JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SCIENCES

Vol. 15 No. 2 ISSN 2221-1152

Editorial

Journal of Social and Development Sciences (JSDS) is a scholarly journal that deals with the disciplines of social and development sciences. JSDS publishes research work that meaningfully contributes to the theoretical bases of contemporary developments in society, business and related disciplines. The work submitted for publication consideration in JSDS should address empirical and theoretical contributions in the subjects related to the scope of the journal in particular and allied theories and practices in general. The scope of JSDS includes: sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, political science, international relations, linguistics, history, public relations, hospitality & tourism and project management. Author(s) should declare that work submitted to the journal is original, not under consideration for publication by another journal, and that all listed authors approve its submission to JSDS. It is JSDS policy to welcome submissions for consideration, which are original, and not under consideration for publication by another journal at the same time. Author (s) can submit: Research Paper, Conceptual Paper, Case Studies and Book Review. The current issue of JSDS consists of papers of scholars from Uganda and South Africa. Stakeholder Involvement, Resource Availability and Performance of Road Projects, Elements of Collaborative Relationships and Supply Chain Performance, Exploring Dilemmas about the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol under Modern Refugee Trends, Analyzing the Agency and Well-Being of Teenage Mothers, Governance Factors and the Growth of the Agro-Processing Industry and Procurement Practices and Supply Chain Performance are some of the major practices and concepts examined in these studies. Journal received research submissions related to all aspects of major themes and tracks. All the submitted papers were first assessed by the editorial team for relevance and originality of the work and blindly peer-reviewed by the external reviewers depending on the subject matter of the paper. After the rigorous peer-review process, the submitted papers were selected based on originality, significance, and clarity of purpose. The current issue will therefore be a unique offer, where scholars will be able to appreciate the latest results in their field of expertise and to acquire additional knowledge in other relevant fields.

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PAPERS

Journal of Social and Development Sciences
Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025 (ISSN 2221-1152)

Stakeholder Involvement, Resource Availability and Performance of Road Projects Under Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of stakeholder involvement and availability of resources on the performance of Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)-managed road works in Uganda. Road building is essential to the acceleration of economic growth and the quality of life, but delays and cost escalation threaten its success. The study aims to understand the extent to which the two variables contribute to ensuring the success of projects. Data were gathered over two months from 62 out of 76 road projects, including project managers, division councillors, and KCCA supervision team members. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were used, including surveys and questionnaires, and statistical analysis was done using SPSS. The findings reveal a positive correlation between stakeholder participation, available resources, and project performance. All these variables together explain 33.3% of the difference in the quality of the projects done. It emphasizes the importance of effective stakeholder engagement and adequate resources to ensure road projects are completed within time, budget, and quality. It proposes implementing formal policies for stakeholder interaction, improving accountability, encouraging public-private partnerships, and merging stakeholder feedback with resource planning. The study further calls upon additional research to facilitate comparison with other regions of the globe to determine better ways of improving project performance.

Keywords: *Stakeholder involvement, resource availability, performance, road projects Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda*

1. Study Background

Successful road construction projects hold the key to building and maintaining infrastructure since they have impacts on economic development, social well-being, and overall quality of life (Kujukira, 2022). Road construction projects are critical pathways for moving goods and individuals, connecting communities, and facilitating access to essential services (Nuwagaba et al., 2022). As Martin and Kakumba (2020) note, good roads increase productivity, minimize travel time and costs, and promote trade by improving market accessibility. Well-constructed roads also minimize accidents and improve road safety for drivers and pedestrians (Ruth, 2022). For these reasons, timely and sufficient project completion of roads is critical in promoting social and economic development in rural and urban areas.

Abdel-Maksoud et al. (2021) observe that stakeholders should be involved in all phases of road construction, from planning through implementation and follow-up. While planning, stakeholders such as ministries of government, members of the public, investors, and contractors provide their knowledge to ensure that project goals match public desires and development targets (Kujukira, 2022). This helps set well-defined objectives, define the scope, and choose appropriate construction techniques (Abdel-Maksoud et al., 2021). In practice, stakeholders contribute through tracking performance, resolving issues at hand, and helping teams maintain timelines and quality standards (Nuwagaba et al., 2022). According to Kujukira (2022), they also offer constant consultancy and remarks, enabling effortless working arrangements on the ground. During monitoring and evaluation, regular checks by stakeholders help to track progress and make necessary changes in an effort to improve outcomes (Abdel-Maksoud et al., 2021). Nuwagaba et al. (2022) note that the kind of participation helps in building trust, increases transparency, and improves overall success within the project.

Availability of resources is a vital element that informs the conduct of road construction projects (Asiimwe, 2020). It includes financial resources, human resources, and technical resources. Adequate finance for the procurement of materials, machinery operation, and compensation for labor is needed (Asiimwe, 2020). Ggoobi et al. (2020) highlight government funding, overseas credit, and public-private partnerships as common sources of finance. Adequately qualified human resources, such as engineers, managers, and technicians, are

also needed to conduct the project in an appropriate way (Asiimwe, 2020). This necessitates appropriate recruitment, training, and offering conducive working conditions. Technical inputs such as equipment, construction materials, and state-of-the-art tools cause the roads to be durable and of superior quality (Ggoobi et al., 2020). Asiimwe (2020) adds that when equipment is available and reliable, it allows for the acceleration of job completion and quality work.

Baensch-Baltruschat et al. (2021) add that globally, countries such as Germany and Singapore are famous for possessing strong road infrastructure. There are more than 95% of roads in in good condition in Germany, which supports an efficient transportation system (Steininger, Groth, & Weber, 2021). Singapore has also developed one of the most efficient road networks, with more than 90% of roads having an excellent rating (Shan et al., 2020). Alaloul et al. (2021) credit this to continuous investment, sophisticated technologies, and efficient project management. Mirhosseini (2023) opines that the above examples reflect the importance of effective management, planning in the long term, and good governance in providing quality roads.

On the African continent, the development of roads has faced challenges country by country (Gamariel & David, 2021). Rwanda, for example, has registered notable improvements in road construction and maintenance (Nsanzimana & Mulyungi, 2020). Obala and Tuyishime (2023) indicate that more than 90% of Rwanda's roads are well surfaced and in good condition. Gamariel and David (2021) attribute the success to political commitment, innovative funding arrangements, and effective management. It is not the case with countries like Nigeria and Kenya, whose projects are late in execution, cost more, and are poorly implemented as a result of corruption, underfunding, and weak institutions (Matu et al., 2020). Notwithstanding this, improved road construction is a paramount goal for the majority of African governments, as they perceive its role in propelling socio-economic development (Aboginije et al., 2020).

In Uganda, where both economic growth and national development are the prime elements that encompass infrastructure, stakeholder contribution and resource availability cannot be dismissed (Mwelu et al., 2020). However, Elong (2020) and Lwanga (2021) indicate that the management of these two factors remains a major hindrance. Mutabazi (2021) explains that among the main issues is poor financing, which creates delays and insufficiency of funds. Though the government of Uganda, through UNRA and local authorities, has tried to improve infrastructure through strategic planning, some projects still fail to meet intended outcomes (Mwelu et al., 2021). For instance, the World Bank-funded Kampala Institutional & Infrastructure Development Project (KIIDP-2) has also faced rising costs, delays, and poor quality of work, as reported by the KCCA and Office of the Auditor General (Manishimwe, 2020). Such problems show the importance of being in possession of enhanced strategies that place resources at disposal on time to keep projects on track (Mutabazi, 2021).

In Kampala, projects such as the Kampala Roads Rehabilitation Project and the Kampala Annuity Roads Project have faced major problems with low levels of resources and a lack of proper stakeholder involvement (Mwelu et al., 2020). While KCCA has timetabled plans for the growth of the city infrastructure, issues such as a tight budget, low progress rates, and substandard workmanship continue to hinder processes (Elong, 2020). Lwanga (2021) outlines that most of Kampala's projects have failed, leading to a loss of money, disruption of daily life, and security concerns. This study thus focuses on how stakeholder engagement and resource management affect road construction project success in Kampala with an aim of offering pragmatic recommendations to ease the city's sustainable growth.

2. Theoretical and Literature Review

Theoretical review

Stakeholder Theory: The study is first underpinned by stakeholder theory, as initially developed by R. Edward Freeman in 1984. Stakeholders can be employees, customers, investors, government officials, communities, and so on (Freeman, 2023). Mahajan et al. (2023) explain that the theory shifts the paradigm from shareholder-only serving to recognizing a wider group of people and institutions that are either affected by or have interests in the actions of an organization. Ozdemir et al. emphasized that organizations must consider all stakeholders' interests and needs in deciding and establishing strategies. McGahan warned that if the concerns of stakeholders are not remedied, reputational damage, legal sanctions, and poor long-term results will ensue. They published their work in May 2023. In construction on the roads, the theory highlights the necessity of

involving different stakeholders such as contractors, regulators, government bodies, and the surrounding communities to ensure the accomplishment of projects. Jiang et al. (2023) highlight involving the stakeholders during the planning, implementing, and evaluating phases to ensure increased openness, accountability, and better results. But the theory has certain shortcomings, including difficulty in finding a balance between competing interests, identifying among the stakeholders who are of greater importance, and measuring their actual influence. But stakeholder theory offers a good guide for handling road construction project relationships and delivering outcomes beneficial to all.

Resource Dependency Theory: The study is further informed by resource dependency theory, which was initially developed by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik in 1978. As posited by Guan et al. (2023), the theory is based on the realization that organizations rely on outside resources beyond their respective systems for them to carry out activities and grow. As Hossain et al. (2023) put it, organizations tend to try and reduce such dependency by diversifying the source of funding, materials, skills, and aid or by creating beneficial partnerships. According to Márquez-Carriel et al. (2023), the assurance of resources being available is a valuable strategy used to ensure seamless operations and stay competitive in a situation where this matters. Translating to road construction, theory demands sufficient availability of access to funding, skilled workers, and construction materials for maintaining flow (Wu et al., 2023). Pfister et al. (2023) also add that institutions may obtain capital from the government, appeal for grants or loans, enter into cooperation with private actors, or invest in new technologies in an effort to effectively utilize resources. Even though the theory describes how crucial access to valuable resources is, it also has some disadvantages. They include the possibility of relying too much on a small group of suppliers, scarcity or interruption risks, and complicating it to match the real costs and benefits involved in acquiring certain resources. With these reservations, however, resource dependency theory remains useful for describing how organizations can more effectively deal with their resource needs and build stronger and more reliable project delivery systems.

Empirical Literature Review

Stakeholder Involvement and Project Performance

Stakeholder participation has been known for a long time as an important causative factor of road construction project performance, especially in the public sector. Khan et al. (2021) conducted a quantitative analysis of public infrastructure projects in Pakistan, where they utilized a quantitative design to assess the influence of project governance and stakeholder management on project performance. They found that stakeholder management plays a big role in optimizing performance through support from effective governance systems. This concurs with Matsiko et al. (2024), whose mixed-method study under the Uganda National Roads Authority verified that stakeholder involvement at the planning phase, through consultations with the local community and district leaders, led to reduced delays to the project and higher beneficiaries' ownership. Similarly, Okaka (2023), in a case study conducted in Kiambu County, Kenya, investigated how stakeholder coordination affected the completion of Class B road projects. Her study showed that poor coordination among stakeholders led to miscommunication, wastage of funds, and delay. All three studies, collectively, find a common factor that timely and well-organized stakeholder participation, particularly in the planning stage, is vital for the success of road projects. While the settings vary across Uganda, Kenya, and Pakistan, the replicability of the findings accentuates the international importance of early engagement and proper management of stakeholder relations within public sector infrastructure delivery.

Prebanić and Vukomanović (2023) examined European infrastructure projects based on stakeholder engagement processes as success drivers. Following qualitative interviews and document analysis of projects, their study concluded that regulated engagement, transparency, and open lines of communication enable community trust and improve project timeliness. Building on this, Rane et al. (2021) took a more technology-oriented approach in their study of stakeholder involvement in green supply chains using blockchain and IoT integration. From their mixed-methods study, they concluded that transparency tools digitally helped greatly to coordinate stakeholders and eradicate delays. While based on environmental quality management, the learning is equally easily transferable to road infrastructure, stakeholder traceability and feedback loops are also more applicable. However, Wojewnik-Filipkowska et al. (2021), in their survey of Central European infrastructure project managers, uncovered the opposite challenge. Although stakeholder theory value is recognized, its application in practice is weak due to institutional weaknesses and vague responsibilities. This body of research describes a range from theoretical optimum to technology-facilitated delivery and

institutional obstacles to practical realization. It is clear that stakeholder involvement is theoretically embraced but its productive contribution to road project performance depends largely on organizational readiness, tools of engagement, and the governance arrangements under which projects are being delivered.

In an African environment, Waris et al. (2022) conducted a case study in the Malaysian public sector infrastructure and illustrated that projects with well-defined stakeholder roles and regular interaction had fewer disputes and enhanced completion. This aligns with work by Kordi et al. (2021), who used qualitative analysis to map social sustainability attributes onto stakeholder roles along the construction lifecycle. They held that active participation in all project stages increased performance as well as long-term benefit. Lucien and Amolo (2025), employing African road construction projects, further established these claims and reported that applying methods such as frequent stakeholder consultations, feedback incorporation, as well as open grievance redress mechanisms provides better results. While Waris et al. emphasize formal arrangements, Lucien and Amolo present the community-based approach, and Kordi et al. integrate the two, linking social outputs with technical processes. These studies collectively argue that effective stakeholder engagement is not one-fitting. It ought to be flexible enough to attend to both organizational effectiveness and social equity. Applied to projects in roads in institutions like Kampala Capital City Authority, these results show that achievement is realized by reconciling formal plans for stakeholder engagement with participatory practices among local communities as well as performance and sustainability-improving practices.

Evidence of the added value from stakeholder engagement in African road projects also comes from research in Nigeria and Kenya. Nnadi and Oyama (2023), using a descriptive survey from Nigeria, established that early stakeholder engagement reduces resistance and improves implementation. Majani and Senelwa (2025), using a mixed-method study in Bungoma County, Kenya, established that stakeholder participation in decision-making enhances efficiency and local ownership. This concurs with Matu et al. (2020), whose investigation of Kenya's urban road infrastructure identified participatory planning as key to the timely and cost-effective delivery of projects. The papers allude to a universal fact in every nation in Africa. Projects that do not listen to the voices of the local stakeholders are likely to fail, while projects that listen to the voices of the people tend to succeed. Above all, this highlights the core focus of the current research on Kampala Capital City Authority, where the same problems of project delays, nonconsultation, and poor coordination of resources are also persistent. With lessons learned in East and West Africa as the basis, this literature attests that stakeholder participation, when well planned, open, and sustained, is not a procedural requirement but a vital resource for achieving effective and sustainable road-construction outputs.

Resource Availability and Road Project Performance

Resource availability plays a vital role in determining how well road construction projects perform, especially in developing urban settings. Karuga et al. (2024), studying the Nairobi Metropolitan area in Kenya, explored how financial resource scheduling affects road project outcomes. Their research, based on a descriptive survey design, established that projects with structured financial planning and timely disbursement of funds achieved higher completion rates and stayed within budget. These results are echoed by Aradukunda and Sikubwabo (2024), who assessed the influence of financial resource management on project performance in Kigali City's public institutions between 2018 and 2022. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, their study revealed that effective financial controls, monitoring systems, and transparency directly contributed to improved project delivery. Similarly, Robert et al. (2021) focused on Uganda's public institutions and evaluated how managing financial resources impacts development outcomes. Though based in the education sector, their findings confirmed that when funds are properly allocated, tracked, and reported, project performance improves significantly. These three studies, though drawn from different sectors and cities, make a solid case for financial planning as a foundation for project efficiency. The connection to road construction under KCCA becomes clear: without predictable, well-managed financial inputs, performance suffers regardless of planning or technical expertise.

Beyond finances, human resource capacity is another critical component that shapes the success of road construction projects. Kipchirchir (2022), in a doctoral study under the Kenya National Highways Authority in Nairobi, examined how resource management, especially human capital, affects road project outcomes. Using a case study methodology, he found that poorly trained personnel, lack of supervision, and delays in staff deployment were key causes of underperformance. In line with these findings, Muntu et al. (2021) carried out

a cross-country study in Indonesia, revealing that human resource management, when supported by incentives and skill development programs, leads to better quality output and adherence to timelines. Ilić (2021), working in a European context, also looked at human resource practices in project environments. His research highlighted the importance of aligning HR functions with project goals, stating that weak alignment often leads to project delays and cost overruns. Together, these studies emphasize the human aspect of construction work. Skilled labor, adequate staffing, and proper HR planning form the foundation on which technical tasks are executed. For KCCA projects, this evidence underscores the need to not only recruit qualified personnel but also ensure that their deployment and management align with the project's changing demands.

Physical and material resources are another pillar in determining road construction performance. Tabitha and Sang (2025) examined road projects in Embu County, Kenya, focusing on how physical resource capability influences performance. Their study, conducted through structured questionnaires and interviews, found that the availability of machinery, construction materials, and logistical support directly correlated with speed and quality of project delivery. Alvanchi et al. (2021), in their study on materials logistics in road construction, used simulation methods to test different logistics planning scenarios. The results showed that well-structured material flows not only reduce wastage but also shorten construction timelines. Cheserek and Oscar (2023), who focused on the Kenya Urban Roads Authority Western Region, studied the role of project technology in construction. Their research indicated that the use of up-to-date machinery and digital tracking tools significantly improved output quality and monitoring efficiency. All three studies demonstrate that delays and performance issues often trace back to the physical and material readiness of a project. Applied to Kampala, this implies that availability and timely delivery of construction equipment, materials, and site support services are just as crucial as technical planning or budgeting.

Technological capacity also has a growing influence on the performance of modern road projects. Kamarkor et al. (2024) assessed technological factors affecting road construction in Nairobi County. Through a survey-based design, they concluded that technology adoption, including GIS mapping, automated grading tools, and real-time data systems, led to faster project completion and better cost control. Their findings align with those of Cheserek and Oscar (2023), who observed that technology improves not only efficiency but also transparency in resource utilization. Additionally, Alvanchi et al. (2021), in a study using discrete event simulation, showed how technological integration in material logistics could reshape planning and eliminate idle time. Taken together, these studies present a strong argument that project performance improves when technology is not treated as an afterthought but embedded in core operations. For KCCA road projects, embracing technology in areas such as design, monitoring, procurement, and reporting can transform project delivery. The collective evidence highlights that financial, human, physical, and technological resources do not operate in isolation. Their interplay is what determines whether road projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the required standards.

Stakeholder Involvement, Resource Availability and Road Project Performance

The dual impact of stakeholder participation and resource availability has come to be increasingly recognized as crucial towards enhancing road project performance. Khan et al. (2021), through their empirical analysis of public sector infrastructure projects in Pakistan, demonstrated how proper management of stakeholders coupled with effective project governance enhances the quality of project delivery. In their quantitative study, they found that collaborative working with stakeholders ensured better resource mobilization and reduced delays in project execution. Similarly, Shaukat et al. (2022), in a study on sustainable project management for development projects, found stakeholder engagement to be a moderator, increasing the effect of team building and resource coordination to make a project successful. Structural equation model results confirm that even resourceful projects are successful only if stakeholders are engaged in the decision-making process. Lee (2021), which focuses on nonprofit organizations, adds one more layer by showing that consistent measurement of performance is more likely with the involvement of stakeholders and transparent resource allocation. These three studies emphasize that resources are not absolute but their efficiency greatly depends on how effectively the stakeholders are involved in impact and tracking their utilization.

McGahan (2021) adds to this argument by integrating the resource-based view of the firm with stakeholder theory, that enduring project success is dependent on the merging of internal capability and external stakeholder relations. This assumption is reiterated in Eaton et al. (2021), who derived a conceptual framework

in the water resource management arena, proving that both active stakeholder participation and adequate resource facilitation are essential towards maintaining behavioral change and results. Their mixed-methods approach highlighted how inclusive practices of engagement supported resource targeting and overall project legitimacy. Similarly, Murphy et al. (2021), in the context of global mental health projects, have identified the main barriers and enablers of stakeholder engagement and concluded that the effectiveness of the application of resources depends significantly on how well stakeholders are brought in as early as the planning stage. These findings, although based on varying industries, all point to the same result: stakeholder involvement and resource availability must occur simultaneously so that infrastructure projects like roads are attained properly and in a sustainable manner.

The dual synergy of both of these aspects is likewise apparent in existing research on the sustainability and competitiveness of projects. Lyulyov et al. (2023), in their review of companies engaging in green competitiveness, concluded that stakeholder involvement had a positive influence on mobilization and utilization of resources, which ultimately translated to sustainability performance. Chukwuma-Eke et al. (2022) proposed a financial optimization framework for significant energy projects, which suggested that quality budgeting was not only contingent upon budgetary instruments but also coordinated stakeholder inputs to ensure maximal relevance and consideration of funding priorities. Lastly, Hamdan et al. (2021), in their analysis of sustainable neighborhood projects, concluded that collaborative frameworks by stakeholders enabled efficient exchange of resources and easy implementation. Collectively, the research suggests that Kampala Capital City Authority road projects can be greatly enhanced by adopting both stakeholder engagement and resource mobilization. When these are addressed in a harmonious strategy, project delivery becomes more timely, cost-efficient, and community-sensitive.

