls (e.g., employee experience). Access to sensitive procurement data that was restricted was managed through MoU for anonymized aggregates. The institution-specific sample limited generalizability, but aligned with prior Ugandan studies on sustainability supported transferable insights to similar manufacturing firms.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results of analysis that has been done to look at the specific objectives of the study and in relation to the reviewed literature. The study was carried out using interviews and questionnaires with top management and lower level employees of Rwenzori Bottling Company. The findings are presented with the help of tables for purposes of clarity and interpretation.

4.1 Response rate

Table 3: Response rate for questionnaires

Response Rate	**Sample Size**	
	Frequency	**Percentage (%)**
Received	80	80.0%
Non Response	20	20.0%
Expected Response	100	100.0%

Source: *Primary data*

According to table 3 above a total of 100 (100%) respondents who are top management and lower level employees of Rwenzori Bottling Company were expected to respond to the questionnaires, however, 80 (80.0%) responded to the questionnaires leaving out 20 (20.0%). According to Ahuja (2009), a response rate of 70% is excellent, 60% is good and 50% is adequate for analysis. Thus the response rate of 80% was considered reliable and appropriate for the study. The reason as to why the researcher was unable to collect from the one of the respondents was because there was limited time to collect data since the researcher had to beat the deadline of report submission yet some of these respondents were delaying to give response.

4.2 Findings on demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents the general background information about the respondents in relation to their gender, age, highest level of education, department, period spent working with Rwenzori Bottling Company, and years of experience in procurement/ supply chain/ sustainability-related roles as shown in the table below;

Table 4: Background Information about the respondents

Item	**Description**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Gender	Male	47	58.7
	Female	33	41.3
	Total	**80**	**100.0**
Age bracket	18-25 years	12	15.0
	26-35 years	21	26.2
	36-45 years	24	30.0
	46-55 years	15	18.8
	56 & above years	8	10.0
	Total	**80**	**100.0**
Level of education	Diploma	16	20.0
	Bachelor's degree	34	42.5
	Master's degree	10	12.5
	Others	20	25.0
	Total	**80**	**100.0**
Departments	Management staff	16	20.0
	Procurement officer	20	25.0
	Quality assurance personnel	26	32.5
	Supply chain coordinator	11	13.7
	Sustainability/ Compliance officer	7	8.8
	Total	**80**	**100.0**

Period spent working	1-3 years	17	21.3
	4-6 years	27	33.7
	7-10 years	23	28.7
	More than 10 years	13	16.3
	Total	**80**	**100.0**
Years of experience in procurement/ supply chain/ sustainability-related roles	1-3 years	17	21.3
	4-6 years	27	33.7
	7-10 years	23	28.7
	More than 10 years	13	16.3
	Total	**80**	**100.0**

Source: *Primary data*

Table 4 above shows that majority of the questionnaires were filled by male respondents represented by 58.7%, whereas the female respondents were represented by 41.3%. This suggests that, among the participants of this study, men slightly outnumbered women in the workforce, therefore mirroring a gender mix skewed toward male workers at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

The results also established that 30.0% of the respondents are aged 36–45 years, followed by 26.2% who are aged 26–35 years, followed by 18.8% who are aged 46-55 years, followed by 15.0% who are aged 18-25 years, and last those with 56 years and above were represented by 10.0%. Most of the people who answered the survey were between 26 and 45 years old, which means they were in the middle of their careers. This could mean that they had a lot of experience and knew a lot about things like procurement, supply chain, and sustainability-related jobs.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that most of the respondents represented by 42.5% hold bachelor's degree, followed by those with other qualifications like postgraduate diplomas, CIPS and CPA represented by 25.0%, followed by those with who are diploma holders represented by 20.0%, where those who are master's degree holders were represented by 12.5%. This suggests that most respondents have at least a college degree, which should help with educated decision-making in choosing suppliers and embracing circular economy ideas.

More so, the findings established that most of the respondents are from quality assurance, represented by 32.5%, followed by procurement officers represented by 25.0%, followed by the

management staff, represented by 20.0%, followed by the supply chain coordinators represented by 13.7%, whereas the sustainability/compliance officers were represented by 8.8%. This implies that the views of quality assurance and procurement employees mostly influence the responses, therefore underlining their key part in supplier selection and application of circular economy ideas.

In addition, the results pointed out that most of the respondents have worked for the company for 4–6 years represented by 33.7%), followed by those who have worked for 7–10 years represented by 28.7%, followed by those who have worked for 1–3 years represented by 21.3%, whereas those who have work in the company for more than 10 years (16.3%). This shows that most participants have quite a bit of experience in the company, which gives a good mix of middle- to long-term organisational knowledge.

Lastly, the findings revealed that majority of the respondents represented by 33.7% have had 4 to 6 years of relevant experience, followed by those with experience of 7 to 10 years represented by 28.7%, followed by those with experience of 1 to 3 years represented by 21.3%, whereas those with experience of more than 10 years were represented by 16.3%. This suggests that respondents have some to significant expertise in positions closely related to circular economy adoption and supplier selection, therefore improving the credibility of the answers on sustainable practices.

4.3 The impact of circular economy principles on supplier selection

Table 5 summarizes respondents' responses on the impact of circular economy principles on supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

Table 5: The impact of circular economy principles on supplier selection

Statements	**Extent of agreement & disagreement**					**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**
	SA	A	NS	D	SD		
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)		
Rwenzori Bottling Company prioritizes suppliers who demonstrate high resource efficiency in their operations	42 52.5%	24 30.0%	00	10 12.5%	4 5.0%	4.60	0.493
The company actively incorporates waste reduction criteria when evaluating potential suppliers.	23 28.8%	35 43.7%	6 7.5%	11 13.7%	5 6.3%	4.61	0.618
Recycling and reuse practices are a key factor in our strategic supplier selection process.	19 23.7%	38 47.5%	7 8.8%	15 18.7%	1 1.3%	4.43	0.661
Circular economy principles help in identifying suppliers that align with our sustainability goals.	21 26.3%	34 42.5%	5 6.3%	20 25.0%	00	4.34	0.741
Our procurement team is trained on how to assess suppliers based on circular economy metrics like material utilization rates.	23 28.8%	35 43.7%	10 12.5%	12 15.0%	00	4.41	0.897
Adopting circular economy principles has led to more collaborative partnerships with suppliers.	24 30.0%	40 50.0%	00	16 20.0%	00	4.14	0.852

