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Pathways for Improving Nigeria's Procurement System

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Donald Areguamen

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Pathways for Improving Nigeria's Procurement System

by

Donald Osebhawe Areguamen

MBA, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria, 2004

BS, University of Abuja, Nigeria, 2000

Proposed Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2017

Abstract

The manual procurement processes used by some private companies result in increased costs and contract fulfillment delays. The focus of this multiple case study was to explore the strategies procurement managers use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The population for this study was three procurement managers of private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria. Weiss's theory of change was the conceptual framework for this study. Data collection included semistructured face-to-face interviews and an exploration of company archival financial documents. Data were transcribed, coded, and then validated through member checking, resulting in the emergence of 5 themes: change implementation strategies, strategies for reducing cost and contract fulfillment delays, change implementation barriers, employee-focused factors, and strategies for responding to the changing external environmental factors. The 2 most important themes identified from the study were change implementation strategies and strategies for reducing cost and contract fulfillment delays. These strategies could help organizational leaders who desire improved procurement process change to define long-term goals and then map backward to identify preconditions to achieve the preferred change. The implications for positive social change include increased sustainability for companies and the consequent potential to increase employment among youth, improve standards of living of the workforce, and reduce social vices in Abuja, Nigeria.

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Dedication

I dedicate my doctoral study to my lovely wife, Clementina Ngozi Donald, and my children Peace, Doreen, Joy, Michael, Cindy, Divine, and grandson Osebhor. Thank you for praying fervently for me throughout the doctorate program. I am pleased to be the son of late Elder Ambrose Oaikhena and Madam Margaret E. Areguamen. Similarly, my love goes to my late brother Julius Oaikhena for giving me a new path to life, Brother Francis, and Napoleon (Suitor). I am sorry that they did not get to see me to this level of education. My prayers are with you all. I feel priceless admiration for sisters Mrs. Rose Obiaza, Kate Alenkhe, Rachael Ominuta, and Brother Edwin (aka Heavy D). My adoration goes out to all my nephews and cousins especially Ehis Baba Ubiaza and Rosemary J.J. for believing in my academic pursuit. My optimism is that this achievement, which symbolizes that success, is an outcome of discipline, commitment, assiduousness, and perseverance, will inspire future generations of my family.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Business leaders spend from 50% to 75% of annual organizational revenue on procurement costs (Sobhani, Malarvizhi, Al-Mamun, & Jayashree, 2013). A small decrease in procurement cost can have a significant impact on the profitability of businesses (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). Most business leaders now focus on procurement as a central business strategy and an excellent process for attaining a sustainable cost reduction and growth (Kauffman, & Tsai, 2014; Loppacher, Luchi, Cagliano, & Spina, 2015; Plantinga & Dorée, 2016; Xue, Xu, & Ma, 2014). Company leaders must subscribe to the globalization process by encouraging their procurement managers to develop innovative strategies for process sustainability (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). Companies' profitability might increase if procurement managers adopt the appropriate strategies to reduce costs as compared to current industrial standards (Bichler, Guler, & Mayer, 2015; Queen, 2015).

Background of the Problem

Business leaders have experienced intense global competition (Loppacher et al., 2015). World market competition resulted in managers' focusing on the continuous advancement of procurement strategies (Xue et al., 2014). The application of the procurement process can have a significant impact on companies' costs and competitive benefits (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014). The manual procurement processes used by some private companies result in increased costs and contract fulfillment delays (More & Basu, 2013). In a case study, Dewi, Anindito, and Suryadi (2015) estimated the increased cost of procurement at 20.44%, with corresponding fulfillment delays of

7.02%. Despite positive research findings, some procurement managers of private companies have been relatively slow in adopting strategies shown to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays (Dewi et al., 2015). The bottom line of business is profit; therefore, investors do business with enterprise leaders who regularly adapt to positive external influences by offering improved business processes and encouraging viable growth (Chen, 2013; Duren, Dorée, & Voordijk, 2015).

In this study, I explored the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The targeted population included three procurement managers of plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, selected because they have implemented the strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The results of this research may contain insights some procurement managers in private plastics companies can use to change business processes and enhance business strategies in ways that could foster growth and sustainability.

