EFFECT OF SUPPLIER SELECTION MANAGEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES IN RWANDA. A CASE STUDY OF ROCK HILL CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LTD IN KIGALI

Murekatete Zawadi & Dr. Dushimimana Jean de Dieu, PhD

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[1*] Murekatete, Z., & [2] Dushimimana, J. D.

[1*] Postgraduate Student (Procurement and Supply Chain Management) - University of Kigali, Rwanda
[2] Senior Lecturer, School of Graduate Studies - University of Kigali, Rwanda.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to examine the effect of supplier selection management on the performance of Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali. The study adopted a mixed research design which included descriptive survey and correlation. The target population was 124 employees from all departments in Rock Hill Construction Company where census approach was adopted. For primary data questionnaires were used for data collection instruments and were in form of a five Likert scale with close ended questions. Validity of the instruments was measured using a team of experts in the field of project management. Data was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods using SPSS version 21. Multiple regression model and correlation coefficient were used. The results reveal that effective supplier selection management positively impacts the performance of the construction company. The study finds that factors such as supplier reliability, quality of materials, cost-efficiency, and timely delivery significantly influence project performance. Furthermore, the qualitative insights shed light on the strategies and challenges encountered by Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd in managing its supplier selection process. The study reveals that supplier selection management shows a modest positive effect on performance (Beta = 0.108, p = 0.047). This research contributes to the understanding of how supplier selection management can be a key determinant of success in the construction industry and offers practical recommendations for enhancing supplier-related decision-making processes to improve overall company performance. Furthermore, the research identifies key factors affecting supplier selection, including financial stability, reliability, and compliance with industry regulations. The study further recommends that the Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali should ensure full adoption of supplier selection practices in procurement and supply chain departments.

Keywords: *Supplier Selection Management, Organization Performance, Rock Hill Construction Company*

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INTRODUCTION

Supply chain management practices have been increasingly recognized as a crucial factor for improving the performance of construction projects worldwide. Effective supply chain management practices can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of project delivery, reduce waste and delays, improve cost control, and ultimately contribute to project success (Ahmed et al. 2019). According to a study by Wang et al. (2020), effective supply chain management practices in construction projects can lead to improved collaboration among project stakeholders, better risk management, increased transparency, and enhanced communication.

For instance, a study by Shi et al. (2021) investigated the impact of supply chain management practices on the performance of construction projects in China. The results of the study revealed that supply chain management practices significantly improve the performance of construction projects by enhancing project delivery time, reducing project costs, and improving the quality of construction projects.

Another study by Al Hattab and Al-Rashdan (2020) examined the impact of supply chain management practices on the performance of construction projects in the Middle East. The study found that effective supply chain management practices can significantly enhance the performance of construction projects by reducing the construction cost, improving the delivery time, and enhancing the quality of construction projects.

In Africa, the role of supply chain management practices on the performance of construction projects has been widely recognized. Effective supply chain management can contribute to the success of construction projects by reducing costs, improving project delivery time, enhancing quality, and minimizing risks (Ogunsemi, Oladapo, & Ekundayo, 2014).

In a study conducted by Odeyinka and Yusif (2014) in Nigeria, it was found that effective supply chain management practices, such as procurement planning, supplier selection, and material management, had a significant positive impact on the performance of construction projects. Another study by Mwakali (2016) in Kenya also found that effective supply chain management practices improved the performance of construction projects by ensuring timely delivery of materials, reducing wastage, and minimizing disruptions.

In Rwanda, supply chain management practices have been recognized as playing a crucial role in the performance of construction projects. The implementation of effective supply chain management practices can contribute to improving project quality, reducing costs, enhancing project efficiency, and minimizing delays. According to a study by Ntawuyirushintege et al. (2020), the adoption of supply chain management practices can improve the performance of construction projects in Rwanda.

