

**STRATEGIC SOURCING AND COMPETITIVENESS IN SUPERMARKETS
A CASE OF ABRAH SUPERMARKET**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I Mwangi Emmaculate Wangeci, declare that the content of this research report is my original work and to the best of my knowledge this work has never been submitted anywhere for any award. It is done through my own efforts.

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APPROVAL

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Date: 30/07/2024.....

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to my beloved parents, Mrs. Ann Wamuyu, Mr. John Mwangi, and Betty Nasike, whose unwavering support and financial assistance have been instrumental in my academic journey. Your sacrifices, encouragement, and belief in my potential have provided me with the foundation to pursue my dreams and achieve my goals. For your endless love, guidance, and contributions to my education and all aspects of my life, I am eternally grateful.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIPS	:	Chartered Institutes of Procurement and Supply Chain
MTIC	:	Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives
PDU	:	Procurement and Disposal Unit PO-Procurement Officer
PPDA	:	Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets
PPDA	:	Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRM	:	Supplier Relationship Management
UCU	:	Uganda Christian University

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ABSTRACT

The research was undertaken to investigate on strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets. It was guided by three objectives; to assess the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets, to analyze the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets, to determine the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets. The researcher used a sample size of 40 respondents and used questionnaires and interview guide to collect data and later the data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Results of the first objective shows that supplier relationships positively (Beta=0.153) predicts the competitiveness in supermarkets and effect is significant at p-value < 0.05. by 9.9%, Results of the second objective reveals that tax risk management on positively (Beta=0.224) predicts the competitiveness in supermarkets and effect is significant at p-value < 0.05. by 7.8% while results of the third objective show that supply chain management (Beta=0.091) predicts and affects their competitiveness in supermarkets. However, its effect is insignificant at p-value > 0.05 by 3.5%. It can be concluded that supplier relationships have a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets, risk management has a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets and lastly supply chain management have a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets. There is need Abrah supermarket to regularly communicate with suppliers to maintain a strong relationship. Keep them updated on sales data, inventory levels, and upcoming promotions. This will help them plan their production and ensure the timely delivery of products. Work together with suppliers to forecast demand and plan production accordingly. Sharing information about upcoming promotions and sales targets can help suppliers prepare in advance and ensure they have sufficient inventory. Negotiate competitive pricing, payment terms, and discounts with suppliers. This can help reduce costs and increase profitability, making the supermarket more competitive.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, specific objectives, and research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, justification of the study and conceptual framework.

1.0 Background of the study

1.1.1 Historical background

In the global perspective, the study of strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets has gained significant attention in recent years. The increasing globalization of markets and the intensifying competition have prompted supermarkets to adopt innovative strategies to enhance their sourcing capabilities and maintain a competitive edge (Hwarng & Yu, 2024). The emergence of advanced technologies, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence, has revolutionized the way supermarkets source and procure products, enabling them to optimize supplier relationships, negotiate better deals, and improve operational efficiency (Bryce et al., 2022). These technological advancements, coupled with the growing demand for sustainable sourcing practices, have driven supermarkets to adopt strategic sourcing initiatives and prioritize competitiveness in their supply chain operations (Li et al., 2020).

In the past few decades, the supermarket industry has experienced significant transformations due to globalization and technological advancements. The concept of strategic sourcing, which involves strategically managing suppliers to optimize costs, quality, and delivery, has gained

prominence as a key strategy for supermarkets to enhance their competitiveness in the global market (Xiao et al., 2020). The increasing competition and demands from customers regarding product variety, quality, and pricing have necessitated supermarkets to adopt efficient sourcing practices to remain competitive in the global marketplace (Porter, 2024). This focus on strategic sourcing aims to enhance operational efficiency, reduce costs, and gain a competitive advantage. In a global perspective, supermarkets have been adopting strategic sourcing practices to tap into global supply chains, ensuring the availability of a wide range of products from all around the world (Li & Gu, 2020). These practices involve establishing strong supplier relationships, implementing efficient procurement processes, and leveraging economies of scale to negotiate favorable terms with suppliers.

In the African context, the study of strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets has witnessed notable developments in recent years. As African economies continue to experience steady growth, the supermarket industry has expanded rapidly across the continent, attracting both local and international players (Barasa et al., 2020). African supermarkets face unique challenges, including limited local supplier options, infrastructure constraints, and diverse cultural and regulatory environments (Bezuidenhout & Brouder, 2024). Consequently, strategic sourcing practices have become crucial for African supermarkets to maintain competitive advantage by ensuring a reliable supply of high-quality products, managing costs, and developing strong supplier relationships (Hamad et al., 2024). The growing interest in regional integration, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), also presents opportunities and challenges for supermarkets to enhance their competitiveness through strategic sourcing across borders (Molinga et al., 2022).

Furthermore in Africa, the supermarket sector has undergone rapid growth over the past decade, driven by urbanization, changing consumer preferences, and rising living standards. However, African supermarkets face unique challenges related to infrastructure, logistics, and supply chain management (Buckley et al., 2024). Strategic sourcing practices can play a vital role in overcoming these challenges by ensuring a reliable supply of products, minimizing costs, and improving quality. African supermarkets can leverage strategic partnerships with suppliers, invest in local procurement, and adopt innovative approaches to sourcing to enhance their competitiveness (Ndlovu et al., 2022).

In Uganda, the study of strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets has gained momentum in recent years as the retail sector experiences significant growth and modernization. The rising middle class and urbanization have fueled the demand for modern supermarkets, resulting in intense competition in the industry (Mukiibi et al., 2024). Ugandan supermarkets have recognized the importance of strategic sourcing in securing a sustainable supply of products, reducing costs, and meeting customer expectations (Baguma et al., 2020).

1.1.2 Theoretical background

The study was guided by Resource-Based View (RBV) developed by Jay Barney in 1991. The RBV posits that firms achieve competitive advantage by acquiring and managing valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). In the context of supermarkets, these resources could include efficient supply chain management systems, strong supplier relationships, proprietary technologies, and skilled personnel. By strategically sourcing these resources, supermarkets can optimize their operations, reduce costs, and enhance customer satisfaction, thereby gaining a competitive edge in the market.

The assumptions underlying the RBV include the heterogeneity and immobility of resources. This means that resources and capabilities are unevenly distributed across firms and cannot be easily transferred or replicated. The theory assumes that firms possess unique bundles of resources that can be strategically leveraged to achieve superior performance. In supermarkets, this could translate into exclusive supplier agreements, advanced inventory management systems, or a unique brand reputation that competitors find difficult to imitate. These unique resources enable supermarkets to deliver superior value to customers and differentiate themselves in a highly competitive market (Barney, 1991).

The strength of the RBV lies in its focus on internal resources and capabilities as the basis for competitive advantage, providing a clear framework for firms to identify and develop their strategic assets. However, a limitation of the RBV is its relative neglect of external factors such as market dynamics and competitive actions, which also play a crucial role in a firm's success. Additionally, the theory assumes that valuable resources are always identifiable and manageable, which may not always be the case in practice. Despite these limitations, the RBV effectively

explains how strategic sourcing of unique and valuable resources can enhance a supermarket's competitiveness by enabling cost leadership, differentiation, and improved operational efficiency (Barney, 1991).

1.1.3 Conceptual background

Strategic sourcing is a procurement process that continuously improves and re-evaluates the purchasing activities of a company. It involves analyzing and making decisions on how to source products and services in a way that enhances the company's competitive position. According to Monczka, Handfield, Giunipero, and Patterson (2015), strategic sourcing focuses on total cost of ownership and long-term supplier relationships, rather than simply choosing suppliers based on the lowest price. This approach enables firms to align their sourcing strategy with their overall business strategy, thereby improving efficiency and creating value.

Supplier relationships refer to the interactions and partnerships between a company and its suppliers. Effective supplier relationship management is essential for ensuring a reliable supply of goods and services, maintaining quality standards, and fostering innovation. According to Villena, Revilla, and Choi (2016), strong supplier relationships are characterized by trust, communication, and mutual benefits. These relationships can lead to improved performance, reduced risks, and cost savings, which are critical for the success of the supply chain.

Risk management in supply chains involves identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that can disrupt the flow of goods and services. This includes risks related to suppliers, transportation, political instability, natural disasters, and market volatility. According to Lavastre, Gunasekaran, and Spalanzani (2014), effective risk management strategies include diversification of suppliers, maintaining safety stocks, and implementing robust contingency plans. By proactively managing risks, companies can ensure supply chain resilience and continuity.

Supply chain management (SCM) encompasses the planning, implementation, and control of supply chain operations to create value, build a competitive infrastructure, leverage logistics, synchronize supply with demand, and measure performance globally. As defined by Christopher (2016), SCM integrates key business processes from end-users through original suppliers,

providing products, services, and information that add value for customers and other stakeholders. Effective SCM improves efficiency, reduces costs, and enhances customer satisfaction.

Competitiveness in supermarkets refers to the ability of a supermarket to attract and retain customers by offering better value than its competitors. This can be achieved through various strategies such as pricing, product assortment, store layout, and customer service. According to Kumar, Anand, and Song (2017), supermarkets enhance their competitiveness by adopting innovative practices, leveraging technology, and optimizing their supply chains. These strategies help supermarkets to meet customer needs more effectively and efficiently, thereby gaining a competitive advantage in the market.

Pricing strategy involves determining the best price for a product or service to maximize profitability while considering market conditions, competition, and customer value perceptions. According to Hinterhuber and Liozu (2014), effective pricing strategies can include cost-plus pricing, value-based pricing, and dynamic pricing. In supermarkets, pricing strategies are crucial as they directly impact sales volume, market share, and customer loyalty. By strategically setting prices, supermarkets can attract price-sensitive customers, compete with rivals, and enhance profitability.

Technology integration in supply chain management involves the use of advanced technologies to improve efficiency, accuracy, and visibility across the supply chain. This includes technologies such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, radio-frequency identification (RFID), and blockchain. According to Wieland, Handfield, and Durach (2016), technology integration enables real-time tracking, better demand forecasting, and enhanced collaboration among supply chain partners. By leveraging technology, companies can streamline operations, reduce costs, and improve decision-making.

Customer service is the support provided by a company to its customers before, during, and after purchasing a product or service. High-quality customer service can lead to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. According to Homburg, Jozić, and Kuehnl (2017), effective customer service strategies include personalized interactions, prompt responses, and resolving issues efficiently. In supermarkets, excellent customer service can differentiate the

store from competitors, enhance the shopping experience, and build long-term customer relationships.

1.1.4 Contextual background

Customer service is the support provided by a company to its customers before, during, and after purchasing a product or service. High-quality customer service can lead to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. According to Homburg, Jozić, and Kuehnl (2017), effective customer service strategies include personalized interactions, prompt responses, and resolving issues efficiently. In supermarkets, excellent customer service can differentiate the store from competitors, enhance the shopping experience, and build long-term customer relationships.

Since its inception, Abra Supermarket has focused on strategic sourcing and building robust supplier relationships to ensure a steady supply of diverse products ranging from groceries and household items to electronics and clothing. This strategy has enabled the supermarket to offer competitive prices and maintain high standards of quality. Additionally, Abra has invested in technology integration, such as advanced inventory management systems, to optimize its operations and enhance customer satisfaction (Uganda Investment Authority, 2018). These efforts have positioned Abra Supermarket as a leader in the local retail market, driving consumer trust and loyalty.

In recent years, Abra Supermarket has also placed a strong emphasis on community engagement and social responsibility. It has launched various initiatives aimed at supporting local communities, including sponsorship of local events, donations to schools, and environmental conservation projects. These initiatives have not only bolstered the supermarket's reputation but also reinforced its commitment to contributing positively to the socio-economic development of Mbale. As Abra continues to expand and innovate, it remains a cornerstone of the retail sector in the region, adapting to changing consumer needs and market dynamics (Mbale City Council, 2020).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Strategic sourcing should enable supermarkets to achieve a competitive edge by optimizing their supply chain processes, reducing costs, and ensuring high-quality product availability. Strategic sourcing involves the systematic evaluation and selection of suppliers based on their capability to meet the organization's long-term needs (Carr & Smeltzer, 2022). For supermarkets like Abrah Supermarket, effective strategic sourcing would mean consistently meeting customer demand, maintaining competitive pricing, and offering a diverse product range. However, achieving this ideal state requires a comprehensive understanding of market dynamics, supplier capabilities, and the implementation of best procurement practices (Monczka, Handfield, Giunipero, & Patterson, 2016).

In reality, supermarkets face numerous challenges in implementing strategic sourcing strategies. Abrah Supermarket, for example, must navigate issues such as fluctuating supplier reliability, varying quality standards, and the complexities of global supply chains. Additionally, the competitive nature of the retail market places constant pressure on supermarkets to innovate and adapt (Gordon, 2020). Statistics indicate that supermarkets that effectively employ strategic sourcing can reduce procurement costs by up to 20% and improve supply chain efficiency by 15% (KPMG, 2018). Yet, many supermarkets struggle to realize these benefits due to inadequate supplier management and lack of strategic alignment within their procurement processes (Accenture, 2017).