3. Research Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional study to assess the effect of stakeholder involvement and resource availability on the performance of road construction projects under Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). Of 76 identified projects, 62 were selected using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for selecting sample size. Stratified random sampling was employed by first classifying the projects according to their completion status and subsequently applying simple random sampling per stratum. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data from key stakeholders such as project managers, KCCA supervision officers, and division councillors. The questionnaire method was selected because of its ability to yield standardized data across respondents. Three main variables were under investigation in this research: stakeholder participation, quantified in terms of planning, executing, and monitoring activities; resource availability, quantified in terms of financial, human, and technical resources; and project performance, quantified in terms of cost control, on-time delivery, and quality of outputs. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, all of which were above the actual value of 0.70. Content validity was ensured through the use of the Content Validity Index (CVI), whose scores were also above 0.70. Data were coded and analyzed with SPSS software version 26. Descriptive statistics were employed in the presentation of the project descriptions, while Pearson correlation and regression analysis were employed to identify the correlations between variables. Interpretation of findings occurred at the project level, presenting evidence-based information on the determinants of road construction project performance in Kampala.

4. Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In the study, most of the respondents were male (59.4%) and fell between the ages of 36 and 55 (88.6%), showing that Kampala's road construction projects are largely managed by a mature and experienced group. A good number (85.4%) were in senior or managerial positions, with very few from junior or mid-level ranks. On top of that, 79.6% had been with their organizations for over 10 years, and none had less than six years of experience. This paints a picture of a workforce that is deeply experienced and likely well-versed in handling complex projects. However, it also brings to light a gap when it comes to involving younger professionals. The lack of youth presence may affect the sector's ability to tap into fresh ideas, innovation, and long-term talent development.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Involvement in Planning-1	1											
Involvement in Implementation-2	0.04	1										
Involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation-3	0.11	.128*	1									
Stakeholder Involvement-4	.551**	.650**	.677**	1								
Financial Resources-5	.201**	0.027	0.023	.117*	1							
Human Resources-6	.346**	0.776	0.04	.164**	.233**	1						
Technical Resources-7	.418**	0.07	0.02	.244**	.408**	.355**	1					
Resource Availability-8	.438**	0.03	0.03	.242**	.721**	.668**	.837**	1				
Project Cost-9	.172**	0.03	.136*	.173**	.154**	.635**	.176**	.401**	1			
Project Schedule-10	0.189*	.270**	0.342*	.194**	.213**	.133*	.429**	.367**	0.09	1		
Project Quality-11	.173**	0.137*	0.06	.169**	.305**	.359**	.378**	.465**	.226**	.475**	1	
Project Performance-12	.203**	.197**	0.08	.249**	.315**	.494**	.469**	.569**	.555**	.771**	.807**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Stakeholder involvement and the Performance of road construction projects under Kampala Capital City Authority.

The results reveal a significant positive relationship between stakeholder involvement and the performance of road construction projects under Kampala Capital City Authority ($r = .249$, $p < .01$), suggesting that increased engagement of stakeholders contributes meaningfully to better project outcomes. Each aspect of stakeholder involvement; whether in planning, implementation, or monitoring; shows a positive and significant link with the specific performance dimensions of project cost ($r = .172$, $p < .01$), schedule ($r = .189$, $p < .05$), and quality ($r = .173$, $p < .01$). This pattern indicates that when stakeholders are actively involved throughout the project cycle, there is improved alignment with budget targets, better adherence to timelines, and enhanced delivery of quality standards. Additionally, the overall project performance variable records a significant positive correlation with stakeholder involvement ($r = .203$, $p < .01$), reinforcing the view that stakeholder participation plays a critical role in the success of road construction projects.

Resource Availability and the Performance of road construction projects Under Kampala Capital City Authority.

The results show a high and significant positive correlation between resource availability and road project works performance under Kampala Capital City Authority ($r = .569$, $p < .01$). This means that road project performance rises when resources such as finances, qualified human capital, and technical equipment are available. All the measures of resource availability are significantly positively correlated with project performance; thus, better access to resources improves cost control, satisfaction in terms of the schedule, and maintains quality. Similarly, the various measures of performance are also positively correlated with resource availability, which suggests that sufficient availability of resources is critical in achieving successful road construction projects.

The interaction effect of stakeholder involvement and resource availability on the performance of road construction projects under Kampala Capital City Authority.

The third objective was addressed by running a regression analysis on the interaction of the two independent variables on the dependent variable.

The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression results on the combined effect

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.212	.110		20.031	0.000
	Interaction (stakeholder involvement and resource availability)	.106	.010	.533	10.661	0.000

ANOVA and Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.533	.284	.282	.3046	113.657	.000b

a Dependent Variable: Performance
a Predictors: (Constant), Interaction (stakeholder involvement and resource availability)
Source: Primary Data, 2024

The research reveals that the interaction effect of stakeholder involvement and resource availability has a positive impact on the performance of the project with a beta value of 0.533 (Beta = .533, $p < .01$). This shows that as the stakeholder involvement and resource availability of one unit both increase at the same time, the project performance is also enhanced by 0.533 units. Moreover, the model is significant at the statistical level of predicting project performance as measured by the F-statistic of 113. The regression model with this interaction significantly explains the variation of Kampala Capital City Authority road construction project performance. Specifically, the model summary indicates that stakeholder involvement and availability of resources together account for 28.2% (Adjusted R Square = .282) of the project performance variation, while other factors not included in this study account for 71.8% of the variation.

Discussion of Findings

The study statistically shows that when the stakeholders are involved in the different stages of road construction projects within Kampala Capital City Authority, their performance improves greatly. With a correlation value of $r = .249$ and significance at $p < .01$, it is evident that greater engagement, whether during planning, implementation, or monitoring, is linked to better outcomes like keeping costs under control, completing work on time, and delivering quality roads. Past research by Matsiko et al. (2024) and Majani and Senelwa (2025) did stress stakeholder involvement, especially in Kenya and Uganda, but they were focused on independent phases or project components only. What makes this research stand out is that it shows how all aspects of stakeholder involvement are important and how these correspond very much to every essential project performance metric. More importantly, it brings to the fore Kampala's urban road works, a context which previous research has been prone to neglect. Through showing how the discourses of KCCA officials, contractors, and local leaders are blended in an attempt to determine project outcomes, the study generates a richer and more localized conceptualization of the functioning of stakeholder engagement in practice.

With respect to the impact of resource availability in enhancing project success, the evidence is compelling. It is strongly positively correlated with project performance, with $r = .569$ and $p < .01$. All resources, be they financial, human, or technical, are of utmost concern. Technical resources, for instance, showed a correlation of $r = .418$, human resources at $r = .346$, and financial resources at $r = .201$. These figures confirm that the availability of sufficiently skilled labor, sufficient finance, and suitable technology can directly improve the performance of road projects. These conclusions are consistent with other studies by Karuga et al. (2024), who reported that improved financial planning improved performance in Nairobi, and Kipchirchir (2022), who observed how a shortage of resources delayed road works in Kenya. But unlike those studies, which only concentrated on a single category of resources or did not cover Uganda in particular, this study gives a more comprehensive picture by discussing all the main categories of resources within the Kampala local context. That makes it highly relevant to local planners and leaders trying to make actual decisions about resource allocation and project management.

In analyzing the combined effect of stakeholder involvement and resource availability, together. The regression analysis did yield a statistically significant combined effect with a beta value of .533 and $p < .01$. The model explains about 28.2 percent of the changes in project performance, which means that when these two variables are simultaneously improved, outcomes in projects are greatly improved. Previous research, like McGahan (2021) and Shaukat et al. (2022), had also shown that these factors could be used to make a project successful, but they did not have actual statistics to back it up. This research fills this gap by giving actual statistics from Kampala's public road projects and how the two are clearly effective when both are utilized together. It sends an unmistakable message to project teams and policy makers: if road construction projects are to thrive, they do not only require focusing on resources or stakeholders but simultaneously improving both.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has established that stakeholder involvement and resource availability are both critical drivers of road construction project performance under Kampala Capital City Authority. The results confirmed a statistically significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and improved project outcomes, highlighting the value of inclusive participation throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring stages. Similarly, the availability of financial, human, and technical resources showed a strong positive link with performance, underscoring the importance of well-managed inputs in delivering quality, timely, and cost-effective infrastructure. More importantly, the study revealed that the combined effect of stakeholder involvement and resource availability produces even greater improvements in project results, offering a practical solution for enhancing project success. Unlike past research that treated these elements in isolation or remained at a conceptual level, this study provides empirical evidence rooted in the Ugandan context, filling a key gap and offering clear direction to policymakers, project managers, and development partners working to improve urban infrastructure delivery in Kampala.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations have been suggested to enhance the performance of road projects under the Kampala Capital City Authority:

Establish formal policies and guidelines for stakeholder engagement that mandate regular consultation, feedback loops, and transparent communication. This could include creating stakeholder advisory committees or forums to facilitate ongoing negotiations and address concerns proactively. Such policies will ensure that stakeholder perspectives are systematically incorporated into project planning and execution, leading to more effective and accepted project outcomes. Policymakers should also adopt tight accountability mechanisms and performance monitoring systems to track project progress and outcomes. Implementing regular audits, performance reviews, and reporting requirements can help identify issues early, ensure compliance with standards, and drive continuous improvement. Transparent reporting and accountability measures will also build trust among stakeholders and ensure that projects meet their goals effectively. Also promote and incentivize public-private partnerships to leverage additional expertise, funding, and innovative solutions for road construction projects. PPPs can provide access to specialized skills and advanced technologies while sharing risks and responsibilities. Creating a supportive regulatory environment and offering financial incentives for private sector involvement can enhance resource availability and stakeholder engagement.

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Journal of Social and Development Sciences
Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025 (ISSN 2221-1152)

Elements of Collaborative Relationships and Supply Chain Performance of SMEs in Bushenyi District

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Abstract: The research investigated how incentive alignment, together with information sharing and joint decision-making, impacts the supply chain performance of small and medium enterprises in Bushenyi District, Uganda. The study employed Relational Exchange Theory to analyze the supply chain performance of SMEs through a cross-sectional quantitative design, which collected data from 327 owners/managers using structured questionnaires. The results from Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis showed that information sharing and joint decision-making positively affected supply chain performance but incentive alignment failed to produce a significant impact. The research results showed information sharing produced the most significant impact ($\beta = 0.559$, $p < 0.01$) followed by joint decision-making ($\beta = 0.073$, $p < 0.05$) yet incentive alignment did not produce a significant effect ($\beta = -0.068$, $p > 0.05$). The model explained 29.5% of the variance in supply chain performance (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.295$). The research indicates that better communication and collaborative planning serve as essential factors for achieving supply chain efficiency among rural SMEs. The study reveals that informal SME networks face specific challenges when attempting to establish formal reward systems because incentive alignment shows minimal impact. The research demonstrates that Bushenyi requires improved information systems together with enhanced participatory planning and digital infrastructure development to enhance supply chain outcomes. The recommendations include supporting digital communication platforms and providing institutional backing for collaborative decision-making processes and educating stakeholders about incentive-based partnership models.

Keywords: *Collaborative Relationships, Incentive alignment, information sharing, joint decision making, Supply Chain Performance, SMEs, Bushenyi District*

1. Background

Supply chain management (SCM) has become essential for operational efficiency and competitive advantage especially for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in recent years (Sánchez-Florez et al., 2020). The performance of the entire value chain depends on the nature and quality of collaborative relationships which extend from suppliers to customers (Christopher, 2005; Argyropoulou et al., 2010). The collaborative elements of incentive alignment together with information sharing and joint decision-making serve as crucial factors for enhancing supply chain responsiveness and cost-efficiency and reliability among SMEs. SMEs function as the foundation of most developing economies through their substantial contribution to employment and GDP. SMEs in Uganda drive 90% of the private sector and create jobs for more than 2.5 million people while generating 75% of the national GDP (Uganda Investment Authority, 2019). Bushenyi District SMEs operate in agro-processing and trade and manufacturing fields while depending on local and regional supply chains for their supply and delivery operations. These SMEs face numerous performance challenges that include late deliveries, inconsistent quality and fragmented supplier relationships because their supply chain systems remain weak (Ntayi et al., 2010; Uganda Business Impact Survey, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed fundamental structural flaws which exist within Uganda's SME supply chains. The combination of lockdowns and restricted movement resulted in disrupted supply flows and breakdowns in partner coordination which highlighted the need for robust collaborative supply chain structures (Fawcett et al., 2011; Chen et al., 2007). Strong collaborative relationships must be fostered because the current uncertain environment requires them. The studies demonstrate that SMEs no longer operate independently because they now function as interconnected supply chains which produce value through trusted relationships and shared knowledge and coordinated objectives (Javanmardi et al., 2012; Leng & Zailani, 2012). The existing research on procurement and operational practices in Kampala and Arua includes work by Eyaa & Ntayi (2010) and Tukamuhabwa (2011) and Hamiza & Isoh (2019) but there is minimal evidence about how collaborative relationships affect the supply chain performance of SMEs in Bushenyi District. The current research indicates that procurement practices only explain a limited portion of supply

chain performance differences yet fail to investigate the substantial unexplored space of relational dynamics (Eyaa & Ntayi, 2010). This research investigates how collaborative relationship elements specifically incentive alignment information sharing and joint decision-making affect the supply chain performance of SMEs operating in Bushenyi District. The research aims to deliver specific practical solutions that will boost supply chain resilience together with efficiency and responsiveness in rural SME ecosystems.

2. Literature Review

The study uses Relational Exchange Theory because it shows how firms build better performance through long-term trust-based relationships. The theory differs from transactional models because it focuses on sustained collaboration between partners who share mutual commitment and exchange information (Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1987; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The supply chain requires relational norms including incentive alignment and information sharing and joint decision-making to establish a stable and adaptive supply network (Heide & John, 1990; Simatupang & Sridharan, 2005). Research findings validate the importance of this theory for supply chain performance. The literature shows that information sharing between SMEs and their partners builds trust and reduces uncertainty while enabling synchronized operations (Prajogo & Olhager, 2012; Kim, Umanath & Kim, 2005). Joint decision-making enables companies to develop aligned plans and solve problems better and respond to customer need changes (Nyaga, Whipple & Lynch, 2010; Wagner & Bode, 2008). This study demonstrates that incentive alignment does not produce significant effects because Bushenyi District operates through informal systems and trust-based exchanges rather than formal incentives (Zhou & Benton, 2007; Yildiz & Feyzioğlu, 2019). Relational Exchange Theory offers a strong framework to understand how SMEs use collaborative mechanisms to boost supply chain performance in developing regions with weak institutional frameworks and strong relationship dynamics (Fynes, Voss & de Búrca, 2005; Graca, Barry & Doney, 2015; Krause, Handfield & Tyler, 2007).

Incentive Alignment and Supply Chain Performance of SMEs

Supply chain partners need incentive alignment to develop trust and achieve mutual commitment and collaborative work. Supply chain actors including SMEs and their suppliers achieve better coordination and performance results when they share common goals and distribute risks and rewards fairly (Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002; Brinkhoff, Özer & Sargut, 2015). Zhu et al. (2022) demonstrated that incentive alignment enhances both transparency and responsiveness in SME supply chains particularly when markets experience volatility. The lack of incentive alignment in Bushenyi District leads to delivery failures and poor product quality and unreliable suppliers among many SMEs who operate in agro-processing and retail. The situation requires formalized contracts and joint planning to minimize operational challenges.

Mensah and Boateng (2023) demonstrate that aligned incentives help SMEs become more agile when responding to supply chain disruptions. The discovery holds particular importance for Bushenyi's rural area because its SMEs face increased challenges with transportation and logistics. Agyapong et al. (2021) observe that low-capacity environments are typically controlled by informal agreements yet incentive misalignment drives SMEs to abandon potentially beneficial partnerships. The regional circumstances demonstrate an information deficit about how Bushenyi SMEs should link supplier and buyer incentives to achieve performance results which requires empirical research.

Information Sharing and Supply Chain Performance of SMEs

Supply chain actors exchange demand forecasts and inventory levels and order status and market changes in a timely and accurate manner (Li et al., 2009; Boyce, Mano & Kent, 2016). The research community agrees that better information sharing improves supply chain visibility and coordination particularly for SMEs with restricted planning capabilities (Min, 2005; Jain et al., 2009). Kohli and Jensen (2010) demonstrate that digital technology-based information-sharing practices reduce uncertainties while improving joint decision-making processes.

The UBOS (2023) reports show that most SMEs in Uganda depend on phone calls and physical visits for communication which restricts their ability to respond quickly and track their products. Tumusiime and Kato (2024) found that rural SMEs cannot synchronize their procurement and delivery schedules because they lack digital tools. The situation in Bushenyi becomes more severe because SMEs face poor internet connectivity and

insufficient IT literacy. The supply chains of these businesses experience delays together with order duplication and poor inventory accuracy.

Research by Nabimanya & Tukamushaba (2023) and Kumar et al. (2024) demonstrates that implementing information systems partially within SME supply chains produces quantifiable improvements in order accuracy and delivery reliability and responsiveness metrics. The adoption and operationalization of these systems in Bushenyi lacks sufficient research-based understanding. The current lack of research creates an essential knowledge gap about how information-sharing practices affect supply chain performance among SMEs in this area.

Joint Decision Making and Supply Chain Performance of SMEs

The core element of collaborative supply chain management consists of joint decision-making processes that combine shared planning activities with problem-solving and resource distribution (Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002; Cao & Zhang, 2011). Research conducted by Horvath (2001) and Cao et al. (2010) demonstrates that collective decision-making between SMEs and suppliers leads to decreased conflict and improved trust while enhancing flexibility. The volatile demand patterns and perishable nature of goods in Bushenyi District's agro-based businesses require joint decision-making.

Zhu, Wang and Li (2022) demonstrate that SMEs that involve their suppliers in procurement and inventory and delivery scheduling decisions achieve better coordination and lower operational risks. Joint decision-making in rural Uganda faces challenges because of power imbalances and insufficient formal governance systems (Akello et al., 2025). Suppliers maintain control over supply chain decisions because of their scale and capital advantages which results in Bushenyi SMEs having minimal authority over upstream supply chain choices.

Nabimanya and Tukamushaba (2023) highlight that poor institutional backing together with insufficient managerial expertise stops numerous SMEs from taking part in joint planning activities. The structural barrier limits the achievable performance gains that collaborative decision-making could produce. The current research lacks sufficient data about the methods through which Bushenyi SMEs address their limitations and establish fair supply chain governance participation. The research gap has important implications for regional SME support programs.

3. Methodology

The research used a quantitative cross-sectional design to study how collaborative relationships affect supply chain performance in SMEs. The research used a structured questionnaire to gather data from 1,932 SMEs and selected 383 participants according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. The study received 327 valid responses which resulted in an 85.4% response rate. The research used stratified and simple random sampling methods to achieve business category representation. The main data source consisted of primary data obtained through self-administered questionnaires which assessed collaborative relationships (incentive alignment, information sharing, joint decision-making) as well as procurement practices and information technology and supply chain performance. All items used a five-point Likert scale for measurement and experts validated the instrument while Content Validity Index (CVI) and Cronbach's alpha coefficients between 0.715 and 0.820 confirmed reliability. The data analysis used SPSS software to generate descriptive statistics and perform Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis while mediation analysis followed Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure. The study maintained ethical standards by protecting participant confidentiality and anonymity while ensuring voluntary participation throughout the research

4. Results of the Study

The research data showed that Mbarara City SME owners and managers were predominantly male at 64.8% while females made up 35.2%. The majority of respondents possessed a diploma (45.9%) followed by degree holders (33.6%) which indicated an educated population that could understand and respond to supply chain issues. The survey results showed that SMEs operated for 5 to 10 years (49.5%) while 28.4% of the businesses had been in operation for less than five years. The employment size of SMEs revealed that 48.3% of them had

between 10 to 19 staff members which indicated their businesses operated at a small scale with restricted potential for extensive operations.

The supplier demographic profile showed a male majority (62.7%) with diploma qualifications (48.6%) and degree qualifications (35.2%). The operational period of supplier businesses spanned between 5–10 years (59.6%) and less than 5 years (26%) which provided sufficient time to develop supply chain knowledge. The supplier firms employed 39.4% of their staff between 10–19 employees and 29.1% between 20–29 employees which indicates their moderate workforce size but restricted ability to process high-volume orders during peak times. The data indicates that SMEs together with their suppliers in Bushenyi possess adequate experience and educational background yet their small business size restricts their supply chain efficiency.

Pearson Correlation matrix

The study variables underwent Pearson's Correlation analysis to determine their linear association strength which produced the result r. The Pearson correlation coefficient r exists between -1 and +1 on the value scale. The absence of any relationship between two variables becomes evident when the correlation coefficient equals 0. The correlation coefficient shows positive values when one variable increases in value and the other variable also increases in value. The value of the correlation coefficient shows negative association when one variable increases while the other variable decreases. The continuous nature of study variables made Pearson correlation the best method to assess their variable relationships.

Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Incentive alignment-1	1						
Information sharing-2	.566**	1					
Joint decision making-3	.156**	.255**	1				
Collaborative relationships-4	.764**	.642**	.617**	1			
Cost effectiveness-5	.462**	.753**	.219**	.660**	1		
SME responsiveness-6	-0.055	.090*	.101**	0.065	.218**	1	
Supply Chain Performance-7	.259**	.539**	.205**	.463**	.779**	.782**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Incentive alignment and supply chain performance of SMEs

The results Table above indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between incentive alignment relationships and Supply Chain Performance of SMEs in Bushenyi ($r=.259$, $p<.01$). This implies that any positive change in incentive alignment is associated with a positive change in Supply Chain Performance of SMEs in Bushenyi District.