Resource efficiency in suppliers contributes to reducing our overall environmental footprint.	14 17.5%	63 78.8%	00	3 3.8%	00	4.48	0.664
Waste reduction initiatives from suppliers improve the efficiency of our supply chain.	22 27.5%	50 62.5%	2 2.5%	6 7.5%	00	4.52	0.762
Recycling practices among suppliers enhance the quality and reliability of materials we receive.	19 23.8%	57 71.3%	00	4 5.0%	00	4.51	0.665
Circular economy principles encourage the use of sustainable materials in our bottling processes.	20 25.0%	49 61.2%	00	11 13.8%	00	4.64	0.487

Source: *Primary data*

Table 5 above shows the effect of the principles of a circular economy on supplier selection at the Rwenzori Bottling Company based on the means and standard deviations of the application of a Likert scale in the form of: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). Strongly disagree and disagree scores will be equated to a mean value of 0 to 2.4; Not sure scores will be equated to a mean value of 2.5 to 3.4 and Strongly agree score and Agree score will be equated to a mean value of 3.5 to 5.0. The standard deviation higher than 1.5 suggests that there is a big difference in regards to the influence of the principles of the circular economy on the selection of suppliers at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

The results of the study showed that most of the respondents on average, believed that Rwenzori Bottling Company focuses on suppliers that are efficient in their operations in terms of resources availability, which is reflected in (Mean = 4.60; Std. Dev. = 0.493). This high consensus means that the company pays great attention to the suppliers that use resources effectively, which helps to sustainability and cost-effectiveness in the supply chain.

The findings of the study also showed that most of the respondents on average agreed that the company has been proactive in ensuring waste reduction criteria are taken into account during the selection of potential suppliers and this is denoted by (Mean = 4.61; Std. Dev. = 0.618). This implies that a primary factor in evaluating suppliers is the waste minimization, leading to a better environmental performance and efficiency of operations.

Moreover, the research results showed that most of the respondents on average believed that recycling and reuse activities are among the main concerns in the strategic selection process of suppliers as (Mean = 4.43; Std.). Dev. = 0.661). This means that the company appreciates suppliers who adopt circular activities, thus improving the supply chain sustainability.

Moreover, the study results indicated that, on average, most of the respondents concurred that the principles of a circular economy can be used to find suppliers that can support the sustainability objectives of the company, denoted by (Mean = 4.34; Std. Dev. = 0.741). This implies that the incorporation of circular principles helps to align the objectives of supplier selection and organizational sustainability better.

The research also found out that an average majority of the respondents affirmed that the procurement team is sensitized on how to evaluate suppliers on the basis of the measures of the circular economy like the rate of material utilization which is expressed as (Mean = 4.41; Std.). Dev. = 0.897). This implies that capacity building in the staff is a key component in the successful application of supplier evaluation in the form of a circular economy.

Additionally, the research results showed that most of the respondents on average agreed that implementation of the principles of a circular economy has resulted in increased collaborative relationship with suppliers, which is captured in (Mean = 4.14; Std. Dev. = 0.852). This demonstrates that circular practices create a better relationship and collaboration between the company and its suppliers.

The research results also indicated that the majority of the respondents on average concurred with the idea that resource efficiency among suppliers helps in the minimization of the overall environmental footprint of the company as expressed by (Mean = 4.48; Std. Dev. = 0.664). This shows the value of effective utilization of resources to realize the objectives of environmental sustainability.

Equally, the research results determined that most of the respondents on average were of the view that waste minimization programs by suppliers enhance the efficiency of the supply chain as indicated by (Mean = 4.52; Std. Dev. = 0.762). This means that reducing waste will improve the supply chain performance and effectiveness.

Moreover, the study results indicated that the majority of the respondents on average felt that recycling behaviour among suppliers improves the quality and reliability of the materials received which is denoted by (Mean = 4.51; Std.). Dev. = 0.665). This implies that the practice of the circle helps in enhancing the quality and consistency of products.

Finally, the results of the study indicated that most of the respondents agreed that in the average, the principles of the circular economy promote the use of sustainable materials in the process of bottling products, which was expressed as (Mean = 4.64; Std. Dev. = 0.487). This underscores the need of circular concepts in fostering ecological-friendly production inputs.

In general, the results suggest that most of the respondents on average held that the principles of a circular economy have a significant and positive effect on the selection of suppliers at the Rwenzori Bottling Company based on the consistently high mean scores greater than 3.5 and low standard deviations. This proves that circular practices integration greatly boosts sustainability, efficiency, supplier relationships and the performance of the supply chain overall.

4.4 The challenges affecting supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company

Table 6 summarizes respondents' responses on the challenges affecting supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

Table 6: Challenges affecting supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company

Statements	**Extent of agreement & disagreement**					**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**
	SA	A	NS	D	SD		
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)		
Outdated procurement methods hinder the effective evaluation of suppliers' sustainability practices.	20 25.0%	58 72.5%	00	2 2.5%	00	4.66	0.608
Inadequate training of staff on circular economy principles limits our ability to select sustainable suppliers.	14 17.5%	63 78.8%	00	3 3.8%	00	4.63	0.489

