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THE IMPACT OF SECONDARY VALUE CHAIN ACTIVITIES ON THE GROWTH OF SELECTED CHAIN STORES IN FRANCISTOWN, BOTSWANA

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Abstract

Effective and efficient implementation of value chain activities is critical to the performance of a business organisation. The purpose of this study was to explicate the impact of secondary value chain activities on the growth of selected chain stores in a developing country. To achieve the purpose of this study, Michael Porter's Value Chain Model was applied and empirically tested on a selected sample of the study population. This study adopted the positivist research philosophy hence a survey research design whence data was collected using a quantitative research methodology through a structured questionnaire. A sample of 130 participants was selected from a population of 200 which was derived from eight retail shops. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings of this study revealed that the secondary value chain activities (firm infrastructure, human resources management, technology development, and procurement) were not effectively contributing to the growth of the retail shops that were covered in this study although these activities were responsible for much of the variance in the growth of these enterprises. The study applies Michael Porter's Value Chain Model concept to determine the impact of the secondary value chain activities on the performance, hence growth, of selected retail shops in an identified developing country. In so doing, the study provides the management of these enterprises with strategies to innovate and enhance business performance and growth using the value chain model.

Key words*: Secondary value chain activities, firm infrastructure, human resources management, technology development, procurement, chain stores, retail enterprise, innovation, firm performance, business growth.*

Introduction and background to the study

The current global business landscape is fast paced and is characterised by competitive business organisations. It is in this kind of environment where retail stores find themselves competing with well-established organisations (Simatupang, *et al*., 2017; Shashe, *et al*., 2018). It follows therefore that for these retail enterprises to experience exponential growth and outcompete effectively with their rivals in this high paced technological space, the full strategic application of the value chain phenomenon becomes paramount.

Recent studies indicate that although sizeable retailers employ value chain activities, they, albeit do so informally (Chirau, 2014; Flanagan, *et al*., 2017; Breuer, *et al*., 2019). The findings of these studies deserve to be interrogated and further research should be conducted on the formal application of value chain activities in retail firms and their implications thereof. Essentially, value chain entails primary activities (inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, and service) and secondary activities which are composed of firm infrastructure, human resources management, technology development, and procurement (Kumar and Rajeev, 2016). Large retailers need these vital activities to acquire a competitive advantage on the local and global market and for such to be attained, outsourcing, multiple partnerships in distribution, technological partnerships, infrastructure sharing, and production outsourcing are important to have a robust and growing mega retail industry in the world (Scheideler, 2018; Shashe, *et al*., 2018).

Porter (1985) posit that competition is at the core of the success or failure of firms. Innovations and the ability to assess environmental factors and act appropriately by applying the competitive five forces is key to retailers' growth. As such, the incorporation of Porter's generic strategies namely cost leadership, differentiation, and focus to secondary value chain activities has the potential of enhancing retailers' growth. The application of technology development enhances economies of scale using automation, resulting in cost leadership, and increasing distribution channels via online shops, thus stimulating access to global markets (Porter, 1985). For this to happen, retail firms need to purchase goods from suppliers from a point of strong leverage by buying as a consortium through online purchasing and sharing of transport costs (Chirau, 2014; Flanagan, *et al*., 2017; Kabeyi, 2018).

Chirau (2014) further avers that due to limited financial capabilities, most retailers in Africa seem not to be able to hire experts to work for them daily thus they can act as consortiums and hire distribution agents and technology experts who can help with advanced technologies. The author believes that such technologies can assist in the automation of business processes which is critical in giving these retailers a competitive advantage such as speed, quality, and cost leadership.

Upon observing that retailers in the selected developing country may be incapacitated to employ value chain activities for purposes of gaining competitiveness and growth, the government of that country, through its business advisory agents, trained these retailers in competitive business strategies, albeit, without tangible growth (Chirau, 2014; Flanagan, *et al*., 2017). It is therefore on this basis that some retailers are being mentored by the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) with the aim of capacitating them to apply some of the value chain activities. This initiative is geared towards advancing the

competitiveness of these retailers, provide added value at lower cost, and facilitate faster competitive supply chains of the firms (Jatmiko, 2016). It is on this basis that this study sought to explicate the impact of secondary value chain activities on the growth of selected retail chain stores in the second capital city of the developing country.

The established retailers in the selected developing country seem to have experienced stunted growth over the years. This could be the consequences of high rentals, inadequately trained staff, in-effective and inefficient management of the business, as well as non-application of current e-value chain activities which can enable global competitiveness. It seems the organisations' low capacity is to blame for the stunted growth of these retailers. Consequently, over and above the government of the country rolling out business advisory services and funding through the relevant state enterprises, a presidential directive requested all government departments to procure from local retailers as a deliberate strategy to promote their growth. However, it looks like these numerous government interventions have not yet borne fruit as they have not facilitated the growth of the targeted retailers in this country (Chirau, 2014). This study, therefore, sought to investigate the impact of secondary value chain activities on the growth of the selected retail chain stores in the identified developing country. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Establish the role of firm infrastructure in the growth of the selected chain stores
- Elucidate the role of human resource management in the growth of the selected chain stores
- Expound the role of technology development in the growth of the selected chain stores
- Explicate the role of procurement in the growth of the selected chain stores

Literature review

This section reviews literature on the impact of value chain activities on the growth of a business focusing on secondary value chain activities which are firm infrastructure, human resource management, technology development, and procurement. These are discussed below.

The role of firm infrastructure on business growth

Firm infrastructure is vital as it adds value to the growth of firms. Jatmiko (2016) and Vattikoti and Razak (2018) suggest that firm infrastructure deals with the enterprise structure and general management which comprises planning, finance, accounting, legal, governance, and quality management. The authors further note that intergration of management functions in a seemless sytem creates cost leadership which ensures quick and quality service delivery. Retailers' insuffiecient funds make it important to integrate management functions using Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) so as to employ less employees which leads to reduced staff overheads (Bughin, *et al*., 2017). Prajogo and Oke (2015) and Scheideler (2018) argue that enteprises with well established intergrated management functions in place are able to coordinate in real time which may lead to business growth and competitiveness. The essence of this study, therefore, was to establish the extent to which the management functions of the retailers that were covered in this study were integrated using ERP and whether this impacted positively on the cost structure of the enterprises.

Businesses lack resources to hire all personnel to deal with general management thus making it difficult to be competitive. Financial instititutions require audited financial statements while some retailers do not have accountants and lawyers and generally lack a sound human resource management (Flanagan, *et al*., 2017). Some business founders and owners run these enterprises as family businesses without seriously applying sound professional management principles (Flanagan, *et al*., 2017). Most retail firms in the selected developing country fall into the family business category hence this literature component is directly linked to them. Business plans, strategic plans, governance plans, and marketing plans are not present in most cases thus making it difficult to implement competitive technological innovations which may reduce cost hence stiffling business growth (Flanagan, *et al*., 2017).