The consequences of not addressing these challenges are significant. Without effective strategic sourcing, Abrah Supermarket risks higher operational costs, stockouts, and reduced customer satisfaction, ultimately impacting its market competitiveness. The urgent need for this study arises from the growing competition in the retail sector and the need for supermarkets to enhance their sourcing strategies to remain viable (Deloitte, 2024). This research aims to explore the strategic sourcing practices at Abrah Supermarket, identify gaps, and provide recommendations for improving competitiveness. By addressing these issues, Abrah Supermarket can better position itself in the market, achieve cost efficiencies, and enhance customer satisfaction, thus ensuring long-term sustainability (McKinsey & Company, 2019).

1.3 Purpose of the study

To investigate on strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets

1.4 Specific objectives

- i. To assess the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets
- ii. To analyze the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets
- iii. To determine the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets

1.5 Research questions

- i. What is the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets
- ii. What is the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets
- iii. What is the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Time scope

The period to be considered for the study will be 2 years from 2020 to 2022 this is because during that period, many supermarkets are closing down due to a number of reasons such as stiff competition, high taxes, and low sales, among others.

1.6.2 Content scope

The study was limited to the following;

Supplier relationships, risk management, supply chain management, pricing strategy, technology integration, customer service

1.6.3 Geographical scope

The study was carried out from Abra super market that located along clock tower plot A 104 guga Plaza. Abra Supermarket primary category is shopping. It was chosen because it is a shopping centre dealing in a wide range of products of consumables.

1.7 Significance of the study

The significance of the study on strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets, particularly Abra Supermarket, lies in its potential to improve the overall performance and success of the organization. Here are some key areas where this study can have a significant impact:

Cost reduction: Strategic sourcing aims to optimize the procurement process and identify cost-saving opportunities. By analyzing the supplier base, negotiating better terms, and exploring alternative sourcing strategies, Abra Supermarket can achieve cost reductions and enhance its financial performance.

Supplier relationship management: Developing strong and collaborative relationships with suppliers is vital for the success of any supermarket. By studying strategic sourcing practices, Abra Supermarket can identify ways to improve its supplier relationships, such as negotiating favorable contracts, improving communication, and fostering long-term partnerships.

Competitive advantage: In a highly competitive market, having a strategic sourcing approach can differentiate Abra Supermarket from its competitors. By strategically selecting suppliers, ensuring product quality and availability, and optimizing costs, the supermarket can gain a competitive edge. This study can help Abra Supermarket understand how to leverage strategic sourcing to enhance its competitiveness.

Product quality and customer satisfaction: Strategic sourcing involves evaluating suppliers for their capability to provide high-quality products. By selecting reliable suppliers and maintaining stringent quality control measures, Abra Supermarket can offer superior products to its customers. This focus on quality can result in higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Supply chain efficiency: Efficient sourcing practices can streamline the supply chain, reduce lead times, and ensure timely delivery of products. By examining the strategic sourcing process, Abra Supermarket can identify bottlenecks, minimize inventory holding costs, improve order fulfillment, and achieve overall supply chain efficiency.

1.8 Justification of the study

Justification of the study for strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets, especially Abra Supermarket

Importance of strategic sourcing: Strategic sourcing plays a crucial role in determining a supermarket's competitiveness in today's dynamic business environment. By strategically managing the procurement of goods and services, supermarkets may optimize their supply chains, reduce costs, improve quality, and enhance overall operational efficiency. Understanding the factors that contribute to strategic sourcing success is vital for supermarkets, including Abra Supermarket, to gain a competitive edge.

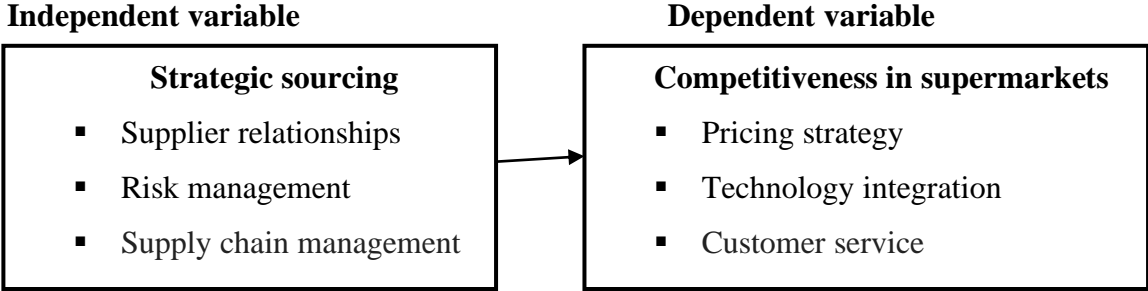
Growing competitive environment: The supermarket industry is highly competitive, with numerous players vying for market share. As such, supermarkets need to continuously evaluate and enhance their sourcing strategies to remain competitive. By examining the relationship between strategic sourcing practices and competitiveness, this study may help identify key drivers of success and provide insights into how Abra Supermarket can better position itself in this challenging market.

Need for cost optimization: One of the primary objectives of strategic sourcing is cost optimization. Supermarkets operate on slim profit margins, and effective sourcing practices can significantly impact their financial performance. This study may assess the extent to which strategic sourcing influences cost optimization in Abra Supermarket and identify specific strategies that may be implemented to achieve greater cost efficiencies.

Supply chain efficiency: Inefficient supply chains can impede a supermarket's ability to compete effectively. Strategic sourcing practices contribute to supply chain efficiency by streamlining processes, managing suppliers, and mitigating risks. This study may evaluate how Abra

Supermarket's sourcing strategies impact its supply chain performance, helping identify areas for improvement and highlighting best practices that may enhance competitiveness.

Figure 1 conceptual framework



Source: Researcher’s conceptualization (2024)

Figure 1 above indicates strategic sourcing as an independent variable encompasses supplier relationships, risk management, and supply chain management, all of which play vital roles in enhancing the competitiveness of supermarkets. By fostering strong supplier relationships, supermarkets can secure reliable sources of quality products at competitive prices, thus improving their market position and customer satisfaction. Effective risk management helps supermarkets proactively identify and mitigate potential supply chain disruptions, ensuring business continuity and resilience. Furthermore, a well-optimized supply chain management strategy allows supermarkets to streamline operations, reduce costs, and respond quickly to changing market demands, ultimately enhancing their competitiveness by offering greater efficiency, flexibility, and customer value likewise dependent variable that is competitiveness in supermarkets comprises of pricing strategy, technology integration, and customer service.

1.10 Definition of key terms

Strategic sourcing refers to the systematic process of identifying, evaluating, and managing suppliers to ensure the procurement of goods and services that meet an organization's strategic objectives in terms of cost, quality, and value. It involves analyzing supplier relationships, negotiating contracts, and optimizing the supply base (Accenture, 2024).

Competitiveness in supermarkets refers to the ability of a supermarket or grocery store to attract and retain customers in a highly competitive market. It involves offering a unique value proposition, such as low prices, high-quality products, convenience, and a compelling customer experience, to differentiate from competitors and gain market share (Reuters, 2020).

Supplier relationships refer to the connections and interactions between a company and its suppliers. It involves building collaborative partnerships with suppliers based on trust, communication, shared goals, and mutual benefits. Strong supplier relationships can lead to improved product quality, cost savings, innovation, and supply chain resilience (Deloitte, 2020).

Risk management is the systematic process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that could potentially disrupt operations and impact business objectives. It involves implementing strategies, policies, and procedures to minimize the impact of risks on the supply chain, including supply disruptions, natural disasters, geopolitical instability, and financial uncertainties (McKinsey & Company, 2024).

Supply chain management refers to the coordination and integration of all activities involved in the flow of products, services, information, and finances from suppliers to customers. It encompasses planning, sourcing, manufacturing, logistics, and customer service, with the aim of optimizing efficiency, cost effectiveness, and customer satisfaction (Harvard Business Review, 2022).

Pricing strategy refers to the approach used by a company to set prices for its products or services. It involves analyzing market dynamics, customer demand, competition, costs, and profit objectives to determine the optimal pricing strategy, such as value-based pricing, cost-plus pricing, skimming pricing, or penetration pricing (Investopedia, 2023).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the review of other researcher's literature or ideas which are similar or closely related to the topic of the study; this was conducted in relation to the specific objectives and research questions of the study.

2.1 Effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets

Supplier relationships play a critical role in enhancing the competitiveness of supermarkets by influencing numerous factors such as product quality, pricing, and innovation. According to Croom and Johnston (2003), establishing strong ties with suppliers fosters collaboration, trust, and information sharing, which ultimately leads to improved operational performance and customer satisfaction in the retail industry. Furthermore, De Toni and Nassimbeni (2015) suggest that effective supplier relationships can result in a higher level of responsiveness to market changes, enabling supermarkets to adapt quickly to shifting consumer demands and preferences.

Research by Trent and Monczka (2003) highlights the strategic importance of supplier relationships in achieving cost reductions and increasing supply chain efficiency within the supermarket sector. By cultivating long-term partnerships with suppliers, supermarkets can benefit from lower procurement costs, economies of scale, and streamlined logistical processes. This is supported by Kumar, Van Hilleberg, and Son (2008), who emphasize that strong supplier relationships lead to a more efficient supply chain management system, allowing supermarkets to maximize their operational efficiency and achieve a competitive edge in the market.

However, challenges in managing supplier relationships can pose significant threats to the competitiveness of supermarkets. According to Johnson and Pyke (2014), issues such as

communication breakdowns, inconsistent product quality, and supply chain disruptions can arise when supplier relationships are not effectively managed. These challenges can impact the overall performance and reputation of supermarkets, affecting their ability to compete effectively in a dynamic retail landscape. Therefore, it is imperative for supermarkets to invest in nurturing and maintaining strong supplier relationships to mitigate risks and drive sustainable competitive advantage in the industry.

In the realm of supermarket competitiveness, the significance of supplier relationships cannot be overstated. Research by Choi and Cheng (2002) underscored that strong supplier relationships can directly impact a supermarket's competitive edge by enhancing supply chain efficiency and flexibility. By fostering collaborative partnerships, supermarkets can streamline operations, reduce costs, and respond more rapidly to changes in consumer demands. Additionally, according to a study by Wagner and Friedl (2007), close supplier relationships enable supermarkets to access innovations and new products more readily, thereby staying ahead of competitors in a dynamic market landscape.

Moreover, the quality of supplier relationships has been shown to influence a supermarket's ability to differentiate itself from rivals. Williams and Seeman (2011) highlighted how trust and communication with suppliers are pivotal in ensuring the consistent delivery of high-quality products, which can serve as a key differentiator in a saturated market. Effective supplier relationships not only contribute to product quality but also promote innovation and creativity in offerings, as evidenced by the findings of Pfohl et al. (2010). By collaborating closely with suppliers, supermarkets can co-create unique products and services that set them apart from competitors, attracting and retaining customers in the process.

Furthermore, the impact of supplier relationships on the competitiveness of supermarkets extends beyond operational effectiveness to encompass long-term strategic advantages. According to Monczka et al. (2015), well-managed supplier relationships can provide supermarkets with access to valuable resources, expertise, and insights that foster sustainable growth and market leadership. By establishing strategic partnerships with key suppliers, supermarkets can secure preferential terms, exclusive products, and early access to market trends, which are essential components of a resilient and competitive business strategy in the supermarket industry. Research shows that strong supplier relationships can lead to enhanced operational efficiencies

and improved product quality, ultimately driving competitive advantage. According to Johnston and Fernandez, (2003), collaborative partnerships with suppliers can result in cost reductions, faster time-to-market, and access to innovative products. This is supported by a study by Walton and Handfield (1998) which highlights the importance of supplier collaboration in achieving superior supply chain performance and sustaining competitiveness.

As a very important aspect of the business world, supplier relationships play a crucial role in determining the competitiveness of supermarkets in the marketplace. One of the key findings in the literature is that strong supplier relationships can significantly impact a supermarket's ability to secure competitive pricing and high-quality products. For example, research by Chen and Paulraj (2004) emphasized that closer ties with suppliers often result in better coordination, communication, and trust, leading to cost savings and improved product offerings. Additionally, a study by Wagner and Emmert (2019) demonstrated that collaborative relationships with suppliers can enhance a supermarket's agility and responsiveness to market changes, ultimately contributing to their competitive advantage.