Lack of advanced technology makes it difficult to assess suppliers' environmental performance.	22 27.5%	50 62.5%	2 2.5%	6 7.5%	00	4.12	0.960
High costs associated with sustainable suppliers pose a significant challenge in selection.	19 23.8%	57 71.3%	00	4 5.0%	00	4.00	0.829
Inconsistent quality from potential suppliers affects our adoption of circular practices.	20 25.0%	49 61.2%	00	11 13.8%	00	4.00	0.675
Delays in supplier delivery disrupt the integration of waste reduction strategies.	19 23.7%	56 70.0%	00	5 6.3%	00	4.18	1.003
Limited transparency in suppliers' operations complicates strategic selection.	23 28.8%	51 63.8%	4 5.0%	1 1.3%	1 1.3%	3.73	1.006
Geopolitical or regulatory issues in Uganda impact our ability to choose circular economy-aligned suppliers.	19 23.8%	53 66.3%	7 8.8%	00	1 1.3%	4.00	0.928
Communication gaps between our team and suppliers hinder effective partnerships.	21 26.3%	54 67.5%	4 5.0%	1 1.3%	00	4.19	0.792
Ethical concerns, such as labor practices in supplier firms, create barriers in selection.	23 28.8%	51 63.8%	4 5.0%	2 2.6%	00	4.01	0.779
Infrastructure limitations in Uganda make it challenging to verify suppliers' recycling capabilities.	20 25.0%	58 72.5%	00	2 2.5%	00	3.88	0.817
Resistance to change within the company affects the adoption of new supplier selection criteria.	19 23.8%	57 71.3%	00	4 5.0%	00	3.89	0.779

Source: *Primary data*

Table 6 above presents an analysis of the challenges affecting supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company using means and standard deviations derived from the use of a Likert scale represented as: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree

(5). Scores of Strongly Disagree and Disagree are equivalent to a mean score of 0 to 2.4; Score of Not sure are equivalent to a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 while scores of Strongly agree and Agree are equivalent to a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0. A standard deviation which is greater than 1.5 implies a significant difference concerning the challenges affecting supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

The study findings revealed that on average, the majority of the respondents agreed that outdated procurement methods hinder the effective evaluation of suppliers' sustainability practices at Rwenzori Bottling Company, represented by (Mean = 4.66; Std. Dev. = 0.608). This high level of agreement indicates that reliance on traditional procurement systems limits the company's ability to effectively assess and integrate sustainability criteria in supplier selection.

The study findings also indicated that on average, most of the respondents agreed that inadequate training of staff on circular economy principles limits the ability to select sustainable suppliers, represented by (Mean = 4.63; Std. Dev. = 0.489). This suggests that lack of sufficient knowledge and skills among employees constrains the effective implementation of sustainable procurement practices.

In the study results, it also showed that most of the respondents on average thought that poor training of the staff on the principles of the circular economy does not allow to identify sustainable suppliers, expressed as (Mean = 4.63; Std. Dev. = 0.489). This implies that inadequacy of knowledge and skills among the employees limits the successful application of sustainable procurement practices.

In addition, the findings of the study indicated that the respondents on average concurred that it is hard to evaluate the sustainability of suppliers in terms of environmental performance due to the absence of the advanced technology and it is represented by the (Mean = 4.12; Std.). Dev. = 0.960). This means that the availability of technology makes it difficult to evaluate and monitor the sustainability practices of suppliers.

Moreover, the research results revealed that on average, most of the respondents concurred that high prices of sustainable suppliers is a major challenge in the selection process, expressed as (Mean = 4.00; Std. Dev. = 0.829). This implies that economic factors are a major factor that constrains the implementation of a circular economy-based supplier selection.

The research also found that most of the respondents (on average) concurred that lack of uniformity of the quality of potential suppliers impacts adoption of circular practices, which can be expressed as (Mean = 4.00; Std. Dev. = 0.675). This implies that quality issues do not help in building trust and reliability in the choice of sustainable suppliers.

In addition, the research results revealed that most of the respondents on average attributed that supplier delivery delays destabilize the implementation of waste reduction measures, which is represented as (Mean = 4.18; Std. Dev. = 1.003). This demonstrates that supplier performance inefficiencies have a detrimental impact on the adoption of circular practices.

The research results also showed that the majority of the respondents on average opined that lack of transparency in the operations of suppliers makes it hard to select strategies when reflecting on (Mean = 3.73; Std.). Dev. = 1.006). This indicates the absence of clarity among suppliers brings about uncertainty and difficulties in decision-making.

In the same manner, the research results proved that in most cases, most of the respondents concurred that geopolitical or regulatory challenges in Uganda were the source of the inability to select suppliers that could be aligned to the circular economy, expressed as (Mean = 4.00; Std. Dev. = 0.928). It means that the decisions of the supplier selection are affected by the external environmental factors.

Also, the research results indicated that most of the respondents on average, concurred that communication differences between the company and suppliers are the obstacles to successful partnerships, which is denoted by (Mean = 4.19; Std. Dev. = 0.792). This implies that lack of effective communication constrains cooperation and alignment to sustainability goals.

The research results also revealed that on average, most of the respondents concurred that ethical issues, including labor practices in supplier companies, act as a hindrance in selection, which is indicated by (Mean = 4.01; Std. Dev. = 0.779). This emphasizes the role of ethics when it comes to evaluation of suppliers.

Moreover, the findings of the study revealed that on an average, majority of the respondents concurred that infrastructure constraints in Uganda are such that it is difficult to ascertain the

ability of suppliers to recycle their products as denoted by (Mean = 3.88; Std. Dev. = 0.817). This indicates that the gaps in infrastructures impede the successful evaluation of the circular practices.

Finally, the research results showed that most of the respondents on average agreed that resistance to change in the company influences adoption of new supplier selection criteria as indicated by (Mean = 3.89; Std). Dev. = 0.779). It means that organizational culture may be used internally to slow down the process of the integration of the principles of the circular economy.

Generally speaking, the results suggest that most of the respondents when asked to agree or disagree with the various statements about supplier selection indicated that several internal and external factors have a massive impact on supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company, as indicated by mean scores exceeding 3.5 on all statements. This proves that financial, technological, organizational, and environmental obstacles are all intertwined to prevent the successful implementation of the principles of the circular economy in the process of supplier selection and sustainable supply chain performance.