Information sharing and supply chain performance of SMEs

The above results indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between information sharing relationships and Supply Chain Performance of SMEs in Bushenyi ($r=.539$, $p<.01$). This implies that any positive change in information sharing is associated with a positive change in Supply Chain Performance of SMEs in Bushenyi District.

Joint decision-making and supply chain performance of SMEs

The results Table above indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between joint decision-making relationships and Supply Chain Performance of SMEs in Bushenyi ($r=.205$, $p<.01$). This implies that any positive change in joint decision-making is associated with a positive change in Supply Chain Performance of SMEs in Bushenyi District.

Multiple regression analysis

A multiple regression analysis was run to explain the predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variable and to show the causal relationship among the study variables.

Multiple regression analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.791	0.144		12.406	0.000
	Incentive alignment	-0.065	0.038	-0.068	-1.709	0.088
	Information sharing	0.442	0.032	0.559	13.719	0.000
	Joint decision making	0.068	0.031	0.073	2.147	0.032
R	.546[a]					
R Square	0.298					
Adjusted R Square	0.295					
F	92.047					
Sig.	.000[b]					

a. Dependent Variable: Supply Chain Performance

The results indicate that incentive alignment was not confirmed to have a positive significant relationship with the supply chain performance of SMEs in Bushenyi (Beta = -0.068, P<.01). This implies that changes in incentive alignment do not have any effect on the supply chain performance of SMEs in Bushenyi. The results also indicate that information sharing is a significant predictor of supply chain performance (Beta = 0.559, p<.01). This implies that a unit increase in information sharing will result in to 0.559 unit increase in supply chain performance.

The results further indicated that joint decision making has a significant positive relationship with supply chain performance (Beta = 0.073, p<.01). This implies that a unit increase in joint decision making will result in to 0.073 unit increase in supply chain performance. The results finally indicate that elements of collaborative relationship (incentive alignment, information sharing and joint decision making) explain 29.5% (Adjusted R Square=.295) of the variations in supply chain performance. This also implies that the remaining 70.5% is explained by other factors not considered in this study.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

The research data showed information sharing between partners as the most important element for SMEs in Bushenyi District to achieve better supply chain performance. The study results show that supply chain performance improves when supply chain partners exchange information openly and on time. The study results confirm the findings of Li et al. (2009) and Kohli and Jensen (2010) who demonstrated that information sharing leads to better decision-making and improved demand forecasting and customer satisfaction. The improved information flows in Bushenyi SMEs would help to solve the delivery delays and stock-outs and communication problems with suppliers and clients.

The results of this study show that joint decision-making has a positive and significant relationship with supply chain performance. The study results indicate that collaborative decision-making and problem-solving and planning activities improve operational efficiency and alignment between SMEs and their partners. The study findings support the results of Simatupang and Sidrihanan (2002) and Fawcett et al. (2011) who found that joint decision-making leads to better goal alignment and smoother coordination. The study did not find any

significant relationship between incentive alignment and supply chain performance. The study results may be due to the limited use of formal performance-based incentive structures or the lack of trust-based relationships among SMEs in Bushenyi. The study results indicate that the model explains 29.5% of the variance in supply chain performance, which means that other factors such as technology adoption, procurement practices, infrastructure and external market dynamics also affect supply chain outcomes in the district.

Recommendations

The research indicates that Bushenyi District SMEs should focus on improving information sharing through digital platforms and regular communication forums and supplier engagement mechanisms. The local government and development agencies should provide support for SME capacity development in data management and collaborative planning to improve joint decision-making practices. The lack of significant incentive alignment requires SME operators to receive education about structured incentive systems including performance-based contracts and mutual reward schemes to develop sustainable trust-based relationships. The overall supply chain performance requires interventions that focus on ICT infrastructure development and skills training and financing access to achieve better results.

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Journal of Social and Development Sciences
Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025 (ISSN 2221-1152)

Exploring Dilemmas about the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol under Modern Refugee Trends: International Refugee Law in Perspective

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Abstract: The study explores the 1951 Convention's dilemmas to assess whether it is abreast with modern refugee trends or not. Mixed-bag migration is explored under the Convention, unlike previous studies that concentrated on pull and push factors. Mixed-bag migration adoption sets this study apart from others. Aims-The study is necessary due to the open arms and solidarity of Europeans to receive Ukrainian refugees. In contrast, Syrian and Afghan refugees were discriminated against. Design- Grounded in Civil Solidarity as a Transformative Practice, and Building an infrastructure of Dissent, to explore the Convention's dilemmas. The study adopts a literature review, otherwise known as a ''meta-study. Findings-The findings reveal that the Convention is outdated with modern refugee trends; mostly children, women, and ordinary men. They commit no crimes to warrant any persecution. They migrated due to unbearable conditions, whereas in the 1950s, refugees were intellectuals, Soviet dissident men with different political opinions. The Protocol's implementation triggered a ''refugee floodgate. Refugees nowadays are non-Europeans, unlike 1950s. Refugees' floodgate led to civil solidarity withdrawal, and financial costs outweighed human rights, which contravenes the non-refoulement principle. Unsuccessful applicants are repatriated. The Convention neglects internal but protects international refugees. Contribution-I argue that a seventy-four-year refugee policy on inclusivity is needed with refugee-led organizations and governments for a public-private partnership. I recommend the Convention's re-examination to ensure modern refugee law, which should contain burden-sharing mechanisms. Conclusion-In-depth academic debates on the Convention's dilemmas and factors that trigger current refugee situations are needed. Since refugee demography has changed, but non-refoulement remains static.

Keywords: *The 1951 Convention, The 1967 Protocol, international refugee law, modern refugee trends, dilemmas*

1. Introduction

The study explores dilemmas about the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol under modern refugee trends to assess whether they (the Convention and the Protocol) are still abreast with modern refugee trends or not. The previous studies concentrated on the pull and push factors as causes of refugee migration; this study concentrates on mixed-bag migration as causes and effects of refugee migration under the Convention. The adoption of mixed-bag migration sets this study apart from the existing studies. The study is necessary and timely due to the availability of arms, the strong solidarity by the nations, and porous borders, especially in the European region, to receive Ukrainian refugees. In contrast, Syrian and Afghan refugees were ''neglected'' and discriminated against (Oyebamiji et al., 2022). Because the current refugees are non-Europeans, unlike in the 1950s, when the refugees were European descendants. For example, in Elmbridge Borough Council (Britain), from March 2022, any new volunteers hosting Ukrainian refugees were paid £600 per month as a "thank you" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2024). The study is anchored on the theoretical concepts, namely Civil Solidarity as a Transformative Practice (Agustín et al., 2024) and Building an infrastructure of Dissent (Fischer & Jørgensen, 2021), to explore the dilemmas about the Convention in modern refugee trends. These concepts explain how civil solidarity was paramount in the 1950s when refugees were European descendants. However, nowadays, financial costs and infrastructural development preferences are rated over civil solidarity since most refugees originate from non-European regions.

The First World War (1914 -1918) and Second World War (1939-1945) left millions of people homeless. Some people were forcefully deported and resettled in a different territory. A number of people migrated to other nations for sanctuary. These raised an alarm about human rights in the 20th Century. In a similar vein, a policy was formulated and enshrined in the non-refoulement principle (non-repatriation of refugees), which aimed to protect and promote the refugee rights (Pijnenburg & Rijken, 2021). In 1921 League of Nations tried to protect the refugees but was unsuccessful. In July 1951, the United Nations Convention was 'born' in Geneva to

protect refugee human rights, specifically European descent refugees (U.N. Geneva Convention, 1951; Adebayo, 2015).

The 1951 Geneva Convention stipulates who refugees were, types of protection, assistance, and rights that should be extended to them in the host nations (U.N. Convention, 1951). Through 26 nations negotiation the 1967 Protocol was signed. It extended the 1951 Convention to other nations. The 1967 Protocol opened the "refugees floodgate'', and created refugee problems globally (Fermi, 2021). The 1951 Geneva Convention defines an asylum seeker as "a person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than their own and awaits a decision on an application for refugee status under relevant international and national instructions. In case of a negative decision, the person may leave the country and be expelled unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian grounds". However, individuals with a war crime record are not allowed to be protected by the Contracting States (Mujuzi, 2020). This means war criminals are excluded under the Convention. Refugees during the post-war period were Soviet dissident men and intellectuals who held different political ideologies from the authorities, hence they were persecuted (Fermi, 2021).

After sixteen years (the 1967 Protocol), the 1951 Convention is now inclusive, capacious, in scope, and focused. The Convention's core aims of refugee protection, enshrined in the non-refoulement principle, guided international community responses to several crises such as Burma, Ethiopia, Congo, Sierra Leone, Syria, Liberia, and elsewhere, requiring continued support and vigilance to the refugee-hosting nations. The Convention has become a watershed that guides the international community in handling refugee crises globally. For example, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) is now called the African Union. Despite the Convention's achievements, it is engulfed with dilemmas that affect its proper functioning.

The refugee floodgate after the 1967 Protocol, and the Syrian and Afghan refugee crisis in 2015, made European nations' ''Fortress Europe. It was aimed to keep refugees and migrants out of ''Europe at all costs''(Alscher, 2017). Denmark adopted legislation with the move to process asylum seekers in third countries. The Danish government refused to renew the residency permit for some Syrians, with the reason that part of Syria was safe for Syrian refugees to return. Prime Minister Sunak's policy aimed to process refugees from Rwanda, termed ''save the boats. However, the project did not materialise because of changes in the government. The Italy-Albania refugee camp pact established a refugee processing centre in Albania to process asylum seekers found in Italy's territory. Successful applicants are sent to Italy, while unsuccessful applicants are repatriated to their country of origin (COO).

These are the Contracting States that were signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention, which they vowed to hold in high esteem. But they now violate the Convention by processing asylum seekers in third-world nations. Their actions call for a re-examination of the 1951 Geneva Convention. Does the current process of handling refugees by the Contracting States conform to international refugee law? Is the 1951 Geneva Convention abreast with the modern refugee crises? And what lapses need to be addressed in the 1951 Convention to stand the test of time to protect refugee floodgates? These are the questions the study aims to answer. The study is structured as follows: theoretical framework, literature review, research methodology, thereafter, research findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

Building an infrastructure of dissent-civil solidarity as a transformative practice concept.

The study is anchored on the concepts of Building an infrastructure of Dissent (Sears, 2021; Fischer & Jørgensen, 2021) and Civil Solidarity as a Transformative Practice (Agustín et al., 2024). Both concepts elaborate on how the 1951 Convention is implemented to show solidarity and support to European descent refugees. The Contracting States signatory served as a commitment to uphold international law to protect refugees through civil solidarity irrespective of their COO (Sears, 2021). Sixteen years after the Convention was extended to the 1967 Protocol. It led to refugee floodgates. Hence, a change in priorities from empathy, morality, and civil solidarity to financial costs and infrastructural development.

Solidarity entails a relational practice. It is a support expressed toward others when they are in need. Solidarity is contentious; it erupts strongly in the case of disaster. It involves alliance-building among diverse actors (individuals, States, organizations, refugees and the United Nations). Solidarity is situated in time and space

and organised in multi-scalar relations. The practice is different among individuals, States, organisations, and non-organisations (Agustín et al., 2024; Fischer & Jørgensen, 2021). Solidarity practices are not concentrated in a particular region but rather criss-cross geographical and international boundaries. It is the bond expressed by people to those in dire need (Agustín & Jørgensen,2018). This implies that through civil solidarity, assistance is extended to refugees in dire need to overcome their challenges. To understand solidarity's practices, societies, villages, urban scale, and States operate as empirical sites and provide an analytical lens (Sears, 2021). States display how solidarity can become institutionalised, which leads to alternative infrastructural inclusivity (Sears, 2021).

The spatial and relational solidarity is expressed through autonomous, civil, and institutional types of solidarity (Agustín et al., 2024). Bauder and Juffs (2020, p 46) assert that civil solidarity is a "complex, multi-dimensional, and normative". Civil solidarity is the context of intervention and support expressed by the Contracting States that are signatory to the 1951 Convention towards people in need. For instance, refugees. This support is displayed by States, organisations, non-organisations, and individuals.

To deeply understand States' solidarity activities and civil societies, one needs to focus on the dynamics of contestation and actions. Solidarity is a ''unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group'' (Sears, 2021). However, for civil solidarity work to be meaningful and impact on people's lives, it goes beyond support and entails resources and financial costs. Therefore, solidarity can be linked to the notion of dissent. Agustín and Jørgensen (2015) define dissent as "social and political questioning (not just mere critique or a need for palliative reforms), undoing consensus and rendering excluded actors and struggles visible". From Agustín and Jørgensen's (2015) explanation, dissent assumes relevance as experience opposed to the dominant order to render new members, struggles, and difficulties, as well as organising itself visibly. Sears (2021) calls dissent in his book *The Next New Left* ''infrastructure of dissent". According to Sears' (2021) research, infrastructure provides social movement with important capacities such as collective dreams, collective learning, capacity for solidarity, and collective memory. Therefore, exploring dilemmas about the Convention under modern refugee trends helps identify how the Contracting states provide infrastructure and are ready to bear financial costs to support various types of dissent. Or how civil solidary, empathy, and morality are rated over financial costs and infrastructural resources that are involved to support refugees (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2015).

In Sears' (2021) research framework, of infrastructure of dissent entails the capacity of solidarity and human rights as part of an integral component. However, Sears (2021) asserts that how the Contracting States regard civil solidarity and empathy nowadays is not an automatic response to injustice, but rather it needs to be cultivated. Express differently, while individuals, the Contracting States, and the United Nations sympathise intuitively with refugees, various States require finances, resources, and infrastructure to enable civil solidarity, morality, and empathy as effective praxis. Hence, the global sympathy will not be useful as in transformative one if it is not translated from theory to practice through the Contracting States.

The Contracting States nowadays rate financial resources and infrastructural development over civil solidarity and human rights. These pose challenges to the Convention. Since the Convention aims to support 'struggling' refugees through civil solidarity on humanitarian grounds. Rating financial resources over humanitarian grounds coupled with refugee floodgate enforced the Contracting States in the European region to build a fortress on their continent to prevent refugee entry to seek asylum (Alscher, 2017). Hence, some of the Contracting States (Denmark, Britain, and Italy) desire to process asylum seekers found in their territory in third-world countries. Successful applicants are 'admitted' to their COD for safety, while unsuccessful applicants are repatriated to their COOs. The repatriation contravenes the Convention as dilemmas about modern refugee trends. In summary, currently, refugee floodgates coupled with financial costs, and infrastructural development rated over human rights, unlike in the 1950s, civil solidarity and humanitarian issues were paramount to the Contracting States ' dilemmas about the Convention.

2. Literature Review

Arguments and frame context of discourse of dilemmas about the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 protocol under modern refugee trends

According to the U.N. Geneva Convention Act of 1951, refugees are people who cross national boundaries because of well-founded fear and security concerns. They were Soviet dissident men, intellectuals who held different political opinions, and they were persecuted by the authorities (Pijnenburg & Rijken, 2021). This implies that the CODs become a refuge to protect themselves, whereas the COOs serve as a threat to them. They cannot return to the COOs until the conditions are conducive. Once they return to the COOs, their permanency status and protection from the CODs cease (Vorvornator, 2024a). International Organisation for Migration's (IOM's) (2018) report on humanitarian grounds argues that a refugee is ''anyone who, owing to the well-founded fear of precautions for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country'' (U.N. Geneva Convention, 1951, Act 1A).

The Cartagena (1984) declaration on refugee states that "among refugees [are included] persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order". The definitions pointed out that individuals who submitted that they left their COOs because of well-founded fear, and persecution are granted asylum. This does not include war crime criminals and economic migrants. This implies that there should be evidence of harm infliction and the state intentionally or unintentionally withholding its protection. According to UNHCR (2021), "a convention ground need not be the sole or even the dominant cause of the risk of being persecuted, but it must be a contributing cause to the risk".

Moran's (2021) research revealed that the refugee definition was enshrined in the non-refoulement principle; at that time, the refugees originated from the European region. Refugees were Soviet dissidents, intellectuals, and held different opinions from the authorities; because of that, they were persecuted. Soviet dissidents' demography at the time, and the authorities' refugee persecution, gave birth to the 1951 Convention to protect them (Pécoud, 2018). This implies that in the 1950s, the Contracting States rated civil solidarity, empathy, morality, and human rights issues over infrastructural development, and financial costs involved in hosting refugees. Sixteen years on, through 26 countries negotiation the 1967 Protocol was 'born', which extended the 1951 Convention to protect refugees globally (Pécoud, 2018). This era creates most refugees who originate from non-European nations, which leads to refugee floodgates globally. According to Murakawa (2021), refugee floodgates exert pressure on the Contracting States to extend civil solidarity to refugees in dire need. The Refugee Floodgate poses dilemmas to the Convention to achieve its objective of refugee protection in modern times. The paper asks, what are the dilemmas about the 1951 Convention in modern refugee protection trends?

Modern and in the 1950s, refugee demography

Refugees' demography under the Convention asserts that refugees in the 1950s were Soviet dissidents, who were intellectuals, and held different opinions from the authorities (Murakawa, 2021). This means that refugees must commit crimes and be persecuted by the COOs (Moran, 2021). The CODs become their refuge. Currently, refugees commit no crimes; they do not hold different opinions, which may warrant their persecution by the authorities (Moran, 2021). They are children, women, and ordinary men who flee from war and genocide to seek refuge in other nations (Vorvornator, 2024b). Modern refugees are people who might not be pleased with the unbearable conditions in the COOs and have decided to move out for the betterment of their lives. Do the modern refugees migrate because of persecution based on gender, nationality, religion, or hold different political opinions? These dilemmas reveal that the Convention is outdated and needs to be reviewed to be abreast with the current refugee trends.

A surge in the number of refugees after the 1967 Protocol

According to Federico and Tena-Junguito (2022), as of the 1980s, the size of the refugee population was estimated to be 9.5 million, which was almost the same figure as in 1926. However, due to an increase in the world population, created more refugees, approximately 36.4 million (Federico & Tena-Junguito, 2022). In the

1950s European Continent hosted most refugees, since refugees were European descendants. But nowadays, there is a tiny refugee population in the region despite improvements in transport and telecommunications. This explains that European States now consider financial costs and infrastructural development more than human rights, morality, and empathy towards refugees (Fischer & Jørgensen, 2021). Mayblin (2017:53) confirms that in the 1950s, "the overwhelming majority of refugees were European" during the First World War. Perhaps, refugees originated from the European region, because of that, European nations warmly received them, just as Ukrainian refugees (Oyebamiji et al., 2022).

For instance, in 1999, the Home Office in Britain received refugee applications close to 91,200, while in two years (1920), after the First World War, the Belgian refugees were estimated to be 250,000 in the UK (Mayblin, 2017). As of 2023, Britain hosted fewer refugees, and Iran became the leading refugee host (Garnier, 2023). Vorvornator's (2024: 3c) study concurs that in the 80s, "Sudan alone was hosting more refugees than the number of applications received by Western Europe and North America combined". This means that the Contracting States implemented their foreign policies over the international refugee law. This poses a dilemma about the Convention, which enhances the call for re-examination of the non-refoulement principle.

No mechanisms for burden-sharing under the Convention

Despite a surge in the number of refugees globally, which exerts a financial burden on the Contracting States for hosting refugees, there are no mechanisms for bearing such costs (financially, emotionally, and physically). In spite, the 1951 Convention's Preamble acknowledged that lasting solutions for refugees "cannot be achieved without international co-operation"(Nalule, 2023). But the Convention is silent on burden-sharing mechanisms or obligations. As time has gone on, unanticipated and new sources of upheaval and impediments to solution, including the COVID-19 pandemic, devastating climatic change, and protracted and old age conflicts, have made this modern trend historical global displacement (Korsi & Mdiniso, 2021). Because of the Convention's silence on refugees' hosting burden-sharing enforce the Contracting States have rated financial and subtle costs involved over human rights and civil solidarity. They pledged to extend to refugees through their signature under the Convention.

In related development, some of the Contracting nations tightened their borders to prevent refugees' entry to reduce costs, which contravenes the non-refoulement principle. Other nations prioritised infrastructural development over the extension of civil solidarity and empathy towards refugees (Sears, 2021). Is it not time to re-examine the Convention to detail how the costs of hosting can be shared? The paper believes that re-examination of the Convention with details information about burden-sharing might encourage the Contracting States to extend their civil solidarity to modern refugees. This will encourage the Contracting States not to build a fortress on their countries (especially in the European region), to prevent refugees from entering their territory (Alscher, 2017). It is time for a re-examination of international refugee law to cater to modern refugee trends globally.

Nation's borders 'tightening'

The Contracting States that signed the Convention to uphold its rules in high esteem fortified their borders since there was a surge in refugees after the 1967 protocol implementation. Research attributed the influx of refugees to an increase in population and the 1967 protocol (Schimmel, 2022). And probably the high costs associated with hosting refugees enforced some of the Contacting States to make it difficult for the refugees' arrival in their territory (Sears, 2021). According to Gorman (2021:1), the 1967 Protocol became the ''refugee floodgates. This created refugees from all walks of life, which reflected changes as refugees were no longer just a European phenomenon; instead, refugee migration was occurring from conflicts all over the world.