As confirmation of the above view, a study by Khanie (2018) that investigated the financing of large firms in the developing country that was covered in this study and the factors influencing access to credit established that access to funding is influened by various factors which include gender, citizenship, experience of the enterprises owner, firm size, sector of the business, sales, and land ownership. Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that although the size of the firm determines access to funding, Hogue et al.,(2016), cited in Khanie (2018), discovered that when the number of employees increases, the probability of being credit rationed decreases, whereas Kira and He (2012), cited in Khanie (2018), posit that larger firms have higher access to debt financing than smaller firms.

To achieve growth, it is therefore imperative for retail enterprises to have in place sound and effective firm infrastructure such as the right employees/managers and competent advisors on matters of domestic and international trade. The intergration of accounting, human resources, planning and legal matters into a real time system improves efficiency and put an enterprises above others on the market (Bughin, *et al*., 2017). Whether this was the case in the selected retail chain stores that were covered in this study is what the study sought to establish.

The role of human resource management in facilitating business growth

Vattikoti and Razak (2018) posit that Human Resource Management (HRM) is one of the vital elements that can facilitate the growth of businesses including retail shops. This view is supported by Alshuaibi and Shamsudin (2016) and Armstrong and Brown (2019) who submit that in this competitive global world, enterprises should hire techno-savvy and analytical employees. Those who fail in this regard can oversee the collapse of the enterprises that they work for.

Vattikoti and Razak (2018) further believe that recruting the right employees gives enterprises a competitive advantage. In this fast paced retail industry where e-commerce is gaining momentum, ERP needs to be integrated into the operations of enterprises. This therefore calls for highly skilled employees who are able to operate these technical tools to the satisfaction of the customers (Flanagan, *et al*., 2017). In addition, Breuer *et al*., (2019) suggest that retail establishments can gain competitive advantage by recruting employees who are skilled in analytics, data science, and

software development to ensure that the businesses fulfill immediate customer needs.

Taking into cognisance the fact that many retailers, especially in developing countries, have insufficient funds to hire competent employees, it is suggested that they collaborate through various ways to access outsourced talent (Flanagan, *et al*., 2017). It is also suggested that retailers form joint ventures to capacitate themselves so that they have enough finances to hire the right talent in the long term but in the short term, outsourcing sophisticated responsibilities to third parties may present an opportunity to compete in this fast-paced global marketplace (Kabeyi, 2018; Scheideler, 2018).

Hassan and Imna (2015) conducted a study in the Maldives to establish the influence of HRM practices on the growth of the retail industry. The results of this study revealed that indeed HRM had a significant impact on employee retention hence organisational productivity and growth. The study findings designated that HRM practices that were responsible for staff retention included career development, reward and recognition, and health and safety. It, therefore, follows that retailers require financial strength to retain, reward, and train employees to have in place strong human capital to stimulate organisational productivity and growth. To the contrary, Chirau (2014) and Flanagan *et al*., (2017) opine that most retailers in developing countries, including the large ones, lack the capacity to effectively motivate employees and to attract and retain high performers. Therefore, outsourcing some human resources functions to third parties who have skilled and competent manpower is recommended for such enterprises (Alshuaibi, 2016; Scheideler, 2018; Adhi, *et al*., 2020). The essence of this study, therefore, was to establish the extent to which HRM, as a secondary value chain activity, contributed to the growth of the selected retail chain stores. Furthermore, the study sought to determine if the chain stores that were covered in this study had the financial muscle that enabled them to train, reward, and retain employees to ehance organisational productivity and growth. In the absence of such financial strength, the study sought to establish if the selected chain stores were outsourcing some of the critical human resources functions to third parties who had in place skilled and competent manpower to handle such roles.

The role of technology development in business growth

Khaled, Ahmed, Tabash, Al-Homaidi and Hossain (2019) carried out a study in the city of Aligarh in India to investigate the impact of technological and marketing innovation on the growth of the retail industry. The findings of the study revealed that technological innovations were influential in the cost effectiveness and growth of the retail sector. Technology was found to increase market share and the competitiveness of retail enterprises. This view is supported by other authors who assert that technology development is crucial for the growth of retail businesses because of its promotion of cost leadership which consequently upsurges market share and profitability (Bughin *et al*, 2017; Abdipour and Mosiehpour, 2019; Adhi, *et al*., 2020). Furthermore, it is suggested that technology contributes to retailers' growth through the enhancement of customer value, store equity, and assisting in mass marketing and electronic selling of goods (Khaled, *et al*., 2019). This study therefore sought to establish if the retail chain stores that were covered in this study possessed any meaningful technological innovations and the extent to which such innovations, if they were available, contributed to the cost

effectiveness, competitiveness, and growth of these enterprises.

Another study was conducted by Rachinger *et al*., (2018) to assess the influence of digitilisation on business model innovation. The findings divulged that digitilisation was indeed pivotal in the innovative product development process (Rachinger, *et al*., 2018). Furthermore, the results of the above study discovered that technology enhances profitability although it was also realised that employee competencies could pose challenges for some retailers by failing to operate the new technological implements. This view is reinforced by various other authors who suggest that technology boosts capacity and efficiency which lead to the growth of retail businesses (Khuan and Rama, 2018; Francis, *et al*., 2019). However, the technology-related challenges that are faced by retail businesses include, amongst others, the affordability of technology and insuffiecient funding to employ techno-savy staff (Nagy, *et al*., 2018) and this study was meant to establish if the retail chain stores that were covered in this study did not experience similar predicaments.

Technology development is crucial in today's fast paced and competitive business environment. The effective use of e-commerce, online banking, digital marketing, and social networking has made retail businesses more competitive than before (Abdipour and Mosiehpour, 2019; Adhi, *et al*., 2020). It follows therefore that the employment of such digital paraphernalia can enable retailers to scale up their operations and stimulate growth (Scheideler, 2018). Nagy *et al*., (2018) argue that although brick and mortar shops are still relevant especially for customers who suffer from trust issues, e-commerce platforms for business-to-business, business-to-customer, and customer-to-customer interaction have taken centre stage.

Nair and Chisoro (2017) argue that although technology is critical to business growth as alluded to above, most retailers' inadequate funding and unqualified staff make it difficult to fully embrace technology as a competitive tool. Nagy et al., (2018) therefore propose that sizeable retailers should embrace collaboration and/or outsource e-commerce functions to expert companies which will play a significant role in their growth financially and in terms of brand equity. This view is supported by other authors who denote that Amazon, for example, managed to outcompete its rivals by using convenient and quick delivery systems in its locality with small parcels being delivered in a day after the order had been placed (Scheideler, 2018; Breuer, *et al*., 2019). These authors further postulate that vertical and horizontal integration led to cost reduction, differentiation, and focus on consumers, a strategy that expanded the market share, revenue, and profitability of Amazon hence this study sought to establish if the selected retail chain stores were undertaking similar business practices.