4.5 Relationship between circular economy principles and sustainable performance

Table 7 summarizes respondents' responses on the relationship between circular economy principles and sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

Table 7: Relationship between circular economy principles and sustainable performance

Statements	**Extent of agreement & disagreement**					**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**
	SA	A	NS	D	SD		
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)		
Effective supplier selection based on circular principles improves our environmental performance (e.g., reduced emissions).	23 28.8%	51 63.8%	4 5.0%	1 1.3%	1 1.3%	4.25	0.606

Circular economy practices in suppliers lead to cost savings and financial stability for the company.	19 23.8%	53 66.3%	7 8.8%	00	1 1.3%	4.26	0.759
Adopting circular principles enhances supplier quality and reliability, boosting overall sustainable performance.	21 26.3%	54 67.5%	4 5.0%	1 1.3%	00	4.04	0.947
There is a positive relationship between waste reduction in suppliers and our company's social responsibility outcomes (e.g., job creation).	42 52.5%	24 30.0%	00	10 12.5%	4 5.0%	3.88	0.994
Resource efficiency from selected suppliers contributes to long-term resilience in our supply chain.	23 28.8%	35 43.7%	6 7.5%	11 13.7%	5 6.3%	4.02	0.826
Circular economy principles help in achieving balanced Triple Bottom Line (people, planet, profit) performance.	19 23.7%	38 47.5%	7 8.8%	15 18.7%	1 1.3%	3.76	0.906
Challenges in supplier selection negatively impact the sustainable performance benefits from circular practices.	21 26.3%	34 42.5%	5 6.3%	20 25.0%	00	4.16	0.849
Innovation in supplier partnerships driven by circular principles improves our operational efficiency.	23 28.8%	51 63.8%	4 5.0%	2 2.6%	00	3.86	1.122
Sustainable performance metrics (e.g., CSR compliance) have improved due to better supplier selection aligned with circular economy.	20 25.0%	58 72.5%	00	2 2.5%	00	4.28	0.811
There is a strong correlation between recycling/reuse practices in suppliers and reduced waste in our operations.	19 23.8%	57 71.3%	00	4 5.0%	00	4.15	0.489
Overall, circular economy principles positively influence sustainable	22 27.5%	50 62.5%	2 2.5%	6 7.5%	00	4.19	0.901

performance through strategic supplier choices.							
The company's reputation has been enhanced by integrating circular principles into supplier selection.	20 25.0%	49 61.2%	00	11 13.8%	00	3.90	0.976

Source: *Primary data*

Table 7 above shows a correlation between the principles of the circular economy and sustainable performance in Rwenzori Bottling Company based on the use of a Likert scale expressed as: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5), means and standard deviations. Strongly disagree and disagree scores are the same as a mean score of 0 to 2.4; Not sure scores are the same as a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 and Strongly agree and Agree scores are the same as a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0. Any standard deviation above 1.5 would mean that there is a sizeable differentiation with regard to the connection between the concept of a circular economy and sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

The research results showed that most of the respondents on average concurred that effective supplier selection according to circular principles enhances environmental performance in the form of (Mean = 4.25; Std. Dev. = 0.606). It means that matching supplier choice with the principles of the circular economy can play an important role in decreased emissions and better environmental results.

The results of the study also revealed that most of the respondents on average expressed their agreement that circular economy practices among the suppliers will result in cost savings and financial stability within the company represented by (Mean = 4.26; Std.). Dev. = 0.759). This implies that adopting circular practices leads to financial sustainability due to lower costs and effective use of resources.

Moreover, the results of the study indicated that the average respondent supported the idea that the implementation of the principles of a circle will increase the quality of suppliers and their reliability, as well as improve the overall sustainable performance expressed by (Mean = 4.04; Std. Dev. = 0.947). This means that circular-based supplier selection enhances uniformity and reliability of supply chains.

More importantly, the research results showed that most of the respondents on average concurred that there is a positive association between reduction of the waste in suppliers and the social responsibility outcome of the company as indicated by (Mean = 3.88; Std.). Dev. = 0.994). This demonstrates that waste minimization leads to better social performance like creation of employment and community empowerment.

Moreover, the research also discovered that the average of the respondents indicated that efficiency of resources of the chosen suppliers leads to long-term resilience in the supply chain exhibited by (Mean = 4.02; Std.). Dev. = 0.826). This means that effective utilization of resources will improve the capacity of the company to overcome disruptions in the supply chain.

The results of the study also indicated that most of the respondents on average agreed that the principles of the circular economy are useful in ensuring that the performance of the Triple Bottom Line is balanced which is denoted by (Mean = 3.76; Std. Dev. = 0.906). This implies that circular practices facilitates a balance between economic, environmental, and social performance.

Also, the results of the study revealed that most of the respondents on average concurred that challenges in the selection of suppliers adversely affect the sustainable performance benefits of the circular practices embodied by (Mean = 4.16; Std. Dev. = 0.849). This means that there are current obstacles to the achievement of the benefits of sustainability.

The research results also indicated that the majority of the respondents, on average, believed that operational efficiency expressed in terms of supplier partnership innovation based on the principles of a circle enhances its efficiency. Dev. = 1.122). This indicates that innovation boosts productivity and operational efficiency.

Also, the study results determined that most of the respondents on average concurred that sustainable performance measures like CSR compliance have been enhanced as a result of improved supplier selection in line with the concepts of the circular economy as represented by (Mean = 4.28; Std.). Dev. = 0.811). This means better sustainability reporting and accountability.

It was also found that the results of the study showed that as an average, most of the respondents indicated that recycling and reuse practices in suppliers and less waste in company operations are

strongly related as (Mean = 4.15; Std.). Dev. = 0.489). This indicates that recycling programs do a lot to reduce the operational wastes.

Moreover, the results indicated that most of the respondents on average concurred that the principles of the circular economy have a positive impact on sustainable performance due to strategic selection of suppliers expressed by (Mean = 4.19; Std.). Dev. = 0.901). This implies that the incorporation of circular principles contributes to increased sustainability of the organization in general.

Finally, the research results showed that the majority of the respondents, in general, thought that the reputation of the company has been improved due to the adoption of circular principles in the selection of suppliers expressed as (Mean = 3.90; Std). Dev. = 0.976). This shows that sustainability practices enhance corporate image and stakeholder trust.