Problem Statement

The manual procurement processes used by some private companies result in increased costs and contract fulfillment delays (More & Basu, 2013). In a case study, Dewi et al. (2015) estimated the increased cost of procurement at 20.44%, with corresponding fulfillment delays of 7.02%. The general business problem was that despite positive research findings, some procurement managers of private plastics companies have been relatively slow in adopting strategies shown to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays (Dewi et al., 2015). The specific business problem was that some procurement managers of private plastics companies lack the strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The targeted population included three procurement managers of private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, selected because they have implemented the strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The results from the study contained additional insights of strategies that managers in private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The implication for positive social change could include the potential to increase employment among the youth, improve standards of living of the workforce, and reduce social vices in Abuja, Nigeria.

Nature of the Study

I used the qualitative method to explore the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. Qualitative researchers seek to explore a societal challenge from an individual or group viewpoint through collecting data for inductive investigation (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers draw from inductive investigations to create themes, make interpretations, and relate the interpretations to the phenomenon under investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Ivey, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). In contrast, a quantitative method involves deductive reasoning, testing objective theories by adopting apparatuses to investigate and measure variables and relationships, and generating quantitative inferential statistics to analyze using statistical procedures (Corner, 2002; Ingham-Broomfield, 2014; Simon, 2011). This study did not involve testing objective theories, which eliminated the option of adopting the quantitative method. Mixed methods research is a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods and hence takes time and is expensive (Van Dijk & Van Dick, 2009; Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Therefore, a qualitative methodology was the best research method for the study.

The multiple case study design was the best way to explore the strategies three procurement managers of private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays. A multiple case study design is ideal for exploring research participants' understanding of a phenomenon in a real-world context by amassing information through stories and personal experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; McMullen & Braithwaite, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Additionally, the multiple case study design enables the researcher to incorporate multiple methods to collect data and develop common factors among the data (Walsh, 2012). In contrast, a phenomenological design is used to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of participants concerning a particular phenomenon (Finlay, 2013; Ivey, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological design was not suitable for the intent of this study. Similarly, ethnographic researchers seek to answer questions concerning to how the individuals of a culture coexist in society (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999; Mannay & Morgan, 2015). Ethnography design was not appropriate for this study because I did not focus on the lives of a cultural group in society. Researchers use a narrative design to identify the life stories and experiences narrated chronologically by individuals (Yin, 2012). The narrative design was not a part of this study because of the lack of collection and analyzing of individuals' comprehensive narrative explanations and stories. Because the focus of the central research question was to explore the strategies three procurement managers of private plastics companies at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays, a multiple case study design was the most suitable for the proposed research.

Research Question

The overarching research question of this qualitative, multiple case study was as follows:

RQ: What strategies do some procurement managers in private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays?

Interview Questions

The interview questions formed part of the data collection protocol (see Appendix A). The interview questions were as follows:

1. What strategies do you use to reduce procurement costs and contract fulfillment delays?
2. What barriers have you encountered when implementing strategies to improve the manual procurement process?
3. What strategies have you adopted to respond to the changing technological,

legislative, and cultural workplace environment?

4. What strategies do you recommend to individuals attempting to implement employee-focused motivational strategies?
5. What am I forgetting to ask that you have found to be helpful when improving procurement methods in Nigerian private companies?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that grounded and complemented this qualitative, multiple case study was Weiss's theory of change (TOC). Weiss (1995) developed the TOC as a central conceptual framework used to define problems and explain the process of change strategies in organizations by outlining necessary linkages in activities and mapping each activity as the pathway. For example, Stame (2004) and Vachon et al. (2013) used Weiss's TOC to identify desirable change successfully and how to achieve the change in complex, multi-stakeholder environments. Weiss's TOC provided a useful perspective to explore strategies some procurement managers in private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. As demonstrated by previous research (Msila &Setlhako, 2013; Stame, 2004; Vachon et al., 2013), the potential results of using Weiss's TOC for the study were (a) outcomes in logical relationships, and (b) a description of the rationale behind considering every result as a condition for achieving the desired business strategies. Key constructs underlying the TOC are (a) the problem definition, (b) the identification of the scope of the needs, (c) the identification of factors that may affect the desired change, and (d) assumptions concerning why the chosen strategies will help to address the challenges (Weiss, 1995).