The smaller retail businesses should therefore adapt and do what giant multinational retailers are doing if they are to remain competitive and to grow in this competitive global village (Mercier, *et al*., 2020). To compete with giant multinational retail businesses, the smaller retailers should employ appropriate marketing strategies that are backed by advanced technological systems. This study therefore sought to elucidate the influence of technology as a secondary value chain activity on the growth of the selected retail chain stores in the identified developing country as confirmation of what was discussed in this section of the literature review.

The role of procurement in the growth of retail enterprises

McGee (2014) avers that procurement, as a component of secondary value chain activities, deals with the purchasing of raw materials, supplies, and other consumables, or inventory for resale. According to Kabeyi (2018), for retailers to be competitive, their procurement cost should be low hence cost efficient. The author further advocates for bulky electronic procurement which he believes is convenient, quick, and cheap because it leverages on internet and all electonic payment platforms to effect a purchase transaction. This view is supported by Khuan and Raman (2018) who observe that coopetition and retailer integrated purchase are some of the best strategies that facilitate the growth of retail businesses. This study intended to establish if the research results revealed that the selected chain stores practised bulky, electronic, cheap, convenient, and quick procurement practices in affirmation to this literature review.

However, it is crucial to note that retail businesses suffer from the challenge of fragmentation in their approach of conducting business including procurement (Chirau, 2014; Flanagan, *et al*., 2017). Flanagan *et al*., (2017) further posit that retailers could collaborate informally by procuring bulky inventory and sharing transport costs. Kabeyi (2018) bemoans the absence of formal procurement agreements by retailers which could give them a collective bargaining advantage over suppliers.

Proper inventory management and planning are vital to the sustenance of retail enterprises and their competitiveness. This view is confirmed by the findings of a study that was conducted by Chang and Wong (2010) that assessed the willingness of organisations to use e-procurement in their operations in the marketplace and to determine their performance to assess its benefits. Their findings showed that organisations which implemented e-procurement were more capable of participating in e-market practices which eventually improved their performance. These findings confirm the importance of the employment of technology in today's competitive procurement landscape. The findings suggest that e-procurement is efficent and cost effective thus enabling retailers to compete effectively in the global space and this literature review is critical as this study sought to confirm whether the retail chain stores that particiapated in this study undertook similar business practices.

It is important to note, however, that the system of e-procurement is expensive as it costs millions of dollars which even some large retailers' cannot afford (Wyman, 2017; Nagy, *et al*., 2018; Anane, *et al*., 2019). Therefore, retailers' lack of funding may make it difficult for them to adopt these expensive automated procurement systems most of which are robotics which use artificial intellegence (Nagy, *et al*., 2018). Therefore, for the retailers in the selected developing country to employ e-procurement in a seemingless way as businesses in Hungary and other advanced economies do, they need to outsource such a service collaboratively or form joint ventures or partnerships to access these important tools that ensure sustainable competitiveness (Nagy, *et al*., 2018; Scheideler, 2018; Breuer, *et al*., 2019). Based on the literature that has been reviewed in this section, this study sought to elucidate the extent to which procurement facilitated the growth of the selected retail chain stores. This is meant to confirm if the literature that has been reviewed is in tangent with the findings of the study.

This study is premised on Michael Porter's Value Chain Analysis Model (VCAM) which is a useful strategic management tool. Value chain analysis pertains to the strategic organisationsal functions that are responsible for the organisations' competitiveness and the model shows the integration and collaborative efforts of value chain activities that enable enterprises to be competitive (Jatmiko, 2016; Kumar and Rajeev, 2016; Vattikoti and Razak, 2018) as shown in Figure 1 below.

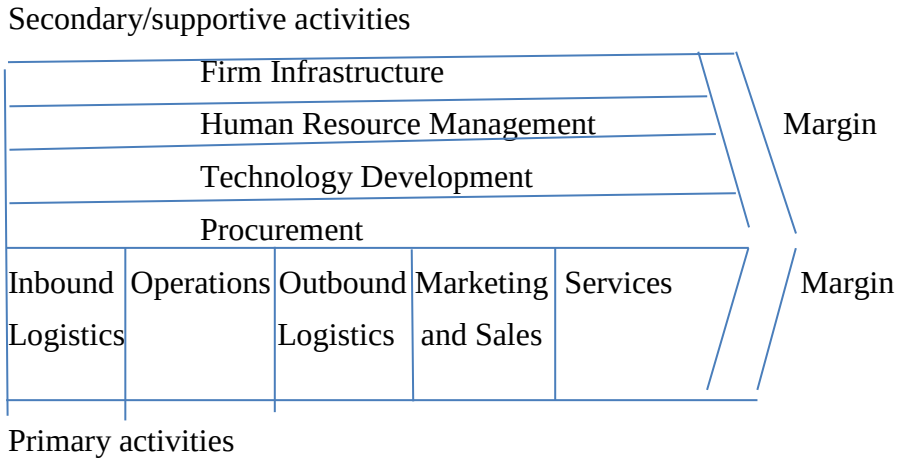

Figure 1: Porter's value chain activities (Flanagan, Lepisto & Ofstein, 2017, p8)

As shown in Figure 1 above, Michael Porter's VCAM is composed of two main categories namely primary and secondary value chain activities. Primary activities are directly involved in the transformation of inputs into outputs (Vattikoti and Razak, 2018). This implies that these activities are mainly skewed torwards manufacturing and production. The activities operate sequentially to create value in the production process of inputs. The secondary (support activities) support primary activities (Vattikoti and Razak, 2018). These activities also operate in sequence mostly within the organisation but can also be applied externally.

Vattikoti and Razak (2018) argue that the VCAM emphasises business collaborative effort and the integration of primary and secondary activities as a strategy of promoting competitive advantage of an organisation over rivals. Other authors assert that the VCAM focuses on adding value to goods and services to satisfy customers (Abdelrazig, *et al*., 2018). Jatmiko (2016) further argues that enterprises satisfy and retain customers because of competitive advantages that include quality products, speedy delivery, customisation, and cost leadership in prices. This view is supported by Kumar and Rajeev (2016) who concur that when value is added to products through the intergration of value chain activities (primary and secondary), customers will be satisfied leading to increased market share and profitability. This study focused on the secondary value chain activities only and how they influenced the growth of the selected chain stores.

Research methodology

A positivist research paradigm and a descriptive survey design were adopted in this study to unravel the impact of secondary value chain activities on the growth of selected retail chain stores in an identified developing country. Alvi (2016) avers that the survey design entails gathering data from a sample of a target population to generalise the findings to a larger population and is considered to be the most appropriate for this purpose.