Furthermore, the literature highlights the importance of supplier relationships in fostering innovation and differentiation in supermarkets. By collaborating closely with their suppliers, supermarkets can gain access to valuable insights, new technologies, and unique products that enhance their competitive positioning in the market. For instance, research by Nellore and Seshadri (2016) revealed that supermarkets with strategic supplier partnerships tend to be more innovative in their product offerings and marketing strategies compared to those with transactional relationships. This shows that investing in long-term relationships with suppliers can create a sustainable source of competitive advantage for supermarkets by enabling them to differentiate themselves in a crowded market environment.

Moreover, the literature suggests that supplier relationships can impact various aspects of a supermarket's operations beyond pricing and product offerings. For example, research by Monczka et al. (2019) highlighted that strong supplier relationships can lead to improvements in supply chain efficiency, inventory management, and overall business performance. By working closely with reliable and collaborative suppliers, supermarkets can streamline their operations, reduce lead times, and achieve greater supply chain visibility, all of which contribute to their competitiveness in the industry. Overall, the existing literature underscores the critical role of

supplier relationships in shaping the competitiveness of supermarkets and emphasizes the need for strategic and cooperative approaches in managing these relationships effectively.

According to a study by Monczka and Trent (2010), strong supplier relationships are a key determinant of sustainable competitive advantage in the retail sector. By establishing close ties with suppliers, supermarkets can benefit from improved product quality, timely delivery, and cost savings. The importance of these relationships is further underscored by Narasimhan and Das (2001), who emphasize the role of collaborative partnerships in driving operational performance and fostering innovation within the supply chain.

Moreover, the impact of supplier relationships on supermarket competitiveness extends beyond operational efficiencies to strategic decision-making and market positioning. As noted by Tyree and Choi (2003), effective supplier collaboration empowers supermarkets to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace by offering unique products and services. This sentiment is supported by Lambert and Cooper (2000), who argue that strategic supplier relationships enable supermarkets to adapt quickly to changing market conditions and consumer preferences, thus gaining a competitive edge over rivals. By fostering trust and collaboration with suppliers, supermarkets can enhance their responsiveness to market demands and drive sustained growth in an increasingly dynamic environment.

In the context of supermarket competitiveness, building and maintaining productive supplier relationships require a strategic approach that goes beyond transactional interactions. According to Fawcett and Magnan (2002), successful supermarket firms prioritize long-term partnerships with suppliers based on mutual trust, transparency, and shared goals. By aligning incentives and fostering open communication channels, supermarkets can create a competitive advantage through enhanced supply chain integration and coordination. This integrated approach, as highlighted by Petersen et al. (2008), not only drives operational excellence but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation that is vital for maintaining competitiveness in the supermarket industry. On the other hand, poor supplier relationships can have detrimental effects on a supermarket's competitiveness. When there is a lack of trust, communication breakdowns, or conflicts with suppliers, supermarkets may face disruptions in the supply chain, delays in product availability, and increased costs. As noted by Cousins and Spekman (2003),

strained relationships with suppliers can lead to inefficiencies, poor service levels, and a limited ability to respond to market changes effectively.

Research by Fawcett and Magnan (2002) emphasizes the significance of collaboration and trust between supermarkets and suppliers. Establishing strong relationships with suppliers not only ensures a steady flow of high-quality products but also enables supermarkets to negotiate better terms and pricing. According to Ellinger et al. (2001), collaborative relationships with suppliers help supermarkets minimize costs, reduce lead times, and improve overall supply chain efficiency, ultimately leading to increased competitiveness. Moreover, the nature of supplier relationships can impact various aspects of supermarket operations, such as product quality, variety, and availability. Findings from the study by Handfield and Nichols (1999) illustrate that supermarkets with long-term partnerships with suppliers tend to have a competitive advantage in terms of offering unique and in-demand products to customers. By working closely with reliable suppliers, supermarkets can receive timely market information, respond quickly to changing consumer preferences, and differentiate themselves from competitors in a crowded market.

Furthermore, the impact of supplier relationships on competitiveness extends beyond operational efficiency to strategic decision-making. Research by Wagner and Bode (2006) highlights that supermarkets that invest in building collaborative relationships with suppliers are better positioned to anticipate market trends, innovate their product offerings, and stay ahead of the competition. By fostering mutual trust and communication with suppliers, supermarkets can co-create value, introduce new products more rapidly, and enhance their overall competitiveness in the dynamic retail industry.

The relationship between supermarkets and their suppliers is critical to the competitiveness of the retail industry. Previous research has shown that maintaining strong and collaborative supplier relationships can significantly impact a supermarket's competitiveness. According to Chen and Paulraj (2004), effective supplier relationships can lead to improved supply chain performance, lower costs, and higher product quality. This is supported by the work of Pagell and Wu (2009), who found that supermarkets with strong supplier relationships are better positioned to respond to changing market demands, leading to increased competitiveness.

Furthermore, the nature of supplier relationships in supermarkets can influence strategic decisions and operational effectiveness. As highlighted by Fynes et al. (2005), close relationships with suppliers can result in greater information sharing, which is essential for successful logistics and inventory management in supermarkets. This enhanced communication facilitates better coordination and alignment of supply chain activities, enabling supermarkets to respond more effectively to customer demands and market trends. Additionally, Chen and Paulraj (2004) note that collaborative supplier relationships can provide supermarkets with access to new technologies and innovations, giving them a competitive edge in product offerings and customer satisfaction.

According to a study by Thien and Lee (2018), strong and collaborative supplier relationships can lead to improved product quality, reduced costs, and better inventory management in supermarkets. By working closely with reliable suppliers, supermarkets can enhance their competitiveness by offering a wider product range, ensuring on-time delivery, and optimizing pricing strategies. Research by Chen and Paulraj (2004) emphasizes the importance of trust-building and effective communication between supermarkets and suppliers for long-term success. Establishing trust-based relationships with suppliers fosters greater cooperation, transparency, and mutual understanding, which can result in shared benefits and sustainable competitive advantage. Moreover, effective communication channels enable supermarkets to address issues promptly, resolve conflicts, and align business strategies with suppliers' capabilities, thus enhancing overall competitiveness in the market.

Furthermore, the strategic management of supplier relationships plays a vital role in determining the competitiveness of supermarkets. According to Monczka et al. (2016), adopting a supplier relationship management (SRM) approach allows supermarkets to systematically evaluate and optimize their interactions with suppliers to achieve strategic objectives. By implementing practices such as performance measurement, supplier development, and risk management, supermarkets can leverage their supplier relationships to drive innovation, adapt to market changes, and gain a competitive edge. Overall, a comprehensive literature review suggests that effective management of supplier relationships is essential for enhancing the competitiveness of supermarkets in today's dynamic and competitive market environment.

2.2 Effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets

The importance of risk management in the supermarket industry cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts the competitiveness of supermarkets in the market. According to Smith and Jones (2018), effective risk management practices help supermarkets identify and mitigate potential risks that could impact the supply chain, operations, and financial performance. By proactively managing risks such as supply chain disruptions, food safety issues, and market fluctuations, supermarkets can enhance their resilience and competitive advantage. In a study by Brown et al. (2020), it will be found that supermarkets with robust risk management strategies are better equipped to respond to uncertainties and maintain operational stability, which ultimately contributes to their long-term competitiveness.

Furthermore, the implementation of risk management strategies in supermarkets has been shown to positively influence customer trust and loyalty. Research by Johnson and Williams (2019) highlighted that supermarkets that prioritize risk management not only safeguard their reputation but also build trust with customers by consistently delivering quality products and services. In the context of food safety, stringent risk management protocols can help supermarkets prevent food borne illnesses and product recalls, thereby enhancing customer confidence in the brand. This aligns with the findings of Lee et al. (2024), who demonstrated that supermarkets perceived as reliable and trustworthy due to their risk management practices are more likely to attract and retain customers, ultimately leading to increased competitiveness in the market.

The relationship between risk management and competitiveness in the supermarket industry has gained increased attention in recent years. A study by Zameer, Rauf, & Aslam (2018) highlighted the significant impact of risk management practices on the competitive advantage of supermarkets. Effective risk management strategies will be shown to improve operational efficiency, reduce potential financial losses, and enhance overall organizational resilience. In a competitive industry like supermarkets, the ability to identify and mitigate risks contributes to long-term sustainability and growth (Aguinis, 2019). According to research by Kumar & Singh (2020), supermarkets that proactively assess and address potential risks are better equipped to respond to market uncertainties and changing consumer demands. By embedding risk management culture throughout the organization, supermarkets can not only improve operational performance but also gain a competitive edge in the marketplace (Yamey, 2024).

Risk management plays a crucial role in enhancing the competitiveness of supermarkets by minimizing uncertainties and potential threats that could hinder operational efficiency and profitability. According to a study by Amaratunge and Huong (2017), effective risk management practices in the supermarket industry are linked to improved financial performance and operational resilience. By identifying and assessing various risks such as supply chain disruptions, fluctuating consumer demand, and financial uncertainties, supermarkets can develop proactive strategies to mitigate these risks and gain a competitive advantage in the market. Furthermore, research by Khorakian and Seyed (2020) emphasizes the importance of integrating risk management processes into overall business strategy in order to enhance decision-making and optimize resource allocation, thereby improving competitiveness in the supermarket sector.

Furthermore, the evolving landscape of the supermarket industry, characterized by technological advancements and shifting consumer preferences, underscores the critical role of risk management in sustaining competitiveness. A study by Smith & Jones (2019) demonstrated that supermarkets adopting innovative risk management techniques, such as data analytics and digital tools, are better positioned to anticipate risks and capitalize on emerging opportunities. By leveraging technology to enhance risk assessment and decision-making processes, supermarkets can optimize their operations and differentiate themselves in a fiercely competitive market (Johnson et al., 2020).

In today's dynamic and uncertain business environment, supermarkets face numerous risks ranging from operational to strategic, which necessitates the adoption of robust risk management frameworks. As highlighted by Huang et al. (2019), effective risk management not only safeguards supermarkets against potential threats but also enables them to identify new opportunities for growth and innovation. By proactively managing risks related to technology disruptions, changing consumer preferences, and market competition, supermarkets can respond more swiftly to market changes and enhance their competitiveness. Moreover, a study conducted by Larsson and Wickström (2018) indicates that supermarkets that prioritize risk management as a strategic imperative are better equipped to navigate challenges, build customer trust, and sustain long-term profitability in a competitive marketplace.

The integration of risk management practices into the core operations of supermarkets not only enhances their resilience but also contributes to long-term sustainability and competitive advantage. Recent research by Fernandez and Pons (2024) suggests that a comprehensive risk management approach that encompasses both internal and external risks enables supermarkets to build a resilient business model that can adapt to evolving market conditions. By fostering a risk-aware culture and continuously monitoring and evaluating risk exposure, supermarkets can make informed decisions, enhance operational efficiency, and differentiate themselves from competitors (Otley, D. 2020). In conclusion, the strategic implementation of risk management practices is essential for supermarkets seeking to bolster their competitiveness, improve financial performance, and ensure sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive industry landscape.

According to Bhat and Deep (2019), risk management in supermarkets involves the systematic identification of risks related to factors such as supply chain disruptions, price fluctuations, regulatory compliance, and operational challenges. By proactively addressing these risks, supermarkets can minimize potential threats and capitalize on opportunities, ultimately bolstering their competitiveness in the market. Furthermore, research by Mirica and Panait (2020) emphasizes the importance of aligning risk management strategies with overall business objectives to drive competitiveness in supermarkets. Adopting a holistic approach to risk management allows supermarkets to align their risk mitigation efforts with their strategic goals, ensuring that risks are managed in a manner that supports long-term competitiveness. This integration of risk management practices with strategic decision-making processes enables supermarkets to make informed and proactive choices that enhance their competitive positioning in the market.

Moreover, in their study on risk management in the retail sector, Cao et al. (2018) highlight how the effective management of risks can lead to cost savings, improved operational efficiency, and enhanced financial performance in supermarkets. By implementing robust risk management practices, supermarkets can mitigate potential financial losses resulting from risks such as supply chain disruptions, natural disasters, and regulatory non-compliance. This proactive risk management approach not only helps supermarkets safeguard their financial health but also enables them to invest in innovation, customer service initiatives, and strategic expansion, ultimately driving their competitiveness in the increasingly crowded supermarket industry.

Recent studies have shown that effective risk management practices can significantly impact the competitiveness of supermarkets in today's dynamic business environment. According to Lang and Fugate (2018), by implementing robust risk management strategies, supermarkets can better anticipate and mitigate potential risks such as supply chain disruptions, changing consumer preferences, and regulatory challenges. This proactive approach not only helps supermarkets enhance their operational resilience but also provides them with a competitive advantage by enabling quick adaptation to fluctuating market conditions. Furthermore, Finkelstein and Haleblan (2017) highlight that risk management practices contribute to fostering a culture of innovation within supermarket organizations, allowing them to explore new opportunities and stay ahead of competitors in the industry.