The focus of the research was an exploration of strategies some procurement managers use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. Adopting a conceptual framework to explore the problems and the strategies for solving procurement challenges were relevant to this study. As noted by Palmberg (2009), use of Weiss's TOC as the conceptual framework of a study permits a general exploration of concepts and meanings.

Operational Definitions

The following operational terms were relevant for this study:

Corrupt practices: Corrupt practices are actions or transactions won or lost based on the amount an individual or entity is willing to pay in bribes in place of the quality delivery of products and services (Kiama, 2014).

Due process: Due process is an instrument initiated by Obasanjo's administration for ensuring absolute adherence to transparency, competition, and cost precision guidelines, as well as procedures guiding the award of contracts within Nigerian organizations (Nwogwugwu & Adebayo, 2015).

Electronic procurement (e-procurement): E-procurement refers to adopting information technology to develop, appraise, and report procurement transactions within organizations (Hung, Lin, Tai, Ho, & Jou, 2014).

Electronic procurement system (e-procurement system): E-procurement system is an online procurement process (Hung et al., 2014).

Manual process: Manual process refers to any paper and conversation-oriented process (Nwogwugwu & Adebayo, 2015).

Motivational strategies: Motivational strategies are systematic plan incentives to make employees work harder to achieve management's objectives. Motivational strategies include employee input, reward, and empowerment (McEgwn & Takeuchi, 2014).

Budget: Budget is a microeconomic concept that shows the trade-off made when an entity exchanges one good for another (Asatryan, Field, & Geys, 2015).

Procurement method: Procurement method is a combination of processes that encompasses steps and communication with other segments of a company, as well as with suppliers, for buying goods and services (Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015).

Procurement professional: Procurement professional is a person who has a combination of education and work experience in procurement and who handles the purchasing activity of a business or organization (Bushman, Chodhurry, & Tupper, 2014). The primary role of procurement professionals is to purchase goods and services for the best possible combination of quality, service, and price (Takuta & Saruchera, 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

In the study, assumptions were the things believed to be true but devoid of verification (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Kirkwood & Price, 2013; Simon, 2011). Multiple case study assumptions relate to the basic class of the phenomenon under study and its environmental impacts on information sharing from specific to the generalization of study (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Kirkwood & Price, 2013; Simon, 2011). I assumed that individuals who met the criteria for participation were willing to participate in the study and that they would answer questions honestly and accurately during interviews. The second assumption was that the purposive sample for the study was representative of plastics companies' procurement managers in Abuja, Nigeria. The third assumption was that the face-to-face interviews were appropriate for data collection and analysis of the study.

Limitations

Limitations are those occurrences and matters arising in research that transcend a researcher's control (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson, 2014). A limitation of the study was the sample consisting of three plastics companies' procurement managers located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria. As I analyzed the participants' input for themes and distilled the data, the purposefully selected participants in the study were procurement managers in private companies, and therefore, generalizations from the results may only apply to procurement projects in private companies. Further, the open-ended semistructured questions in the interviews may have resulted in conclusions that impeded a generalization of the findings. Finally, I did not consider factors such as gender, religion, ethnicity, and nationality of the procurement managers.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the choice and scope of the study set by the researcher (Hyett et al., 2014). A clear description of research participants is fundamental to realizing an in-depth understanding of the focus of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Also, Marshall and Rossman (2016) noted that clearly established confines and locations of the research samples permit future researchers to compare a new population of a study with the population explored earlier. For this study, I used a purposeful sample of three procurement managers of some private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria. The geographical location of participants in the study was Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, approximately 50 km from my residence. Participants located outside Abuja were not part of this study because of my limited time and resources.

Significance of the Study

Plastics are so useful in the Nigerian economy that the need exists to explore the skills that some procurement managers in private plastics companies have used to succeed (North & Halden, 2014). The plastics industry has energy-saving potential in Nigeria (Oyedepo, 2013), which indicates its central role in the economy. Some procurement managers of private plastics companies lack strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays (Dewi et al., 2015; Oyedepo, 2013); hence, the study may be of value to business leaders.