The study employed the positivist research paradigm in which the quantitative research methodology was utilised to collect data. Unlike the interpretivist approach which is usually employed in qualitative research which is subjective denoting that the researcher immerses himself/herself in the phenomena that is under study, the positivist philosophy is objective in nature. It allows the phenomena that is being studied to be autonomous rendering the findings independent and credible (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017; Kamal, 2019).

The population of this study comprised 196 managers and supervisors of seven prominent fast-moving consumer goods retailers in Francistown from which a sample of 130 respondents was adopted guided by the research advisors' sample size table (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). To ensure a fair representation of the retail shops that participated in the study, the 130 respondents were selected through the stratified random sampling technique as shown in Table I below.

Table I: Population and sample frame

Retail Shop	Total population	Sample size
Shop 1 - Galo Mall	32	22
Shop 2 - Blue jacket street	38	26
Shop 3 - Lojwa Mall	18	8
Shop 4 - Tati River Mall	28	20
Shop 5 - Blue Jacket street	20	12
Shop 6 – Game Mall	20	12
Shop 7 – Game Mall	40	30
Total	**196**	**130**

Table I above shows the population and sample distribution across the study units leading to the total population of 196 and total sample size of 130 which was selected using the stratified random sampling strategy. The use of stratified random sampling to select study participants enables adequate representativeness of the entire study population (Elsayir, 2014).

The study employed a structured questionnaire with closed ended questionnaires to collect data. The drop and pick method was used to distribute and retrieve questionnaires as it is associated with a high response rate (Allerd and Ross-Davis, 2010). It is important to note that data collection for this study was undertaken at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic when the selected country was under different levels

of lockdown which affected all segments of the economy including the retail sector. Furthermore, the regulations that allowed working from home made it difficult to find some of the respondents at their place of work even though they would have agreed to participate in the study and had promised to leave the completed questionnaires at the workplace. Some did not do so thus prolonging the questionnaire pick-up process which ultimately affected the response rate which ultimately stood at 66% (86 questionnaires were recovered from the 130 that were distributed).

Data was collected in strict observance of expected research ethics. The respondents undertook to participate in the study voluntarily and they were informed that they were free to withdraw any time they chose to do so with no dire consequences. The researcher committed to the maintenance of respondents' confidentiality to avoid potential victimisation of any form.

This study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse quantitative data. The descriptive statistical method was employed to present the quantitative data using the mean, Standard Deviation (SD), correlation, and regression. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data.

To ensure reliability of the instrument that was used or internal consitency between items in a scale, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient test was applied. According to Gan *et al*., (2020), for a research instrument to be deemed reliable, the Cronbach Alpha test values should be at least 0.6. The validity of the study was established using factor loadings, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS).

Results and discussion

The Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency reliability test that was conducted confirmed the reliability of the instrument that was used to collect data in this study as shown in Table II below.

Table II: Cronbach's Alpha reliability test results

Research objective	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Role of firm infrastructure in retailers' growth	0.723
2	Role of human resource management in retailers' growth	0.676
3	Role of technology development in retailers' growth	0.894
4	Role of procurement in retailers' growth	0.888

Table II shows that the Cronbach's Alpha test values ranged between 0.676 and 0.894 thus exceeding the 0.60 threshold (Gan, *et al*., 2020) which reinforces the reliability of the research instrument hence the findings of the study. The results of the study for the specific research objectives are presented in the subsections that follow.

The role of firm infrastructure in the growth of the selected retailers

The purpose of this subsection is to address the first specific research objective that sought to ascertain the role of firm infrastructure in the growth of the retail chain stores that were covered in this study. The BTS, KMO and AVE were used to determine the factor loadings. The mean and the SD statistics are also reported to indicate how each scale item on the question was, on average, rated by the respondents. The results are highlighted in Table III.

Table III: Role of firm infrastructure in the selected retailers' growth

	KMO	Bartlett test	Mean	Standard	AVE	Factor Metrics
Statements	0.867	184.030			55.744	
The organization uses teleconferencing strategies to reduce costs			2.49	1.290		0.706
Qualified personnel ensured ERP integrates functional areas			3.02	1.301		0.854
The organisation uses licensed accounting software for quick financial analysis and buying trends			2.91	1.325		0.831
Outsourcing technical tasks has led to growth in business			2.81	0.952		0.818
Lack of funds makes it difficult to acquire the right technology which reduces growth prospects			3.65	1.404		0.589
Access to bank loans has led to the growth of the business			2.42	1.376		0.640

The results in Table III reveal that firm infrastructure contributes 55.74% on average in explaining the business growth of the selected retailers. The KMO of this construct is 0.867 which is above the 0.5 threshold and all the six factor loadings are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, the firm infrastructure questions are valid and reliable constructs for factor analysis. The findings in Table III demonstrate that the retail chain stores that were covered in this study do not use teleconferencing as a strategy to reduce costs (mean = 2.49, n = 86) and thus did not contribute to their growth. The respondents also indicated that their organisations do not use licensed accounting software for quick financial analysis (mean = 2.91), and they disagree with the view that their organisations outsource technical tasks (mean = 2.81). In addition, growth prospects have also been hampered by lack of funds to acquire the right technology (mean = 3.65),

and this finding is consistent with the inability of the retailers to make use of teleconferencing strategy and accounting software. The situation is worsened by the lack of access to bank loans (mean = 2.42). This interrelationship between the independent variables is proven by the correlation matrix that is presented in Table IV. However, to some extent, the use of ERP by qualified personnel may have played a part in the growth of these retail businesses (mean =3.02). The results reveal that there is a need by these retailers to improve their usage of firm infrastructure to enhance their chances of growth.

To determine the association between firm infrastructure and firm growth, as well as the interrelationship between the firm infrastructure variables, a correlation analysis was carried out. The results are presented in Table IV below.