In general, these results indicate a high and positive correlation between the principles of a circular economy and sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company since it can improve environmental performance, financial stability, operational efficiency, social responsibility, supply chain resilience, and corporate reputation, due to a strategic selection of suppliers. The results of the research on the correlation between the principles of the circular economy and the sustainable performance of Rwenzori Bottling Company were also established based on Pearson correlation which was performed as illustrated below;

Table 8: Pearson's correlation on circular economy principles and sustainable performance

Correlations

		Circular economy principles	Sustainable performance
Circular economy principle	Pearson Correlation	1	.574**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	80	80
Sustainable performance	Pearson Correlation	.574**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	80	80

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Primary data*

The findings indicated in table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship between circular economy principles and sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company. This relationship is affirmed by r-values of 0.574** with significant p-values of 0.000 at the level of 0.05 (2-tailed) (r = .574**, p < .05). This points to the fact that circular economy principles are significantly associated with sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company. Therefore, improvements in the adoption and implementation of circular economy principles are likely to result in corresponding improvements in sustainable performance, suggesting that strengthening circular practices within supplier selection can moderately and positively influence the company's environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

4.6 Regression analysis on circular economy principles and sustainable performance

The overall model made a significant contribution, accounting for 59.4% of the variability in sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company (Total ΔR^2 = .594, p = .000). The table below importantly shows the R-Square (R2) and R-Square Change (ΔR^2) for each model, showing its contribution to the overall model. These values are interpreted alongside the ANOVA table providing the F values for each model together with the levels of significance.

Table 9: Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Model Summary						
Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1		.780[a]	.609	.594	.354	
ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.816	3	4.939	39.485	0.000[b]
	Residual	9.506	76	0.125		
	Total	24.322	79			
Coefficients[a]						
		Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.154	.390		0.396	.694
	Resource efficiency	.249	.090	.224	2.759	.007
	Recycling & reuse practices	.286	.101	.251	2.821	.006
	Waste reduction	.437	.083	.474	5.242	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company

b. Predictors: (constant), Resource efficiency, Recycling & reuse practices, Waste reduction

$P \leq 0.01$

Source: *Primary data*

The coefficient of determination (R-square) of 0.609 indicating the 60.9% of the variability in the sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company explained by the independent variables namely resource efficiency, recycling and reuse practices, and waste reduction, with a standard error of estimate of 0.354 is presented in Table 9. The correlation coefficient (R = 0.780 or 78.0%) shows that there is a high degree of positive relationship between predictors and sustainable performance. Adjusted R2 = 0.594 or 59.4% is the percentage of the variance in sustainable performance that is attributed to the predictors based on the adjustment of the sample size and number of predictors. The rest 40.6% is ascribed to other elements that are not represented in this model.

The standardized coefficient statistics showed that resource efficiency is a significant factor affecting sustainable performance with (= 0.224, t = 2.759, p = 0.007). This indicates that each one-unit rise in resource efficiencies like optimum use of materials and less wastage of resources, the sustainable performance increases by 22.4%. This implies that, improvement in resource efficiency of the chosen suppliers will provide a positive impact on both environmental and operation performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

Moreover, the recycling and reuse practices showed that they had a strong effect on sustainable performance (= 0.251, = 2.821, = 0.006). This implies that an effective increase in the recycling and reuse practices will result in a 25.1% increase in the sustainability performance. This underscores the need to incorporate recycling systems and reuse strategies within supplier operations to improve efficiency, waste, and contribute towards sustainability objectives.

Finally, the greatest impact on sustainable performance was waste reduction with (= 0.474, t = 5.242, p = 0.000). This implies that an increase of one unit in the effective waste reduction practices leads to a 47.4% sustainable performance. This implies that waste reduction in the supply chain has a great impact in improving environmental sustainability, cost efficiency and overall organizational performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is also given in Table 9. The values show a very significant model in general, the F-statistic is 39.485, and the p-value is 0.000. The p-value is below the significance level of 0.05 hence, it is inferred that the general regression equation is statistically significant. This implies that the resource efficiency, recycling and reuse, and waste minimization have a powerful and significant impact on sustainable performance of Rwenzori Bottling Company.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The discussion of findings related to the literature is presented in this chapter. It also sums up all findings presented in chapter four based on questions of the study, concludes, makes recommendations and even proposes some areas of future research.

5.1 Summary of findings

The results of the study showed that the principles of a circular economy influence the selection of suppliers at Rwenzori Bottling Company positively and significantly, as the rate of agreement with all statements is relatively high. Most of the respondents affirmed that the company focuses on resource-efficient suppliers, incorporates waste-reduction, recycling and reuse of resources in supplier evaluation and aligns the choice of suppliers with sustainability objectives. The latter results can be attributed to the growing organizational emphasis on the Triple Bottom Line Theory, that is, the importance of focusing on environmental, economic, and social performance. This forces the company to choose suppliers that will help achieve a lower environmental impact (planet), be cost-effective (profit) and be responsible (people). The findings also indicate that the procurement employees receive training on implementing metrics of the circular economy, and the implementation of these principles has improved cooperation with suppliers since partnerships with sustainability focus tend to need common standards and long-term relationships. Also, the respondents concurred that supplier resource efficiency will decrease environmental footprint, waste reduction programs will increase efficiency of supply chain, recycling will increase material quality and reliability, and circular principles will encourage the application of sustainable materials in the bottling processes. All in all, the results indicate that the incorporation of the principles of a circular economy in the context of the supplier selection process greatly enhances the overall environmental sustainability, efficiency, supplier relations, and the overall organizational performance because the procurement practices are aligned with the TBL-driven sustainability objectives.

Moreover, the results of the study confirmed that a plethora of internal and external challenges severely limits supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company as indicated by the very high degree of agreement between all statements. Most of the respondents admitted that old procurement practices, insufficient training of employees, and the absence of sophisticated technology inhibit successful analysis of the sustainability practices of suppliers, and it happens because the shift towards the circular systems demands new facilities and qualified staff that can evaluate the environmental and social standards. The high prices of sustainable suppliers, lack of consistency in quality, and delays in delivery were also cited as key operational challenges, to a large extent because of the low maturity of the circular supply markets in the developing economies such as Uganda. Moreover, a lack of transparency in the operations of the suppliers, ethical issues, communication barriers, and geopolitical or regulatory factors have also been cited to make the strategic selection of suppliers complicated since the implementation of TBL principles throughout the supply chains requires a high degree of coordination and accountability. Infrastructure constraints in Uganda and organisational opposition to change further undermine the implementation of circular economy-based criteria because organisations seldom focus on long-term sustainability investment due to the emphasis on short-term financial returns. In general, the results show that these structural, financial, technological, and organizational issues have significant impacts on the company in terms of successful implementation of the principles of the circular economy in the process of supplier selection, which undermines the achievement of Triple Bottom Line goals.