Contribution to Business Practice

Some private plastics procurement managers lack strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays (Dewi et al., 2015; Oyedepo, 2013). Outcomes from my research may provide insights to some procurement managers in private plastics companies on how to change business processes and enhance business strategies that could foster growth and sustainability. I will share the outcomes of this study with participants and the National Board of Small and Medium Scale Industries as well as business owners to inspire business process redesign.

Implications for Social Change

Equity holders may use the results of my study to change their organizational practices. Accordingly, the present staff strength will either increase or remain the same, as some private plastics companies who are still using the manual procurement processes in Nigeria could advance their performance for sustainability and growth. The unemployment level in Nigeria is high, and increasing performances of private plastics companies might reduce or eradicate poverty (Oyedepo, 2013). The effects of unemployment in Nigeria among the youth have led to social vices (Nwogwugwu & Adebayo, 2015). The outcomes of the study could lead to suggestions that may inspire business owners to change business processes that foster growth. Furthermore, the results of this study may contribute to the effective practice of business that culminates in additional insights into strategies successful managers in private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The benefits may include economic growth, sustainability of income, improved standard of living of the workforce, and reduced social vices in Abuja, Nigeria.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The literature review was introductory to answering the overreaching research question on what strategies some procurement managers in private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. Therefore, a thorough review of the literature included extensive research to identify strategies that procurement managers use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays. In conducting a critical analysis and synthesis of the literature review, I used the following databases to search for relevant research studies: the Walden University Library and Google Scholar, ProQuest, SAGE Premier, Emerald Management, Business Source Complete, and ABI/INFORMS Complete.

Organization of the Literature Review

Amongst the methods to organize a review of the literature, Fink (2014) recommended the use of either chronological or thematic organization. In this study, I used professional and academic sources and arranged the literature review thematically. The organization of the review contained four significant topic categories: (a) critical analysis and synthesis of the selected conceptual framework of Weiss's (1995) TOC, (b) analysis of supporting and contrasting theories, (c) critical analysis and synthesizes of the literature themes, and (d) a description of the relationship between the study and previous research.

The TOC discussion included strategies for adapting to changing external factors, strategies for motivating employees, and barriers that may affect the successful implementation of strategies advanced about the research question. Next, I grounded the study with a foundation of the procurement function, including the role Nigerian private plastics companies play, and then exploring the procurement process challenges documented in Nigerian private plastics companies. Third, I considered the study purpose by exploring procurement strategies via (a) reviewing the evolution of e-procurement, (b) comparing the manual and e-procurement processes, and (c) detailing known disadvantages of the e-procurement process. Finally, I addressed known advantages of the e-procurement process, deepening that discussion with exemplars for using e-procurement to reduce costs and for using e-procurement to reduce fulfillment time.

Strategy for searching the literature. My strategy for searching for the literature began with an inquiry using the key search terms of *(a) the roles of Nigerians' private plastics companies, (b) Weiss's theory of change, (c) challenges facing Nigerian private plastics companies' current procurement process, (d) cost reduction strategies, (e) contract fulfillment delay reduction strategies, (f) strategies for adapting to changing external factors, (g) strategies for implementing employees' motivation*, and *(h) change implementation barriers*. Based on the need for recent peer-reviewed literature, the search results ranged from 2013 to 2016 and were relevant to the TOC conceptual framework and the research question. The search results consisted of reviewed literature from 252 resources; 225 (89%) of which were peer reviewed, 195 (86.67%) from within the past 5 years (2013-2016), and 30 (13.33%) of which were more than 5 years old and consisted of seminal sources (see Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of Sources

Reference type	Total	% of total references	<than 5 years	>than 5 years
Scholarly and peer-reviewed articles	225	89	195	30
Dissertations	3	1.2	3	
Seminal book	20	8.2	18	2

Conference proceedings	3	1.2	3	
Seminar and contemporary books	1	.4	1	
Literature review totals	252	100	220	32

Weiss's Theory of Change (TOC)

Weiss (1995) created the TOC to define problems and explain the process of change strategies in organizations by outlining necessary linkages in activities and mapping each activity as the pathway. As noted in Davidoff, Dixon-Woods, Leviton, and Michie's (2016) review, good theory is a framework for analyzing change. For example, researchers Msila and Setlhako (2013), Stame (2004), and Vachon et al. (2013) used Weiss's TOC to identify desirable change and how to achieve the change. A well-formulated change theory is likely to enhance the work of improvement, evaluation, and research (Davidoff et al., 2016). Among other things, Weiss's change theory serves to clarify the components of an activity and the mechanisms through which business leaders perceive the activities to fulfill expectations (Davidoff et al., 2016). Davidoff et al. (2016) recommended that researchers assess the critical expectations to adopt in their studies, including evaluative tools, analytical processes, data collection approaches, and standards.