The selection of suppliers and its impact on the performance of construction companies has garnered significant attention in the field of supply chain management and construction management. The study aims to explore this relationship within the context of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd, a prominent construction firm located in Kigali, Rwanda. Effective supplier selection is critical for construction companies like Rock Hill, as it directly influences project timelines, costs, and overall quality. Studies by Kumar and Ozdamar (2002) and Ghannad and O'Brien (2015) have emphasized that the choice of suppliers significantly affects project performance, with poor supplier selection leading to delays, cost overruns, and potential quality issues. Within the Rwandan construction industry, which has been rapidly growing and attracting international investments, understanding the intricacies of supplier selection management is particularly crucial. By delving into the supplier selection practices and their impact on performance in this specific context, this research can offer insights that are not only academically relevant but also practically significant for companies like Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd.

Statement of the Problem

Supply chain management is one of the key mechanisms enabling government to implement policy. The inefficiency in supply chain management, particularly in the procurement phase of the chain attributed to supply chain practices has contributed to inequality in the construction sector in Rwanda. The construction industry in Rwanda like in other developing countries, faces numerous challenges, such as lack of skilled labor, inadequate financial resources, and poor supply chain management practices (Ntawuyirushintege et al., 2020).

The problem and cost overrun and delays as the significant factors that are affecting the performance of building projects in Rwanda have not been given an adequate attention throughout the construction phases from initiation to completion and it has resulted in negative consequences such as disputes, cost overrun (Ntihabose et al. 2021). The lack paying attention to major factors causing cost and time overruns has been criticized as the sources of poor performance of projects in Rwanda. Construction sector in Rwanda is also lacking database of performance indicators to be used by practitioners in the building industry performance (Rwanda National Construction Policy, 2009).

The performance of construction companies is inherently reliant on effective supplier selection management, a critical component of supply chain management. However, the specific challenges and impacts of supplier selection on the performance of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd in Kigali have not been thoroughly investigated. This study aims to address this gap by examining the nuanced issues related to supplier selection within the construction industry, taking into account factors such as supplier qualifications, pricing strategies, delivery reliability, and quality of materials, all of which play a vital role in influencing project success and overall company performance (Li, Akintoye, Edwards, & Hardcastle, 2015; Kannan & Tan, 2015). Understanding the supplier selection practices within the context of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd in Kigali is crucial for enhancing the firm's competitiveness and long-term sustainability, as well as providing valuable insights for the broader construction sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Supplier selection management and organization performance

The management of supplier selection is of paramount importance in determining the overall performance and profitability of a company. The implementation of efficient supplier selection management is crucial in order to assure the availability of appropriate items in optimal quantities and timing, while simultaneously minimizing expenses related to excessive inventory or stock shortages. Numerous scholarly investigations have been conducted to analyze the influence of supplier selection management on the performance of organizations, hence underscoring its importance across diverse industries.

The process of supplier selection is of utmost importance as it pertains to the strategic selection of suppliers by enterprises in order to augment their competitive edge. The supplier selection process has become increasingly intricate over time, as it now encompasses not only pricing but also a range of quantitative and qualitative aspects that are deemed crucial for the long-term viability and expansion of enterprises (Carr et al., 2018). The growing reliance on suppliers results in heightened vulnerability for organizations in the face of unexpected events. Consequently, the process of supplier selection has emerged as a critical concern for buying managers (Lai et al., 2017). As organizations increasingly depend on their key suppliers, it is imperative for supply managers to carefully choose appropriate vendors. The challenge encountered is in the absence of consensus among scholars regarding the primary selection criteria for suppliers, despite the abundance of literature on the subject. Krause et al. (2019) argue that there is a dearth of consensus about the provision of comprehensive guidelines to supply managers engaged in strategic purchasing. Consequently, supply managers frequently employ the practice of formulating a predetermined set of

criteria in order to assess and juxtapose prospective sources whenever a procurement scenario emerges.

The contextual nature of supplier selection renders it challenging to establish standardized selection processes. Furthermore, this implies that there is a superfluous expenditure of energy when the procedure is replicated for every instance of purchasing. The absence of shared characteristics also poses a challenge to the advancement of frameworks for guiding practitioners, as well as the difficulty in directly comparing various research investigations due to the lack of dependable and valid measurements (Pagell et al., 2017).