The Contracting States rated infrastructural development over the civil solidarity extended to the European descendant refugees in the 1950s (Sears, 2021). It could also mean that most refugees originate from non-European regions because of the European nations' fortified borders, not due to hosting refugees (Alscher, 2017). This poses dilemmas about the Convention since the Contracting States were signatory to protect the refugees who are in dire need, now fortressing borders to prevent them refugees. To seek asylum (Alscher, 2017). This act contravenes the non-penalisation clause of refugees enshrined in the 1951 Convention. Hence, a call for re-examination of the Convention to be abreast with the current refugee trends.

Civil solidarity extends to international refugees at the expense of internal refugees.

In plain language, the Convention has not been, and cannot be, a solution to the global refugee displacement of refugees at both the internal and international stages. By considering only refugees who cross the border at the expense of the internally displaced or people displaced other to persecution is a grave concern that needs to be re-addressed (Schimmel, 2022). For instance, natural disasters, climatic conditions, war, dire economic circumstances, and general violence are ignored by the international refugee law (Vorvornator & Enaifoghe, 2024). Time and refugee status have changed over the years. Refugees are no longer intellectuals who hold different opinions against the authorities and are being persecuted. But rather, they are children, women, and ordinary men who were displaced through internal war and conflicts in local areas and communities. Some cultures frown upon practices and activities such as Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and the +(LGBTQIA+). These act attracts persecution and discrimination in such societies. These revelations indicate that the Convention needs to be re-examined to cater to modern refugees, since modern refugees' acts which lead to persecution in the COOs, are quite different of the 1950s refugees. The 1950s refugees were intellectuals, held different opinions from the authorities before the Convention was established.

International policies' effect on developing nations

International policies are the actions and strategies nations adopt to interact with other states, unions, and international entities, encompassing objectives such as security and humanitarian assistance. International policies could have positive or negative impacts on the betterment of developing nations. Currently, the global interdependence of the developed nations and economic blocks such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) has caused devastating damage through overexploitation of the environment, leading to far-reaching consequences and creating more refugees (Benhabib, 2020). Hathaway and Foster (2014) argue that "...where poverty provides the causal connection to a well-founded fear of being persecuted, it is sensibly understood to be the basis for a recognition of refugee status under the rubric of the social group ground". These types of refugees originate from environmental degradation and climatic conditions that are not enshrined in the international refugee law (Adebayo, 2015). It could be argued that the Convention, to promote equality and create social justice for all, rather creates injustice and inequality because of modern factors that trigger refugees (Vorvornator, 2024a).

The Convention only protects refugees who hold different ideologies from authorities and cross borders to seek refuge in another country (Fermi, 2021). We need to understand that the Convention promoted and protected Soviet dissident intellectuals' refugees in the 1950s. Therefore, it is time to re-examine the Convention to provide social justice to current refugees as it did in the 1950s. As the Convention represents modern international refugee law, it poses challenges to modern refugees. Hence, a high rate of refugees' repatriation to their COOs, which contravenes the non-refoulement principle. Is the 1951 Convention abreast with the current development of refugee situations? These are some of the dilemmas that affect the Convention's usefulness, which calls for re-examination to meet modern refugee trends.

Modern migration is caused by a mixed bag, unlike in the 1950s

According to Lee (2017), migration over 2,000 years ago was caused by push factors (unemployment, climatic conditions such as drought, famine, and bushfires), and pull factors (infrastructural development, and purported job availability). The push factors are unbearable economic conditions and conflicts that forced people to leave their place of origin to seek sanctuary in another place or country. Whereas the pull factors are the purported infrastructural development that attracts people to migrate and benefit from those amenities in the CODs (Mohorčič et al., 2021). Migration trends changed in the 1980s. Currently, migration comprises both push and pull factors (Korsi, 2022). This explains that migration in modern times is a mixed bag (Vertovec, 2023). Vertovec's (2023) research pointed out that modern migration is mixed and complicated because a migrant can be an economic migrant at one time, and at the same time, become a refugee at a certain point. For instance, in Uganda (where LGBTQIA+ practices are frowned upon), an unemployed Ugandan aims to reach Britain to work, but at the same time, he practices homosexuality, and he is being persecuted by the authorities. Will the person be considered as an economic migrant or refugee under the Convention? Migration of a Ugandan comprises both push and pull factors (Korsi, 2022). A migrant might migrate to another country for economic reasons to another country. However, there can be unfavourable conditions such as racism, xenophobic attacks, and war outbreaks, which might force the migrant to engage in migration or secondary migration to another nation for sanctuary. Migration of such a person makes him qualify as an economic

migrant as well as a refugee because of the outbreak of the war. Does the Convention make provision for the mixed-bag migrants? These are the dilemmas faced by modern refugees.

Vorvornator's (2024b) reflection on the current state of refugees asserts that "Economic migration and movements of refugees fleeing conflict had become increasingly entangled". This means that it would be difficult for the Contracting States to assess whether an individual is a refugee or an economic migrant. Therefore, some of the Contracting States (Italy, Britain, and Denmark), policies that aimed to repatriate unsuccessful applicants to their COOs are likely to contravene the non-refoulement principle (Vorvornator, 2024c). According to ideal political theory under liberal-democratic theory, the main problem is the justification of boundaries to determine and demonstrate the person who qualifies as a refugee or migrant (Mendola & Pera, 2022). Since determining whether a person to either a migrant or a refugee is a dilemma, the Convention needs re-examination to be abreast with modern refugee trends.

From the foregoing discussions are dilemmas about the 1951 Convention under modern refugee trends. Currently, the international refugee law serves as a yardstick for the Contracting States and organisations. Factors that trigger modern refugee situations and refugees' demographic dynamics have continued to change since the 1950s. The Convention needs to be re-examined to be abreast with modern refugee trends to provide the needed civil solidarity, morality, and empathy to modern refugees as it did in the 1950s.

I argue that the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol have overstayed their usefulness. They are outdated and irrelevant in modern days, since they do not serve the purpose of refugee protection as their primary establishment. Infrastructural development and financial costs for refugee hosting are rated over empathy and human rights. They are 'white elephants' that need to be re-examined to stand the test of time. The next section presents the methodology of the study.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a migration literature review (LR) to explore dilemmas about the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol under modern refugee trends. Taherdoost (2021, P. 21) explains that LR is ''the process of accessing published secondary data. The definition depicts two distinct characteristics. This implies that the LR adopts only published information data, not primary data. The published is broadly used, which comprises journals, books, articles, and organisational and non-organisational reports (Maxwell, 2021). The second characteristic reveals that the LR is employed ''in-house'' not in the field (Taherdoost 2021, P. 11).

Several search engines such as Google Scholars, JSTOR, Web of Science, EBSCOhost, Scopus, Research Gate, migration websites and journals namely, Journal for International Migration, and Integration and International Organization for Migration (IOM) and search terms namely: 'refugees dilemmas', 'the 1951 Convention', 'the 1967 Protocol', 'international refugees law', and 'non-refoulement principle' were employed.

The study acquired 1,296 ideal publications; 1,284 of these derived from an electronic search, and twelve were found through backward and forward search. Through eligibility assessment conducted a total of (1,296-1,254) n=42 articles were selected, cited and referenced, through the following eligibility criteria; a) the articles that concentrated on either or both dilemmas about the 1951 Geneva Convention, and the 1967 Protocol; b) focus on international refugees law; c) published in 2010 or later; d) published in English (Creswell & Poth, 2016). And the fifteen years were considered because it was a phenomenon and unprecedented in the migration history (Afghan and Syrian refugees, Arab Spring migration to Europe, and presently Ukrainian refugees).

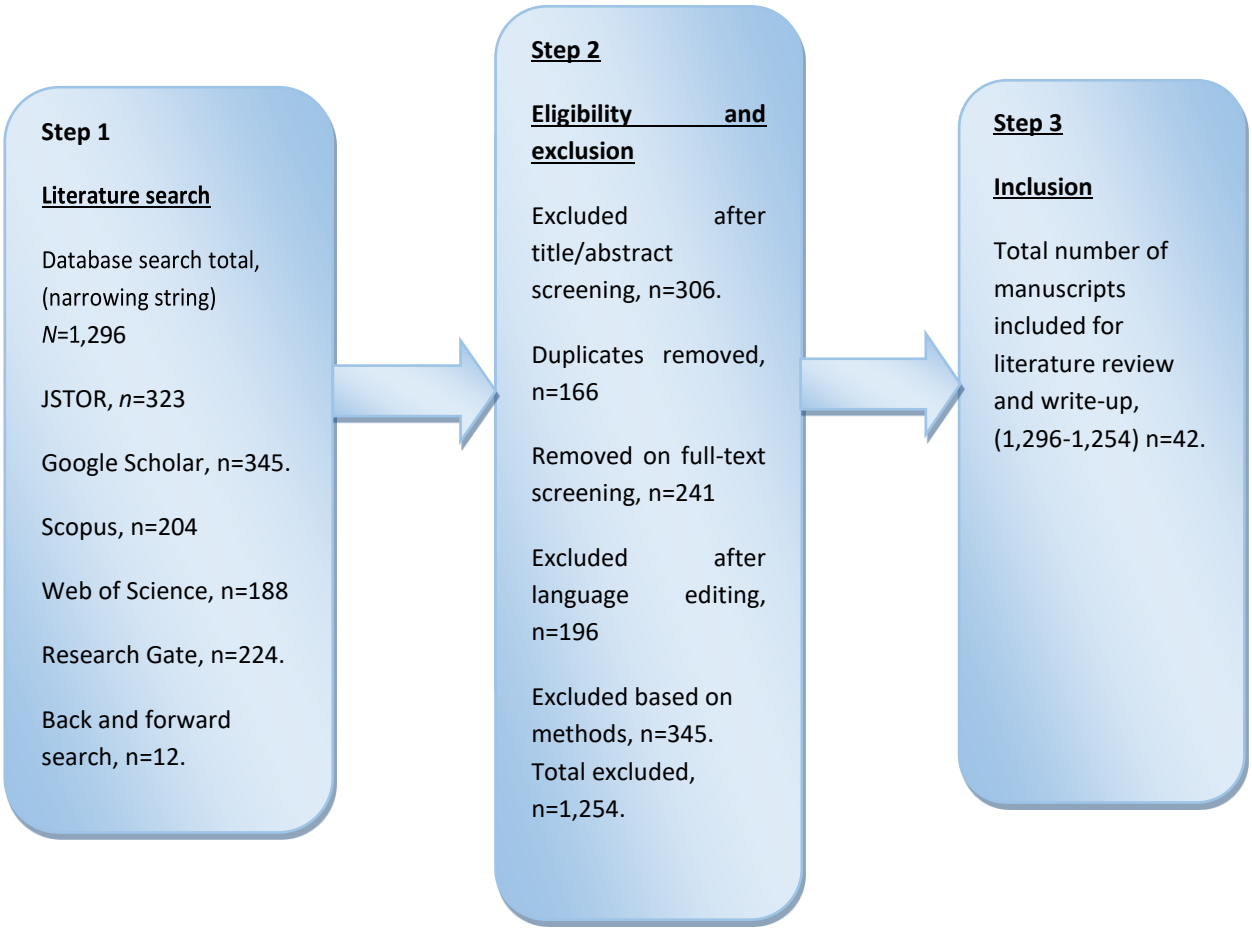
Templier and Paré (2015) identify six steps in conducting LR, namely: a) identifying the objectives and research questions; b) finding the important articles; c) making an inclusion; d) exploring the quality of articles; e) extracting data, and f) analysing data. All articles considered not relevant were excluded. After the eligibility check, the author proceeded to the data extraction and analysis stage. Data extraction deals with coding relevant articles related to the study. Coding was done through thematic analysis, which involves the process of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative information (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The author employed 'framework analysis', which deals with a methodological procedure that extracts and analyzes the literature, because it has a procedure and guiding process that facilitates both the extraction and

analysis of relevant data. It helps the researcher manage data, analyse large datasets, identify processes, patterns, and conclude.

The procedure Ritchie and Spencer (2002) described as "sifting, charting and sorting materials according to key themes and issues". In specific terms, familiarisation is done to have in-depth knowledge about articles importance, identification of the thematic framework, which identifies memos on the concepts and ideas that emerged from the migration literature review. Indexing is done via sifting the information related to the particular themes; charting the information was done to sort out relevant headings and sub-headings during the thematic framework stage (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Mapping and interpretation, which entail gathering and analysing all the criteria features of the dataset, and performing a synthesis of information, were done.

Key articles selected for the study employed a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Meta-analysis for the quantitative data was not done because the research method was different. This means this research did not share the same variables. Textual information was mapped and coded appropriately by employing a framework analysis approach. The theories and LR present broader pictures, baseline information data, and an understanding of the previous literature on the refugees' dilemmas about the Convention (Maxwell, 2021). The Convention's LR helps to avoid duplication of existing works by researchers. However, the limitations could be that since not all academic search engines were employed, there could be some previous literature that the author might not have used. Figure 1 depicts the article selection process presented below.

Figure 1: Article selection process



4. Findings

The study's findings are presented on the 1951 Convention's dilemmas about modern refugee trends. The study's finding identifies that in the 1950s, the Convention protected European descent refugees; because of that, the Contracting States, especially in the European region, extended civil solidarity and empathy towards refugees from Soviet dissidents (Sears, 2021). Later, 26 nations negotiated, and the Convention was extended to the entire world through the signing of the 1967 Protocol. This triggered a surge in the number of refugees termed refugee floodgates (Fermi, 2021; Alscher, 2017). Refugee floodgates exert financial and subtle costs on the Contracting States; because of that, they adopted policies to tighten their national borders to prevent refugees from entering their territories (Alscher, 2017).

The study reveals that most refugees after the 1967 Protocol were non-Europeans (Mayblin, 2017). Refugees were mostly from African and Asia countries, as of that, civil solidarity and human rights, which were the basis for the 1951 Convention's formation, were relegated to the background. And financial costs and infrastructural costs are now paramount to the European nations in hosting refugees (Sears, 2021). The study identifies that in the 1950s European region hosted most of the refugees (Mayblin, 2014). But as of 2023, Iran was leading refugees host (Garnier, 2023). This explains the infrastructural development and financial considerations over human rights issues by the European region (Agustín et al., 2024).

The study's finding further reveals that the current refugee demography is usually children, women, and ordinary men who do not hold different political opinions from the authorities (Moran, 2021). They are individuals who might not be pleased with unbearable conditions such as war and conflicts, and decided one day to migrate to another country for sanctuary (Moran, 2021). They might not commit any crime against the COOs, which might warrant their persecution (Murakawa, 2021). In the 1950s, refugees were intellectuals from Soviet dissidents who held different political opinions against the authorities (Moran, 2021). These pose dilemmas about the Convention to be re-examined.

The study's finding reveals that one of the Convention's dilemmas is that there are no appropriate mechanisms for refugee hosting costs or burden-sharing (Nalule, 2023). Costs sharing, such as financial, emotional, physical, and subtle, incurred through refugee hosting, is silent in the Convention. This poses a dilemma to the Contracting States to shift their international policies on refugees from human rights protection to infrastructural development (Sears, 2021). It was further revealed that there is no provision for internally displaced people in conflicts and war situations (Schimmel, 2022). Internally displaced people who are refugees are not protected by the Convention, unless a refugee crosses the international border to seek sanctuary in another country (Schimmel, 2022). Moreover, violence, natural disasters, and unfavourable climatic conditions, which devastated and displaced people in modern times, are not catered to in the Convention (Vorvornator & Enaifoghe, 2024). These pose dilemmas about the Convention, hence a call for its re-examination.

The study reveals that the Convention still holds the view that migration is triggered by push and pull factors (Lee, 2017), which contradicts mixed-bag modern migration trends (Korsi, 2022). Mixed-bag migration poses a challenge to the Contracting States to be able to assess migrants or refugees according to their rightful status. Hence, the creation of a backlog in the refugee processing centres in the Contracting States (Vianelli, 2022). In some instances, unsuccessful applicants (asylum seekers) are repatriated to their COOs, which contravenes the non-refoulement principle (Vianelli, 2022). Based on the presentation above, the paper argues that the Convention has overstayed its usefulness, and modern refugee trends and demography have changed over time. These pose dilemmas about the Convention since over seventy-four years on, it still holds the very principles and conditions enshrined in its implementation in the 21st century.

Overall the paper concludes that the Convention's dilemmas such as change in refugees demography, a surge in number of refugees, withdrawal of civil solidarity because of financial and subtle costs involve in refugees hosting, and mixed-bag migration in modern refugee trends possess dilemmas about the 1951 Convention, because of that there is a call that the Convention should be re-examined to be abreast with time.

5. Conclusion

The study explored the 1951 Geneva Convention's dilemmas to assess whether the Convention is abreast with modern refugee trends or not. It is revealed that refugee migration at the time the Convention was enshrined was triggered by push and pull factors. Currently, refugee migration comprises mixed-bag migration, while the Convention is still in use in modern refugee migration trends. The finding reveals that the Convention is outdated and needs to be re-examined to be abreast with modern refugee trends. Because the demography of modern refugees is quite different from the 1950s refugees. Modern refugees are children, women, and ordinary men who do not commit any crime that might warrant their persecution in the COOs. They might leave their COOs because of unbearable conditions such as war, unfavourable climatic conditions, and conflicts, while in the 1950s, refugees were Soviet dissident men with an intellectual background who held different opinions from the authorities, and hence their persecution. The study reveals that because of the 1967 Protocol's implementation, refugees number had surged globally, which created refugee floodgates. Most refugees originate from non-European nations, whereas in the 1950s, refugees were of European descent. The refugee floodgates exert a financial burden on the Contracting States. Hence, they changed their international policies on refugees from civil solidarity to infrastructural development. In another development, some nations fortified their borders and prevented refugees from entering their territory. Meanwhile, they were signatories to the Convention, whose mandate is to protect refugees. Modern migration assumes a mixed bag, unlike in the 1950s, when people migrated because of push and pull factors. Mixed-bag migration poses dilemmas to the Contracting States in processing asylum seekers' applications effectively. This leads to a refugee application backlog in most of the Contracting States. Unsuccessful applicants are repatriated to their COOs, which contravenes to non-refoulement principle. Hence, a call for re-examination of the Convention to be useful to modern refugee trends. Like any international instrument, the Convention does not address or protect the modern refugee problem globally. This explains neglect of internal refugees, since the Convention is concerned about refugees who cross national borders. As decades have unfolded, it is clear that there should be a public-private partnership, where refugee-led organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) engage with the national governments to promote greater inclusion in national and international policy-making on modern refugee issues.

Therefore, the paper recommends re-examination of both the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol to be abreast with time. This would enable the Contracting States not to implement their policies contrary to international refugee law. Further, the source of funding and burden-sharing mechanisms for refugee-hosting nations need to be enshrined in the new Convention. So that nations that host refugees would be aware of where and how their refugee-hosting burden will be shared. This would prevent nations not to tightening their borders against refugees. The paper, therefore, calls on academic debates on global dilemmas faced by refugees in the CODs since the dynamics of the refugee population are changing, but the non-refoulement principle remains static. The paper further recommends unpacking refugees' demographic concepts to strengthen the arguments for modern refugee trends. Other factors that trigger refugees' needs need to be discussed in-depth with academics, to widen the debates on modern refugee trends. Future directions should focus on global issues such as climate change, nationalism, and global migration patterns, which trigger refugee situations.

Funding: The author received no funding for writing the manuscript.
Conflict of interest: No conflict of interest is declared by the author.

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Journal of Social and Development Sciences
Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025 (ISSN 2221-1152)

Resilience amid Stigma: Analyzing the Agency and Well-Being of Teenage Mothers in Rural Uganda

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Abstract: Teenage motherhood remains a significant public health and socio-economic challenge in Uganda, especially in rural areas where access to education and health care services and economic opportunities is limited and social stigma and rejection are prevalent. The study explores the agency applied by teenage mothers to improve their well-being in rural Uganda particularly in Kanungu District. The study employed a phenomenological research design, and data were collected through in-depth interviews that involved Community Development Officers (CDO's) and parents, focus group discussions (FGDs) which involved the teenage mothers, and key informant interviews (KIIs) that involved the District officials, Non-Government Organizations (NGO's), Religious and community leaders. Findings reveal that family structures, parenting styles, cultural norms and institutional gaps significantly shape teenage mothers' ability to act independently, access services, and plan for their prospects positively. Supportive family relationships were found to be essential in strengthening resilience, self-confidence, and decision-making capability, whereas neglectful and harsh environments compounded vulnerability and isolation. Teenage mothers employed different forms of agency for them to survive such as engaging in vocational training, informal labor and seeking support from (NGO's). Community actors, particularly CDO's emphasized the urgent need for family sensitization, better adolescent-friendly services, increased family awareness and targeted empowerment programs. The study recommends community sensitization, strengthening family and institutional support systems, increasing access to youth-friendly health and education services, and integrating tailored vocational and financial programs for young mothers and pregnant teenagers to advance their agency and holistic well-being in rural Uganda.

Keywords: *Teenage Mothers, Agency, Vulnerability, Resilience, Well-being, Rural Uganda*

1. Introduction

In the hills of Kanungu District, where adolescence should mark the beginning of dreams, many teenage girls like Tindimweebwa Maria Asumpta are instead thrust into the demanding realities of motherhood. Amidst social stigma, fragile family structures, and limited access to essential services, teenage mothers navigate a path often marked by resilience and improvisation. The teenage mother narrates her situation.