As noted by Davidoff et al.'s (2016) review of both the role and the value of theory when considering healthcare improvements, Weiss's (1995) TOC met the recommendations for good behavior change theory. Msila and Setlhako (2013), Stame (2004), and Vachon et al. (2013) leveraged TOC as one means for emphasizing the assumptions that clarify both the processes culminating in the long-term goal and the linkages between program activities and expectations occurring at each process. Designers of process restructuring initiatives should be sure about the theories of change that guide their work (Weiss, 1995). Millar (2013) found evidence in a case study of the NHS modernization agency improvement leaders' guides in England that understanding and adopting a suitable change theory framework is imperative for managers or other change agents to increase the possibility of success. Zamora-Bonilla (2013), in an exploratory study to confirm the reasons why some theories are good, corroborated the need to follow an appropriate approach. Davidoff et al. (2015) suggested an approach that contains the sequence of expected outcomes as the result of an intervention and that also contains plans for an evaluation strategy to track whether these desired results emerge (Msila & Setlhako, 2013). Doing so would enhance designers' general measurement approach, thereby strengthening their potential to claim responsibility for projected results in their theory (Weiss, 1995). The expansive qualities of Weiss's TOC were consistent with the research question and therefore a relevant match for the study.

Msila and Sethako (2013) found the implications of using Weiss's TOC included outcomes in logical relationships and the rationale behind each result. Thus, as a conceptual framework, TOC may support conditions necessary for achieving the desired change strategies, such as reducing costs and contract fulfillment delays. Key constructs underlying the TOC are (a) definition of the problem, (b) identification of the scope of the needs, (c) identification of factors that may affect the desired change, and (d) assumptions concerning why the chosen strategies will help to address the challenges (Weiss, 1995). Given the results of other research, the TOC constructs may work when addressing the challenges in the Nigerian private plastics companies' procurement processes. The use of Weiss' TOC as the conceptual framework for the study permitted an exploration of concepts and meanings in a general way. Furthermore, as the focus of the research was to explore the strategies some procurement managers use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays, adopting a conceptual framework to explore the problems and strategies for solving them was relevant.

Strategies for adapting to external change factors. There are several factors that assist leaders in encouraging adaptation to external change. For example, organizational leaders who plan to either sustain or transcend their current competitive advantage can benefit from an organizational culture of adaptability (Senge, 2006; Nesbit & Lam, 2014). Researchers have used the TOC to help business leaders adapt to global best practices and to simplify growth (Davidoff, et al., 2016; Msila & Setlhako, 2013; Stame, 2004). Fostering change and leveraging its organizational benefits begins at the apex; fostering a culture of learning is an indispensable element (Christensen, 2014; Senge, 2006; Nesbit & Lam, 2014). In a study to investigate what motivates employees to participate in organizational innovation, Wendelken, Danzinger, Rau, and Moeslein, (2014) found evidence that indicated employees' resistance to change might exist at all levels of a company. Understanding and adopting a change theory framework can help change agents to increase the prospect of success (Packard, 2013; Simoes, & Esposito, 2014). Agents of change help counter resistance to change and inspire alignment (Tongo, 2014). Hornstein (2015) and Schultz (2014) noted that effective plan management skills are imperative when implementing transformation. Plan management skills include assessing the accomplishment of targets and the ability to achieve or exceed the agreed upon indicator measures (Packard, 2013; Yuan, Zhao, Liao, & Chi, 2013).