In their study, Prajogo et al. (2016) conducted research on the incorporation of sustainability into the process of selecting strategic suppliers. Their objective was to develop a comprehensive methodology and a problem-specific model for configuring the most optimal strategic supplier portfolio, taking into account both traditional performance-related objectives and sustainability goals. The methodology employed in this study was the utilization of a hybrid model combining the Analytic Network Process (ANP) and Goal Programming (GP) (Wagner et al., 2018).

The proposed model satisfactorily fulfills all the necessary criteria for effectively incorporating the principles of three-dimensional sustainability into the strategic process of supplier selection. The Analytic Network Process (ANP) enables the determination of suppliers' sustainability priorities by considering several economic, environmental, and social decision criteria and their interconnectedness. Game theory (GP) can be utilized to determine the most advantageous supplier portfolio in situations when dual or multiple sourcing selections are being considered. This can be achieved by considering several factors such as the supplier's sustainability priorities, performance-related targets, resource limitations, and the overall corporate strategy. During the selection phase of portfolio management, the objective is to choose a group of suppliers that possess distinct traits and competencies, so enabling them to cater to the specific needs of the purchasing organization.

The selection of suppliers has a direct impact on operational performance measurements, including cost reduction, lead time reduction, and inventory management. The implementation of effective supplier selection procedures allows firms to optimize their supply chain operations, mitigate production delays, and realize financial benefits (Gao et al., 2018). According to Huq et al. (2019), empirical studies have demonstrated that firms that adopt a strategic approach in managing their supplier selection processes tend to observe enhancements in operational performance and heightened levels of customer satisfaction.

Stakeholder Theory

Freeman (1984) is credited with pioneering the field of stakeholder management, wherein he presented the notion that organizations possess stakeholders and delineated the fundamental characteristics of the stakeholder concept. The stakeholder method has been widely acknowledged as a robust framework for comprehending the organization within its external context. According to Mitchell et al. (2017), the purpose of this method is to expand the management's perspective on its tasks and obligations beyond the sole focus on maximizing profits and the stakeholders often defined in input-output models of the firm. Instead, it strives to incorporate the interests and claims of non-stockholding groups as well.

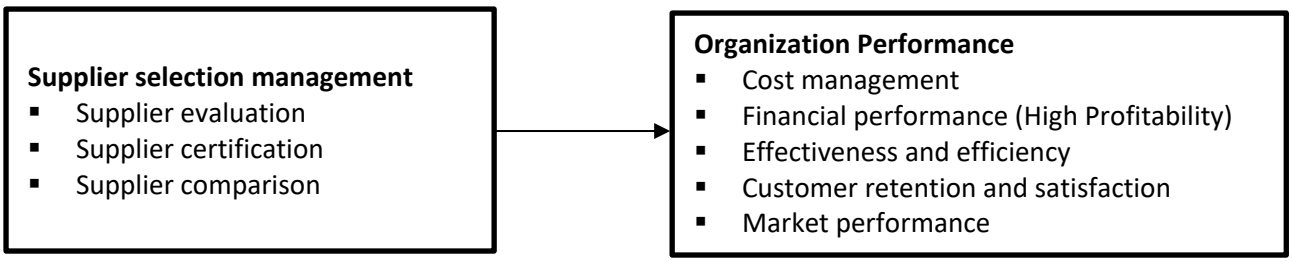
According to Mitchell et al. (2017), several variables might influence the level of significance attributed to a specific stakeholder in a given project. Legitimacy refers to the ethical or legal entitlement that a stakeholder possesses to exert influence on a specific project. Power, on the other hand, pertains to their ability to affect the ultimate result of such project. Lastly, urgency denotes the extent to which their demands are time-sensitive or pressing. According to Newcombe (2013), the initiation of effective stakeholder management involves the initial identification of key stakeholders. The assessment of stakeholder groups' strategic

significance aids organizations in determining the appropriate nature of their stakeholder management strategy.