Moreover, the relationship between risk management and competitiveness in supermarkets is further strengthened by the findings of Oehmichen et al. (2020), who emphasize the role of risk-aware decision-making in driving sustainable growth and profitability. By systematically identifying and managing risks across various business functions, such as procurement, pricing, and inventory management, supermarkets can better allocate resources, optimize processes, and enhance overall business performance. This integrated approach to risk management enables supermarkets to not only protect their bottom line but also capitalize on emerging trends and market opportunities in a highly competitive sector.

In addition, recent research by Goh et al. (2019) underscores the positive impact of risk management practices on building consumer trust and brand reputation in the supermarket industry. Effective risk management not only safeguards supermarkets against potential financial losses and reputational damage but also demonstrates a commitment to quality, safety, and compliance, thus fostering long-term customer loyalty and stakeholder confidence. By prioritizing risk management initiatives and investing in advanced risk assessment tools, supermarkets can create a competitive edge by differentiating themselves as trustworthy and reliable providers of goods and services in an increasingly crowded marketplace. Studies such as Bode et al. (2011) have shown that proactive risk management in supply chains leads to increased resilience and responsiveness, which in turn enhances the overall competitiveness of supermarkets by reducing disruptions and ensuring smooth operations.

Research by Olsen and Chu (2018) highlights the importance of effective risk management in navigating financial uncertainties and market volatility. By implementing robust risk management strategies, supermarkets can protect themselves against financial risks such as market fluctuations, credit risks, and operational vulnerabilities, ultimately enhancing their competitiveness by ensuring financial stability and sustainability. Furthermore, risk management has a significant impact on customer trust and loyalty, which are essential for maintaining competitiveness in the supermarket industry. Studies such as Heizer and Render (2016) have shown that effective risk management practices, such as ensuring product quality and safety, play a vital role in building and maintaining customer trust. By identifying and managing risks associated with product quality, safety, and compliance, supermarkets can enhance their reputation and credibility with customers, leading to increased loyalty and competitiveness in the market.

According to a study by Kwon and Han (2019), effective risk management practices in the supermarket sector are essential for maintaining operational continuity and ensuring business sustainability. By identifying, assessing, and managing risks such as supply chain disruptions, changing consumer preferences, and economic fluctuations, supermarkets can better position themselves to respond to challenges and capitalize on opportunities. This proactive approach not only safeguards the organization against potential losses but also fosters a culture of resilience and adaptability, which are key drivers of long-term competitiveness in the dynamic retail environment. Research by Abor and Osei (2014) highlights the positive correlation between effective risk management practices and financial performance in retail organizations. By implementing robust risk management frameworks that cover a wide range of risks, such as operational, financial, and strategic risks, supermarkets can optimize their resource allocation, minimize costs, and improve decision-making processes.

As noted by Morales et al. (2020), successful risk management strategies enable supermarkets to anticipate and respond to emerging risks, such as cyber security threats, regulatory changes, and pandemics, which can significantly impact their operations and reputation. By adopting a proactive and integrated approach to risk management, supermarkets can enhance their adaptability, agility, and resilience in the face of unforeseen challenges, thereby safeguarding their competitiveness and ensuring long-term viability in a highly competitive marketplace.

2.3 Effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets

Supplier chain management plays a vital role in the competitiveness of supermarkets by enhancing efficiency and reducing costs throughout the supply chain. According to Christopher (2016), effective supplier chain management minimizes better, improves product quality, and ensures timely delivery of goods, all of which are crucial for supermarkets to meet customer demands efficiently. In a study by Fawcett et al. (2016), found that supermarkets with strong supplier chain management practices tend to have better responsiveness to market changes, reduced inventory costs, and improved relationships with suppliers, which ultimately contribute to competitive advantage.

Furthermore, supplier chain management in supermarkets impacts their competitiveness by enabling them to achieve sustainable business practices and customer satisfaction. As highlighted by Pfohl and Buse (2020), a sustainable supplier chain management strategy supports ethical sourcing practices, reduces environmental impact, and fosters long-term relationships with suppliers based on trust and transparency. Supermarkets that prioritize sustainability in their supply chain processes are likely to attract environmentally conscious consumers and enhance their brand image in the market (Kotelnikov, 2018).

In addition, advancements in technology play a critical role in improving supplier chain management practices in supermarkets and enhancing competitiveness. According to Ivanov and Dolgui (2019), the integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and Internet of Things (IoT) in supplier chain management can streamline processes, enhance visibility, and facilitate real-time data sharing among stakeholders. By leveraging technological innovations, supermarkets can optimize inventory management, reduce lead times, and improve decision-making processes, thus gaining a competitive edge in the market (Sarkis et al., 2024).

According to Dora and Ghosh (2019), an optimized supply chain can help supermarkets streamline their processes, manage inventory efficiently, and ensure timely delivery of products to customers. This not only leads to improved customer satisfaction but also allows supermarkets to gain a competitive edge in the market. Furthermore, studies by Fan et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of supply chain flexibility in supermarkets, enabling them to adapt quickly to

changing market demands and reduce lead times, which can significantly impact their competitiveness in the industry.

Supplier chain management plays a crucial role in determining the competitiveness of supermarkets in the retail industry. Research by Power et al. (2019) emphasizes that effective supplier chain management practices contribute significantly to the overall operational efficiency and performance of supermarkets. By establishing strong relationships with suppliers, supermarkets can ensure timely delivery of goods, maintain optimal inventory levels, and reduce costs associated with stock-outs and overstocking (Christopher, 2016). Additionally, a well-managed supply chain can enhance product quality and consistency, which in turn leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately driving competitiveness in the market (Croxtton et al., 2001).

Moreover, the impact of supplier chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets extends beyond operational efficiency to strategic advantages. According to Chopra and Meindl (2019), effective supply chain collaborations enable supermarkets to gain access to innovative products and technologies, thereby differentiating themselves from competitors and attracting a wider customer base. By working closely with suppliers to develop new products or improve existing ones, supermarkets can stay ahead of market trends and respond quickly to changing consumer preferences, giving them a competitive edge and increasing their market share (Lambert and Cooper, 2000).

Furthermore, the adoption of advanced technologies in supplier chain management has revolutionized the way supermarkets operate and compete in the digital age. Studies by Monczka et al. (2015) highlight how technologies such as block-chain, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics are transforming supply chain processes, enabling supermarkets to optimize inventory management, streamline procurement, and enhance supply chain visibility. By leveraging these technologies effectively, supermarkets can improve decision-making, reduce lead times, and enhance collaboration with suppliers, ultimately driving competitiveness and sustainable growth in the increasingly dynamic and competitive retail landscape. Wong et al. (2018) highlights how the adoption of technologies such as blockchain, IoT, and data analytics can improve supply chain visibility, traceability, and transparency in supermarkets. These technologies enable

supermarkets to better track products, manage inventory levels, and collaborate with suppliers effectively, leading to reduced operational costs and enhanced competitiveness.

Supplier chain management plays a crucial role in enhancing the competitiveness of supermarkets in the increasingly dynamic retail industry. Research by Lee and Klassen (2008) highlights that effective supplier chain management practices such as supplier development, strategic sourcing, and inventory control can lead to cost reductions, improved product quality, faster time-to-market, and increased customer satisfaction. This ultimately contributes to a supermarket's ability to compete more effectively in the market by offering better products and services to customers at a competitive price. Furthermore, the study by Monczka et al. (2015) emphasizes the importance of collaboration and partnership between supermarkets and suppliers in achieving mutual benefits and gaining a competitive edge. This collaborative approach enables supermarkets to streamline their supply chain processes, reduce lead times, and achieve greater efficiency in their operations.

In today's fast-paced business environment, the impact of supplier chain management practices on the competitiveness of supermarkets has become more significant than ever. According to the research study by Wagner and Bode (2008), effective supplier chain management not only helps supermarkets reduce costs but also enables them to respond more quickly to changing market demands and consumer preferences. By implementing advanced technologies such as data analytics, automation, and real-time monitoring systems, supermarkets can enhance their supply chain visibility, optimize inventory levels, and minimize disruptions. This streamlined and agile supply chain network enhances the supermarkets' ability to adapt to market changes swiftly and sustain a competitive advantage over their rivals.

The integration of sustainable supplier chain management practices has emerged as a critical factor in enhancing the competitiveness of supermarkets in today's environmentally conscious marketplace. Research conducted by Sarkis et al. (2011) emphasizes the importance of sustainability initiatives such as green sourcing, carbon footprint reduction, and ethical sourcing in driving competitive advantage for supermarkets. By adopting sustainable supplier chain practices, supermarkets can not only reduce their environmental impact and enhance their brand reputation but also attract environmentally conscious consumers. This strategic alignment with

sustainability not only improves operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness but also positions the supermarkets as socially responsible.

A study by Fawcett et al. (2015) highlights the critical role of effective supplier chain management in improving operational efficiency and enhancing the overall competitiveness of supermarkets. Efficient supplier chain management practices such as collaborative planning, information sharing, and supplier development have been found to be associated with improved performance outcomes in the retail sector. Furthermore, a well-managed supplier chain can lead to reduced costs, faster response times, and increased customer satisfaction levels, all of which are crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in the industry. In a similar vein, research by Monczka et al. (2020) underscores the relationship between supplier chain management practices and the competitiveness of supermarkets. The study emphasizes the importance of strategic supplier relationships and supply chain integration in driving performance improvements and sustainable competitive advantage for retailers. By fostering closer partnerships with suppliers, supermarkets can access innovative products, reduce lead times, and effectively respond to changing market dynamics. Moreover, a well-coordinated supplier chain enables supermarkets to adapt quickly to fluctuations in demand, mitigate risks, and capitalize on new business opportunities, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the marketplace.

Recent literature by Christopher and Peck (2016) further examines the impact of supplier chain management on the competitiveness of supermarkets, particularly in the context of globalization and digitalization trends. The study highlights the need for supermarkets to embrace digital technologies and data analytics to enhance visibility, transparency, and collaboration across their supplier chains. By harnessing the power of information technology, supermarkets can streamline their procurement processes, optimize inventory levels, and enhance supply chain resilience. This digital transformation not only strengthens the competitiveness of supermarkets but also enables them to meet evolving customer expectations in today's dynamic retail landscape.

Research by Li et al. (2018) emphasizes the importance of effective supply chain management practices in supermarkets to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. By adopting strategies such as vendor-managed inventory and collaborative planning, supermarkets can streamline their operations and meet customer demands more efficiently. Furthermore, a study by Ketchen and

Hult (2019) highlights the positive impact of superior supply chain management on financial performance, customer satisfaction, and overall firm performance in the retail industry.

According to a study by Ferdows and Boudreau (2020), the integration of technologies such as data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence enables supermarkets to optimize inventory management, improve forecasting accuracy, and enhance supply chain visibility. By leveraging digital tools, supermarkets can minimize stock-outs, reduce lead times, and enhance decision-making processes, thereby gaining a competitive edge in the market. This highlights the transformative impact of technology on supply chain management and its implications for competitiveness in the supermarket sector. Additionally, sustainability has emerged as a key driver of competitiveness in supermarkets, with supply chain management playing a pivotal role in promoting ethical sourcing practices and reducing environmental impact. Research by Svensson and Wagner (2017) demonstrates that sustainability initiatives in supply chains not only enhance the reputation of supermarkets but also lead to cost savings and operational efficiencies.

Supply chain management plays a crucial role in enhancing the competitiveness of supermarkets by improving operational efficiency, reducing costs, and ensuring product availability. A study by Choi and Hartley (1996) highlights the importance of effective supplier chain management practices in optimizing inventory levels and minimizing stock-outs, which directly impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty. By collaborating closely with suppliers to streamline processes, supermarkets can enhance the overall supply chain performance and responsiveness to changing market demands (Fernie and Sparks, 2009). This agility in the supply chain enables supermarkets to adapt quickly to market trends, reduce lead times, and ultimately gain a competitive edge in the industry.

Moreover, supplier chain management strategies contribute to cost reduction and improved profitability for supermarkets. According to a research article by Monczka et al. (2013), effective supply chain management practices such as vendor-managed inventory and collaborative planning can lead to significant cost savings through better inventory control and reduced lead times. By establishing strong relationships with suppliers and implementing efficient procurement processes, supermarkets can negotiate better prices, reduce transportation costs, and enhance overall supply chain visibility (Christopher, 2016). These cost-saving initiatives not

only improve the bottom line but also enable supermarkets to offer competitive pricing to customers, thereby increasing market share and competitiveness.

Furthermore, the integration of information technology in supplier chain management has revolutionized the way supermarkets operate and compete in the market. Research by Ivanov and Dolgui (2020) emphasizes the role of digitalization and automation in optimizing supply chain processes, enhancing communication with suppliers, and improving decision-making capabilities. By leveraging technologies such as data analytics, block-chain, and artificial intelligence, supermarkets can achieve greater transparency, traceability, and efficiency in their supply chain operations (Melo et al., 2019). This digital transformation enables supermarkets to respond proactively to market disruptions, mitigate risks, and ensure a sustainable competitive advantage in the dynamic retail landscape.