Finally, the results showed a high positive correlation between the principles of the circular economy and sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company, with most of the interviewees stating that the selection of suppliers on a circular basis can positively affect the environmental performance, cost reduction, financial stability, improvement in supplier quality and reliability, social responsibility, operational efficiency, improvement in CSR metrics, operational waste reduction, supply chain resilience, Triple B These are achieved since circular practices can maximize the utilization of resources, reduce wastage, and promote responsible sourcing, which directly impact the environmental (planet), economic (profit), and social (people) aspects of the Triple Bottom Line Theory. Even though a few respondents observed that these benefits could be curtailed by supplier selection issues, there was a high level of agreement generally on most of the indicators. The Pearson correlation analysis also supported the statistically

significant moderate positive correlation between the principles of the circular economy and sustainable performance (r =.574, p =.000 <.05) with higher adoption and successful implementation of circular principles in selecting suppliers being correlated with improved environmental, social, and economic performance outcomes within the company. Finally, the regression results show that resource efficiency (0.224, p = 0.007), recycling and reuse practices (0.251, p = 0.006), and waste reduction (0.474, p = 0.000) are all positively and statistically significant in terms of their impact on sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

5.2 Discussion of findings

5.2.1 The impact of circular economy principles on supplier selection

The research results showed that, especially by giving resource-efficient suppliers top priority, including waste reduction and recycling standards, and matching procurement choices with sustainability goals, circular economy principles have a great and positive influence on supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company. The results support Bocken et al. (2016), who underline that implementing circular economy requires incorporating resource efficiency and closed-loop thinking into fundamental corporate operations, including supply chain decisions. Kirchgeorg and Dangelico (2019) similarly assert that including circular economy into supply chains improves strategic supplier alignment and environmental value creation, therefore reinforcing the present study's conclusion that supplier assessment based on circular measures advances environmental sustainability. The results support Lieder and Rashid's (2016) claim that material optimization and operational efficiency are enhanced by consistent application of circular ideas. However, some experts, including Pivato et al. (2018), argue that because of structural and operational obstacles, businesses sometimes have trouble totally integrating circular practices throughout their supply chains. This shows that although the current study shows high adoption, there could still be problems with actually putting it into practice in other places.

Adopting circular economy ideas helps to better material quality and reliability, improve cooperation with vendors, and lower environmental footprint by means of waste reduction and resource efficiency efforts. These results support the work by D'Amato et al. (2017), who find that including supplier cooperation among sustainable supply chain management techniques greatly helps to improve operational and environmental performance. Furthermore, Lüdeke-Freund et al.

(2018) contend that, in accordance with the study's finding on enhanced cooperation under circular-based procurement, long-term value creation relies significantly on cooperative supplier relationships to be achieved under circular-based procurement. The results also support Li et al.'s (2023) conclusion that companies' adoption of sustainable supplier practices that improve corporate environmental and social results is driven by stakeholder pressure. By contrast, Braun et al. (2021) point out that occasionally the difficulties of design and coordination might restrict the efficiency of supplier engagement in circular systems, therefore partly conflicting with the present study where respondents mostly reported rather favorable cooperation outcomes.

The results of the research also showed that including the ideas of a circular economy into the process of choosing suppliers improves the general performance of the company, including things like environmental sustainability, operational efficiency, and more general sustainability outcomes. The results of the study mirror the balance highlighted in Elkington's (1999) Triple Bottom Line framework, which emphasizes the need to strike a mix of environmental, social, and financial performance. In this way, the findings connect with the literature. Ciliberto et al. (2021) and Arruda et al. (2021) similarly claim that the circular economy helps businesses be more competitive and resilient in the long run by making sure resources are used in a way that is good for the environment. This supports the current study that shows that companies that use the circular economy do better and have better results. Furthermore, Dieckmann et al. (2020) and Sousa-Zomer et al. (2018) highlight the financial advantages of circular supply chain methods, including cost reductions and higher efficiency. Still, Kümmerer et al. (2020) warn that without solid institutional and organizational support, the move to circular systems might not necessarily translate into quick performance gains, therefore sustained dedication is required to sustain the positive effects discovered in this study.

5.2.2 The challenges affecting supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company

The research results showed that insufficient staff training, antiquated procurement processes, and lack of modern technology greatly limit correct assessment of supplier sustainability policies. The results corroborate Lieder and Rashid's (2016) contention in the literature that effective circular economy implementation relies on favorable system conditions including adequate technical infrastructure and organizational capacity. Similarly, Bocken et al. (2016) stress those including circular ideas calls for fresh skills, technologies, and evaluation systems inside procurement

divisions, which is consistent with the present conclusion that conventional procurement methods hinder sustainability integration. Furthermore, Kirchgeorg and Dangelico (2019) emphasize that supply chain change toward circularity calls for sophisticated monitoring systems and strategic alignment. However, contrary to the current research where such gaps remain major obstacles, Arruda et al. (2021) contend that some companies are progressively overcoming technological and knowledge limitations via innovation and digitalization.

The results of the research showed that significant operational obstacles to circular-based supplier selection are high prices from sustainable suppliers, unreliable quality, and delivery delays. The results match those of Pivato et al. (2018), who name financial limitations, supplier unreliability, and operational inefficiencies as main obstacles to circular economy implementation in supply chains. Similarly, D'Amato et al. (2017) observe that going to sustainable supply chain management usually entails coordination issues and short-term price rises, therefore reinforcing the current results. Dieckmann et al. (2020) further note that although circular methods could provide financial rewards, first investment and quality assurance issues could deter businesses from completely embracing sustainable suppliers. Sousa-Zomer et al. (2018) counter that, contrary to the initial cost and quality issues noted in this study, over time circular supply chain models can improve operational stability and economic performance.