The Stakeholder Theory provides a comprehensive lens through which to understand the intricate relationship between supplier selection management and the performance of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd in Kigali. According to Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (2017), stakeholders encompass various groups, including suppliers, whose interests and engagement can significantly impact an organization's outcomes. In the case of Rock Hill Construction, the supplier selection process is not merely a transactional activity; it is a strategic decision that can have far-reaching consequences. The company's suppliers are not just sources of materials and services but integral partners, affecting operational efficiency, cost control, product quality, and ultimately, customer satisfaction. Through a stakeholder lens, the supplier becomes an essential stakeholder in the organization's value chain. Therefore, effective supplier selection management that aligns with stakeholder interests and considers factors such as ethical and sustainable practices can lead to enhanced supplier relationships, trust, and long-term commitment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2018). In this context, the stakeholder theory emphasizes that by managing suppliers as critical stakeholders, Rock Hill Construction can improve its overall performance by achieving operational excellence, reducing costs, and ensuring the delivery of high-quality products and services to meet its clients' needs and expectations. Moreover, by integrating stakeholders' perspectives and interests into supplier selection decisions, the company can build a reputation for social responsibility and sustainability, further enhancing its competitiveness in the construction industry.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for understanding the effect of supplier selection management on the performance of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd in Kigali is rooted in the dynamics of procurement and supply chain management. At its core, this framework acknowledges that supplier selection management is a pivotal element that can significantly impact the company's operational and financial performance. Drawing from the research of Monczka, Handfield, Giunipero, and Patterson (2015), supplier selection involves multifaceted criteria such as cost, quality, reliability, and responsiveness. Effective supplier selection management, informed by these criteria, enhances the efficiency of the supply chain, reduces procurement costs, and ensures a consistent supply of quality materials. This, in turn, aligns with the principles of strategic supply chain management, as espoused by Lambert and Cooper (2020), which advocate that the integration of suppliers into a company's strategic planning can lead to competitive advantage. Furthermore, the performance of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd will be measured across various dimensions, including cost efficiency, project timelines, and overall quality, in line with indicators discussed in the research of Neves, Saavedra, and Brito (2013). By examining the interplay between supplier selection management and performance in this context, this framework aims to shed light on the critical role of supplier management strategies in influencing the success and competitiveness of construction companies in Kigali, providing insights that can guide future decisions and practices.



Independent variable **Dependent variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher, 2023

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive and correlational research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Therefore, the chosen design was deemed suitable as it aligns with the objective of the study, which is to investigate the impact of supplier selection management on the performance of construction projects in Rwanda. In this study, the focus group consisted of 124 individuals employed across several departments within Rock Hill Construction Company (Rock Hill Human Resource Management, 2023). Due to the limited size of the participant pool, the census inquiry approach, which involves the inclusion of all individuals within the target population without employing any sampling procedures, was utilized.

The data collection process involved the utilization of questionnaires that employed a five-point Likert scale, consisting of close-ended questions, in order to get information from the participants. The study employed a drop and pick methodology, in which the research instruments were distributed to the respondents and subsequently collected once they had been completed. Regular follow-up was conducted in order to mitigate instances when the respondents inadvertently neglected to complete the questionnaires. Questionnaires are a practical method for collecting data from a substantial sample size of participants (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013).

A pilot study was deemed necessary prior to assessing the validity and reliability of the research tools. An initial assessment was conducted on the data gathering methods and procedures in order to detect potential issues. Taylor (2014) advocated for the utilization of a representative 10% sample from the population in order to conduct statistical tests on instruments. The test was conducted using the Nonparametric Probability Distribution (NPD) method, in which a total of 13 questionnaires were provided to the personnel working in their respective departments.