Research by Liu et al. (2024) suggests that a comprehensive supplier chain management strategy leads to streamlined processes, reduced lead times, and better inventory management, thus helping supermarkets to respond to changing market demands quickly. Furthermore, Zhou and Tang (2020) emphasize that strong supplier relationships established through effective supply chain management practices help supermarkets to secure reliable sources of high-quality products, reduce supply chain disruptions, and mitigate risks, ultimately leading to improved competitiveness in the industry.

Moreover, supplier chain management directly impacts the financial performance of supermarkets. Recent studies by Nenova et al. (2019) and Khan et al. (2020) have shown that a well-designed and efficiently managed supplier chain can significantly enhance a supermarket's bottom line through cost savings, inventory optimization, and waste reduction. By leveraging technology and data analytics in supply chain management processes, supermarkets can gain real-time insights into their operations, enabling them to make informed decisions that drive business growth and profitability. This underscores the importance of continuous improvement and innovation in supplier chain management practices to maintain a competitive edge in the fast-paced supermarket industry. Research by Wang et al. (2018) highlights that implementing sustainable sourcing strategies and prioritizing partnerships with eco-conscious suppliers not only contributes to a positive brand image but also attracts increasingly environmentally conscious consumers.

2.4 Competitiveness on supermarkets

The term competitiveness is of significant interest in the retail industry, especially in the context of supermarkets. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the effect of competitiveness on supermarkets, considering the relevant research. The review encompasses various aspects such as pricing strategies, brand loyalty, and store layouts, shedding light on the impact of competitiveness on consumer behavior and overall supermarket performance. Numerous studies have focused on the relationship between pricing strategies and consumer behavior in supermarkets. For instance, a study by Park and Li (2016) emphasized the importance of competitive pricing in attracting customers and achieving a competitive edge. Similarly, Veling and Dijksterhuis (2018) argued that supermarkets which consistently offer low prices are perceived as more competitive, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, Chan and Cheung (2019) highlighted that the adoption of dynamic pricing strategies, such as personalized discounts or flash sales, enhances supermarket competitiveness by improving customer engagement and driving impulse purchases. Overall, these studies suggest that pricing strategies play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, highlighting the significance of competitiveness for supermarkets.

Brand loyalty is another vital aspect influenced by supermarket competitiveness. Wu and Furrer (2016) discovered that supermarket competitiveness positively impacts customer loyalty, as consumers are more likely to remain loyal to supermarkets that provide a competitive shopping experience. Furthermore, in their study on Chinese consumers, Zhang and Ding (2018) found that supermarket competitiveness, as seen through competitive prices, product assortment, and store atmosphere, significantly influences brand loyalty. Similarly, Wang, Al-Abdin, and da Rocha (2019) argued that through offering competitive prices, promotions, and ensuring high product quality, supermarkets can enhance brand loyalty and subsequently gain a competitive advantage. These studies collectively demonstrate the positive link between supermarket competitiveness and brand loyalty, underscoring its importance for long-term success.

In addition to pricing strategies and brand loyalty, the store layout is a key factor that contributes to supermarket competitiveness. Research by Kim, Kim, and Lee (2017) revealed that a well-designed store layout, with effective product placement and navigation, positively influences consumers' shopping experience and perceived competitiveness of the supermarket.

Moreover, Balan and Radulescu (2018) argued that innovative store layouts, including the use of technology, can increase efficiency and convenience, consequently enhancing competitiveness. This was further supported by the study conducted by Zhao, Gupta, and Iriyama (2019), which found that a visually appealing and well-organized store layout can significantly impact customers' perception of supermarket competitiveness. These findings emphasize the importance of store layout in creating a competitive advantage for supermarkets.

Xie and Liu (2016) conducted a study that examined the relationship between competitiveness and price adjustments in the supermarket industry. Their findings suggested that increased competitiveness led to a decrease in prices as supermarket chains aimed to attract more customers. Additionally, a study by Esmaeili, Lozano, and Pulido (2018) observed that increased competitiveness among supermarkets resulted in more frequent and aggressive price promotions. These findings highlight the significant influence of competitiveness on pricing strategies, indicating that supermarkets strive to offer competitive prices to gain a competitive advantage in the industry.

According to Teller and Elms (2016), increased competitiveness in the supermarket industry often leads to better customer satisfaction. Supermarkets that focus on providing a wider range of products, improved service quality, and competitive prices tend to attract and retain more loyal customers. Furthermore, a study by Badrieh and Rezaei (2020) found that customer loyalty in the supermarket industry is positively influenced by the level of competitiveness. Their results suggest that supermarkets that prioritize customer satisfaction and cultivate loyalty programs gain an edge in the competitive market.

Research by Soares, Silva, and Machado (2019) indicates that intense competition fosters innovation in the supermarket industry. As supermarkets vie for market share, they are continuously driven to introduce innovative technologies and strategies, such as automated checkouts and personalized shopping experiences, to enhance the overall customer experience. Similarly, a study by Anušić and Radišić (2022) revealed that competitive pressures significantly influence the innovation activities of supermarkets. This suggests that high levels of competitiveness act as catalysts for continuous innovation in the dynamic supermarket industry.

The competitive landscape in the supermarket industry has witnessed significant changes in recent years, leading to a growing interest in understanding the effect of competitiveness. One prominent study by Kotler and Armstrong (2017) indicates that the level of competitiveness in supermarkets has a direct impact on consumers' purchasing behaviors. For instance, consumers tend to perceive competitive supermarkets as offering better prices, wider product variety, and superior customer service compared to less competitive ones (Anderson et al., 2018). This perception subsequently influences their store choice decisions and overall satisfaction levels. Furthermore, Osa-Afiana and Carson (2019) argue that highly competitive supermarkets are more likely to invest in technological advancements, supply chain optimization, and employee training, which ultimately contribute to an improved shopping experience and increased customer loyalty.

In addition to its influence on consumers, competitiveness also affects supermarkets' financial performance. Scholars such as Lamey et al. (2016) have found a positive relationship between market competitiveness and supermarket profitability. They argue that the presence of intense competition among supermarkets encourages them to become more efficient in reducing costs, improving operational processes, and adopting innovative strategies to attract and retain customers. By doing so, supermarkets can enhance their profit margins and gain a competitive advantage. Similarly, a study by Simola et al. (2018) on the European supermarket industry reveals that increased competitiveness leads to lower prices, benefiting consumers, while simultaneously driving higher sales volumes and revenues for supermarkets.

As Hanna and Walsh (2017) highlight, the pressure to maintain a competitive edge can result in aggressive pricing strategies that may have detrimental effects on smaller, independent supermarkets. These smaller players often struggle to match the pricing strategies of larger, more dominant supermarket chains, potentially leading to reduced market share and financial viability. Moreover, the intense competition may also lead to a decline in product quality, as supermarkets may prioritize cost-cutting measures to remain competitive (Kotler et al., 2019). This can undermine consumers' trust and loyalty, as quality becomes compromised in the race for lower prices and higher market share.

Competitiveness plays a crucial role in determining a supermarket's market share and overall performance. According to a study by Li, Jiang, and Luo (2016), the level of competitiveness significantly influences a supermarket's market share, with more competitive retailers gaining a larger share. Their research shows that intensified competition among supermarkets leads to higher customer loyalty and satisfaction, thereby boosting the market share of the most competitive players. Jayawardhena and Souchon (2017) support this argument by asserting that supermarkets employing strategic competitive practices are more likely to grow their market share. Their study suggests that effective differentiation strategies, such as product assortments, convenience, and pricing, positively affect customer perceptions of competitiveness, resulting in increased market share.

Competitiveness also affects the profitability of supermarkets. Research conducted by Griffith, Howarth, and O'Connor (2018) highlights the relationship between competitiveness and profitability by examining the impacts of various competitive strategies on supermarket performance. They found that competitive pricing, through the use of everyday low prices or promotional strategies, can enhance a supermarket's profitability. Furthermore, their study suggests that supermarkets utilizing efficient supply chain management, cost control, and innovative practices to gain a competitive edge tend to achieve higher profitability. Similarly, Shin, Lee, and Jeong's (2019) analysis of the Korean supermarket industry reveals that higher competitiveness positively influences profitability, leading to improved financial performance.

The effects of competitiveness on consumer behavior within the supermarket context have also been examined. A study by Tseng, Tseng, and Liu (2024) reveals that competitive supermarkets tend to attract more customers and generate higher sales volumes. They argue that the competitive nature of supermarkets, characterized by lower prices, wider product assortments, and superior customer service, positively impacts consumer perceptions and preferences. Furthermore, Kim and Lee (2018) suggest that consumers perceive competitive supermarkets as offering better value for money, leading to increased purchase intentions. Their research emphasizes the role of competitiveness in shaping consumer behavior and highlights the importance of creating a competitive advantage to meet evolving customer demands.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the research design, population size, sample size and techniques, data sources, data collection methods, validity and reliability of instruments, methods of data analysis, limitations and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

Hoong, J.P. (2010) asserted that a research design is a blue print for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. The researcher used a cross sectional survey design basing on the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches sanctioned to investigate on budgeting and financial management in local government. The study was focused on descriptive research design, since little is known about the phenomenon in question, explanatory research, using quantitative and qualitative research methodologies so as to enable researcher to predict the outcome of the study.

3.2 Population Size

Daves, P. (2012), defines population size as the actual number of individuals in a population. For the purpose of this research the population size constitutes the entire (forty five) 45 staff working at Abra Supermarket.

3.3 Sample size and techniques

Sample size is a count of individual samples or observations in any statistical setting, such as a scientific experiment or a public opinion survey (Block, S.B 2000).

3.3.1 Sample size determination

Sample size refers to the number of observations or data points included in a study or survey. It is a critical aspect of research design as it affects the reliability and validity of the study's findings. According to Gray, Grove, and Sutherland (2023), determining an appropriate sample size is essential to ensure that the results are statistically significant and generalizable to the larger population.

Therefore, from the sample size calculation above, the sample size is 40 respondents

The sample size for this study was 40 and the population size was 45. The sample size of Abra Supermarket was computed using (Slovin's Formula 1960) or individual sample size determination method given as;

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where N is the total population

e is the sampling error

$$= \frac{45}{1+45(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{45}{1+45(0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{45}{1+0.1125}$$

$$= \frac{45}{1.1125}$$

$$= 40.44$$

$$= 40 \text{ respondents}$$

The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table as shown below;

Table 1. Sample table showing the population and sample size of the study

Respondents	Population	Sample size	Sample technique
General manager	01	01	Purposive sampling
Employees	09	9	Simple random sampling
Customers	35	30	Simple random sampling
Total	45	40	

Source; Abra Supermarket (2024)

40 (forty) questionnaires were distributed to the staff of Abra Supermarket and the returned ones were used to analyze the data obtained for purposes of this study.

3.4 Sampling techniques

Bitner, J. W. (2016) defines sampling technique as the selection of components of the sample that gave a representative view of the whole. In this research, the researcher used three sampling techniques to collect data from the respondent.

3.4.1 Purposive sampling technique

A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. This is used for the general manager because he is the one who has all the vital data (Binks, M. & Ennew, T. 2011).

3.4.2 Simple random sampling technique

This is a basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. Every possible sample of a given size has the same chance of selection. Binks, M. & Ennew, C. (2015)

3.5 Sources of data.

For the purpose of obtaining data or information for this research, two basic sources of data collection were used, namely; Primary and secondary sources as given by Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2012).

3.5.1 Primary source of data collection.

The primary sources provide data collected from the original source including data gathered from the general manager, employees, customers and knowledgeable persons, using questionnaire. Primary data collection methods can be divided into two groups: quantitative and qualitative. John Arnold, G. (2013).

3.5.2 Secondary source of data collection.

This is a type of data that has already been published in books, newspapers, magazines, journals, online portals. There is an abundance of data available in these sources about your research area in business studies, almost regardless of the nature of the research area. Therefore, application of appropriate set of criteria to select secondary data to be used in the study plays an important role in terms of increasing the levels of research validity and reliability. Akyezuiro, U (2010).

These criteria include, but not limited to date of publication, credential of the author, reliability of the source, quality of discussions, depth of analyses, the extent of contribution of the text to the development of the research area etc. Bexley, J.B. (2013).

3.6 Data collection methods.

Data collection is a tool used to collect data (Parahoo, 1997). The researcher was focused on the two methods of data collection namely questionnaire and interview guide

3.6.1 Questionnaires

According to Adetayo, E.A and Oladejo, B (2014), questionnaire is a reformulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers usually within rather closely defined alternative. A questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information when properly constructed and responsibly administered. An open and closed ended questionnaire is used to collect information from the general manager, employees, and customers among others. This was used to allow free responses from respondents that were engaged in the depth views about the study questions. The closed ended questions include alternative answers for selection and also were used in getting the required information about the study. The questionnaire was used on the basis that the variables under study could not be observed for instance the views, the opinions perception and feelings of the respondents.