Attempting to enhance culture can be an attempt to increase the worth and resourcefulness of employees' efforts (Sudarno & Sukmaningrum, 2016). For example, Gabrielsson, Gabrielsson, and Dimitratos (2014) considered entrepreneurs who were moving into new international markets and found these business leaders sought to enhance the business culture as a route to realizing a more aggressive growth plan. Further, Frimpong and Wilson (2013) considered how to impact customer service in developing countries and found that after employees learned new processes, a more favorable environment could arise that improved customer service. Finally, Gray, Kang, Lin, and Tang (2015) considered culture impacts post-International Financial Reporting Standards and found that some business leaders claimed the objective to improve culture as a shield for the real motive of business growth; leaders cannot assume that culture is not central to the growth of businesses.

Of interest to the impact of organizational culture is a research study by Herstein and Jaffe (2013) that included Nigerian firms implementing new marketing strategies. Organizational leaders who employed internal checks linked a positive culture to generating some positive business results (Bassey, Solomon, & Omono, 2014; Chiaburu, Chakrabarty, Wang, & Lin, 2015). Research by Aguilera-Caracuel, Gurrero-Villegas, Vidal-Salazar, and Delgado-Marquez (2015) also found that culture could play a vital part in numerous organizations' results. Paradoxically, culture may not affect the financial results of businesses (Fernandez-Serrano & Romero, 2014). However, Pivec and Potocan (2015) considered the acquisition of employee knowledge and confirmed that improving the culture at the same time as meeting another management objective can bias success. Organizational leaders’ objectives are time-related and measurable; therefore, most business priorities involve time consciousness (Aguilera-Caracuel et al., 2015; Chiaburu et al., 2015; Fernandez-Serrano & Romero, 2014).

Strategies for motivating employees. Company leaders must subscribe to the globalization process by encouraging their managers to develop the necessary strategies for motivating employees as the success and sustainability of a process depend on high employee morale (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). Adequate employee fulfillment with strong confidence can be a major element in raising organizational performance and productivity (Agarwal & Mehta, 2014; Georgalis, Samaratunge, Kimberley, & Lu, 2015). Saner and Eyupoglu (2015) noted a positive correlation between employee steadiness and drive to job satisfaction, which invariably is positively correlating to productivity. Guaranteeing employee satisfaction is a problem for leaders during change initiatives (Agarwal & Mehta, 2014; Saner and Eyupoglu, 2015). When change managers do not accomplish proper actions and appropriately sequence them in the change implementation process, employees will not be pleased with the change efforts and the process may be futile (Bakotić, 2015; Holten, & Brenner, 2015).

Employees’ morale decreases if they are not satisfied with the change process (Bakotić, 2015; Kuster et al., 2015). Saner and Eyupoglu (2015) added that specific factors correlate to an individual’s success in handling organizational change, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. By evaluating changes and the influence on employee commitment to change while organizational change unfolds, managers will be able to apply the factors correctly. When there are uncertainties with change, there is a negative impact on employees being satisfied with their jobs. When change managers develop proper employee motivation skills, the interaction between them and employees is enhanced, resulting in job satisfaction (Penava & Šehić, 2014) and, thereby encouraging employees to embrace the change process and meet organizational objectives (Agarwal & Mehta, 2014; van der Smissen, Schalk, & Freese, 2013).

Barriers to implementing successful change. Choosing the process change does not mean the change has already taken place (Bereznoi, 2014). Change managers must be capable of articulating the need for change, both persuasively and convincingly to impacted stakeholders (Lohe & Leger, 2014; Smollan, 2015). Resistance to change may be in all areas of business organizations. Weak change motivation may mean that organizational leaders are not likely to adapt to the planned change (Benson-Rea, Brodie, & Sima, 2013). The way to make a convincing and persuasive argument is for managers to leverage TOC steps, such as (a) appraising the results of their analysis, (b) explaining the current position of the business, (c) projecting the anticipated future desired position, and then (d) justifying it (Weiss, 1995). To aid the motivation of organizational leaders, managers must inform organizational leaders about the negative consequences for a company if changes to fill the identified performance gaps fail to occur (Van Dijk, Catlin, Bridget, & Carroll, 2015).