RESULTS

Descriptive survey on supplier selection management

The objective in this research was to examine the effect of supplier selection management on the performance of Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali. In pursuit of this goal, the research aimed to gather a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions regarding the effect of supplier selection management on the performance of Rock Hill Construction Company. Employing a 5-point Likert-type weighted scale, the study further endeavored to assess the extent of agreement among respondents concerning a range of statements associated with the relationship between supplier selection management and performance of Rock Hill Construction Company. The findings are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents views on supplier selection management

Statement on supplier selection management	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
At Rock Hill Construction Company technical expertise criteria is used when evaluating supplier	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 1.0%	38 36.5%	65 62.5%	4.62	.508
At Rock Hill Construction Company technical capability, criteria is used when evaluating suppliers	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 1.0%	44 42.3%	59 56.7%	4.56	.518
At Rock Hill Construction Company Use of financial capability criteria is used when evaluating suppliers	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 3.8%	30 28.8%	70 67.3%	4.63	.558
Rock Hill Construction Company considers provision of after sales service when evaluating suppliers	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 9.6%	27 26.0%	67 64.4%	4.55	.667
Rock Hill Construction Company considers suppliers past performance and current relationship when evaluating suppliers	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 1.9%	48 46.2%	54 51.9%	4.50	.540
At Rock Hill Construction Company exact amount of inventory ordered is delivered by the suppliers	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 3.8%	34 32.7%	66 63.5%	4.60	.566
Overall mean						**4.58**	

Source: **Primary data**, (2023).

The results were as presented in Table 1 whereby in the assessment of supplier qualifications, several key criteria were taken into account. The data reveals that technical expertise is highly prioritized, with approximately 36.5% of respondents strongly agreeing and 62.5% either strongly agreeing or agreeing that it is a critical factor in supplier evaluation. The mean score of 4.62 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.508 indicate a strong consensus among respondents regarding this criterion.

Similarly, technical capability is deemed significant, with 42.3% strongly agreeing and 56.7% strongly agreeing or agreeing with its importance in supplier assessment. The mean score of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.518 suggest a consistent viewpoint among respondents regarding technical capability criteria. Financial capability also emerges as a key consideration, as evidenced by 28.8% strongly agreeing and 67.3% strongly agreeing or agreeing with its relevance in supplier evaluation. The mean score of 4.63 and a standard deviation of 0.558 indicate a clear consensus regarding the importance of financial criteria.

Additionally, the survey highlights the importance of after-sales service, with 26.0% strongly agreeing and 64.4% strongly agreeing or agreeing that it is taken into account when assessing suppliers. The mean score of 4.55 and a standard deviation of 0.667 show that while there is agreement, there may be slightly more variability in opinions regarding this aspect. Supplier past performance and current relationships are considered essential by 46.2% of respondents, with 51.9% strongly agreeing or agreeing with this criterion. The mean score of 4.50 and a standard deviation of 0.540 suggest a reasonably strong consensus on this evaluation factor.

Furthermore, respondents indicate that the accuracy of inventory orders is a significant consideration, with 32.7% strongly agreeing and 63.5% strongly agreeing or agreeing that it is crucial. The mean score of 4.60 and a standard deviation of 0.566 suggest that this criterion is generally well-aligned with the company's expectations. Overall, the data reveals a positive sentiment regarding Rock Hill Construction Company's supplier evaluation criteria, with an overall mean of 4.58. This suggests that the company's approach to supplier assessment,

emphasizing technical expertise, technical capability, financial capability, after-sales service, past performance, and order accuracy, is generally well-received by those surveyed. The consistent agreement among respondents indicates a unified perspective on these criteria, underlining their importance in the supplier selection process.

The results are in line with Prajogo *et al.,* (2016) who carried out a study on integrating sustainability into strategic supplier portfolio selection with a view of proposing a comprehensive methodology and a problem specific model for the configuration of the optimal strategic supplier portfolio in terms of traditional, performance-related objectives and sustainability targets.

Regression results for supplier selection management versus Rock Hill performance

To examine the effect of supplier selection management on the performance of Rock Hill Construction Company, a linear regression model was fitted with Supplier selection management as the independent variable. Table 2 shows the model summary of the bivariate model fitted. The R Square value of 0.004 suggests that only 0.4% of the variance in the performance of the company can be explained by variations in supplier selection management.