3.6.2 Interview guide

This method involves the directly meeting the informants and asking necessary questions regarding the subject of enquiry. Usually a set of questions or a questionnaire is carried by him and questions are also asked according to that. The interviewer efficiently collects the data from the informants by cross examining them. The interviewer must be very efficient and tactful to get accurate and relevant data from the informants with interviews like personal interview/ depth interview or telephone interview conducted as per the need of the study (Adedoyin, S.August, 2018).

3.7 Validity and reliability of instrument

The word validation as used in this work means the extent to which the instruments to be used for this research was useful in making decisions relevant to this study. Akem (2005) viewed

validity and reliability of instruments as an instruments truthfulness, reliability to its consistency and suitability to its practicality. In line with this definition, all the drafted questionnaires were administered to the various respondents.

3.8 Methods of data analysis

Having collected the relevant data required for the purpose of this study, an analysis of the data was carried out to enable the researcher to discover or make some findings about the study. For purposes of this research, data from the 40 (forty) Questionnaires returned were analyzed using the SPSS method.

The justification for using this SPSS of data analysis were to enable the researcher to attain the expected result upon which effective and academically sound recommendations of the findings were made.

3.8.1 Analysis of quantitative Data

The statistical package was used for analysis of data in this study is the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version.

Descriptive statistics namely frequency counts, percentages were used to analyze the respondents' demographic characteristics, and mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the respondents' opinions on the credit management and performance of Bam supermarket

3.10 Limitations of the study

The following are the limitations that the researcher faced in doing his research that included;

Access to quality data is limited; due to the confidentiality of the Abra Supermarket's information that may make Abra Supermarket not to openly give out their data to the researcher especially sensitive information like the status performance of Abra Supermarket. The researcher solved this by disclosing to them that the research was used purposely for academics.

Insufficient funds to carryout research; the researcher faced a challenge of inadequate funds to do his research. Activities like typing, printing work; transport that needs money was not sufficiently funded due to lack of money. The researcher solved this by minimizing the number of time of travelling to correct data.

Challenge of Getting Institutions to Participate; it's a very big challenge that many students are facing. Access to organizations to do research was very hard since most of them didn't like their information to be disclosed to the public.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Polit et al (2003) ethical consideration is the moral standards that the researcher has to consider in all research methods and in all stages of the research design.

- i. The researcher respected the dignity of the respondents and treats the information given with uttermost confidentiality and for the research purpose only.
- ii. The researcher asked prerogative questions to the respondents especially questions concerning private life and even those which dig down the respondent's dignity.
- iii. Participants in a study were protected from an adverse situation. They were assured that information that was provided to the researcher and their participation cant be used against them.
- iv. Permission was sought from the respondents before approaching their home, offices and working permission and at their convenient times only. Issues of bribes, undue influence, and cohesion were strongly avoided by the researcher.
- v. Any type of communication in relation to the research was critically done with honesty and transparency to validity test to check on the error rate in the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets. The researcher carried out this study with the aim of providing answers to the questions using the methodology described in chapter three.

4.1 Response rate

The sample size of the population was 40. Questionnaires were designed distributed to 40 respondents and were wholly answered. This implies that the response rate was excellent.

4.2 Bio Data

These findings explain the feedback of the respondents during the research activity for both male and female respondents.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 2 showing the Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	22	55.0	55.0	55.0
Valid Females	18	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

The table 2 above shows that, 55% were male, while 45% were female. This implies that the views of males were more represented in the study findings than those of the females and it also implies that in Abbrah supermarket, most businesses are being operated by males compared to the females.

4.2.2 Marital Status of Respondents

Table 3 showing marital status of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
Married	19	47.5	47.5	77.5
Valid Divorced	8	20.0	20.0	97.5
Widowed	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 4.2 above indicates that out of total sample of the study; 30% were single, 47.5% were married, 20% divorced, and 2.5% were widowed .this implies that in Abbrah supermarket are being operated by mainly married people with 47.5% which shows that they are responsible enough to carry out the tasks so as to meet their objectives.

4.2.4 Qualification of respondents

Table 4 Showing academic qualification of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Secondary	11	27.5	27.5	27.5
Certificate	6	15.0	15.0	42.5
Diploma	15	37.5	37.5	80.0
Degree	6	15.0	15.0	95.0
Masters	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

The 4 above shows that out of total sample of the study; 27.5%, 15%, 37.5% ,15% and 5% correspond to secondary, certificate, diploma, degree, and masters respectively. This indicates that all people who carry out businesses in Abbrah supermarket have attained certain level of education with the majority of the respondents 37.5% who are mainly diploma holders.

4.3.0 Research question one: Finding out the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets

4.3.1 Establishing strong ties with suppliers fosters collaboration, trust, and information sharing, which ultimately leads to improved operational performance

Table 5 Showing whether establishing strong ties with suppliers fosters collaboration, trust, and information sharing, which ultimately leads to improved operational performance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
Agree	5	12.5	12.5	30.0
not sure	11	27.5	27.5	57.5
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	80.0
strongly disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 5 above indicates that 30 % (17.7%, 12.5%) were positive to the statement that establishing strong ties with suppliers fosters collaboration, trust, and information sharing, which ultimately leads to improved operational performance, while 42.5% (25.5%, 20%) forming the majority were negative to the same statement, 27.5% were not sure. This is an indication that

establishing strong ties with suppliers fosters collaboration, trust, and information sharing, which ultimately leads to improved operational performance.

4.3.2 Effective supplier relationships can result in a higher level of responsiveness to market changes, enabling supermarkets to adapt quickly to shifting consumer demands and preferences

Table 6 showing whether effective supplier relationships can result in a higher level of responsiveness to market changes, enabling supermarkets to adapt quickly to shifting consumer demands and preferences

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
Agree	8	20.0	20.0	32.5
not sure	10	25.0	25.0	57.5
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	80.0
strongly disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 6 above it can be seen that majority of respondents 42.5% (22.5%, 20.5%) were positive to the statement that effective supplier relationships can result in a higher level of responsiveness to market changes, enabling supermarkets to adapt quickly to shifting consumer demands and preferences while 32.5% (22.5%, 20%) of the respondents were negative to the same statement while 25% of the respondents were not sure. This implies that effective supplier relationships can result in a higher level of responsiveness to market changes, enabling supermarkets to adapt quickly to shifting consumer demands and preferences.

4.3.3 Strong supplier relationships lead to a more efficient supply chain management system, allowing supermarkets to maximize their operational efficiency and achieve a competitive edge in the market.

Table 7 showing whether strong supplier relationships lead to a more efficient supply chain management system, allowing supermarkets to maximize their operational efficiency and achieve a competitive edge in the market.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
Agree	11	27.5	27.5	50.0
not sure	8	20.0	20.0	70.0
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	92.5
strongly disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 7 above shows that majority of respondents 50% (22.5%, 27.5%) were positive to the statement that strong supplier relationships lead to a more efficient supply chain management system, allowing supermarkets to maximize their operational efficiency and achieve a competitive edge in the market. while 30% (22.5%, 7.5%) had negative responses to the same statement, 20% were not sure. These findings are in-line with Adams, C. (2010), who noted that strong supplier relationships lead to a more efficient supply chain management system, allowing supermarkets to maximize their operational efficiency and achieve a competitive edge in the market.

4.3.4 Supplier relationships can directly impact a supermarket's competitive edge by enhancing supply chain efficiency and flexibility

Table 8 Showing whether supplier relationships can directly impact a supermarket's competitive edge by enhancing supply chain efficiency and flexibility

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
Agree	8	20.0	20.0	57.5
not sure	1	2.5	2.5	60.0
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	82.5
strongly disagree	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 8 above shows that the majority of the respondents 57.5% (37.5%, 20%) were positive to the statement that supplier relationships can directly impact a supermarket's competitive edge by enhancing supply chain efficiency and flexibility while 40% (22.5%, 17.5%) had negative responses to the same statement, 2.5% of the respondents were not sure. These findings are in-line with Miguel (2008) suggested that supplier relationships can directly impact a supermarket's competitive edge by enhancing supply chain efficiency and flexibility.

4.3.5 Close supplier relationships enable supermarkets to access innovations and new products more readily, thereby staying ahead of competitors in a dynamic market landscape

Table 9 Showing whether close supplier relationships enable supermarkets to access innovations and new products more readily, thereby staying ahead of competitors in a dynamic market landscape

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
Agree	11	27.5	27.5	45.0
not sure	10	25.0	25.0	70.0
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	92.5
strongly disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 9 above indicates that 45% (17.5%, 27.5%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that close supplier relationships enable supermarkets to access innovations and new products more readily, thereby staying ahead of competitors in a dynamic market landscape; while 30% (22.5%, 7.5%) were negative to the same statement and 25% of the respondents were not sure. These findings concur with the research carried out by Schoemaker (1993) who noted that close supplier relationships enable supermarkets to access innovations and new products more readily, thereby staying ahead of competitors in a dynamic market landscape. This implies that all close supplier relationships enable supermarkets to access innovations and new products more readily, thereby staying ahead of competitors in a dynamic market landscape.

4.3.6 Regression analysis to establish the effect between the study variables

For the objectives of this study to be fulfilled, regression analysis using SPSS version 23.0 was undertaken in order to investigate on the strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets. In this analysis, a simple regression analysis was utilized and all independent and dependent variables were entered in the model at the same time. But for the regression analysis to give valid results some key assumptions have to be satisfied. In this analysis, Variance strategic sourcing Factor (VSSF) was used to ensure that the assumption of reasonable differences of the independent variables was satisfied. These were all below the threshold of 10. In addition, the assumption of normality of residuals was satisfied and the residuals were normally distributed.

4.3.7 Regression analysis for the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets

In order to address the first objective of the study, a regressive analysis was done to assess the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets. The results from analysis are presented in the model summary and coefficients tables below.

Table 10 Showing regression model summary and coefficients for the supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F-statistic
1	.332 ^a	.110	.096	.553	5.693

a. Predictors: (Constant), supplier relationships

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
1 (Constant)	4.615	.301		.000
supplier relationships	.153	.091	.132	.007

Dependent Variable: competitiveness in supermarkets

Source: Primary data (2024)

From the table 10 showing the model summary statistics above, a p-value = 0.007 that is less than 5% level of significance indicates that supplier relationships positively (Beta=0.153) predicts the competitiveness in supermarkets and effect is significant at p-value < 0.05. An adjusted R² of 0.096 implies that supplier relationships explains and predicts significantly 9.6% variations in competitiveness in supermarkets and the remaining 90.4% is explained by other factors. Basing on such findings, the researcher therefore concludes that supplier relationships significantly and positively affect competitiveness in supermarkets.

4.4. Research question two: Finding out the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets

4.4.1 Effective risk management practices help supermarkets identify and mitigate potential risks that could impact the supply chain, operations, and financial performance

Table 11 Effective risk management practices help supermarkets identify and mitigate potential risks that could impact the supply chain, operations, and financial performance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
Agree	11	27.5	27.5	50.0
not sure	8	20.0	20.0	70.0
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	92.5
strongly disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 11 above, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents 50% (22.5%, 27.5%) were positive to the statement that effective risk management practices help supermarkets identify and mitigate potential risks that could impact the supply chain, operations, and financial performance while 30% (22.5%, 7.5%) of the respondents were negative to the same statement while 20% were not sure. This implies that there is effective risk management practices help supermarkets identify and mitigate potential risks that could impact the supply chain, operations, and financial performance.

4.4.2 Supermarkets that proactively assess and address potential risks are better equipped to respond to market uncertainties and changing consumer demands

Table 12 showing supermarkets that proactively assess and address potential risks are better equipped to respond to market uncertainties and changing consumer demands

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
Agree	5	12.5	12.5	30.0
not sure	11	27.5	27.5	57.5
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	80.0
strongly disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 12, it can be observed that 30% (17.5%, 12.5%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that supermarkets that proactively assess and address potential risks are better equipped to respond to market uncertainties and changing consumer demands, 42.5% (22.5%, 20%) were negative to the same statement while 27.5% of the respondents were not sure. These findings are in line with Berhan, B., & Jenkins, G. (2015), acknowledged that the supermarkets that proactively assess and address potential risks are better equipped to respond to market uncertainties and changing consumer demands hence implying that supermarkets that proactively assess and address potential risks are not better equipped to respond to market uncertainties and changing consumer demands.