Table IV: Correlation between firm infrastructure and firm growth, and interrelationships between firm infrastructure variables

		Uses teleconferencing strategies	Qualified personnel ensured ERP integrates	Uses Accounting Software	Outsourcing technical tasks	Can access bank loans	Experienced growth due to Value chain activities
Uses teleconferencing strategies to reduce costs	Pearson Correlation	1	.575**	.495**	.477**	.334**	.217*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.002	.045
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Qualified personnel ensured ERP integrates all functional areas	Pearson Correlation	.575**	1	.649**	.649**	.422**	.298**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.005
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Uses Accounting Software for quick fin analysis and inv trend	Pearson Correlation	.495**	.649**	1	.620**	.447**	.350**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.001
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Outsourcing technical tasks-sound growth-rev and profitability	Pearson Correlation	.477**	.649**	.620**	1	.455**	.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.001
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Can access bank loans, led to growth	Pearson Correlation	.334**	.422**	.447**	.455**	1	-.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.000	.000		.602
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Lack of bank loans for expanding into other countries	Pearson Correlation	.225*	.225*	.102	.097	.291**	-.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.038	.348	.375	.007	.681
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Experienced growth due to Value chain activities	Pearson Correlation	.217*	.298**	.350**	.365**	-.057	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.005	.001	.001	.602	
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86

Table IV shows that there is some weak association between firm infrastructure variables and the dependent variable (retail growth) attributable to value chain. Statistically significant variables include:

- Use of teleconferencing strategy (r =0.217, P< 0.05)
- Integration of functional areas through ERP due to availability of qualified personnel (r = 0.298, P< 0.01)
- Use of accounting software (r =0.35, P< 0.01)

The above variables depict a positive relationship with retail growth though the association is not all that strong. The advantage in seeking to redress the issue of firm infrastructure effect is that the independent variables are interrelated themselves. For instance, "Accessing bank loans" is not significantly related with retail growth but has a statistically significant relationship with all the independent variables (at P<0.01). This view affirms the opinion of Khanie (2018) who argues that most sizeable retailers have challenges accessing bank loans which affects other firm infrastructure variables like teleconferencing capabilities and availability of qualified personnel to ensure ERP integration. Therefore, it is important to note that improved access to bank loans can have a positive effect on firm infrastructure variables which, in turn, would directly impact on retailers' growth.

The lack of access to bank loans has a negative relationship with the growth prospects of the selected retailers (r = -0.057). Although the correlation coefficient is not statistically significant, this variable becomes important upon running a linear regression. The results of the linear regression analysis are presented in Table V.

Table V: Regression analysis

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.653	.554		2.981	.004	.549	2.756			
	Uses teleconferencing strategies to reduce costs	.026	.142	.023	.187	.852	-.255	.308	.217	.021	.018
	Qualified personnel ensured ERP intergrates all functional areas	.072	.171	.064	.423	.673	-.268	.413	.298	.048	.041
	Uses Accounting Software for quick fin analysis and inv trend	.292	.157	.262	1.860	.067	-.021	.605	.350	.205	.181
	Outsourcing technical tasks- sound growth-rev and profitability	.478	.219	.308	2.187	.032	.043	.913	.365	.239	.213
	Can access bank loans, led to growth	-.368	.126	-.343	-2.921	.005	-.619	-.117	-.057	-.312	-.285
	Lack of bank loans for expanding into other countries	-.022	.107	-.021	-.204	.839	-.236	.192	-.045	-.023	-.020

a. Dependent Variable: Experienced growth due to Value chain activities

In the regression model in Table V above, the inability of the selected chain stores to access bank loans is statistically significant at 0.01. One more variable that was statistically not significant on the correlation analysis but is significant at 0.05 when

considering regression analysis is 'outsourcing of technical tasks'. The regression analysis reveals that the decision by large retailers to outsource technical tasks to third parties would put their businesses on a growth mode. This view is confirmed by various authors who suggest that technology enhances capacity and efficiency which lead to the growth of retail businesses (Khuan and Rama, 2018; Francis, *et al*., 2019).

The role of human resources management in the growth of the selected retailers

This subsection presents the findings of the study on the role of human resources in the growth of the retailers that were covered in this study. The validity and reliability of the constructs were tested using the KMO, BTS and AVE. The individual scale items were rated using the mean and the SD. Table VI illustrates the effects of human resources management activities on the selected retailers' growth.

Table VI: Role of HRM in the growth of the selected retailers

	KMO	Bartlett test	Mean	SD	AVE	Factor Metrics
Statements	0.592	323.509			69.998	
Great employee customer service has led to business growth			3.67	1.315		0.666
Employees are trained on ERP to ensure competitiveness			3.09	1.351		0.696
Management offers competitive packs to motivate employees			3.33	1.278		0.551
Employees uses ecommerce for online marketing as they have the right skills			2.51	1.272		0.632
Employees continually engages on cost reduction strategies			3.05	1.207		0.689
Employee competitiveness led to growth			2.28	1.175		0.762
Insufficient funds resulted in high staff turnover, which has reduced growth			2.91	1.280		0.687
Inadequate training reduced business growth			3.19	1.232		0.784
Inadequate career development reduced business growth			3.21	1.139		0.832

The research findings in Table VI above show the nine factor loadings of the role of HRM on the selected retailers' growth. The KMO is 0.592 which is higher than the acceptable limit of 0.5. The effects of HRM activities account for about 70.0% (AVE) in

explaining the growth of the retail businesses that were covered in this study. The factor loadings range from 0.551 to 0.832. As per the factor metrics, inadequate career development can be singled out as the dominant response with the highest factor loading of 0.832.

The results in Table VI exhibit that strong customer service is the leading factor in the growth of the selected retailers (mean = 3.67, n = 86). The hierarchy is followed by competitive packs that are offered by management to motivate employees (mean = 3.333). To a lesser extent, the respondents agree with the notion that employees have contributed to growth through continually engaging in cost reduction strategies (mean = 3.05). Similarly, they also agree, though marginally, that employees are trained on ERP to ensure competitiveness and attain growth (mean = 0.309). However, inadequate career development reduced the growth prospects as already indicated above (mean = 3.21). The factor is closely linked to the inadequacy of employee training which has had almost the same negative effect on growth (mean = 0.319). These findings are in contrast to the results of a study by Hassan and Imna (2015) to establish the influence of HRM practices on the growth of the retail industry in the Maldives. The results of this study demonstrated that HRM had a significant impact on employee retention hence organisational productivity and growth and that HRM practices that were responsible for staff retention included career development, reward and recognition, and health and safety.

The respondents refuted the view that employee competitiveness has led to the growth of the selected chain stores (mean = 2.28). They also disagreed with the view that insufficient funds have resulted in high labour turnover which diminished growth (mean = 2.91). Finally, the respondents do not agree that employees aggressively use e-commerce for online marketing (mean = 0.251). These results demonstrate explicitly that the employees of the retail chain store that was covered in this study lacked competitiveness and they were not sufficiently using e-commerce to market their products online. This could have dampened their prospects for growth to the levels of multinational retail chain stores.

A two tailed Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the association between the HRM activities and the selected retailers' growth. Statistically significant variables are presented in Table VII.