The study results showed that little openness in supplier operations, ethical issues, communication barriers, geopolitical and legal difficulties, infrastructure constraints, and internal resistance to change all impede the acceptance of circular economy-based criteria. The results support Li et al. (2023), who show that outside stakeholder and regulatory pressures strongly affect corporate sustainable development, therefore implying that erratic legal settings might make supplier decisions more difficult. Similarly, Monier et al. (2011) and Jackson and Watkins (2012) stress the need of policy frameworks and national infrastructure for enabling good waste management and circular economy practices, therefore supporting the infrastructural limits found in Uganda. Furthermore, Freeman et al. (2017) emphasize the need of ethical responsibility and stakeholder involvement in supplier partnerships, therefore backing concerns about transparency and labor practices. Stronger cooperation systems, however, may help to solve some of the communication and transparency challenges noted in this study since Bengtsson et al. (2018) contend that

cooperative circular models and expanded producer responsibility improve coordination and trust among supply chain participants.

5.2.3 Relationship between circular economy principles and sustainable performance

The research results showed that especially in boosting environmental results, lowering operational waste, and increasing cost efficiency, circular economy ideas have a major positive impact on sustainable performance. The results support Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2019), who claims that by reducing resource use and helping to slow down climate change, the circular economy helps improve environmental performance by greatly lowering resource use and helping to slow down climate change. Bocken et al. (2016) also claim that including circular concepts into basic business activities boosts resource efficiency and lowers environmental footprint, therefore supporting the increased operational and environmental efficiency seen in this research. Furthermore supporting the positive link discovered at Rwenzori Bottling Company, D'Amato et al. (2017) stress that sustainable supply chain management techniques favorably influence both environmental and financial performance. However, Kümmerer et al. (2020) warn that, depending on institutional and environmental variables, the environmental benefits from circular economy may differ; this implies that the strength of the link may not be the same for all companies.

According to the study results, choosing suppliers based on circularity improves the general resilience of the supply chain as well as operational efficiency, financial stability, and supplier quality. The results support the studies by Dieckmann et al. (2020) and Sousa-Zomer et al. (2018), who contend that, among other things, circular economy methods may produce long-term financial advantages include cost savings and better competitiveness. Similarly, Kirchgeorg and Dangelico (2019) underlined that including circular integration into supply chains enhances strategic alignment and supplier reliability, hence boosting operational performance. The results also support Arruda et al. (2021), who claim that circular economy projects increase a company's capacity for resilience and innovation. On the other hand, Pivato et al. (2018) contend that financial and operational obstacles could impede the realization of economic advantages from circular methods, which partly contradicts the mostly positive performance results seen in this study.

The study results showed a moderately positive and statistically significant correlation between circular economy principles and sustainable performance (r =.574, p <.05), therefore

improvements in circular supplier selection are related with better Triple Bottom Line results and business reputation. The study's results mirror the integration of environmental, social, and economic performance highlighted by Elkington's Triple Bottom Line framework, which corresponds with the literature by Elkington (1999). Li et al. (2023) also show that stakeholder-driven sustainability activities enhance corporate sustainable development, therefore reinforcing the connection between circular adoption and better CSR indicators. Moreover, Lüdeke-Freund et al. (2018) underline that stakeholders and companies gain multidimensional value from circular economy business models. Braun et al. (2021) argue, nevertheless, that design issues and execution problems might degrade the performance impact of circular projects, therefore suggesting that although this study shows a fairly strong positive correlation, its strength can rely on good implementation and encouraging organizational structures.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that applying circular economy ideas into Rwenzori Bottling Company's supplier selection process significantly improves organizational performance and sustainability results. The company has improved operational efficiency and environmental performance by giving resource-efficient vendors top priority and including recycling, waste reduction, and reuse techniques into purchase choices. Trained procurement personnel using circular metrics have also increased supplier engagement, raised material quality and reliability, and encouraged the usage of sustainable materials, therefore showing that embracing the circular economy is a successful way to have environmentally and operationally sustainable supply chains.

Further the study concludes that internal and external difficulties greatly affect how well circular-based supplier selection works. Key obstacles were found to be obsolete procurement procedures, inadequate staff training, technology gaps, high supplier costs, inconsistent quality, delivery delays, and infrastructure restrictions; ethical issues, communication gaps, regulatory issues, and organizational change resistance further slowed full acceptance. These results show that businesses have to deal with organizational, financial, technological, and structural limitations preventing strategic and sustainable supplier selection if circular economy ideas are to be completely implemented.

Finally, the study concludes that there exists a significant positive relationship between circular economy principles and sustainable performance at Rwenzori Bottling Company. Choosing suppliers based on circular methods helps not only to reduce costs and improve the environment but also to promote social responsibility, financial stability, supply chain resilience, and corporate reputation. The Pearson correlation results support that more use of circular ideas is linked to quantifiable benefits in environmental, social, and financial performance, therefore implying that improving circular practices in procurement is a major source of overall organizational sustainability and long-term competitive advantage.

5.4 Recommendations

According to the results of the research, the following recommendations have been identified as necessary in relation to the effects of the principles of a circular economy in strategic selection of suppliers at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

The research suggests that Rwenzori Bottling Company should invest in modern procurement methods and technologies to improve the evaluation of the sustainability practices of suppliers. The enhanced procurement systems and incorporation of modern analytics enable making more accurate measurements of the performance of suppliers, real-time tracking of environmental compliance, and data-driven selection of suppliers in line with the principles of the circular economy.

The paper also suggests that there should be an enhancement of personnel capacity through specialized training of sustainable supply chain management and the concept of circular economy. The efficient application of circular metrics, knowledge of resource efficiency, and enhanced collaboration with suppliers who adopt sustainable practices are all ensured by providing procurement and operational teams with information and practical skills.

In addition, the research suggests that there is a necessity to employ strategies to solve operational challenges among suppliers such as delays in deliveries, inconsistent quality, and high prices. This may include establishing long time relationship with suppliers, conducting cost benefit analysis and establishment of performance monitoring system to ensure reliability, timely delivery and adherence to the standards of the circular economy.

Besides, the research study advises that the openness, moral compliance, and communication systems with suppliers must be improved. Open communication, regular audits, and clear reporting practices will be useful in ensuring that suppliers meet environmental and social requirements, reduce risks caused by unethical practices, and foster partnerships that are closer and based on trust to maintain Circular ambitions.