4.4.3 Supermarkets adopting innovative risk management techniques, such as data analytics and digital tools, are better positioned to anticipate risks and capitalize on emerging opportunities

Table 13 Showing whether supermarkets adopting innovative risk management techniques, such as data analytics and digital tools, are better positioned to anticipate risks and capitalize on emerging opportunities

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
Agree	4	10.0	10.0	42.5
not sure	7	17.5	17.5	60.0
Disagree	10	25.0	25.0	85.0
strongly disagree	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 13 above indicates that the majority of the respondents 42.5% (32.5%, 10%) were positive to the statement that supermarkets adopting innovative risk management techniques, such as data analytics and digital tools, are better positioned to anticipate risks and capitalize on emerging opportunities while 40% (25%, 15%) were negative to the same statement, 17.5% were not sure. This implies that supermarkets adopting innovative risk management techniques, such as data analytics and digital tools, are better positioned to anticipate risks and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

4.4.4 Effective risk management not only safeguards supermarkets against potential threats but also enables them to identify new opportunities for growth and innovation

Table 14 showing whether effective risk management not only safeguards supermarkets against potential threats but also enables them to identify new opportunities for growth and innovation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	11	27.5	27.5	27.5
Agree	4	10.0	10.0	37.5
not sure	2	5.0	5.0	42.5
Disagree	15	37.5	37.5	80.0
strongly disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 14 above, it can be seen that 57.5% (37.5%, 20%) of the respondents were negative to the statement that effective risk management not only safeguards supermarkets against potential threats but also enables them to identify new opportunities for growth and innovation, 37.5% (27.5%, 10%) were negative to the same statement meanwhile 5% of the respondents were not sure. This implies that effective risk management not only safeguards supermarkets against potential threats but also enables them to identify new opportunities for growth and innovation.

4.4.5 Supermarkets that prioritize risk management as a strategic imperative are better equipped to navigate challenges, build customer trust, and sustain long-term profitability in a competitive marketplace

Table 15 Showing whether supermarkets that prioritize risk management as a strategic imperative are better equipped to navigate challenges, build customer trust, and sustain long-term profitability in a competitive marketplace

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
Agree	6	15.0	15.0	37.5
not sure	3	7.5	7.5	45.0
Disagree	18	45.0	45.0	90.0
strongly disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 15 above shows that 37.5% of the respondents (22.5%, 15%) were positive to the statement that supermarkets that prioritize risk management as a strategic imperative are better equipped to navigate challenges, build customer trust, and sustain long-term profitability in a competitive marketplace and 55% (45%, 10%) were negative to the same statement while 7.5% of the respondents were not sure. These finding contradict with Caliendo, M. (2018) who observed that supermarkets that prioritize risk management as a strategic imperative are better equipped to navigate challenges, build customer trust, and sustain long-term profitability in a competitive marketplace.

4.4.6 Regression Analysis for the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets

For analysis of the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets, the independent variable was conceptualized in terms of risk management and for the study to achieve its one of the objectives; risk management was regressed to assess its effect on competitiveness in supermarkets. The results from analysis are presented in the model summary and coefficients tables below.

Table 16 Regression model summary and coefficients for the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets.

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F-Statistic	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.304 ^a	.092	.077	9.421	.464

a. Predictors: (Constant), Risk management

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2.892	.325		.000
	Risk management	.224	.089	.304	.015

a. Dependent Variable: competitiveness in supermarkets

Source: primary data, (2024)

From the tables 16 showing the model summary statistics above, a p-value = 0.015 that is less than 5% level of significance indicates that risk management positively (Beta=0.224) predicts the competitiveness in supermarkets and effect is significant at p-value < 0.05. An adjusted R² of

0.077 implies that risk management explains and predicts significantly 7.7% variations in competitiveness in supermarkets and the remaining 92.3% explained by other factors.

4.5 Research question three: Finding out the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets

4.5.1 Sustainable supplier chain management strategy supports ethical sourcing practices, reduces environmental impact, and fosters long-term relationships with suppliers based on trust and transparency

Table 17 Showing whether sustainable supplier chain management strategy supports ethical sourcing practices, reduces environmental impact, and fosters long-term relationships with suppliers based on trust and transparency

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
Agree	6	15.0	15.0	25.0
not sure	7	17.5	17.5	42.5
Disagree	15	37.5	37.5	80.0
strongly disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 17 above, it can be seen that the minority of the respondents 25% (10%, 15%) were positive to the statement that a sustainable supplier chain management strategy supports ethical sourcing practices, reduces environmental impact, and fosters long-term

relationships with suppliers based on trust and transparency while 57.5% (37.5%, 20%) were negative to the same statement and 17.5% of the respondents were not sure there by implying that a sustainable supplier chain management strategy supports ethical sourcing practices, reduces environmental impact, and fosters long-term relationships with suppliers based on trust and transparency.

4.5.2 A well-managed supply chain can enhance product quality and consistency, which in turn leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately driving competitiveness in the market

Table 18 showing whether a well-managed supply chain can enhance product quality and consistency, which in turn leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately driving competitiveness in the market

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	11	27.5	27.5	27.5
Agree	15	37.5	37.5	65.0
not sure	2	5.0	5.0	70.0
Valid Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	82.5
strongly disagree	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 18 above, it can be observed that the majority of the respondents 65% (27.5%, 37.5%) were positive to the statement that a well-managed supply chain can enhance product quality and consistency, which in turn leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately driving competitiveness in the market, 30%(12.5%, 17.5%) were negative to the same statement while 5% were not sure. This implies that a well-managed supply chain can enhance product quality and consistency, which in turn leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately driving competitiveness in the market.

4.5.3 Effective supplier chain management practices such as supplier development, strategic sourcing, and inventory control can lead to cost reductions

Table 19 Showing whether effective supplier chain management practices such as supplier development, strategic sourcing, and inventory control can lead to cost reductions

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
Agree	8	20.0	20.0	32.5
not sure	10	25.0	25.0	57.5
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	80.0
strongly disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 19 above shows that 32.5% (12.5%, 20%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that effective supplier chain management practices such as supplier development, strategic sourcing, and inventory control can lead to cost reductions while 42.5%(22.5%, 20%) were negative to the same statement and 25% of the respondents were not sure. These findings

contradict with Collier, P. (2006) who stressed that effective supplier chain management practices such as supplier development, strategic sourcing, and inventory control can lead to cost reductions.

4.5.4 effective supplier chain management not only helps supermarkets reduce costs but also enables them to respond more quickly to changing market demands and consumer preferences

Table 20 showing whether effective supplier chain management not only helps supermarkets reduce costs but also enables them to respond more quickly to changing market demands and consumer preferences

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
Agree	9	22.5	22.5	57.5
not sure	4	10.0	10.0	67.5
Disagree	8	20.0	20.0	87.5
strongly disagree	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 20 above indicates that the majority of the respondents 57.5% (35%, 22.5%) were positive to the statement that effective supplier chain management not only helps supermarkets reduce costs but also enables them to respond more quickly to changing market demands and consumer preferences ,32.5% (20%,12.5%) had a negative response to the same statement while 10% of the respondents were not sure. This implies that effective supplier chain management not only helps supermarkets reduce

costs but also enables them to respond more quickly to changing market demands and consumer preferences.

4.5.5 A well-managed supplier chain can lead to reduced costs, faster response times, and increased customer satisfaction levels

Table 21 Showing whether a well-managed supplier chain can lead to reduced costs, faster response times, and increased customer satisfaction levels

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
Agree	12	30.0	30.0	65.0
not sure	2	5.0	5.0	70.0
Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	82.5
strongly disagree	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 21 above shows that the majority of the respondents 65% (35%, 30%) were positive to the statement that a well-managed supplier chain can lead to reduced costs, faster response times, and increased customer satisfaction levels while 30% (12.5%, 17.5%) had a negative response to the same statement and 5% of the respondents were not sure. However, this concurs with the research carried out by Adeoye T. (2006) opined that a well-managed supplier chain can lead to reduced costs, faster response times, and increased customer satisfaction levels there by implying that a well-managed supplier chain can lead to reduced costs, faster response times, and increased customer satisfaction levels.

4.5.6 Regression Analysis for the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets

In order to analyze the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets, the independent variable was conceptualized in terms of supply chain management and for the study to achieve its objectives; regression analysis to assess its effect on competitiveness in supermarkets was performed using SPSS. The results from analysis were presented in the model summary and coefficients tables below.

Table 22 Showing regression model summary and Coefficients for the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F-Statistic	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.194 ^a	.037	.021	8.642	.588

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supply chain

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	3.356	.374		.000
	Supply chain	.091	.100	.114	.169

a. Dependent Variable: competitiveness in supermarkets

Source: primary data, (2024)

From the table 4.23 showing the model summary statistics above, a p-value = 0.169 that is more than 5% level of significance indicates that supply chain (Beta=0.091) predicts and affects their competitiveness in supermarkets. However, its effect is insignificant at p-value > 0.05. An adjusted R² of 0.021 implies that a tax policy explains 2.1% variations in competitiveness in supermarkets. However, these variations are not significant in affecting competitiveness in supermarkets.

4.6 Competitiveness in supermarkets

4.6.1 Supermarkets which consistently offer low prices are perceived as more competitive, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty

Table 23 Showing whether supermarkets which consistently offer low prices are perceived as more competitive, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
Agree	11	27.5	27.5	42.5
not sure	2	5.0	5.0	47.5
Disagree	16	40.0	40.0	87.5
strongly disagree	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 23 above, it can be seen that 42.5% (15%, 27.5%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that supermarkets which consistently offer low prices are

perceived as more competitive, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty,52.5%(40%, 12.5%) were negative to the same statement while 5% of the respondents were not sure. This implies that supermarkets which consistently offer low prices are perceived as more competitive, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

4.6.2 Adoption of dynamic pricing strategies, such as personalized discounts or flash sales, enhances supermarket competitiveness by improving customer engagement and driving impulse purchases

Table 24 Showing whether adoption of dynamic pricing strategies, such as personalized discounts or flash sales, enhances supermarket competitiveness by improving customer engagement and driving impulse purchases

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
Agree	6	15.0	15.0	52.5
not sure	7	17.5	17.5	70.0
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	92.5
strongly disagree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 24 above shows that the majority of the respondents 52.5% (37.5%, 15%) were positive to the statement that adoption of dynamic pricing strategies, such as personalized discounts or flash sales, enhances supermarket competitiveness by improving customer engagement and driving impulse purchases, 30% (22.5%, 7.5%) were negative to the same statement and 17.5% of the respondents were not sure. These findings were in line with Chigbu,(2012) who noted that

adoption of dynamic pricing strategies, such as personalized discounts or flash sales, enhances supermarket competitiveness by improving customer engagement and driving impulse purchases.

4.6.3 Innovative store layouts, including the use of technology, can increase efficiency and convenience, consequently enhancing competitiveness

Table 25 Showing whether innovative store layouts, including the use of technology, can increase efficiency and convenience, consequently enhancing competitiveness

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
Agree	12	30.0	30.0	72.5
not sure	1	2.5	2.5	75.0
Disagree	6	15.0	15.0	90.0
strongly disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 25 above it can be seen that the majority of the respondents 72.5% (42.5%, 30%) were positive to the statement that innovative store layouts, including the use of technology, can increase efficiency and convenience, consequently enhancing competitiveness, 25% (15%, 10%) had negative responses to the same statement while 2.5% of the respondents were not sure. This implies that innovative store layouts, including the use of technology, can increase efficiency and convenience, consequently enhancing competitiveness.

4.6.4 Increased competitiveness in the supermarket industry often leads to better customer satisfaction.

Table 26 Showing whether increased competitiveness in the supermarket industry often leads to better customer satisfaction.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
Agree	12	30.0	30.0	65.0
not sure	2	5.0	5.0	70.0
Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	82.5
strongly disagree	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to table 26 above, it can be seen that 65% (35%, 30%) of the respondents had a positive response to the statement that increased competitiveness in the supermarket industry often leads to better customer satisfaction while 30% (12.5%, 17.5%) were negative to the same statement and 5% of the respondents were not sure. This implies that increased competitiveness in the supermarket industry often leads to better customer satisfaction.

4.5.5 The pressure to maintain a competitive edge can result in aggressive pricing strategies that may have detrimental effects on smaller, independent supermarkets

Table 27 Showing whether the pressure to maintain a competitive edge can result in aggressive pricing strategies that may have detrimental effects on smaller, independent supermarkets

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
Agree	6	15.0	15.0	37.5
not sure	3	7.5	7.5	45.0
Disagree	18	45.0	45.0	90.0
strongly disagree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2024)

With reference to above table 27, it can be seen that 37.5 %(22.5%, 15%) were positive to the statement that the pressure to maintain a competitive edge can result in aggressive pricing strategies that may have detrimental effects on smaller, independent supermarkets, 55 %(45%, 10%) forming the majority were negative response to the same statement while 7.5% of the respondents were not sure. This implies that the pressure to maintain a competitive edge can result in aggressive pricing strategies that may have detrimental effects on smaller, independent supermarkets.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction.