Table VII: Correlation analysis between HRM activities and the selected retailers' growth

Correlations						
		Great employee customer service	Employee trained on ERP	Management offers competitive packs	Employee engaged on cost reduction	Growth due to value chain
Great employee customer service	Pearson Correlation	1	.679**	.498**	.484**	.830**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.002

	N	86	86	86	86	86
Employee trained on ERP	Pearson Correlation	.679**	1	.473**	.473**	.587**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86
Management offers competitive remuneration package	Pearson Correlation	.498**	.473**	1	.295**	.621*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.006	.041
	N	86	86	86	86	86
Employee engaged on cost reduction	Pearson Correlation	.484**	.473**	.295**	1	.640*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.006		.026
	N	86	86	86	86	86
Growth due to value chain	Pearson Correlation	.830**	.587**	.621*	.640*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.041	.026	
	N	86	86	86	86	86
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Table VII demonstrates that great employee customer service is strongly and positively correlated with the selected retailers' growth ($r = 0.830$, $P<0.01$). This implies that the two variables are moving in the same direction. Specifically, greater customer care service would create customer loyalty for the business of the retailers thus leading to growth. This finding confirms the views of Hassan and Inna (2015) and Stankeviciute and Savaneviciene (2018) who concur that HRM had a significant impact on employee retention and the growth of the retail shops of the Maldives.

Table VII shows that there is a moderate positive relationship between employee training on ERP and retailer growth ($r = 0.587$, $P<0.01$). The relationship is much stronger between the dependent variable and management offering competitive remuneration package ($r = 0.621$, $P<0.05$), and employees engaging on cost reduction ($r = 0.640$, $P< 0.05$).

Furthermore, a regression analysis was conducted to examine the role of HRM activities on the growth of the selected retailers. The results are shown in Table VIII.

Table VIII: Regression analysis: Role of HRM activities in the growth of large retailers

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial
(Constant)	1.014	.442		2.292	.024	.134	1.894		
Employees trained on ERP-ensured competitiveness	.735	.110	.672	6.709	.000	.517	.953	.587	.595
Employees uses ecommerce for online mkting due to right skills	-.304	.119	-.275	-2.719	.039	-.440	.032	.168	-.187
Ltd funds-high staff turnover-reduced business rev	.133	.103	.115	1.287	.202	-.073	.339	.076	.141

a. Dependent Variable: Experienced growth due to Value chain activities

Table VIII shows that the variable 'Training of employees on the use of ERP to integrate all operations' has a positive impact on retailer growth as the initiative ensures the competitiveness of the firms. It is statistically significant at 0.01. On the other hand, 'lack of aggressive use of ecommerce for online marketing' by these firms slows down their growth prospects. This variable is statistically significant at 0.05.

The role of technology development on the selected retailers' growth

The validity and reliability of the constructs, that is the technological development factor loadings, were tested using the AVE, BTS and the KMO. Each scale element was rated using the mean and the SD. The results are displayed in Table IX.

Table IX: Role of technology development in the growth of selected retailers in Francistown

	KMO	Bartlett's test	Mean	Standard Deviation	AVE	Factor Metrics
Statements	0.854	507.011			66.88	
My organisation has ecommerce agreements with third parties which has led to growth.			2.42	1.046		0.668
Use of ERP software has reduced costs and led to growth.			2.77	1.165		0.753
Use of coding and computerisation has led to efficiency and growth of the organisation.			2.93	1.291		0.564
Robotics/artificial intelligence use has led to innovative product development and growth of the firm.			2.70	1.117		0.716
Unskilled employees with respect to computer and digitisation usage has			3.1			

slowed growth of the firm.			4	1.200		0.847
Online selling and online payments by customers have led to growth of the organisation.			2.67	1.222		0.680
Automated warehouses subcontracted to the organisation have improved competitiveness and growth of my organisation.			2.81	1.173		0.702
Use of E-procurement has reduced costs and led to the growth of my organisation.			2.81	1.000		0.601
My organisation shares expensive technology with other large retailers, which has led to its growth.			2.74	1.248		0.553
Use of technology has reduced costs thus leading to the growth of my organisation.			2.79	1.294		0.605

Table IX above shows how the respondents rated the role that was played by technology development in the growth of the retail firms that were covered in this study. The table shows the technology development factor loadings that contribute to retailer growth. The KMO is 0.854 which confirms a high validity of the survey instrument. The technology development variable accounted for 66.88% (AVE) in explaining the growth of the retailers that were covered in this study. The factor loadings ranged from 0.553 to 0.847. The highest factor metrics lies with the 'employees who do not have enough skills to handle computerisation and digitisation' which has restricted the growth of the selected retail shops (mean = 3.14, n= 86). The respondents rejected the notion that the use of ERP has reduced costs thus leading to the growth of the selected retail shops (mean = 2.77). Likewise, the respondents disagreed that the use of robotics or artificial intelligence has led their organisations to introduce innovative products and thus spur growth (mean = 2.70).

Overall, Table IX shows that the selected retailers have not yet started to fully take advantage of technology development activities to boost growth. The respondents disagreed with all the technology items listed in the factor loadings as the growth drivers. This is in contrast with the findings by Rachiner, Ranter, Muller, Vorraber and Schirgi (2018) who posit that technology has enhanced the growth of retail business although there have been challenges of employees failing to operate new technologies. The finding also resonates with the theoretical framework that was used in this study which suggests that value chain analysis ensures competitiveness of firms and related advantages over rivals which include, amongst others, quality products, speedy delivery, and cost effectiveness brought about by the application of technology (Vattikoti, 2018).

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine the association between technology development activities and the

selected retailers' growth. The findings are presented in Table X.

Table X: Correlation analysis between technology development and the selected retailers' growth

Correlations

		Orgn has ecommerce agreements- raised rev in wider geo	ERP usage reduced costs- raised profitability	Coding & computerisation- efficiency- reduced customer queues	Online selling & online pyts by customers- raised rev	Auto warehses subcontracted to orgn- consistent inv-competitiv	Tech usage enabled e-procuremnt- reduced cost	Growth from value activity
Orgn has ecommerce agreements- raised rev in wider geo	Pearson Correlation	1	.622**	.440**	.568**	.582**	.435**	.587**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
ERP usage reduced costs- raised profitability	Pearson Correlation	.622**	1	.615**	.707**	.639**	.609**	.608**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Coding & computerisation- efficiency- reduced customer queues	Pearson Correlation	.440**	.615**	1	.478**	.473**	.555**	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Online selling & online pyts by customers- raised rev	Pearson Correlation	.568**	.707**	.478**	1	.729**	.547**	.567**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Auto warehses subcontracted to orgn- consistent inv-competitiv	Pearson Correlation	.582**	.639**	.473**	.729**	1	.532**	.532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Tech usage enabled e-procuremnt- reduced cost	Pearson Correlation	.435**	.609**	.555**	.547**	.532**	1	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Growth from value activity	Pearson Correlation	.587**	.608**	.569**	.567**	.532**	.642**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86

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

Table X shows the leading six technology development value chain activities that have a significant positive association with retailer growth. All the six activities are statistically significant at the 0.01 level in a 2-tailed test. The results show a 58.7% strength in association between retailer growth and e-commerce agreements that were intended to increase revenue. The relationship between the dependent variable has almost the same level of strength with 'coding and computerisation activity' (r=56.9%) with 'online selling and online payment activity' (r =56.7%) and with 'auto warehouses subcontracted' activity (r =53.2%). The relationship is slightly stronger between the dependent variable and 'ERP usage activity' (r =60.8%) and with 'e-

procurement aimed at reducing costs' activity (r = 64.2%).