Table 2: Model summary for supplier selection management

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.062[a]	.004	-.006	.27455

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supplier selection management

b. Dependent Variable: Performance of Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali

Source: **Primary data**, (2023).

The study sought a Simple Linear Regression between supplier selection management and the performance of Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali. The researcher tested the following hypothesis.

H_{01}. Supplier selection management has no significant effect on organization performance

The F-statistic is 0.400, and the associated p-value (Sig.) is 0.529. The large p-value suggests that the regression model, which includes "supplier selection management" as a predictor, is not statistically significant. This means that "supplier selection management" does not have a significant linear relationship with "performance" in this model. The majority of the variance in "performance" remains unexplained by the inclusion of this predictor. Hence accepting the Null hypothesis one.

Table 3: ANOVA results for Supplier selection management ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.030	1	.030	.400	.529[b]
	Residual	7.688	102	.075		
	Total	7.718	103			

a. Dependent Variable: performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), supplier selection management

Source: **Primary data,** (2023).

The findings indicate that the constant term (intercept) in the model is 4.082, and it is highly statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that when "Supplier selection management" is zero, the expected performance value is approximately 4.082. However, the coefficient for "Supplier selection management" is 0.069, with a standard error of 0.109. This coefficient reflects the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in "Supplier selection management." Importantly, the

beta (standardized coefficient) is 0.062, indicating a very small standardized effect size. The t-statistic is 0.632, and the associated p-value is 0.529, signifying that the effect of "Supplier selection management" on "Performance" is not statistically significant at conventional significance levels (e.g., $p < 0.05$). In summary, the results suggest that "Supplier selection management" does not have a statistically significant impact on "Performance" in this model. The equation formulated by the results of the model is given as:

Performance of Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali= 4.082 + 0.069 Supplier selection management

Table 4: Coefficient results for Supplier selection management Coefficients (a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.082	.497		8.208	.000
	Supplier selection management	.069	.109	.062	.632	.529

a. Dependent variable: Performance

Source: **Primary data**, (2023).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective focused on assessing the influence of supplier selection management on Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd.'s performance in Kigali. The findings indicate that the company's supplier evaluation criteria, which include technical expertise, technical capability, financial capability, after-sales service, past performance, and order accuracy, are highly prioritized and well-received by respondents. However, despite the strong consensus on the importance of these factors, the statistical analysis reveals that variations in supplier selection management have a minimal impact on the company's overall performance. The regression model fails to establish a significant linear relationship between supplier selection management and performance, as indicated by the large p-value, leading to the acceptance of the Null hypothesis. In summary, while Rock Hill Construction Company's supplier evaluation criteria align with respondents' preferences, they do not substantially influence the company's overall performance, as demonstrated by the statistical analysis.

This study recommends that Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali should consider provision of after sales service when evaluating suppliers. The study further recommends that the Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali should ensure full adoption of information technology in procurement and supply chain departments. Finally, the study recommends that the Rock Hill construction company ltd in Kigali should come up with training programs to help suppliers improve the quality of their products and services.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Several avenues for future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of supplier selection management on the performance of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd in Kigali. Firstly, investigating the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, in enhancing supplier selection and monitoring processes could provide insights into the company's performance improvements in an increasingly digitalized business environment. Second, a comparative study analyzing the supplier management practices of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd in Kigali with those of other construction firms in the region could offer valuable benchmarks and best practices, shedding light on potential areas for improvement. Third, an exploration of the dynamic interplay between supplier selection strategies and the company's sustainability and corporate social responsibility initiatives could uncover opportunities for aligning

supplier management with broader organizational objectives. Finally, longitudinal research tracking the evolution of supplier selection management practices within the company could reveal long-term performance trends and the adaptability of these strategies over time. These research directions can collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between supplier selection management and performance in the context of Rock Hill Construction Company Ltd.

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