"*During the delivery of my son, I got some little support of some things to use from my mother and her friends, but afterwards, she did not even bother to ask me if my child and I wanted as basics. She kept telling me to ask the father of my son to support me, however, he was not interested in giving us even a piece of washing soap. I became sick and the child could not breastfeed because of the delivery of my son, I got some little support of some things to use from my mother and her friends, but afterwards, she did not even bother to ask me if my child and I wanted anything basic support myself and son' survival" (teenage mother FGD, Kihiihi S/C, January 2025)*

Teenage motherhood has continued to be an acute social psychological and public health growing problem globally, with intensified implications in sub-Saharan Africa, predominantly in Uganda (Webb et al., 2023). While early childbearing is sometimes regulated or endured within certain cultural settings, its significance for the distinct teenager, the child, and society is broad (UNFPA, 2021). National statistics indicate that nearly 25% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 in Uganda have begun childbearing, and this prevalence rises to about 50% in rural districts such as Kanungu (UNFPA, 2022).

Resilience is a dynamic psychological and social reserve for persons navigating hardships, particularly the teenage mothers in rural Uganda who face interconnecting challenges. It is referred to as the ability to recover from hardship and adjust positively amidst the consequences, resilience plays an important role in enabling young mothers to regain agency and restore their lives resulting from early pregnancy (Nkansah et al., 2022) and (Worringer, 2020). In the settings where teenage pregnancy is regarded as a destruction of moral and cultural beliefs, teenage mothers often meet rejection from families, exclusion from school, loss of social status,

and limited access to support services Ellis-Sloan, (2014) Naidoo et al. (2021). These experiences reduce their sense of self-confidence and hamper their capacity to make decisions about their lives as well as their children's future.

Moreover, in Uganda, nearly 25% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 years have begun childbearing (UBOS, 2022) , a rate that is significantly higher in rural districts where Kanungu District, where the prevalence of teenage pregnancy is predominantly high estimated at 50%, almost twice the national average (UNFPA-Uganda, 2017). Despite the identified structural challenges by various scholars, (Macleod, 2010); (Mollborn, 2017); (Ellis-Sloan, 2014), ranging from cultural, social economic to public health, their situation may not be solely a narrative of victimhood in the presence of agency responses.

Notwithstanding, studies are increasingly drawing attention to the nuanced ways in which teenage mothers attempt to reclaim agency and reconstruct their lives within constraining environments (Hardgrove et al., 2011). For instance, despite limited institutional support, many adolescent mothers exhibit resilience by engaging in informal labor, joining community networks, or pursuing vocational skills. Still, the dominant literature lacks a nuanced understanding of how teenage mothers in rural settings define well-being and construct meaning in their journeys toward survival and empowerment. This paper contributes to that gap by exploring how rural teenage mothers navigate both visible and hidden support systems to redefine agency in their terms.

Although Uganda's National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy (MGLSD, 2022) outlines objectives to empower girls and delay early pregnancies through education and community sensitization. Still, implementation remains inconsistent due to limited funding, poor implementation, and community resistance. Additionally, (MGLSD, 2022b) has it that while legal frameworks such as the Children Act and the Constitution prohibit child marriage, society attitudes often overlook their effectiveness. Addressing these gaps is necessary for enabling teenage mothers to exercise agency.

Nonetheless few studies have critically examined how teenage mothers in rural environments like Kanungu navigate social stigma and economic hardship to improve agency. Likewise, little is known about how these young women define well-being or what forms of support they find meaningful. Understanding these viewpoints is important especially in designing interventions that are responsive and specific to environments. In this paper, we argue that centering teenage mothers' voices and agency will challenge avenues for conventional top-down interventions and calls for context-sensitive strategies that reflect the realities and resilience of rural adolescent motherhood. The paper analyzes the existing agencies and well-being of teenage mothers in Kanungu District amidst socioeconomic and health challenges. As for Zarina Chohan, (2011) teenage mothers are actively rejected by stigmatizing narratives in various ways as they pursue life endeavors. Similarly, Brown et al. (2011) highlighted the impact of family-based violence and control on teenage mothers' sense of disempowerment. Therefore in families where teenage motherhood is assumed morally shameful, agency becomes weakened, leaving the young mothers vulnerable to further disregard. Thus, exploring the lived experiences of teenage mothers and identifying the structural and interpersonal factors that either promote or weaken their agency is imperative in this paper.

2. Literature Review

Situating Teenage Motherhood, Agency, Vulnerability and Support Systems

Teenage motherhood remains a persistent challenge in many low- and middle-income countries, with profound implications for the education, health, and socioeconomic futures of adolescent girls (World Health Organization, 2024). Teenage mothers are usually referred to as girls aged between 13 and 19 years who have experienced childbirth in various constitutions in Africa Countries (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013). Furthermore, teenage mothers develop various coping strategies in response to the pressures of early motherhood.

According to Kaye, (2008), these include thriving through opportunities, bargaining with challenges, or struggling to survive. McDermott, (2005) emphasizes that effective strategies are not always about knowledge gaps but involve background support such as discussions around contraception. Although, few studies clearly

connect these strategies to, furthermore, teenage mothers develop various coping strategies in response to the pressures of early motherhood.

Nevertheless, these coping strategies do not occur in isolation. Family relations play a vital, yet often ignored, role in shaping teenage mothers' agency. While past studies have explored individual strategies and social responses, there remains a research gap in understanding how parental communication, family dynamics, and support systems directly influence agency among teenage mothers, particularly in African contexts and family dynamics. These are associated with the development of not only medical, but also social problems. Studies carried out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2021)indicate that social stigma and negotiated health consequences are the major characteristics of teenage motherhood. This study, therefore, seeks to analyze the existing agency that contributes to teenage mothers' well-being in Kanungu District.

Agency, in this context, means the capacity of teenage mothers to make purposeful choices and act in ways that affect their lives even in the face of diversity (Cheung et al., 2020). Feminist theorists argue that agency should not only be measured by explicit acts of resistance but also through everyday survival strategies that reflect intentionality and adaptation within socially constructed limitations Shahsavari (2012). Brophy et al. (2012) highlight the importance of family relationships, access to education, parenting support, and community-based programs in shaping outcomes for adolescent mothers' structures. Bhana & Nkani, (2016) observed that teenage mothers, especially in conservative rural communities, agency is often quietly negotiated through decisions about caregiving, resource management, mobility, and interaction with support structures. These subtle forms of action challenge the notion that young mothers are merely passive recipients of aid or victims of circumstance. In this paper agency involves individual empowerment, resilience, autonomy, and access to supportive structures that enable meaningful involvement in life choices. It involves psychological willingness, capacity access to resources, and supportive relationships with the family and the community.

Vulnerability

Teenage mothers often face discriminating vulnerability due to interconnecting socio-economic, cultural, and institutional challenges. Kuran et al. (2020) similarly indicates that social vulnerability arises from interconnected socio-economic, cultural, and a lack of access to resources. Their early transition into motherhood is commonly accompanied by interrupted education, limited access to reproductive health services, poverty, and social stigma (Pillay, 2021). Although, in many rural settings, including Uganda, society and family reactions to teenage pregnancy often lead to rejection, isolation, and reduced support networks, which significantly deteriorate the well-being and agency of these young mothers (Moganedi & Mudau, 2024; Chung et al., 2018). Cultural norms and gender expectations further impair their vulnerability, as teenage mothers are normally blamed for their pregnancies while their male counterparts are rarely held accountable (Qebengu et al., 2025; Ninsiima et al., 2020). Nonetheless, vulnerability is defined as the degree to which individuals or groups are susceptible to harm due to exposure to external shocks or stresses, Karman, (2020) combines vulnerability with limited capacity to anticipate, cope with, or recover from those impacts.

Therefore, the rise of social exclusion, particularly among marginalized groups, is susceptible to a new form of poverty characterized by informal labor (MGLSD, 2022). Furthermore, inadequate policies and weak institutional support systems leave many teenage mothers without access to justice, psychosocial care, or economic empowerment opportunities. Thus, the nature of compounded marginalization often weakens their ability to exercise agency including, planning for the future, or advocating for themselves and their children.

Support Systems

In this context of early motherhood, especially within rural and limited-resourced communities, support systems act as critical barriers against the multi-dimensional challenges faced by teenage mothers. The embeddedness of family and community structures has the potential to improve or worsen the status of teenage mothers' experiences despite the prevailing stigma (Chohan, 2011). As indicated by Carvalho et al. (2025) that support from family members particularly mothers and grandmothers is instrumental in providing emotional care, assisting with childcare responsibilities, and encouraging the continuation of education or vocational pursuits. These forms of tangible and moral support enable young mothers to navigate hardship and rebuild a sense of purpose, promoting their psychological and physical well-being (Kuri, 2023).

Conversely, the absence or breakdown of reliable support networks significantly compounds the risks associated with early motherhood. Teenage mothers who face rejection or judgment from families, communities, or institutions may not sustain heightened isolation, poverty, and mental health challenges (Ellis-Sloan & Tamplin, 2019). Nonetheless, Okine et al. (2020) note that, weak support systems exacerbate stigma and marginalization, stripping young mothers of critical coping mechanisms and reinforcing structural barriers to recovery. This lack of support not only undermines their well-being but also limits their agency the ability to make decisions, plan for the future, or assert their rights. In this context, resilience becomes less about internal strength and more contingent upon external affirmation and socio-economic reinforcement.

3. Methodology

Study site and Sampling Procedure

The research was conducted in town councils and sub-counties of Kinkiizi East and Kinkiizi West, Kanungu District, in the Western Region of Uganda. Purposive sampling was used to select participants (Child Family Protection Unit, District officials, Community-Based organizations, community workers, parents and teenage mothers). This is because of the need to acquire the knowledge in its natural setup (Rai & Thapa, 2015).

Research design and sampling

The study applied a phenomenological research design to analyze the life experiences of teenage mothers to understand their internal and external agency in multifaceted social settings ((Zarina Chohan, 2011; Kaye, 2008). The research team used three data collection methods, which included key informant interviews (KII's) together with in-depth interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). FGD's included only teenage mothers. The researcher used a stratified method to select teenagers to avoid the benefit of doubt and give a chance for equal participation. 4 teenage mothers were selected from every parish where two parishes were combined and a total of 8 participants per FGD. The Key Informants included district officials, church leaders and community leaders who were dealing with teenage mothers. In-depth interviews included Community Development Officers from selected sub-counties and Town Councils and parents of teenage mothers. They were identified using a stratification method where every sub-county or town council would get one parent. This was because there was a need for deeper insights that teenage mothers would have left out in the discussion. The method used was purposive and stratified selection which followed Chohan & Langa, (2011) recommendations to include participants with different family backgrounds and educational levels and support systems after pregnancy. The research involved two parishes in each focus group discussion which brought together eight teenage mothers per FGD.

Data collection methods, analysis and Ethical considerations

The research instruments used open-ended interview guides to collect data about how participants managed stigma and their educational pursuits and childcare approaches. They were conducted through In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with mothers/guardians of teenage mothers and Community Development Officers which allowed giving deeper insights about teenage mothers' agency. The study also employed Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with teenage mothers. These discussions enabled the researcher to capture shared experiences, social dynamics, and perspectives on stigma, educational challenges and how they survive. Key Informant Interviews were also conducted including district officials, church leaders, community-based organizations. These offered external lenses on challenges faced by teenage mothers, institutional responses and cultural norms. A combination of these methods enhanced the reliability of richness of the data.

The research applied thematic content analysis to analyze data through a combination of deductive codes from literature (e.g., emotional support, coping mechanisms) and inductively developed themes (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2015; Ketokivi, 2015). The Research Ethics Committee of Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST-REC) granted ethical approval for the study which followed ethical protocols that included obtaining informed consent and assent from minors and using female interviewers to create comfortable environments for participants (G & Jejeebhoy, 2015). The research team conducted interviews on teenage mothers, their parents and district officials in neutral and familiar settings such as sub-county offices and district headquarters to gather honest information about the challenges faced by teenage mothers'.

4. Results and Discussion

Vulnerabilities of Teenage Mothers

Societal attitudes frequently portray these young mothers as irresponsible or morally deviant, leading to social exclusion and limited opportunities for personal development, thereby compounding their marginalization. Teenage mothers often find themselves at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities, including poverty, gender inequality, limited or no access to education, and harmful cultural practices such as early marriages. These structural barriers significantly impede their ability to access necessary services and actively participate in social and economic life. It was revealed that the absence of adolescent-friendly health services, neglect, stigma, and limited institutional support associated with early pregnancy further weaken teenage mothers' ability to exercise agency. However, some were found to have found means of survival amidst the challenges experienced as quoted below;

"One day, my child got sick and when I told my parents about it, my father told me to go and find the person who impregnated me, I felt so bad that I had a sleepless night, I learned a lesson that I should look for all ways to get money to look after my child. I started to go with my mother, for casual labor and they paid me 4000 which was less than the usual amount they pay because of having a baby. Whenever the baby would cry, I would first go and breastfeed him, I did not manage digging carry the baby." Teenage mother FGD Kihiihi, January 2025)

"I started saving a little money in case my child gets sick again I can buy medicine, I would give my mother 2000 and keep the balance for myself. My mother registered me in a group in the village whereby I would save 6000= every week, after two months, my mother got for me 30,000= and I started making pan cakes in the village. I am still selling them, I even go to the weekly markets and I like the business. I sometimes support my mother."(Teenage mother FGD Kihiihi, January 2025)

Findings revealed that, teenage mothers were found to navigate difficult connections of family expectations, cultural norms, limited resources, and social stigma. Cultural beliefs and community attitudes severely constrained external agency. Teenage mothers were often labeled with derogatory terms like "Abinyandaro" and excluded from schools, churches, or social groups. This stigma, driven by rooted cultural values, undermines teenage mothers' agency and reinforces cycles of poverty as well as dependency syndrome. This kind of situation limits them to exercise their agency and affects their well-being

"They (teenage mothers) feel shy and uncomfortable to be in the community after experiencing a teenage pregnancy and also when they hear names tagged on them because they got pregnant, it distances them from socializing and they isolate themselves and are no longer hopeful for the future" (Kihihi T/C CDO, December, 2024)

Another community worker also shared that in most cases, teenage girls are brought up by parents with the skills of digging from childhood and other domestic work. Although, unfortunately, some of them are stopped from schooling to look after their siblings, they end up escaping from home to rent their own houses, survive on their own if not married.

"In Kihiihi Sub County, girls who get pregnant do not have skills and the only skill they have is digging so after giving birth, they resort to looking for digging opportunities for money on people's farms, they are paid wages which they use to buy food for their babies and their parents for those who stay home. The ones who run away from their parents' homes are able to rent some cheap houses and they also go around looking for opportunities for survival" (Kihiihi S/C CDO, December 2024)

More to that, the teenage mother expressed how, following childbirth, she felt degraded within her own family referring to herself as a slave showing a shift in her social status from being a valued daughter to a burden or source of disgrace. Community reactions increased this distress. Neighbors teased her, equating her condition to "ebinyandaaro" a derogatory local term, which stripped her of dignity and excluded her from social interactions. Her friends were prohibited from even greeting her, emphasizing how deeply cultural stigma can break social ties and isolate young mothers.

"For me ever since I gave birth at home I came to know that I did a mistake which gave me a scar in my heart for the rest of my life because I became a slave in our family, even whenever I would pass by our neighbors going to fetch water or collect food in the garden, people would start laughing at me saying that, that is the work of "ebinyandaaro", they abused me, cursed me, even my friends were stopped from greeting me that am

no longer a youth, I go and find a home , they do not always wish me well" (FGD teenage mother, Kanungu T/C, January, 2025).

However, some cultures and communities have provided guidance and support to these teenage mothers which has given them confidence to be independent and regain agency according to this quotation;

"Cultural beliefs have changed and there remains a few people who tend to look at pregnant teenage girls as misfits; culturally it was not allowed for a girl to get pregnant from their parent's home but currently most parents have come to accept that anything can happen and when it happens, they have to be in charge and continue looking after their children. Some parents chose to look after their grandchildren and their children after teenage pregnancies happening, such parents are capable of taking these girls back to school because they have hope that a girl can still become an important person even after having a teenage pregnancy" Some of these parents come to seek for protection measures against their grand children after sending their girls back to school." (Kambuga T/C CDO, December, 2024)

Others highlighted gaps in healthcare access, such as a lack of treatment, rejection of girls attending antenatal care without partners, or the absence of adolescent-specific services which deteriorate teenage mothers' well-being

"When I went to the hospital for antenatal, the nurse asked me about my husband and i told her that I came alone. She said she will not work with me because I have to come with my husband. I told her I don't have a man. She asked me what took you to play sex, she abused me, I did not go back, there was a herbal nurse, I started going to her place, digging for her and later told her what happened, when time to give birth came closer, she talked to my mother, they took me to another health center where I gave birth" (Teenage mother FGD Kambuga, January 2025)

In households where teenage mothers were included in conversations about their future, their agency flourished. This was confirmed by teenage mothers who were allowed to participate in decisions about education, child care, or health showed greater self-confidence. This implies that where there is participatory decision making in families, teenage mothers are more likely to have opportunities for prospects and adapt to the situations fast, unlike those whose decisions are taken without their consent. This drags them behind and they are nurtured with fear and an inferiority complex.

"We normally have conversations... I let her decide what is best for her and the baby. I don't mistreat her, she asked me to go to the saloon and I guided her to go back to school. The baby is one year old and I will take care of her and put her mother in a boarding so that people don't keep seeing her around."(Parent Kambuga TC)

Agency and Well-Being of Teenage Mothers

The role of supportive parents was one of the leading internal agencies. Supportive parenting, particularly from mothers and grandmothers emerged as a foundational pillar for teenage mothers' ability to reassert agency. Emotional, material, and practical support helped buffer the psychological impacts of stigma, rejection, and loss of opportunity. The examples given reflect how such support not only ensured day-to-day survival (through provision of food, clothes, and child care) but also reawakened long-term aspirations by enabling school re-enrollment and rebuilding of self-worth. These findings indicate that intergenerational female solidarity plays a crucial role in restoring agency among young mothers, challenging dominant narratives that portray them solely as dependent or disempowered. For instance, one mother disclosed:

"My grandmother and biological mother are the ones who take care of me because they provide food, school fees, and buy clothes for my child." (Teenage mother Kambuga TC)

"My mother never gave up on me. She supported me to go back to school after giving birth." (Teenage mother, FGD, Kanungu T/C January 2025)

Furthermore, some teenage mothers survived through economic adaptation and emotional endurance due to varying capabilities. Despite the overwhelming pressures of early motherhood ranging from family tension, peer judgment, and economic exclusion, many teenage mothers revealed internal agency by initiating or participating in informal economic activities such as tailoring, hairdressing, basket weaving, and subsistence farming. These strategies were not merely for survival, but also avenues for reclaiming dignity and constructing independent identities. The ability to navigate emotional conflict and interpersonal betrayal, as shown in the

statement "I chose to forget about it and focus on my goals," reveals a high level of emotional intelligence and self-determination.

"They supported me in taking a hairdressing course, but one of my sisters became jealous and falsely accused me… I chose to forget about it and focus on my goals." (Teenage mother, FGD, Kambuga T/C January 2025)

The types of activities teenage mothers engaged in tailoring, hairdressing, housekeeping helping and planting food crops for survival are predominantly feminized and informal. This suggests a gendered dimension to survival strategies where societal expectations shape the nature of permissible or accessible income-generating work. Yet, their involvement in these spaces reflects adaptive use of available resources and social networks. The agency here is therefore, bounded but not absent, operating within cultural norms while still resisting complete dependency.

"When I gave birth, a friend of my mother got me a job as a house helper. I stayed with her relatives, who took care of me and my baby and I was getting a wage from which I would support my mother sometimes" (Teenage mother, FGD, Kanungu T/C January 2025)

Furthermore, the external agency that would take teenage mothers at a supportive level was identified to be particularly limited. This was attributed to the influence of culture, where women are perceived to be homogeneous and as a whole with no reservation on the categories that they appear in. Key informants highlighted the lack of consistent governmental or NGO support. Some parents wished to access programs like the Parish Development Model (PDM) to help their daughters, but lacked information on how to go about the registration procedures. Community and institutional actors emphasized vocational training and education as key strategies although government programs are not tailored to teenage mothers. One Officer portrayed,

"Most of the programs we have are not specifically targeting teenage mothers or pregnant teenage girls; government programs generally target the livelihoods of households. The non-governmental organizations also come with their thematic areas of interest which they operate on" (Kihihi T/C CDO, December, 2024)

Another one shared that,

"We offer support at a family level and we offer counseling as a town council and maybe connecting them to other structures that are going to be of help to them but we cannot do beyond that because we do not have the resources. We normally sit and talk to the parents who are sometimes worried about whether schools will accept admitting their children after giving birth given that they are viewed as grownup women, then we make calls to schools some girls are able to resume school; this normally happens when we counsel both the parents and their teenage girls" (Kambuga T/C CDO, December, 2024)

Notwithstanding some teenage mothers who received institutional help reported positive outcomes, such as completing vocational courses and finding survival means. The study revealed that access to institutional support played a significant role in enhancing the agency of some teenage mothers, particularly in economically constrained rural settings like Kambuga. Agency, in this context, is understood as the capacity of individuals to make choices and act upon them to improve their life circumstances. For teenage mothers who often face stigma, economic hardship, and limited social mobility external interventions from well-structured organizations provided an important platform for exercising this agency. A notable example is the support provided by NYAKA, a local organization that offered vocational training in basket weaving. The testimony of a teenage mother illustrates how this institutional support translated into practical empowerment

"I was supported by NYAKA to learn basket weaving skills, I can now make baskets and sell them in Kambuga weekly market and get money to look after my child." (Teenage mother, FGD, Kambuga T/C January 2025)

These findings highlight the transformative potential of institutional support in enhancing the agency and well-being of teenage mothers. Access to vocational training and livelihood opportunities, such as those provided by organizations like NYAKA, not only equips young mothers with practical skills but also restores their sense of dignity, independence, and hope for the future. As demonstrated by the testimonial from Kambuga Town Council, such support enables teenage mothers to generate income, care for their children, and reintegrate into society thereby countering the disempowering effects of early motherhood and social stigma.