However, when variables are correlated, that does not amount to causation. This is cross-examined using the regression analysis of the relationship between technology development activities and the selected retailers' growth. Table XI shows the regression analysis results.

Table XI: Regression analysis results: The association between technology development activities and the selected retailers' growth

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.228	.316		-.722	.472					
	Orgn has ecommerce agreements- raised rev in wider geo	.334	.123	.270	2.704	.008	.587	.291	.200	.549	1.821
	ERP usage reduced costs- raised profitability	.049	.141	.044	.345	.731	.608	.039	.026	.341	2.933
	Coding & computerisation- efficiency- reduced customer queues	.184	.078	.184	2.329	.005	.569	.206	.138	.565	1.769
	Online selling & online pyts by customers- raised rev	.117	.110	.110	.898	.372	.567	.101	.066	.364	2.751
	Auto warehses subcontracted to orgn- consistent inv-competitiv	.002	.128	.002	.015	.988	.532	.002	.001	.406	2.463
	Tech usage enabled e-procuremnt- reduced cost	.434	.129	.335	3.352	.001	.642	.353	.248	.546	1.831

a. Dependent Variable: Experienced growth due to value chain activities

The findings in Table XI above show that statistically significant technological development activities bear a positive relationship with the selected retailers' growth. The positive impact of the variables confirms that technological development activities may help to raise the growth prospects of the retailers that were covered in this study. Significant variables at the 0.01 level are 'ecommerce agreements geared towards reaching a wider geographical market', 'coding and computerisation engineered to improve efficiency', and 'e-procurement aimed at reducing costs'. A coefficient of 0.334 on the 'ecommerce agreement' activity implies that a successful unitary initiative of the ecommerce agreement would result in retailer growth of 0.334 units. All the VIF values are greater than 1 and the tolerance values are less than 1 which proves that the multicollinearity assumptions of the regression model are not violated. These findings resonate with the views of various authors who assert that technology development is crucial for the growth of retail businesses because of its promotion of cost leadership which consequently upsurges market share and profitability (Bughin et al, 2017; Abdipour & Mosiehpour, 2019; Adhi, Magnus & Sanger, 2020).

The role of procurement activities on the selected retailers' growth

This subsection presents the results of the survey on the role of procurement on the growth of selected retail businesses. To ensure reliability and validity of the constructs, the procurement factor loadings, the KMO, BTS, and AVE tests were applied. Each scale element was rated based on the mean and the SD. Table XII below demonstrates the effects of procurement, as a secondary value chain activity, on the growth of the selected retail businesses.

Table XII: Role of procurement activities on the growth of the selected retailers

	KMO	**Bartlett's test**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**AVE**	**Factor Metrics**
Statements	0.822	503.232			75.062	
Consolidated inventory procurement with other large retailers lowered costs and led to growth of my organisation.			2.79	1.139		0.784
Bulk buying enabled credit purchase of inventory and improved liquidity and growth of my firm.			2.84	1.318		0.782
Collective purchases have allowed favourable payment terms, improved liquidity, and growth.			2.79	1.159		0.863
My organisation orders online, and transportation is done by the supplier which has lowered costs.			2.19	1.068		0.840
Collaborative procurement with other large retailers has earned us bulk discounts, and led to growth			2.47	1.175		0.868
A shared distribution centre allowed our business enough inventory replenishment leading to growth.			2.37	1.085		0.804
Supplier discounts enabled my organisation to do some sales promotions leading to business growth.			2.81	1.288		0.508
ERP ensures stock replenishment on time				1.04		0.77

using intranet connected to suppliers.			2.49	9		1
ERP reduces inventory wastages through efficient inventory management			2.98	1.116		0.718
Payment of suppliers online promotes quick order processing and transportation hence business growth.			2.86	1.238		0.568

Table XII above indicates the factor loadings of the procurement activities that contribute towards the growth of the retail firms that were covered in this study. The KMO is 0.822 which highly validates the data collection instrument. The effects of the procurement activities in explaining the growth of the selected retailers account for 75.06% (AVE). The factor loading metrics range from 0.508 to 0.868. The highest factor loading metric is on the 'lack of collaborative procurement amongst the retailers' which may mean that the maximum benefit of bulk buying discounts could not be fully harnessed (factor loading metric = 0.868). This finding confirms the reviewed literature. For instance, Khuan and Raman (2018) opine that retailers are fragmented in their approach of conducting business, including procurement, which restricts their growth.

The results in Table XII also reveal that the respondents disagreed with the view that procurement activities were used to attain the growth of the selected retailers. Specifically, the respondents disagree with the idea that their organisations make payments to suppliers online to promote quick order processing and transportation (mean = 2.86, n=86). However, they refute the view that they make use of ERP to reduce inventory wastage through enhanced inventory management (mean = 2.98). The firms do not make use of shared distribution centres to reduce costs (mean = 2.37). In addition, the retailers do not make use of supplier intranets through interlinked ERP systems for on-time replenishment of inventory (mean =2.49). It is unfortunate that the retailers have not managed to acquire sufficient discounts which they could pass on as sales promotions to attract more business (mean =2.81). The 'missing initiative for collaborative purchases' has not helped the large retailers to win favourable credit payments to improve their liquidity position (mean = 2.79). Finally, the results show that the large retailers do not take advantage of bulk purchases (mean = 2.84). These results demonstrate clear evidence of deficiencies in the procurement practices of the selected retailers contrary to the views of McGee (2014) and Kabeyi (2018) who reiterate that for retailers to be competitive, their procurement cost should be low hence cost efficient. The authors further advocate for bulky electronic procurement which they believe to be convenient, quick, and cheap because it leverages on internet and all electonic payment platforms to effect a purchase transaction. This view is supported by Khuan and Raman (2018) who observe that coopetition and retailer integrated purchases are some of the best strategies that facilitate the growth of retail businesses.

Further to the factor loadings analysis above, a correlation examination was conducted to

establish the association between procurement activities and the selected retailers' growth. The results are indicated in Table XIII below.