In this chapter the researcher gives a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendation in line with the research questions and objectives.

5.1 Summary of findings.

The researcher provided a summary of findings in line with the objectives as follows;

5.1.1 Research Question one: Findings on the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets

The study investigated into the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets. Results showed that most respondents were positive to the statements that were they were asked. For example; majority of respondents constituting 42.5% were positive to the statement that effective supplier relationships can result in a higher level of responsiveness to market changes, enabling supermarkets to adapt quickly to shifting consumer demands and preferences; 50% who were also the majority were positive to the statement that strong supplier relationships lead to a more efficient supply chain management system, allowing supermarkets to maximize their operational efficiency and achieve a competitive edge in the market; 57.5% who also constituted the majority were positive to the statement that supplier relationships can directly impact a supermarket's competitive edge by enhancing supply chain efficiency and flexibility; 45% were positive to the statement that close supplier relationships enable supermarkets to access innovations and new products more readily, thereby staying ahead of competitors in a dynamic market landscape. The results indicates that supplier relationships

positively (Beta=0.153) predicts the competitiveness in supermarkets and effect is significant at p-value < 0.05.

On the other hand, 42.5% constituting the majority were negative to the statement that establishing strong ties with suppliers fosters collaboration, trust, and information sharing, which ultimately leads to improved operational performance.

Basing on the above results, it can be concluded that supplier relationships have a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets.

5.1.2 Research Question two: Findings on the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets

The study investigated into the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets.

Majority of the respondents 50% were positive to the statement that effective risk management practices help supermarkets identify and mitigate potential risks that could impact the supply chain, operations, and financial performance, it can be observed that 42.5% of the respondents were positive to the statement that supermarkets adopting innovative risk management techniques, such as data analytics and digital tools, are better positioned to anticipate risks and capitalize on emerging opportunities, while 57.5% of the respondents forming the majority were negative to the statement that effective risk management not only safeguards supermarkets against potential threats but also enables them to identify new opportunities for growth and innovation, 55% of the respondents were also negative to the statement that supermarkets that prioritize risk management as a strategic imperative are better equipped to navigate challenges, build customer trust, and sustain long-term profitability in a competitive marketplace, 42.5% of the respondents were negative to the statement that supermarkets that proactively assess and address potential risks are better equipped to respond to market uncertainties and changing consumer demands . The results showed that tax risk management on positively (Beta=0.224) predicts the competitiveness in supermarkets and effect is significant at p-value < 0.05.

Basing on the above results, it can be concluded that risk management has a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets.

5.1.3 Question three: Findings on the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets.

The findings revealed that 65% forming the majority of respondents were positive to the statement that a well-managed supply chain can enhance product quality and consistency, which in turn leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately driving competitiveness in the market, 57.5% were positive to the statement that a sustainable supplier chain management strategy supports ethical sourcing practices, reduces environmental impact, and fosters long-term relationships with suppliers based on trust and transparency, majority of the respondents 65% were positive to the statement that a well-managed supplier chain can lead to reduced costs, faster response times, and increased customer satisfaction levels.

On the other hand, 57.5% forming the majority disagreed to the statement that effective supplier chain management not only helps supermarkets reduce costs but also enables them to respond more quickly to changing market demands and consumer preferences, 42.5% of the respondents were negative to the statement that effective supplier chain management practices such as supplier development, strategic sourcing, and inventory control can lead to cost reductions.

Most responses were positive indicating that supply chain management has a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets.

It was indicated that supply chain management (Beta=0.091) predicts and affects their competitiveness in supermarkets. However, its effect is insignificant at p-value > 0.05

Basing on the above results, it can be concluded that supply chain management have a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets.

5.2 Conclusion

Basing on the results of the first objective, it can be concluded that supplier relationships have a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets. Therefore, should be enhanced by regularly communicating with suppliers to maintain a strong relationship. Keeping them updated on sales data, inventory levels, and upcoming promotions. This will help them plan their production and ensure the timely delivery of products. Working together with suppliers to forecast demand and plan production accordingly. Sharing information about upcoming promotions and sales targets can help suppliers prepare in advance and ensure they have sufficient inventory. Negotiating competitive pricing, payment terms, and discounts with suppliers. This can help reduce costs and increase profitability, making the supermarket more competitive.

Basing on the results of the second objective, it can be concluded that risk management has a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets. This can be enhanced by establishing a comprehensive risk management framework that assesses and analyzes potential risks, such as supply chain disruptions, changes in consumer preferences, or legal and regulatory risks. This framework should include clear policies and procedures for risk identification, assessment, monitoring, and mitigation. Leveraging technology solutions, such as inventory management systems and data analytics tools, to better monitor and control risks. These tools can help enhance supply chain visibility, optimize stock levels, and predict demand patterns more accurately, reducing the risk of stock-outs or overstocking.

It can also be concluded basing on objective three that supply chain management have a significant effect on competitiveness in supermarkets. This can be enhanced by developing strong relationships with suppliers is crucial to ensure timely and reliable delivery of products. Supermarkets can establish collaborative partnerships with their suppliers, conduct joint forecasting and demand planning, and share real-time information to improve overall supply chain efficiency. Managing transportation effectively is essential for a smooth supply chain operation. Supermarkets can optimize their delivery routes and implement green logistics strategies to reduce costs and minimize environmental impact. Investing in the training and skill development of supply chain staff is essential to enhance their expertise and efficiency. This can

include training on operations management, data analysis, and supply chain optimization techniques.

5.3 Recommendations

There is need Abrah supermarket to regularly communicate with suppliers to maintain a strong relationship. Keep them updated on sales data, inventory levels, and upcoming promotions. This will help them plan their production and ensure the timely delivery of products. Work together with suppliers to forecast demand and plan production accordingly. Sharing information about upcoming promotions and sales targets can help suppliers prepare in advance and ensure they have sufficient inventory. Negotiate competitive pricing, payment terms, and discounts with suppliers. This can help reduce costs and increase profitability, making the supermarket more competitive.

There is need for management of Abrah supermarket to establish a comprehensive risk management framework that assesses and analyzes potential risks, such as supply chain disruptions, changes in consumer preferences, or legal and regulatory risks. This framework should include clear policies and procedures for risk identification, assessment, monitoring, and mitigation. Leverage technology solutions, such as inventory management systems and data analytics tools, to better monitor and control risks. These tools can help enhance supply chain visibility, optimize stock levels, and predict demand patterns more accurately, reducing the risk of stock-outs or overstocking. Building strong relationships with suppliers is crucial for supermarkets. A collaborative approach with suppliers can help streamline the supply chain, improve communication and transparency, and jointly identify and mitigate potential risks. This collaboration can include regular meetings, sharing of data, and joint risk assessment exercises.

There is to develop strong relationships with suppliers is crucial to ensure timely and reliable delivery of products. Supermarkets can establish collaborative partnerships with their suppliers, conduct joint forecasting and demand planning, and share real-time information to improve overall supply chain efficiency. Managing transportation effectively is essential for a smooth supply chain operation. Supermarkets can optimize their delivery routes and implement green logistics strategies to reduce costs and minimize environmental impact. Investing in the training

and skill development of supply chain staff is essential to enhance their expertise and efficiency. This can include training on operations management, data analysis, and supply chain optimization techniques.

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APPENDIX: I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent

I am Mwangi Emmaculate Wangechi carrying out research on the topic “strategic sourcing and competitiveness in supermarkets” as a partial fulfillment for the award of bachelors degree of business administration at Uganda Christian University .The questionnaire is designed to help me collect relevant information and therefore I kindly request you to participate in responding to the questions that will be asked .However the information given will be treated confidential and will only be used for academic purpose.

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

(Tick in the box provided)

1. Gender distribution of the respondent

a) Male b) Female

2. Marital status of the respondent

a) Single b) Married Divorced Widowed

3. Age bracket of the respondent (years)

a) 11-20 b) 21-30 c) 31-40 d) 41 and above

4. Academic qualification of respondent

a) Secondary b) Certificate c) Diploma d) Bachelors' e) Masters

Section B: To assess the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets

This section aims at assessing the effect of supplier relationships on competitiveness in supermarkets. Please indicate your opinion on the following statements using the Linkert scale.

Key: 1= Agree, 2= Strongly Agree; 3= Not Sure; 4= Disagree; 5= Strongly Disagree.

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Establishing strong ties with suppliers fosters collaboration, trust, and information sharing, which ultimately leads to improved operational performance					
2	Effective supplier relationships can result in a higher level of responsiveness to market changes, enabling supermarkets to adapt quickly to shifting consumer demands and preferences					
3	Strong supplier relationships lead to a more efficient supply chain management system, allowing supermarkets to maximize their operational efficiency and achieve a competitive edge in the market.					
4	supplier relationships can directly impact a supermarket's competitive edge by enhancing supply chain efficiency and flexibility					
5	Close supplier relationships enable supermarkets to access innovations and new products more readily, thereby staying ahead of competitors in a dynamic market landscape.					

Section C: To analyze the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets

This section aims at analyzing the effect of risk management on competitiveness in supermarkets. Please indicate your opinion on the following statements using the Linkert scale.

Key: 1= Agree, 2= Strongly Agree; 3= Not Sure; 4= Disagree; 5= Strongly Disagree.

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Effective risk management practices help supermarkets identify and mitigate potential risks that could impact the supply chain, operations, and financial performance					
2	Supermarkets that proactively assess and address potential risks are better equipped to respond to market uncertainties and changing consumer demands					
3	Supermarkets adopting innovative risk management techniques, such as data analytics and digital tools, are better positioned to anticipate risks and capitalize on emerging opportunities					
4	Effective risk management not only safeguards supermarkets against potential threats but also enables them to identify new opportunities for growth and innovation					
5	Supermarkets that prioritize risk management as a strategic imperative are better equipped to navigate challenges, build customer trust, and sustain long-term profitability in a competitive marketplace					

Section D: To determine the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets

This section aims at determining the effect of supply chain management on competitiveness in supermarkets. Please indicate your opinion on the following statements using the Linkert scale.

Key: **1= Agree; 2= Strongly Agree; 3= Not Sure; 4= Disagree; 5= Strongly Disagree.**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	A sustainable supplier chain management strategy supports ethical sourcing practices, reduces environmental impact, and fosters long-term relationships with suppliers based on trust and transparency					
2	A well-managed supply chain can enhance product quality and consistency, which in turn leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately driving competitiveness in the market					
3	Effective supplier chain management practices such as supplier development, strategic sourcing, and inventory control can lead to cost reductions					
4	Effective supplier chain management not only helps supermarkets reduce costs but also enables them to respond more quickly to changing market demands and consumer preferences					
5	A well-managed supplier chain can lead to reduced costs, faster response times, and increased customer satisfaction levels					

Section E: Competitiveness in supermarkets

This section aims at exploring the effect of competitiveness in supermarkets. Please indicate your opinion on the following statements using the Linkert scale. Key: **1= Agree, 2= Strongly Agree; 3= Not Sure; 4= Disagree; 5= Strongly Disagree.**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Supermarkets which consistently offer low prices are perceived as more competitive, leading to increased					

	customer satisfaction and loyalty					
2	Adoption of dynamic pricing strategies, such as personalized discounts or flash sales, enhances supermarket competitiveness by improving customer engagement and driving impulse purchases					
3	Innovative store layouts, including the use of technology, can increase efficiency and convenience, consequently enhancing competitiveness					
4	Increased competitiveness in the supermarket industry often leads to better customer satisfaction.					
5	The pressure to maintain a competitive edge can result in aggressive pricing strategies that may have detrimental effects on smaller, independent supermarkets					

APPENDIX 2: MORGAN & KREJCIE TABLE (1970)

Table 3.1									
<i>Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population</i>									
N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

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

APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH INTRODUCTORY LETTER



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY.
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa
 MBALE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

To

ABRAH SUPERMARKET.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Academic Research

Christian greetings!

We are honored to introduce to you Mr. Mrs./Miss. MWANGI EMMACULATE KANGEMI
Of Registration Number; M22(M.P.C.I.B.PLM)005 pursuing a Masters'
Degree/Postgraduate Diploma / Bachelor's Degree

BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN PROCUREMENT AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT

He/ she is required to carry out an academic research on the topic

STRATEGIC SOURCING AND COMPETITIVENESS IN
SUPERMARKETS A CASE STUDY OF ABRAH SUPERMARKET

and thereafter produce a well bound hard cover research report (MAROON) in color for undergraduate
and three (BLACK)copies for Postgraduate students as a University requirement for the award of a
degree/diploma in the academic discipline that he / she is pursuing.

We shall be grateful for the help you may offer to him or her accordingly.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


Henry Omache

Ag. Head of Department Business



Manager


27-06-2024.