Discussion

The study reveals a multifaceted relationship between internal and external agency among teenage mothers in rural Uganda particularly Kanungu District. An internal agency characterized by resilience, emotional strength,

and individual decision-making is often natural out of inevitability rather than prospect. These findings echo those of Goossens et al. (2015), who noted that young mothers often develop coping strategies that reflect strong internal acceptance and perseverance.

External agency, on the other hand, is largely influenced by background structures such as family relationships, institutional frameworks, and community standards. This finding is consistent with earlier research by Brophy et al. (2012), who observed that emotionally supportive family environments significantly enhance adolescent mothers' self-efficacy and decision-making. Conversely, neglectful or authoritarian parenting, as highlighted by Zarina Chohan, (2011) tends to weaken young mothers' agency by promoting control and discouraging autonomy, coupled with harsh conditions often leading to cycles of dependency and vulnerability.

The role of cultural stigma in weakening agency is also significant. Teenage mothers in Kanungu frequently face derogatory labeling, exclusion from social spaces, and shaming experiences in the community that result in suppressed shame and reduced self-efficacy. This dynamic is supported by Kelly, (2018) and Ellis-Sloan, (2014), both of whom emphasize that stigma reinforces disregard and acts as an obstacle to education access, healthcare, and social support services.

In regard to the institutional level, the study revealed that, while NGOs and community-based programs such as NYAKA AIDS Orphans Project provided a vital support through vocational training, psychosocial counseling, and mentorship, this support was not accessed by all teenage mothers. The findings are consistent with Brophy et al. (2012) and Francis, (2021) who argue that, effective policy implementation must reflect the lived experiences of vulnerable populations especially teenage mothers to achieve meaningful improvement. Teenage mothers in Kanungu who accessed vocational training expressed improved confidence and individual independence thus showing explicit indicators of agency and well-being. However, others reported missed opportunities due to a lack of information or exclusion from programs like the parish Development Model which reflects a gap in adolescent–friendly services.

Agency among teenage mothers in Kanungu is not merely a product of individual behaviors but materializes at the intersection of personal resilience and structural support. Enhancing their well-being needs a holistic strategy that strengthens individual agency while transforming the family, cultural, and institutional systems that shape their choices.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion: The findings of this study highlight that teenage motherhood in Kanungu District is deeply embedded in a difficult trap of family dynamics, cultural beliefs, economic hardships, and structural barriers. Looking at teenage mothers' agency, their capacity to make independent and informed decisions is not simply a matter of personal resilience, but one significantly shaped by the relational and institutional environments in which they live. Supportive families, especially mothers and grandmothers, played a pivotal role in fostering confidence, ensuring access to basic needs, and encouraging continued education or vocational arrangements which enhances their nature of well-being.

Cultural stigma and community attitudes toward teenage motherhood remain considerable impediments. Derogatory labeling and social exclusion diminish self-sufficiency and block reintegration into school or the community lifetime. Yet, the study also found strong examples of agency, particularly where young mothers accessed informal work, vocational training, or received encouragement from NGOs and family members.

Institutional support, while present in the form of NGOs played an important yet inconsistent role in enabling teenage mothers' paths to well-being. Local government initiatives such as the Parish Development Model show potential but limited awareness and accessibility. Meanwhile, challenges in the health and education sectors including stigma in health centers, inflexible school policies, and lack of adolescent-specific services continue to disempower young mothers which affects their well-being.

To enhance the well-being and agency of teenage mothers in rural Uganda, especially in settings like Kanungu, a comprehensive response is needed. Programs should go beyond individual-focused interventions and

address the operational and relational factors that condition a teenage mother's life. Strengthening empathetic parenting, equipping families with tools for reintegration, reducing community stigmatization, improving access to reproductive and mental health services, and expanding vocational and educational opportunities are essential. Through collaborative, culturally sensitive, and community-based strategies, it is possible to transform teenage motherhood from a cycle of disregard into a platform for growth, and empowerment.

Recommendations: To effectively address the persistent stigma surrounding teenage motherhood, there is a critical need for community-based sensitization programs aimed at transforming negative societal attitudes and fostering inclusive environments. Such initiatives can begin with the leaders such as the religious, local authorities, educators, and media actors to challenge prevailing stereotypes and promote narratives that affirm the dignity and potential of teenage mothers. Tackling stigma at both the interpersonal and institutional levels can reduce shame, social exclusion, and psychological distress factors that undermine young mothers' self-worth and social participation. In addition, integrating comprehensive sexuality education into school and community platforms can help prevent early pregnancies while promoting empathy and understanding toward teenage mothers, thus reducing moralistic judgments and increasing acceptance.

In tandem, efforts to strengthen the agency of teenage mothers must prioritize the expansion of accessible, youth-responsive support systems. This includes scaling up vocational training programs, psychosocial counseling, re-entry education policies, and childcare services to enhance young mothers' capacity to make informed decisions, pursue aspirations, and regain control over their lives. Empowerment-focused interventions should be designed in ways that recognize and build on the resilience and resourcefulness already demonstrated by many teenage mothers, rather than treating them as passive recipients of aid. Furthermore, the introduction of collaborations between institutional actors including schools, health centers, and NGOs should be ensured to support structures in handling the unique needs and aspirations of adolescent mothers. This is important in helping the mother to navigate stigma and socio-economic vulnerability.

Acknowledgement: The author is very thankful to all contributors towards this work. Dr. Benjamin Musiita and Dr. Twinamasiko Specioza

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Journal of Social and Development Sciences
Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025 (ISSN 2221-1152)

Governance Factors and the Growth of the Agro-Processing Industry in Uganda

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Abstract: The study examined the influence of governance on the development of Uganda's agro-processing sector against four governance indices: regulatory quality, control of corruption, government effectiveness, and voice and accountability. Rooted in the institutional growth theory, the research employed a quantitative longitudinal study design based on time series data from 2000 to 2023. The secondary data were collected from the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) and Uganda's Ministry of Finance Macro Data Portal. Estimation was done using the Auto-Regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model, with the diagnostic tests such as the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test for stationarity and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test for multicollinearity. Facts revealed that regulatory quality had a statistically significant positive effect on agro-processing development ($\beta = 0.425$, $p < 0.01$), so also did control of corruption ($\beta = 0.318$, $p < 0.05$), and government effectiveness ($\beta = 0.267$, $p < 0.05$). Voice and accountability, while positive, were not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.112$, $p > 0.05$). The model was strongly explanatory with an adjusted R^2 being 0.716, indicating that 71.6% of the variation in growth in agro-processing was attributed to governance variables in the model. It was therefore concluded that the quality of governance, particularly regulatory quality and corruption control, plays a critical role in encouraging agro-processing industry development in Uganda through uncertainty mitigation, giving confidence to the investor, and the addition of value. The study recommends periodic review and enforcement of the regulatory frameworks, merger of anti-corruption institutions, and improvement of the service delivery mechanisms in order to foster a conducive environment for industrialization. These findings present significant policy implications for the achievement of Uganda's Vision 2040 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly industrial development and job creation.

Keywords: *Governance Factors, Growth, Agro-Processing Industry, Uganda*

1. Background

Governance plays a basic role in determining agro-processing sectors in emerging economies like Uganda (Nguyen-Thi-Thuy, Bui, & Dang, 2024). It has been noted by Asongu and Nwachukwu (2020) that effective regulatory organizations make the sector more effective as they have explicit guidelines for operations. Ominde et al. (2022) demonstrate that effective regulation enforcement fosters fair competition and enables enterprises to be more predictable in their actions. The other most important one is the battle against corruption, which lowers business costs and ensures that there is no misappropriation of funds (Colonnelli & Prem, 2022). Tukamuhabwa (2023) demands that corruption in Uganda is a persistent problem, which suppresses industrial development. Gelgo, Gemechu, and Bedemo (2023) are of the view that effectiveness in the government, especially the enforcement of policy and provision of services, promotes the creation of a secure investment climate. Mugun (2021) also adds that substandard industrial performance has been attributed to poor accountability in most of East Africa. Despite these, Akidi et al. (2023) believe that with better governance and institutional changes, Uganda's agro-processing industry can grow enormously. Sharma and Kumar (2022) observe that institutional robustness and regulatory stability are vital for agro-industrial transformation in the emerging economies.The role of governance in promoting the agro-processing industry in Uganda cannot be overstated. Effective regulatory quality, corruption control, and government effectiveness are critical factors in creating an enabling environment for industrial growth (Nguyen-Thi-Thuy et al., 2024). A strong regulatory framework ensures that businesses comply with industry standards, fostering a competitive and efficient sector (Ominde et al., 2022). Corruption control reduces the costs of doing business, ensuring that resources are directed toward productive activities rather than being diverted through illegal practices (Tukamuhabwa, 2023). Government effectiveness, through transparent policy implementation and efficient public service delivery, helps to establish a stable and predictable environment for investment (Gelgo, Gemechu, & Bedemo, 2023). However, Uganda faces challenges in these areas, including corruption, inconsistent policy enforcement, and inadequate infrastructure (Tukamuhabwa, 2023). Despite these challenges, the growth opportunities are significant, especially with continued improvements in governance

and a more supportive policy environment (Akidi et al., 2023). This study aims to explore these dynamics in greater detail, identifying key areas where governance improvements can foster the growth of Uganda's agro-processing industry (Sharma & Kumar, 2022).

Globally, the agro-processing industry is of critical significance to economic development, making a significant contribution to global GDP and employment (Sharma & Kumar, 2022). According to Singh, Yadav, and Rani (2025), the global food processing market worth 4.12 trillion dollars in 2020 is destined to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 7.2 percent by the year 2024. Shafi, Liu, and Ren (2022) reference that more than 10 percent of the global workforce is employed in the process of food and beverages, which reflects the sector's massive employment impact. Between 2013 and 2023, various nations including the United States, China, Brazil, India, the Netherlands, and Israel have witnessed enhanced growth in agro-processing that has enhanced innovation and economic output (Venkatesh, 2021). Sugar, meat, and cereal agro-processing contributes over 10 percent of the nation's GDP in Brazil due to good exports and friendly policy (Sharma & Kumar, 2022). The OECD (2023) notes that the Netherlands relies on high-tech food technology and efficient supply chains, and the sector contributes 14 percent of its manufacturing value-added. The World Bank (2023) reports that Israel has progressed significantly in agro-processing by adopting innovations in water-conserving agriculture and environmentally friendly production methods. Manjunath and Narayana (2021) have contended that rising global demand for processed food, rising trade, and technological advances are the main catalysts for such global growth in the agro-processing industry.

In Africa, the agro-processing industry has been presented as a path to development and structural transformation (Chitonge, 2021). In South Africa, the industry accounts for more than 30 percent of the nation's entire manufacturing production and employs more than 700,000 individuals, mainly in food and beverages processing (Shafi et al., 2022). It is observed by Nyamweya and Osoro (2024) that Kenya's agro-processing sector accounts for more than 10 percent of Kenya's GDP and is a primary source of employment opportunities, mostly in rural regions. Ominde, Osoro, and Monari (2022) observe that Kenya's success has been driven by stringent regulation and anti-corruption. Abdullahi et al. (2021) observe that notwithstanding Nigeria's challenges, it has made strides in agro-processing, particularly cassava, palm oil, and cocoa processing. Singh (2021) observes that Nigerian agro-processing has been seen as a vehicle for economic diversification as well as the creation of employment. Quality of governance, especially regulatory capacity and anti-corruption, is an important driver of industrial performance in Africa, Adomako, Danso, and Ofori-Dankwa (2021) argue. Chitonge (2021) argues that countries in Africa whose good governance institutions are strong have seen more stable agro-processing and industrialization growth in general.

Uganda's agro-processing was similarly given priority as a strategic pillar of Uganda's National Industrialization Policy launched in 2008. This priority was increasing value addition and export (Kabbera, Mbabazi, & Kalema, 2024). Fowler and Rauschendorfer (2019) note that the policy was aimed at reducing the cost of doing business, enhancing infrastructure, and streamlining rules to ease industrial development. Akidi, Akello, and Nsisi (2023) posit that implementation interventions have seen consistent growth of Uganda's agro-processing industry, having a contribution of approximately 7.2 percent to GDP and creation of more than 500,000 jobs by 2024. Tukamuhabwa (2023) posits that exports of Uganda's agro-processing accounted for approximately 1.4 billion dollars in 2020, indicating the increasing importance of the industry. However, Van Campenhout, Lecoutere, and Spielman (2020) tell us that Uganda still remains constrained by factors such as corruption, infrastructure, and policy uncertainty. Tukamuhabwa (2023) contends that despite such limitations, there are unparalleled opportunities in export diversification, productivity improvement, and governance reform. Urugo, Abimana, and Kabonesa (2024) cite infrastructural deficits and ineffective regulatory enforcement as ongoing threats to Uganda's full industrial potential.

The institutional growth models

This study is informed by the institutional growth model. The institutional growth model is concerned with the role of governance in economic growth. In this study, the model is augmented to include some of the key governance indicators, viz., government efficiency (GE), corruption control index (CC), and quality of regulation (Regq). A general-to-specific method is applied to include these governance variables in the empirical estimation.

$$GAP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CC + \beta_2 RQ + \beta_3 GE + \beta_4 VA + U_i$$

Where:
GAP = Growth of agro-processing sector output, value added (current US$)
CC is a measure of corruption control index, a perception index that events corruption levels in a country, on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (clean). It is measured on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 represents High corruption. And 10 for (clean/ zero corruption).

GE is a measure of the effectiveness of government that accounts for views of the public services' quality, the civil service's quality, and liberation from constraints of political pressures, the formulation and development of the quality of policies and their implementation, and the government's adherence to policies in question. It is expressed as a number that runs from -2.5 (poor/weak) to 2.5 (excellent/strong).

RQ means the quality of regulation. Quality of regulation is an expression that depicts the extent to which citizens are of the opinion that the government is capable of framing and applying sound rules and regulations that help develop and improve private sector progress. Quality of regulation is measured along numerous variables as a composite index according to the Democracy Index, among which are such non-unfair activities as competition, prices, tariffs, excessive protection, and discriminatory taxes. The range of the quality of regulation index is between zero (0) and one (1), where higher values represent better results.

VA: Voice and Accountability gauges people's perceptions of how far their country is in being able to select their government, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and free media. The estimate provides the country's score on the composite indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e., roughly between -2.5 and 2.5.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

The Institutional Model of Growth, rooted in institutional economics, believes that institutions are the most influential factor in economic behavior and economic growth (Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2023). It was best formulated and popularized by North (1990), who argued that good institutions, including good governance, open regulatory mechanisms, and corruption-control mechanisms, are essential to attain sustained economic growth. Institutional governance influences incentives and constraints that economic actors have access to, and thus shapes the overall economic climate (Sharma & Kumar, 2022). Kanani and Larizza (2021) noted that institutions play a key role in achieving growth and prosperity, particularly for low-income countries where poor institutions are likely to hinder development. Similarly, Pritchett, Woolcock and Andrews (2022) underscored the fact that institutional quality plays a vital role in influencing sectoral productivity and economic diversification.

In the context of this research, the Institutional Growth Model is a theory of governance and the growth of Uganda's agro-processing industry (Fowler & Rauschendorfer, 2019). The model has been complemented with governance indicators such as government effectiveness (GE), control of corruption (CC), and regulatory quality (RegQ) (Gelgo, Gemechu & Bedemo, 2023). These are indicators of the institutional context in which industries operate. Good governance yields a climate that promotes industrial growth by reducing regulatory bottlenecks, increasing transparency, and less corruption, as would otherwise impede business operations (Njuki & Muriithi, 2021). For instance, Asongu and Nwachukwu (2020) revealed that corruption control and regulatory quality are positively correlated with industrial sector development in sub-Saharan Africa. In Uganda, these initiatives are particularly critical in developing the agro-processing industry growth, which remains central to economic transformation (Kabbera et al., 2024).

Previous studies have utilized the Institutional Growth Model to assess governance and economic performance within varying environments. For instance, Ebrahim and Girma (2020) applied this model to examine Ethiopia's governance and industrial growth and discovered that better regulations and government efficiency significantly contributed to increasing industrial output. Similarly, Njuki and Muriithi (2021) applied governance quality and agro-industrialization in Kenya and established that countries with better institutional arrangements experienced higher rates of agro-industrial growth. These works point out the applicability of the Institutional Growth Model in examining governance's role in facilitating industrialization, and they relate

to this research aimed at addressing challenges related to governance that are stifling Uganda's agro-processing sector. Further, a study by Acemoglu et al. (2023) examined the role of institutions in per capita GDP growth across a broad sample of countries from 1980 to 2015. The findings revealed that institutions play a positive role in growth rates, emphasizing the significance of governance in development. Similarly, a study by Kose and Ncube (2025) examined the contingent effect of economic growth and institutions on development. The studies concluded that institutional quality determines the effect of economic growth on development, emphasizing the crucial role of governance structure in economic development. The studies justify the foundation of the Institutional Growth Model by confirming that institutional factors are vital to the explanation and encouragement of economic growth.

Empirical Literature

The relationship between regulatory quality and the growth of the agro-processing industry

Regulatory quality is generally seen as one of the sources of industrialization and economic transformation. Regulatory quality refers to the capacity of government institutions to design, enforce, and implement rules and regulations that promote effective markets, environmental protection, and competitive fairness. In the agro-processing sector, regulatory quality affects resource use, industrial upgrading, market access, and investment attraction extensively. This subtopic analyzes the various ways in which regulatory frameworks impact the growth of the agro-processing industry, particularly its function in value addition, enhanced sustainability, and promotion of competitiveness at local and global levels.

Ouyang et al. (2019) examined environmental regulation, economic development, and air pollution in 30 OECD countries with a panel threshold model and determined that there was a non-linear relationship where increased regulations first raised PM2.5 emissions before they stabilized and began to trend downwards. Economic development too was found to be a pollution regulation determinant, and spending on air quality by the public yielded conflicting results, possibly due to weak enforcement of policies. Such findings highlight the importance of good regulation to enable industrial expansion and environmental sustainability. In the Ugandan agro-processing sector, weak enforcement, infrequent policies, and poor compliance support are fundamental barriers. As compared to OECD countries with strongly developed institutions of regulation, Uganda requires research to determine whether Uganda's system of regulation is favorable or not to the development of agro-processing. Knowing what policies in regulation are conducive to industrial development while minimizing environmental concerns like waste disposal and emissions would be enlightening information towards governance and sustainable development within the sector.

Yang et al. (2019) examined the government's regulatory function in the new energy automobile sector with a focus on how subsidies and tariffs can expand the market share of locally produced cars. They confirmed that although government subsidies can boost local brands, especially those with inferior technology, in the short run, the enhanced growth will not be sustainable unless there is technological advancement. It also highlighted the reality that subsidies to consumers generate higher social welfare than subsidies to producers. This use can be applied to Uganda's agro-processing industry, where government support can drive short-term growth. But just like in the automobile sector, Uganda's agro-processing industry will be in trouble if policies are not directed at longer-term technological progress and competitiveness. For Uganda, the most essential study gap is how government policy can drive sustainable innovation and reduce technological disparities for agro-processing such that growth is not only subsidy-driven but also stimulated by continuous developments that enhance competitiveness at the global level.

Literature emphasizes the role of robust regulatory frameworks in promoting industrial growth, environmental sustainability, as well as market access (Ouyang et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2019). Literature has identified that while support through regulation can create short-term development, long-term success of agro-processing relies on technological development and regulatory enforcement consistency (Caradonia et al., 2019; Liu & Xie, 2020). Regulatory challenges in Uganda in the form of poor enforcement, unpitched policies, and inadequate infrastructure slow down the sector's potential (Urugo et al., 2024). One of the research gaps is that not much research has been done on how Uganda can establish and implement effective regulatory frameworks that fuel innovation, close technological gaps, and reverse environmental challenges in agro-processing. Additional research must be done in order to determine how regulatory reforms can be

implemented to propel sustainable development in Uganda's agro-processing sector and place it on the international stage to compete.

Corruption control and the growth of the agro-processing industry

Corruption has also been described as being among the main obstacles to economic growth and development, particularly in the case of highly public resource- and regulation-intensive economic activities such as agro-processing. Agro-processing, as a value-adding activity to agricultural products, is susceptible to corruption based on its heavy dependence on licensing, quality certification, and access to financial and physical infrastructure. Anti-corruption, therefore, is an important pillar upon which transparency, equitable resource distribution, and an enabling environment for agro-processing industry development are built. This section looks at the connection between control of corruption and agro-processing industry development through the issues of transparency, investment attraction, productivity, competitiveness, good institutions, and inclusive growth.