Table XIII: Correlation analysis between procurement activities and retailers' growth

Correlations

		Consolidated inv procurement with other small busi- lowered cost	Bulk buying- permits credit purchase	Ogn order online & supplier transports @ lower cost	Collaborative procur with other small busi - big supplier discount	Shared distri center- enough replishmnt in all locatn- raise rev	Experienced growth due to Value chain activities
Consolidated inv procurement with other small busi- lowered cost	Pearson Correlation	1	.196	.245*	.179	.159	.559**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.070	.023	.099	.144	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Bulk buying- permits credit purchase	Pearson Correlation	.196	1	.339**	.429**	.503**	.501**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.070		.001	.000	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Ogn order online & supplier transports @ lower cost	Pearson Correlation	.245*	.339**	1	.792**	.691**	.653**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.001		.000	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Collaborative procur with other small busi - big supplier discount	Pearson Correlation	.179	.429**	.792**	1	.785**	.577**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.099	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Shared distri center- enough replishmnt in all locatn- raise rev	Pearson Correlation	.159	.503**	.691**	.785**	1	.624**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.144	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86
Experienced growth due to Value chain activities	Pearson Correlation	.559**	.501**	.653**	.577**	.624**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86

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

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

The findings in Table XIII above indicate a positive relationship between statistically significant procurement activities and retailers' growth. 'Consolidated inventory procurement with other retailers' shows a moderate positive associative relationship with retailer growth ($r = 0.559$, $P < 0.01$). This also applies to 'bulk buying activities' ($r = 0.501$, $P < 0.01$), and 'collaborative bulk procurement activities' ($r = 0.577$, $P < 0.01$). However, there is a stronger positive associative relationship between the dependent variable and 'online ordering activities' ($r = 0.653$, $P<0.01$), and 'the use of shared distribution centres' ($r = 0.624$, $P<0.01$).

Besides the correlation analysis described above, a regression analysis was conducted to depict a causative relationship between the dependent variable (retailer growth) and the independent variables (procurement activities). The results are depicted in Table XIV below.

Table XIV: Regression analysis results: Impact of procurement activities on retailers' growth

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64.011	5	12.802	34.745	.000[b]
	Residual	29.477	80	0.368		
	Total	93.488	85			
a. Dependent variable: Experienced growth due to value chain activities						
b. Predictors: (Constant), (i)Shared distribution centre allows enough replenishments in all locations, (ii) Consolidated inventory procurement with other large businesses- lowered cost, (iii) Bulk buying- permits credit purchase, (iv) Organisation order online and supplier transports at lower cost, (v) Collaborative procurement with other large businesses - big supplier discount						

Table XV: Analysis of Variance

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.217	.222		-.979	.331	-.659	.224					
	Consolidated inv procurement with other small busi- lowered cost	.371	.060	.403	6.158	.000	.251	.491	.559	.567	.387	.920	1.087
	Bulk buying- permits credit purchase	.155	.059	.195	2.644	.010	.038	.272	.501	.283	.166	.726	1.378
	Ogn order online & supplier transports @ lower cost	.357	.105	.363	3.411	.001	.149	.565	.653	.356	.214	.347	2.879
	Collaborative procur with other small busi - big supplier discount	-.075	.110	-.084	-.685	.495	-.293	.143	.577	-.076	-.043	.262	3.822
	Shared distri center- enough replishmnt in all locatn- raise rev	.268	.105	.277	2.559	.012	.060	.476	.624	.275	.161	.336	2.974

a. Dependent Variable: Experienced growth due to Value chain activities

Table XIV above shows that, except for the 'collaborative procurement seeking to win bulk buying discounts' construct, all the other independent variables are statistically significant at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. The regression model confirms the positive relationship that was established by the correlation analysis. More specifically, 'collaborative procurement activities', 'bulk buying activities aiming to gain favourable credit purchases', and 'online ordering activities' are all statistically significant at the 0.01 level and positively impact on the growth of the retail firms that were covered in this study. On the other hand, the 'sharing of distribution centres with other retailers' is statistically significant at the 0.05 level and positively impacts on retailers' growth. The VIF values for all the independent variables are greater than 1 and the corresponding tolerance values are less than 1 which confirms the absence of multicollinearity between the variables.

Finally, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to establish if the survey

results were significant and to compare the differences among the major secondary value chain activities. This was implemented by considering the variations between and within groups. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Table XV below.

Table XV shows that the F-statistics of the model is significant at the 0.01, which means that the ANOVA can be relied upon. The results also show that there are significant differences in the value chain activities within the secondary activities explaining the growth of the retail enterprises that were covered in this study. The post hoc test helped the researcher to understand the specific activities that differ in the context of this study.

Conclusion

The study assessed the impact of secondary value chain activities on the growth of selected retail shops in the chosen developing country. The study results were enlightening as they demonstrated sufficiently that the identified secondary value chain activities (firm infrastructure, human resource management, technology development, and procurement) were not effectively contributing to the growth of the retail shops that were covered in this study. These value chain activities were responsible for much of the variance in the growth of the selected retail shops.

The overall implication of the study is its contribution to the body of knowledge in responding to the study objectives and answering the research questions thereby contributing to both practice and future research on the impact of value chain activities on the growth of retail enterprises and related topics. The key implication for practice is that this study provides the selected enterprises and similar business ventures with the required empirical data on the impact of secondary value chain activities on the growth of retail and other related businesses. Information that was acquired from the findings as well as the recommendations put forward will contribute immensely to the benefit of large enterprises and society at large because secondary value chain activities, if properly managed, provide businesses with the competitiveness they need to succeed. Business organisations that apply the recommendations of this study will reap the benefits of enhanced productivity and growth because of a robust exploitation of secondary value chain activities.

This study also has implications for future research. The study covered seven chain stores from one city in the identified developing country and was restricted to fast moving consumer goods retailers. Future researchers may want to cover the whole country and/or other business sectors outside the retail industry such as wholesale and manufacturing using a multi-pronged methodological approach such as mixed methods as opposed to the wholly quantitative methodology that was applied in this study.

To enhance the growth of the selected retail enterprises through the effective application of Michael Porter's Value Chain Model, the following recommendations are proffered to address the shortcomings that have been exposed by the findings of this study:

- Enhancement of the use of the components of firm infrastructure such as

teleconferencing for quick diffusion of information, outsourcing technical tasks to reduce operational costs, and utilisation of licensed accounting software for quick financial analysis.

- Addressing the shortcomings of the retailers' HRM function such as inadequate career

development prospects which demotivated employees thereby retarding the growth of the selected retailers.

- Effective exploitation of technology such as computerisation and digitisation which

were found to restrict the growth of the selected retail enterprises, enhancement of the use of ERP to reduce operational costs, and the utilisation of robotics or artificial intelligence to facilitate the introduction of innovative products thus spurring the growth of the selected enterprises.

- Strengthening the procurement function in the selected enterprises by facilitating

collaborative procurement amongst the retailers to maximise the benefit of bulk buying through significant discounts, promoting online payments to facilitate quick order processing and transportation, exploitation of the ERP system to reduce inventory wastage through enhanced inventory management, making use of shared distribution centres to reduce costs, and making use of supplier intranets through interlinked ERP systems for on-time replenishment of inventory.

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