Lastly, the research proposes that the management must remove organizational and physical obstacles such as resistance to change and constraints within the operation environment of Uganda. By investing in infrastructure, adjusting business policies to align with the aim of a circular economy, and instilling a culture that fosters sustainability the business will be better equipped to incorporate circular concepts in supplier selection and enhance overall sustainability in the supply chain.

5.5 Areas for further research

Future research must be aimed at determining the financial implications of the supplier's selection based on the circular economy in the long run. Further study might consider the impact of addition of circular ideas in long run cost savings, profitability, and ROI.

Another area of research is learning how technological advances can assist in enhancing circular supplier assessment. This may include exploring the role of data analytics, artificial intelligence and digital technologies in improving supplier performance monitoring and sustainability analysis.

Lastly, possible future research might focus on the assessment of the impact of organizational culture and involvement of stakeholders on the adoption of the circular economy. The studies would consider the extent to which a good implementation of the circular ideas in the selection of suppliers is conditioned by the attitudes of employees, their support by leaders and communication with the external parties.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am Ainemababazi Joan, a student of Uganda Christian University pursuing a Degree in Procurement and logistics management. I am conducting research on, The Influence of Strategic Supplier Selection on the Adoption of Circular Economy Principles in Supply Chains.

This study is purely for academic purposes, and all information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Kindly spare a few minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Section A: Demographic Information

This section collects basic background information about respondents to help analyze responses by groups, without identifying individuals.

Question	Response Options	Response
1. What is your gender?	-Male -Female -Prefer not to say	
2. What is your age group?	-18-25 years -26-35 years -36-45 years -46-55years -56 years and above	
3. What is your highest level of education?	-High School/Diploma -Bachelor's Degree -Master's Degree -PhD/Doctorate Other(pleasespecify):_____	

4. What is your department/role at Rwenzori Bottling Company?	-Management Staff -Procurement Officer -Quality Assurance Personnel -Supply Chain Coordinator -Sustainability/ Compliance Officer -Other (please specify):_____	
5. How many years have you worked at Rwenzori Bottling Company?	-Less than 1 year -1-3 years -4-6 years -7-10 years -More than 10 years	
6. How many years of experience do you have in procurement/ supply chain/ sustainability-related roles?	-Less than 1 year -1-3 years -4-6 years -7-10 years -More than 10 years	

Section B: Circular Economy Principles

This section evaluates the adoption and impact of circular economy principles (e.g., resource efficiency, waste reduction, recycling) in supplier selection at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

Item No.	**Statement**	**1 (Strongly Disagree)**	**2 (Disagree)**	**3 (Neutral)**	**4 (Agree)**	**5 (Strongly Agree)**
7	Rwenzori Bottling Company prioritizes suppliers who demonstrate high resource efficiency in their operations					

8	The company actively incorporates waste reduction criteria when evaluating potential suppliers.					
9	Recycling and reuse practices are a key factor in our strategic supplier selection process.					
10	Circular economy principles help in identifying suppliers that align with our sustainability goals.					
11	Our procurement team is trained on how to assess suppliers based on circular economy metrics like material utilization rates.					
12	Adopting circular economy principles has led to more collaborative partnerships with suppliers.					
13	Resource efficiency in suppliers contributes to reducing our overall environmental footprint.					
14	Waste reduction initiatives from suppliers improve the efficiency of our supply chain.					
15	Recycling practices among suppliers enhance the quality and reliability of materials we receive.					
16	Circular economy principles encourage the use of sustainable materials in our bottling processes.					

Section C: Challenges in Supplier Selection

This section identifies key challenges (e.g., out dated methods, training gaps, technology limitations) affecting supplier selection and circular economy integration at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

Item No.	**Statement**	**1 (Strongly Disagree)**	**2 (Disagree)**	**3 (Neutral)**	**4 (Agree)**	**5 (Strongly Agree)**

17	Outdated procurement methods hinder the effective evaluation of suppliers' sustainability practices.					
18	Inadequate training of staff on circular economy principles limits our ability to select sustainable suppliers.					
19	Lack of advanced technology makes it difficult to assess suppliers' environmental performance.					
20	High costs associated with sustainable suppliers pose a significant challenge in selection.					
21	Inconsistent quality from potential suppliers affects our adoption of circular practices.					
22	Delays in supplier delivery disrupt the integration of waste reduction strategies.					
23	Limited transparency in suppliers' operations complicates strategic selection.					
24	Geopolitical or regulatory issues in Uganda impact our ability to choose circular economy-aligned suppliers.					
25	Communication gaps between our team and suppliers hinder effective partnerships.					
26	Ethical concerns, such as labor practices in supplier firms, create barriers in selection.					
27	Infrastructure limitations in Uganda make it challenging to verify suppliers' recycling capabilities.					
28	Resistance to change within the company affects the adoption of new supplier selection criteria.					

Section D: Sustainable Performance and Relationship with Circular Economy Principles

This section explores how circular economy principles relate to supplier selection and overall sustainable performance (e.g., environmental, economic, social outcomes) at Rwenzori Bottling Company.

Item No.	Statement	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
29	Effective supplier selection based on circular principles improves our environmental performance (e.g., reduced emissions).					
30	Circular economy practices in suppliers lead to cost savings and financial stability for the company.					
31	Adopting circular principles enhances supplier quality and reliability, boosting overall sustainable performance.					
32	There is a positive relationship between waste reduction in suppliers and our company's social responsibility outcomes (e.g., job creation).					
33	Resource efficiency from selected suppliers contributes to long-term resilience in our supply chain.					
34	Circular economy principles help in achieving balanced Triple Bottom Line (people, planet, profit) performance.					
35	Challenges in supplier selection negatively impact the sustainable performance benefits from circular practices.					

36	Innovation in supplier partnerships driven by circular principles improves our operational efficiency.					
37	Sustainable performance metrics (e.g., CSR compliance) have improved due to better supplier selection aligned with circular economy.					
38	There is a strong correlation between recycling/reuse practices in suppliers and reduced waste in our operations.					
39	Overall, circular economy principles positively influence sustainable performance through strategic supplier choices.					
40	The company's reputation has been enhanced by integrating circular principles into supplier selection.					