Bai et al. (2019) examined the nexus between corruption and firm growth, using a sample of over 10,000 Vietnamese firms. The research established that as firms grow, they tighten bribes as a share of revenues. Authors suggest that inter-jurisdictional competition among governments can influence bribery-related choices in the hope that firms that are likely to be located in a myriad of locations or possess transferable rights over their properties will stand to benefit greatly from a reduction in bribery. This book suggests that as firms expand and become more mobile, they are better able to combat corruption. Corruption in the agro-processing industry of Uganda is also a problem, and it influences the development of firms as well as the potential of the industry. Corruption may drive up the cost of doing business, suppress investment, and discredit the efficacy of policies in favor of the industry as well. Bai et al.'s (2019) study presents an insight into how the development of firms could be linked to declines in corruption, which could be of considerable relevance to Uganda. For Uganda to grow its agro-processing sector, the country must provide a platform on which businesses will grow without being burdened by corruption. The research gap is thus how corruption in Uganda's agro-processing firms can be reduced through expansion and more broadly how increased control of corruption can be used to trigger the growth of the industry. Research on the role of anti-corruption efforts in firm growth for Uganda's agro-processing sector is needed to fully understand these processes and inform policy accordingly.

Monteiro et al. (2022) provided a review of the recent corruption literature in the construction industry, particularly in emerging economies. The research confirmed that corruption is an extensive issue in the construction industry, particularly in countries like Brazil, where corruption is widespread. The study emphasized the importance of structural reform within corruption prevention policy and the behavior of the industry. Corruption affects firm growth, increases costs, deters investment, and gives an uneven playing field in Uganda's agro-processing sector. The study reveals that, as in the construction industry, Uganda's agro-processing industry would also benefit from better anti-corruption practices, regulatory reform, and transparent governance systems. The gap in research for Uganda within the agro-processing industry was to determine the precise types and effects of corruption in the industry and establish specific measures to stop corruption and ensure sustainable development. Based on carrying out this study, for example, assistance could be offered to formulate policies in mitigating corruption in the agro-processing industry in Uganda towards a more effective and competitive industry.

In summary, there is a place for managing corruption to contribute to the growth and expansion of Uganda's agro-processing industry. Corruption also increases the operation cost, reduces competitiveness, chases away investment, and reduces institutional efficiency, all of which act negatively on firm growth (Bai et al., 2019; Monteiro et al., 2022). The facts confirm that effective anti-corruption efforts and enhanced openness with regulatory transformation will build a cleaner and more efficient place for agro-processing ventures (Colonnelli & Prem, 2022). Limited funds along with corruption continue to be the largest constrain, specifically for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which define the Uganda agro-processing sector (Ullah, 2020). There is a lack of research on the effects of corruption on firms' productivity, the compounding effect of corruption and financial constraint on growth, and the extent to which the success of interventions could minimize such issues (Demir et al., 2022; Adomako et al., 2021). Future research needs to attempt to develop methods of countering corruption and its negative effects on the performance, productivity, and global competitiveness of Uganda's agro-processing sector.

The relationship between government effectiveness and the growth of the agro-processing industry

The agro-processing industry is a cornerstone of economic transformation and sustainable development in general, and of the developing world in particular. Public sector performance, or the ability of the public institutions to deliver quality services, articulate policy, and effectively use resources, is one of the most important functions in mobilizing the development of the industry. Good governance in the agro-processing situation impacts various aspects like policy settings, infrastructure development, technological progress, compliance with regulations, market access, and environmental sustainability. This article discusses these aspects in depth to establish the relationship between government effectiveness and the development of the agro-processing industry.

Alam et al. (2019) analyzed the role of research and development (R&D) investment institutional drivers in emerging economies, focusing on government effectiveness, rule of law, regulatory quality as good institutional drivers of R&D investment, political instability, and corruption as being bad drivers. They conclude that developing emerging economies sustainably can be achieved if there is an effective and stable institutional framework, which will attract R&D investment. For the agro-processing sector of Uganda, the present research highlights the role played by government effectiveness in engendering growth. For Uganda, government effectiveness in policy implementation, regulatory environments, and infrastructure investment could constitute an important input towards the development of the agro-processing sector. Regardless of this, there has been short of conceptualization of the explicit contribution that certain government effectiveness elements, such as policy coherence, openness, and effective public service, make to agro-processing sector development and competitiveness. Further research would have to be conducted in order to determine how effective the government in Uganda would render the environment more attractive for agro-processing ventures, promoting innovation, and enhancing overall performance for the industry as a whole. This lacuna generates the need for exploring the actual channels via which government policy and institutional quality can facilitate the emergence of Uganda's agro-processing industry.

In conclusion, government effectiveness is an essential element of Uganda's agro-processing sector's growth and development. Public institutions' ability to implement policy, promote compliance with the rules, and spark innovation has a direct impact on the competitiveness and viability of the sector. Intervention by the government through subsidies and facility construction is necessary for growth, though it is difficult to tie interventions to agro-processing requirements. Additional research is needed to experiment on the relative influence of government policy and institutional quality on agro-processing in Uganda. Through bridging these gaps, policy-makers are able to make the environment more conducive for the industry to thrive and achieve sustainable economic transformation as well as enhance international competitiveness.

Voice and accountability and the growth of the agro-processing industry

Growth of the agro-processing industry and voice and accountability are key research areas, particularly in developing economies (Thompson, 2020). Voice and accountability reflect the extent to which citizens in a country are able to select their government, enjoy freedom of expression, freedom of association, and access to a free media (Kim, 2019). These are critical in enabling the citizens' involvement in policy-making decisions that affect sectors including the agro-processing sector (Martin, 2021). The agro-processing sector, which involves the processing of agricultural produce into processed products, is highly crucial to economic development as it enhances food security, creates employment, and increases export revenues (O'Connor, 2022). Understanding the role of voice and accountability in the development of this sector can provide insights into governance measures that promote sustainable economic development (Zhang, 2023).

The role of voice and accountability in supporting innovation in Pakistan with emphasis on political and institutional environments influencing innovation is described by Nadeem et al. (2020). They.learn from their studies that accountability and low voice, along with other factors like terrorism, hurt innovation in the short run and long run. Low voice and accountability have been determined to lead to institutional shortcomings such as nepotism and cronyism in the distribution of resources, and this discourages innovation. More voice and accountability, along with increased saving rates and better infrastructure, have been observed in empirical work to stimulate innovation. Evidence shows that institutional quality is required to propel economic growth, especially innovation. The result directly relates to Uganda's agro-processing sector as low voice and accountability levels in government are capable of scaring away innovation as well as sector growth.

Even though monumental studies have been carried out on voice and accountability affecting economic growth, there is yet a missing link in doing it in Uganda's agro-processing sector. The majority of studies are not specifically focused on the question of how improving voice and accountability contributes to Uganda's agro-processing development, especially innovation, investment, and transparency. Policy makers may find it helpful as it can guide them on how to optimize governance institutions and create a suitable environment for the growth of the agro-processing sector.

In conclusion, voice and accountability and transformation of the agro-processing industry are the most essential research areas for developing economies such as Uganda. While earlier studies underscore voice and accountability governance factors as key to innovation, transparency, and competitiveness among industries (Bah et al., 2021; Zhuo et al., 2021; Nadeem et al., 2020), there is a significant gap in research on how such factors affect the agro-processing sector of Uganda. Recent studies emphasize the general contribution of governance to economic growth (Zhuo et al., 2021) and export performance (Bah et al., 2021), but few of them directly address the peculiar needs of the agro-processing industry. Besides, whereas improved governance can drive innovation (Barra & Ruggiero, 2023; Costantiello & Leogrande, 2023), there is also further research that has to be done in an attempt to sketch out how voice and accountability can enhance growth in the sector and export performance of the agro-processing industry in Uganda. To close these gaps can provide useful feedback to policymakers on the use of an enabling environment in order to achieve sustainable development of agro-processing.

Key study gaps

Despite the sheer volume of literature on economic growth and governance metrics, tremendous gaps remain in the literature on Uganda's agro-processing industry. While some literature has accounted for how regulatory quality, corruption control, and government effectiveness drive growth (Zhuo et al., 2021; Nadeem et al., 2020), very minimal research has addressed their sectoral effects on measures like innovation, competitiveness, and export performance in Uganda's agro-processing industry. Furthermore, as corruption control has been found to create a business-friendly climate, its impact on the relief of country-level challenges facing the agro-processing sector is yet to be explored.

This study aims to close these gaps by investigating the effect of governance indicators of regulatory quality, corruption control, government effectiveness, and voice and accountability on Uganda's agro-processing industry. It will become more precise in scope on important sector characteristics, including innovation, market access, and export performance, and bring new evidence on the role of improved governance towards sector development. Through the presentation of empirical results, the research will assist policymakers in formulating policies that are favorable for governance, transparency, and investment and ultimately benefit sustainable growth in Uganda's agro-processing industry.

3. Methodology

The study used a longitudinal design under a quantitative research paradigm that applied the time series analysis to examine the degree to which governance indicators have influenced Uganda's agro-processing sector growth between the years 2000 and 2023. The design was appropriate to record cause-and-effect and long-run trends, particularly when the impact of governance and policy appreciates with time (Setia, 2016; Gujarati and Porter, 2009). The study relied on secondary data collected from a documentary survey with the use of the World Bank Development Indicators (WDI) database (World Bank, 2023) and the Macro Data Portal of the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (MoFPED, 2023). A document review checklist was utilized to gather information systematically on key governance indicators such as regulatory quality, control of corruption, government effectiveness, voice and accountability, and growth indicators of the industry. The selected time frame covered the critical policy and governance milestones in Uganda, such as achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), transition to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and implementation of Uganda Vision 2040, which collectively framed the nation's institutional and industrial development (Republic of Uganda, 2013; World Bank, 2023).

Specification of the Model

The model was parameterized according to institutional growth theory as outlined by Acemoglu and Robison (2006). Growth of any sector was expected by governance indicators, which were: corruption control, quality of regulation, government effectiveness, and voice and accountability. Therefore, this study tested this theory as one of the econometric goals of theoretical testing and established whether it could be used in the agro-processing industry in the case of Uganda.

The predicted model will be

$$Ln(\text{GAS})_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Ln(\text{GAS})_{t-1} + \beta_1 Ln(\text{CC})_t + \beta_2 Ln(\text{RQ})_t + \beta_3\, Ln(\text{GE})_t\, \beta_4 Ln(\text{VA})_t + \mu_i + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

WHEREBY GAS is the growth of the Agro-processing sector, CC is the corruption control, RQ is the regulatory quality, GE is the government effectiveness, and VA is voice and accountability.

Variables Description

In relation to the above Literature Review, descriptions of the study variables were investigated and contextualized. From the model displayed, the measurement of these variables was based on findings of previous empirical research and concepts that were theoretical concepts. Past scholars widely employed multiple dimensions, indicators, and ranges of measurement as good measures to assess governance and sector development. Whereas available measurement methods in existing research were not effective or not used, this current study used a large review of the literature to decide appropriate dimensions, indicators, and scales. Determinants were measured using secondary data from well-reputed governance indexes, such as the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), as well as industry performance reports, to have precision, uniformity, and comparability across the study period.

Estimation Techniques/Data Analysis

Linear dynamic time series models were used in this research to estimate the data. The sample moment conditions were obtained by taking the average of the product of the moment conditions and the error term over the data available. It was founded on the principle that the moment function, which defined the theoretical connection between the variables and the error term, had to be uncorrelated (orthogonal) with the error term in the entire population. For the Auto Regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model, the parameter values were determined such that the disparity between the sample moment conditions and the ones representing the whole population was minimized. Since the study employed time series data, controlling for issues such as stationarity, serial correlation, and cointegration was crucial in order to have a valid model estimation.

4. Study Findings

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of study variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
agric_va_a~l	24	2.958019	2.069565	-0.43833	7.856684
reg_qua	23	-0.28404	0.116958	-0.51737	-0.11361
coc	23	-0.98645	0.108185	-1.17447	-0.78762
g_eff	23	-0.57511	0.067666	-0.6923	-0.45182
voice	23	-0.64052	0.143614	-0.9933	-0.44538

The data show that agricultural value added as a percentage of GDP (used here as a proxy for the strength of Uganda's agro-processing industry) averages 2.96% per year, though this figure fluctuates significantly from year to year. Meanwhile, all governance indicators- regulatory quality, control of corruption, government effectiveness, and voice/accountability- consistently have negative mean values, signaling persistent governance challenges in Uganda. This suggests that the agro-processing industry's contribution to GDP remains modest and variable within a context of generally poor governance. Examining these trends is important because good governance is widely recognized as critical for creating an enabling environment for private sector growth, reducing barriers to investment, and supporting sustainable sectoral development. By exploring the relationship between agricultural value added and governance, this study aims to highlight where

institutional improvements could catalyze greater economic transformation, industrialization, and rural development in Uganda.

Table 2: Variable Stationarity tests

Variable	Level Test Statistic	Level p-value	1st Difference Test Statistic	1st Difference p-value	Order of Integration (I(d))
Agric Value Added	-3.594***	0.0059	-	-	I(0)
Regulatory Quality	-0.184	0.9403	-5.181***	0.0000	I(1)
Control of Corruption	-1.115	0.7092	-4.423***	0.0003	I(1)
Government Effectiveness	-2.808*	0.0572	-3.039**	0.0314	I(1)
Voice and Accountability	-1.460	0.5534	-5.237***	0.0000	I(1)

The integration order results show that agricultural value added is stationary at level, I(0), meaning its statistical properties do not depend on time, while all governance variables, regulatory quality, control of corruption, government effectiveness, and voice and accountability, are non-stationary at level but become stationary after first differencing, i.e., they are I(1). This mix of I(0) and I(1) variables justifies the use of the ARDL (Autoregressive Distributed Lag) model, as ARDL is specifically designed to estimate relationships between variables with different orders of integration, provided none are integrated of order two or higher (I(2)). Using ARDL allows for robust modeling of both short- and long-run dynamics between agricultural value added and governance factors, making it suitable and methodologically appropriate for this study.

Correlation analysis among study variables

Table 3: Correlation analysis among study variables

Variables	1	2	4	4	5
Agric Value Added (1)	1				
Regulatory Quality (2)	-0.4326*	1			
Control of Corruption (3)	-0.5229*	0.4821*	1		
Government Effectiveness (4)	-0.2859	0.4086	0.3593	1	
Voice and Accountability (5)	-0.4005	0.1431	0.3766	-0.2906	1

The correlation matrix shows that agricultural value added as a percentage of GDP is negatively and significantly correlated with both regulatory quality (-0.4326*) and control of corruption (-0.5229*), indicating that as governance improves in these areas, agricultural value added tends to decline, or vice versa. There are also significant positive correlations among the governance indicators themselves, particularly between regulatory quality and control of corruption (0.4821*), suggesting some interdependence between aspects of governance. However, the correlations between the dependent variable and the governance variables are not so high as to suggest perfect multicollinearity, and the intercorrelations among governance indicators are moderate. This pattern justifies including these variables together in the same model, as each governance indicator may capture unique dimensions of institutional quality that can independently or jointly influence agricultural value added, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of their combined effects.

Table 4: VIF Test

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Control of Corruption	1.76	0.566599
Government Effectiveness	1.67	0.598473
Voice and Accountability	1.56	0.641542

Regulatory Quality	1.44	0.694886
Mean VIF	1.61	

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all governance variables are well below the commonly accepted threshold of 10, with the highest being 1.76 for control of corruption. This indicates very low multicollinearity among the independent variables, meaning that each governance indicator provides distinct information in the model. A low mean VIF of 1.61 further supports the reliability of the model estimates, as multicollinearity is unlikely to bias the regression coefficients. Therefore, it is statistically appropriate to include all four governance variables, control of corruption, government effectiveness, voice and accountability, and regulatory quality, in the same regression model without concerns of redundancy or inflation of standard errors.

Table 1: Cointegration Test

Significance Level	I(0) - F	I(1) - F	I(0) - t	I(1) - t
10%	3.06	4.607	-2.526	-3.667
5%	3.963	5.838	-2.978	-4.225
1%	6.529	9.269	-3.978	-5.465
p-value	0.011	0.04	0.001	0.01
Decision Criteria				
Reject H0 if:	Both F and t are more extreme than the I(1) critical values.			
Do not reject H0 if:	Either F or t is closer to zero than the I(0) critical values.			
Decision Symbols	'.r' = rejection, '.' = inconclusive, '.a' = no rejection			

The ARDL bounds test results indicate that the null hypothesis of no long-run relationship can be rejected at the 1% level, as both the F-statistic (6.529) and the t-statistic (−3.978) are more extreme than the critical values for I(1) variables at this threshold. This means there is strong statistical evidence of a long-run cointegrating relationship between agricultural value added (proxy for agro-processing) and the selected governance variables. In simple terms, the agro-processing sector in Uganda moves together with governance factors over time, suggesting that improvements or deteriorations in governance have sustained long-term effects on agro-industrial growth.

Table 2: ARDL Model Results

Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|
Error Correction Term	-1.3289***	0.242479	-5.48	0.000
Long Run				
Regulatory Quality	3.169628**	1.259754	2.52	0.031
Control of Corruption	-1.13055	1.141124	-0.99	0.345
Government Effectiveness	-8.46753**	3.139936	-2.7	0.022
Voice and Accountability	-6.89566***	1.178537	-5.85	0.000
Short Run				
Agric Value Added$_{L1}$	0.48505**	0.17833	2.72	0.022
Regulatory Quality	4.212121**	1.84135	2.29	0.045
Control of Corruption	-1.50239	1.512978	-0.99	0.344
Government Effectiveness	-5.59264**	2.327947	-2.40	0.037
Government Effectiveness$_{L1}$	6.534249**	2.616262	2.50	0.032
Voice and Accountability	-3.51126	1.952555	-1.80	0.102
Constant	-11.3572***	2.822196	-4.02	0.002

Model Summary: ARDL (2,0,0,2,1) regression, Sample: 2004 – 2023, Number of obs = 20, R-squared = 0.8532, Adj R-squared = 0.7211, Root MSE = 0.4625, Log likelihood = -6.0248565

Effect of Regulatory Quality

Regulatory quality positively and statistically affects the growth of Uganda's agro-processing industry in the long and short term. The long-run coefficient value of 3.1696 (p = 0.031) tells us that improved regulatory climates are closely linked to improved agricultural value added. It reveals that long-term investment and agro-processing structural expansion occur within a stable, transparent, and effective regulatory environment. In the short run, the effect is also favorable and statistically significant at 4.2121 (p = 0.045). This indicates that even short-run regulatory improvement or policy adjustments have the capability to induce spontaneous favorable responses in the sector, ostensibly by affecting investor confidence or reducing operating constraints. On average, regulatory quality continues to support agro-processing development in both periods, focusing on institutional change and policy consistency.

Effect of Control of Corruption

Control of corruption has no statistically significant effect on agro-processing expansion in either the long or the short term. In the long term, the p-value is 0.345 and the coefficient is -1.1305, indicating a negative but insignificant relationship. It may reflect challenges in effectiveness or consistency of anti-corruption policy, which although worthwhile in principle, are not translating into measurable sectoral benefits in this environment. Similarly, in the short run, the coefficient remains negative at -1.5024 (p = 0.344), again showing no immediate significant effect. These results imply that although anti-corruption is important for good governance, its impact on agro-processing may be indirect or lagged, or even overshadowed by other structural factors within the sector.

Effect of Government Effectiveness

Government effectiveness shows a significant but complex relationship with agro-processing performance in Uganda. In the long run, its effect is strongly negative and statistically significant, with a coefficient of -8.4675 (p = 0.022). This counterintuitive result might reflect inefficiencies in public service delivery or misaligned policies that, while intended to support growth, may inadvertently hinder sectoral performance through overregulation, resource misallocation, or bureaucratic delays. In the short run, the impact is split into two parts: the immediate first-difference effect is negative and significant (-5.5926, p = 0.037), suggesting that sudden government actions may disrupt the sector. However, the lagged difference term is positive and significant (6.5342, p = 0.032), indicating that the benefits of such interventions may materialize after some delay. This duality implies that while government initiatives might initially strain the sector, they could produce positive outcomes if sustained and well-targeted over time.

Effect of Voice and Accountability

Voice and accountability have a notably negative and statistically significant impact on agro-processing growth in the long run. With a coefficient of -6.8957 (p = 0.000), this suggests that higher levels of democratic participation and civil liberties may correlate with reduced agricultural value added. While this may seem paradoxical, it could point to underlying issues such as political fragmentation, inconsistent policymaking, or governance instability associated with increased public scrutiny and participation. In the short run, the relationship remains negative (-3.5113) but is not statistically significant (p = 0.102), indicating that short-term changes in participatory governance do not have a clear immediate effect on the agro-processing sector. Taken together, the findings imply that while democratic engagement is important for broader governance, its influence on economic performance must be balanced with coherent institutional leadership and implementation capacity.

Model summary statistics

The error correction term (ECT) has a coefficient of -1.3289 and is highly statistically significant (p = 0.000), indicating strong evidence of a long-run equilibrium relationship between agricultural value added and the governance variables. The negative sign confirms that any short-run deviations from the long-run equilibrium are corrected over time. Specifically, about 133% of the disequilibrium is corrected within one period, suggesting a relatively fast adjustment speed. This reinforces the model's stability and the validity of using ARDL for analyzing both short- and long-term effects in the agro-processing sector.

The lag of agricultural value added (Agric Value Added$_{L1}$) in the short-run dynamics has a positive and statistically significant coefficient of 0.4851 (p = 0.022). This indicates that past values of agricultural value

added positively influence its current growth, meaning that the agro-processing sector in Uganda exhibits strong inertia or momentum. In practical terms, improvements in one period tend to carry over into the next, reinforcing growth patterns over time. This supports the idea that sustaining positive shocks or policy interventions can yield cumulative benefits in the sector.

Discussion

The analysis determines that the quality of regulation significantly enhances Uganda's growth of the agro-processing sector in the short run and long run. Short-run reforms such as reducing bureaucratic barriers to initial access to inputs lead to quicker sectoral advances, while long-run regulatory stability enhances investor confidence and capital inflows. This proof follows institutional growth theory that emphasizes the fact that good institutions through explicit rules and enforcement create an enabling environment to foster economic growth (Shen et al., 2023; Chiang and Liu, 2020). Uganda's pragmatic reforms such as Uganda Investment Authority's One Stop Centre and sanitary and phytosanitary standards enhancement for exports demonstrate how good regulation improves competitiveness and enables sectoral expansion under strategies such as the National Development Plan III.

Corruption control, government effectiveness, and voice and accountability, however, have poor or negative effects. Corruption control is insignificant statistically, possibly due to poor enforcement or overshadowing structural constraints, as findings from Mugun (2021) and Habiburrochman et al. (2024) also highlight the need for institutional capacity and public trust for anti-corruption to be effective. Government effectiveness has a negative influence, suggesting poorly enforced policies might stifle rather than support sector development (Sori et al., 2024; Mose, 2020). Similarly, while voice and accountability are critical to inclusive governance, their negative long-term implications in Uganda may portend instability and weak bureaucratic support, as uncovered by research studies by Ortega et al. (2024) and Tanjung (2024). The findings emphasize that unidirectional governance is not adequate because effective institutional systems are crucial in translating reforms into tangible agro-industrial outcomes.

5. Conclusion

The empirical results are that regulatory quality is important to Uganda's agro-processing sector development, with both short and long-term statistically relevant effects. Appropriate regulatory reforms improve investor confidence, reduce operational bottlenecks, and promote a conducive environment for agricultural value addition. But control of corruption had no statistically relevant effect on agro-processing development, an indication of enforcement and institutional capacity shortcomings. Government performance was negatively correlated, reflecting a mismatched policy implementation with sectoral demands. Voice and accountability were also negatively influencing in the long term, most likely due to instability and weak bureaucratic facilitation in translating civic participation into sustained, growth-oriented policy. Such findings work to support the importance of efficient, well-governed institutions to translate governance efforts into sustainable industrial outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that the government of Uganda should prioritize strengthening regulatory institutions by simplifying business procedures, enforcing standards, and maintaining policy consistency to stimulate agro-industrial investment. Anti-corruption efforts need to be restructured to focus on transparency, institutional accountability, and digital governance tools that are effectively enforced. To address the negative impact of government effectiveness, policies should be more closely aligned with the needs of agro-processors through decentralized decision-making and improved coordination with local stakeholders. Lastly, while promoting civic engagement remains important, voice and accountability mechanisms should be accompanied by capacity building within public institutions to ensure that participatory governance leads to stable and coherent policies that support agro-processing development.

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Journal of Social and Development Sciences
Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025 (ISSN 2221-1152)

Procurement Practices and Supply Chain Performance Among Manufacturing Firms in Kampala

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship between procurement practices and supply chain performance among manufacturing firms in Kampala, Uganda. Motivated by the operational challenges faced by the manufacturing sector, the study focuses on three key procurement practices: purchasing risk-taking, purchasing knowledge and skills, and strategic purchasing. The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory serves as the conceptual foundation, positioning procurement as a strategic internal resource capable of enhancing organizational performance. A cross-sectional, quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from 327 manufacturing firms using stratified random sampling. Analysis was conducted using correlation and multiple regression techniques. Results indicate that both strategic purchasing and purchasing risk-taking are significant and positive predictors of supply chain performance ($\beta = 0.449$ and $\beta = 0.295$, respectively), while purchasing knowledge and skills showed a negative but marginally insignificant effect ($\beta = -0.085$, $p = 0.051$). Together, the procurement practices explained 31.5% of the variance in supply chain performance (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.315$). These findings underscore the importance of integrating procurement within long-term business strategy and embracing innovative procurement behavior while ensuring continuous application of practical skills. The study recommends investment in procurement training, digital systems, and risk-responsive strategies to improve supply chain efficiency in Uganda's manufacturing sector.

Keywords: *Procurement Practices, Supply Chain Performance, Manufacturing Firms, Kampala*

1. Background to the Study

The manufacturing sector remains a cornerstone of Uganda's economic development, with Kampala serving as the country's principal industrial hub (Eyaa & Ntayi, 2010). Manufacturing firms in Kampala contribute significantly to job creation, value addition, and exports (Akello et al., 2025). However, despite the sector's strategic importance, firms continue to face operational inefficiencies that undermine competitiveness, especially in procurement and supply chain functions (Kabagambe et al., 2022). Procurement practices, defined as the methods and strategies used to acquire goods and services, play a critical role in ensuring that manufacturing operations run smoothly (Arinaitwe & William, 2025). Effective procurement supports timely production, cost management, and consistent supply chain flow (UBOS, 2023). Supply chain performance refers to how well an organization manages the flow of goods, services, and information across its supply network. (Eyaa & Ntayi, 2010) Indicators such as delivery reliability, lead time, inventory turnover, and customer satisfaction serve as benchmarks for performance assessment (Akello et al., 2025). In Kampala, these indicators are frequently challenged by delays in procurement processes, limited supplier diversity, fluctuating material costs, and poor adoption of digital procurement systems (Kabagambe et al., 2022). These challenges directly affect the performance of manufacturing supply chains by causing inefficiencies, bottlenecks, and reduced service levels (Arinaitwe & William, 2025).

Recent literature emphasizes the positive correlation between sound procurement practices and improved supply chain outcomes (Eyaa & Ntayi, 2010). According to Kabagambe et al. (Akello et al., 2025) (2022), manufacturing firms in Uganda that integrate quality control and supplier evaluation into their procurement practices experience higher operational efficiency and resilience (Kabagambe et al., 2022). Similarly, Arinaitwe and William (2025) found that robust procurement planning and supplier engagement lead to enhanced delivery reliability and cost-effectiveness (Arinaitwe & William, 2025). Their findings align with the Resource-Based View (RBV), which suggests that internal capabilities such as procurement strategy can be sources of sustainable competitive advantage (UBOS, 2023). The adoption of technology in procurement has also been recognized as a driver of performance (Eyaa & Ntayi, 2010). Akello et al (2025) highlight that e-procurement tools such as e-tendering and e-catalogs streamline supplier communication, enhance transparency, and reduce procurement cycle times (Kabagambe et al., 2022). In Kampala's manufacturing sector, however, the integration of such systems remains limited due to cost barriers and lack of skilled personnel (Arinaitwe &

William, 2025). As such, the potential benefits of digital procurement have not been fully realized, thereby contributing to inefficiencies in supply chain execution (UBOS, 2023).

Moreover, institutional factors such as policy enforcement, regulatory oversight, and training play a role in shaping procurement efficiency (Eyaa & Ntayi, 2010). Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2023) reports that although the manufacturing sector is growing, many firms lack formal procurement policies or structured supplier management systems (Akello et al., 2025). This results in inconsistent supplier performance and reactive rather than strategic purchasing decisions (Kabagambe et al., 2022). Strengthening procurement governance, therefore, emerges as a key priority for enhancing supply chain performance (Arinaitwe & William, 2025). Despite the existing body of knowledge, limited empirical research specifically explores the dynamics of procurement practices and supply chain performance in Kampala's manufacturing sector (Eyaa & Ntayi, 2010). While several studies have examined public sector procurement and SMEs in other regions, there remains a gap in understanding how manufacturing firms in Kampala align procurement strategies with broader supply chain goals (Akello et al., 2025). Addressing this gap is critical for informing practical interventions and policy reforms (Kabagambe et al., 2022). This study seeks to examine the relationship between procurement practices and supply chain performance among manufacturing firms in Kampala (Eyaa & Ntayi, 2010). The findings are expected to offer actionable insights for manufacturers, procurement professionals, and policymakers aimed at improving procurement efficiency and strengthening supply chain competitiveness (Akello et al., 2025). By identifying key drivers and barriers, the study will contribute to the ongoing discourse on industrial development and supply chain modernization in Uganda (Kabagambe et al., 2022).

2. Literature Review

Theoretical Review

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory posits that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage arises from its unique resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). In the context of procurement and supply chain management, RBV underscores the strategic importance of internal resources, such as procurement practices, in enhancing organizational performance. Komakech et al. (2025) conducted a systematic literature review examining the application of RBV in supply chain management, highlighting the growing scholarly interest in leveraging RBV to enhance supply chain capabilities and outcomes. Stütz et al. (2023) discuss the development of next-generation digital procurement workspaces that focus on information integration, automation, analytics, and sustainability, emphasizing the role of digital capabilities as strategic resources. Kumar et al. (2024) investigate how big data analytics can drive supply chain innovation and sustainability, aligning with RBV's emphasis on leveraging unique capabilities for competitive advantage. Paulraj (2011) explores the relationships between internal resources, sustainable supply management, and organizational sustainability, further reinforcing the relevance of RBV in understanding procurement practices. Collectively, these studies affirm that strategic procurement practices, underpinned by RBV, are instrumental in enhancing supply chain performance among manufacturing firms.

Purchasing risk-taking and supply chain performance

The relationship between purchasing risk-taking and supply chain performance has attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly in the context of emerging economies. Purchasing risk-taking refers to the willingness of firms to engage in innovative or unconventional procurement decisions that may involve uncertainty or supplier variability. Mensah and Boateng (2023) highlight that procurement risk-taking allows firms to adapt quickly to supply disruptions and market fluctuations, particularly when dealing with global supply sources. Okello et al. (2022) similarly found that firms in Uganda that diversified their supplier base and experimented with new sourcing strategies recorded fewer stockouts and higher fulfillment rates. Kakande and Byaruhanga (2023) assert that calculated risk-taking in procurement functions contributes to supply chain responsiveness and agility, which are vital for manufacturing firms operating in volatile environments like Kampala. Agyapong et al. (2021) support the idea that moderate risk orientation helps firms to explore better pricing and quality options. Therefore, embracing purchasing risk-taking as a strategic resource aligns well with the Resource-Based View, as it builds internal capacity for competitive advantage.

Purchasing knowledge and skills and supply chain performance

Procurement knowledge and skills are essential for achieving efficiency and reliability in supply chain performance. This variable refers to the technical, analytical, and interpersonal competencies that procurement professionals bring to organizational processes. Kimani et al. (2024) found a direct link between procurement training and operational improvements in Ugandan manufacturing SMEs, with better negotiation, cost control, and supplier management outcomes. Wanjiru and Ogutu (2021) argue that while knowledge is crucial, its effect on performance depends on the ability to apply it within structured procurement systems. UBOS (2023) reports show that many Kampala-based manufacturing firms lag in digital procurement skills, which limits their ability to modernize supply chain functions. Banda and Otieno (2022) further emphasize that procurement professionals with strong analytical abilities significantly contribute to sourcing efficiency and vendor performance monitoring. Therefore, improving procurement knowledge through continuous capacity building is vital for enhancing supply chain reliability and responsiveness in Kampala's manufacturing sector.

Strategic purchasing and supply chain performance

Strategic purchasing involves aligning procurement objectives with the overall long-term goals of the firm. It moves procurement from a transactional role to a more integrative and value-driven function. Zhu et al. (2022) demonstrate that firms with strong strategic purchasing practices experience greater supplier innovation, better inventory control, and reduced lead times. Nabimanya and Tukamushaba (2023), focusing on Kampala's manufacturing sector, found that involving procurement professionals in strategic planning led to increased supply reliability and production efficiency. Tumusiime and Kato (2024) confirm that strategic purchasing enhances supplier partnerships, improves forecasting accuracy, and strengthens supply chain coordination. Chikweche and Buberwa (2021) argue that strategic alignment in procurement is a source of sustainable competitive advantage, especially in industrially transitioning economies. These findings align with the Resource-Based View, which sees procurement integration as a core competency that influences firm performance and adaptability.

3. Methodology

To investigate the effect of purchasing risk-taking, purchasing knowledge and skills, and strategic purchasing on supply chain performance among manufacturing firms in Kampala, this study adopted a cross-sectional quantitative survey design. The cross-sectional approach was selected for its effectiveness in capturing data from a diverse population at a single point in time, allowing for the analysis of relationships between key supply chain variables (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This design is widely used in operations and management research due to its cost-effectiveness, ease of administration, and suitability for large-scale studies (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

Structured self-administered questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from supply chain managers, procurement officers, and operational heads of manufacturing firms. This method enabled the collection of standardized responses and minimized interviewer bias, while ensuring confidentiality and reducing the likelihood of social desirability bias (Bryman, 2016). The questionnaire included sections on demographic characteristics (e.g., age of the business, number of staff) and variables related to purchasing practices and supply chain performance.

Study population and sample size determination. The target population consisted of registered manufacturing firms in Kampala Capital City, covering all five divisions: Central, Kawempe, Makindye, Nakawa, and Rubaga. These firms operate across various subsectors including food processing, beverages, plastics, metal fabrication, and furniture production. A comprehensive list of firms was obtained from the Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) and Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) business registry (KCCA, 2024).

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. A total sample of 382 firms was targeted to achieve sufficient statistical power and representation (Israel, 1992). However, due to non-response and data quality issues, complete and usable responses were obtained from 327 manufacturing firms, resulting in a response rate of 85.6 percent, which was considered adequate for rigorous analysis. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure fair representation across manufacturing subsectors and geographic divisions. Stratification helped minimize sampling bias by ensuring

inclusion of firms of various sizes and from different industrial categories within each division of Kampala (Etikan and Bala, 2017). To analyze the data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Inferential techniques such as multiple linear regression were used to determine the effect of purchasing risk-taking, purchasing knowledge and skills, and strategic purchasing on supply chain performance.

4. Results

Table 1: Characteristics of manufacturing firms

Characteristics	*Item*	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Age of the Business	Below 5 years	85	26.0
	05 – 10 years	195	59.6
	Above 10 years	47	14.4
	Total	327	100.0
Number of staff	Less than 10	39	11.9
	10-19	129	39.4
	20-29	95	29.1
	30-39	57	17.4
	50 and above	7	2.1
	Total	327	100.0

The results indicate that the majority of supplier businesses supporting manufacturing firms in Kampala have been in operation for a substantial period. Specifically, 59.6 percent have operated for 5 to 10 years, 26 percent for less than 5 years, and 14.4 percent for more than 10 years. This distribution suggests that most suppliers possess a moderate level of operational experience, which is vital for ensuring reliability, consistency, and understanding of procurement and logistics requirements. Such experience contributes positively to the supply chain performance of manufacturing firms, as it facilitates timely deliveries, effective communication, and the ability to meet production schedules with minimal disruptions.

In terms of staffing, 39.4 percent of the supplier firms employ between 10 and 19 workers, 29.1 percent employ 20 to 29 staff, and only 2.1 percent employ 50 or more. This indicates that most suppliers are small to medium-sized enterprises with lean operational structures. From a supply chain performance perspective, working with such firms can be beneficial for manufacturing companies in Kampala, as it allows for greater flexibility, reduced overhead costs, and quicker decision-making processes. However, while lean staffing can enhance efficiency, it may also present capacity limitations during periods of high demand. Therefore, the performance of manufacturing supply chains is partly influenced by the supplier's ability to balance lean operations with scalability and responsiveness.

Table 2: Correlations results

Variables	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Purchasing risk taking-1	1			
Purchasing knowledge skills-2	.306**	1		
Strategic purchasing-3	.334**	.664**	1	
Supply Chain Performance-4	.419**	.303**	.491**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 3 indicate there is a positive significant relationship between purchasing risk taking and supply chain performance of manufacturing firms ($r = .419$, $p<.01$). This implies that any positive change in purchasing risk taking is associated with a positive change in supply chain performance of manufacturing firms in Kampala.

The results in Table 3 indicate there is a positive significant relationship between Purchasing knowledge skills and supply chain performance of manufacturing firms (r = .303, p<.01). This implies that any positive change in Purchasing knowledge skills is associated with a positive change in supply chain performance of manufacturing firms in Kampala.

The results in Table 3 indicate there is a positive significant relationship between Strategic purchasing and supply chain performance of manufacturing firms (r = .491, p<.01). This implies that any positive change in Strategic purchasing is associated with a positive change in supply chain performance of manufacturing firms in Kampala.

Table 3: Regression analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.25	0.123		10.127	.000
	Purchasing risk-taking	0.292	0.034	0.295	8.535	.000
	Purchasing knowledge skills	-0.078	0.04	-0.085	-1.955	.051
	Strategic purchasing	0.407	0.04	0.449	10.187	.000
R	.564a					
R Square	0.318					
Adjusted R Square	0.315					
F	101.164					
Sig.	.000b					

a Dependent Variable: Supply Chain Performance of Manufacturing firms in Kampala

The results in the table indicate that purchasing risk-taking is a significant predictor of supply chain performance (Beta = 0.295, p < .01). This implies that a unit increase in purchasing risk-taking is associated with a 0.292 unit increase in supply chain performance among manufacturing firms in Kampala. This suggests that firms that are more willing to take calculated risks in procurement decisions such as exploring new suppliers, investing in untested materials, or entering new markets are likely to experience improved performance in their supply chains.

The results also show that purchasing knowledge and skills have a negative and marginally insignificant effect on supply chain performance (Beta = -0.085, p = 0.051). This implies that a unit increase in purchasing knowledge and skills would result in a 0.078 unit decrease in supply chain performance, although the relationship is not statistically significant at the 5% level. This could suggest that while knowledge is essential, its effectiveness in improving supply chain performance may depend on how well it is applied or aligned with firm strategy and contextual needs.

The results further reveal that strategic purchasing is a significant positive predictor of supply chain performance (Beta = 0.449, p < .01). This implies that a unit increase in strategic purchasing will result in a 0.407 unit increase in supply chain performance. This highlights the importance of aligning procurement strategies with overall organizational goals, building long-term supplier relationships, and planning for long-term value rather than short-term cost savings.

Finally, the results indicate that purchasing risk-taking, purchasing knowledge and skills, and strategic purchasing together explain 31.5% of the variation in supply chain performance (Adjusted R Square = 0.315).

This means that 68.5% of the variation is explained by other factors not included in the study, such as supplier reliability, economic conditions, infrastructure, government policies, or market demand fluctuations.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

The results of the current study reveal that strategic purchasing and purchasing risk-taking significantly and positively influence supply chain performance, while purchasing knowledge and skills show a negative but marginally insignificant effect. These findings are consistent with recent literature. For instance, Zhu et al. (2022) found that strategic alignment in procurement such as involving suppliers in planning and decision-making positively impacts supply chain resilience and performance, especially in emerging markets. This aligns with the current study's finding that strategic purchasing has the strongest positive effect ($\beta = 0.449$), indicating that Kampala's manufacturing firms benefit substantially from embedding procurement within long-term planning. Similarly, the positive role of purchasing risk-taking reflects the findings by Mensah and Boateng (2023), who argue that firms willing to experiment with new suppliers, technologies, or markets gain superior adaptability and responsiveness key traits for manufacturers operating in uncertain environments like Uganda. On the other hand, the negative coefficient for purchasing knowledge and skills challenges earlier assumptions. While Wanjiru and Ogutu (2021) emphasize the importance of procurement competency, they also caution that without proper application frameworks, skills alone do not enhance performance an observation that may explain the current study's result. In fact, Kimani et al. (2024) support this by showing that unless skills are continuously updated, aligned with digital transformation, and linked to strategic outcomes, their impact remains limited. Thus, the study's results reinforce the need for manufacturers in Kampala to prioritize strategic integration and innovation in procurement, while revisiting how training and knowledge are translated into measurable outcomes.

Recommendations

Manufacturing firms in Kampala should enhance their supply chain performance by embedding strategic purchasing into broader organizational planning processes. This involves aligning sourcing strategies with long-term business goals, integrating suppliers into product development and innovation cycles, and conducting regular supplier evaluations to ensure consistent quality and efficiency. Firms should also formalize procurement functions by investing in advanced supplier relationship management systems and digital tools that enable seamless communication, performance monitoring, and strategic decision-making. To fully leverage the benefits of purchasing risk-taking, companies need to adopt structured risk management frameworks that encourage innovation while minimizing potential disruptions. This includes empowering procurement teams to pilot new technologies, explore diverse sourcing options, and engage with non-traditional suppliers, all guided by real-time data and risk analytics. Furthermore, firms must review and revamp their procurement training programs, shifting from general theoretical knowledge to practical, results-oriented learning. Emphasis should be placed on strategic sourcing, supplier negotiation, digital procurement systems, and evidence-based practices. Partnerships with academic institutions, industry associations, and professional training bodies can enhance training relevance and impact. Finally, firms should institute performance evaluation mechanisms that ensure acquired skills are effectively applied, transforming procurement knowledge into a strategic asset that drives competitiveness, cost-efficiency, and supply chain resilience.

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