Corporate leaders should understand what maintaining the existing system will mean to an organization. Nonadaptability to change might mean the price for the current system processes is meaningfully more complex than the price of change (Antony, 2015). Van Dijk et al., (2015) found evidence in a study that indicated that leaders must understand common forseeable causes of change resistance in individual situations and map out strategies around them. Further, Msila and Setlhako (2013) found that it was also important for leaders to explain to stakeholders' specifics for how the changes will close the gaps and in what order, to get their supports for process change. In a similar study, Antony (2015) established that setting operational objectives, holding a clear understanding of how to measure success, and setting well-defined goals aided successful change. Change managers are accountable for identifying and obtaining the organizational support of the project by providing compelling arguments and securing the essential resources (Msila & Setlhako, 2013).

A critical risk aspect in the successful implementation of the project is noteworthy. Some employees will measure the significance of the change of process (Msila & Setlhako, 2013). If stakeholders convey the appropriate number of people, money and time signify the organizational leaders' seriousness toward the desired change (Van Dijk et al., 2015). A need exists for change development plans to explain measurable aims. Also needed is a summary of the strategic success factors, part of the stages for implementation, and a framework for obtaining a commitment from the primary decision makers (Msila & Setlhako, 2013; Van Dijk et al., 2015). Designing a change might also involve creating new processes, writing job explanations, and establishing general expectations (Van Dijk et al., 2015). A change practitioner must identify which cultural norms and patterns, decision-making processes, and political environments need changing (Msila & Setlhako, 2013). The need for transition planning might also be necessary as there may be the need to evolve a business model design (Rosell, 2014).

Leaders undertake stakeholder engagement to ensure change commitment and to confirm the resource availability (Lueg & Vu, 2015). In successfully delivering planned change, By, Armenakis, and Burnes (2015) and Rosell (2014) found managers confirmed that stakeholders and team members had accepted the plan objectives and outcomes. Further, Lueg and Vu (2015) recommended that change managers also build a formidable team that is ready and motivated to initiate a complete and feasible plan that will ensure positive change information reaches the people involved. Change managers can improve the feasibility of a change project by consistently demonstrating a serious choice behind the objective (Lueg & Vu, 2015; Rosell, 2014). Researchers (Lueg & Vu, 2015; Rosell, 2014; Shah, 2014) found that leaders who placed importance on personnel aspects of change were more likely to be successful. Rosell (2014) confirmed that a formal process ensured the sustainability of stakeholder backing. Thus, change leaders keep stakeholders informed to ensure they can anticipate change, are ready to change, are ready for surprises, and are capable of sharing knowledge with other interested parties (Berens, 2013; Lueg & Vu, 2015). Having completed a review of the literature regarding Weiss's TOC, I next considered the literature foundation regarding the managerial process of procurement.

Procurement Foundation

Johnson and Robinson (2014) provided a succinct recapitulation of the evolution of procurement. Johnson and Robinson (2014) found that leaders evolved the functional activity of procurement to address changing circumstances. The examples of procurement reflected throughout early history included the Egyptians in 3,000 BC (as cited in Johnson & Robinson, 2014). In a study of procurement history, Researchers (Dza, Gapp, & Fisher, 2015; Munch, 2015) found the genus in materials control, versus definite procurement functions. For example, the Egyptians adopted transcribers to manage the supplies for their businesses (as cited in Johnson & Robinson, 2014). Transcribers had clerical functions such as recording the volume of materials needed for their business activities and the number of workers on their payrolls. Accordingly, the transcribers tracked orders through deliveries, and Munch (2015) determined transcribers were one of the initial groups recognized as part of the procurement profession. Thus, procurement involved material management and was a clerical role until the 1970s when it became a managerial function (Dza, Fisher & Gapp, 2013; Johnson & Robinson, 2014).

Procurement professionals stressed competitive bidding, with price as the determining factor for most contracts. Porter's (1980) five forces model, which includes supplier and buyer power as two key forces for competitiveness, led organizational leaders to consider advanced procurement as a strategic function. Managers subscribe into the analysis of present and potential imminent competitive forces, by identifying options to affect the forces of buyers and suppliers in their organizations (Porter, 1980). The aim is to cut the power of competitive forces (Porter, 1980) of the procurement industry. Significant growth in supplier competition occurred in the 1980s (Munch, 2015; Williams-Elegbe, 2013). The growth culminated in an emphasis on the quality and reliability of suppliers (Johnson & Robinson, 2014; Zandi, 2013). Business managers' external environment does not only affect their decisions, but also by their internal resources, proficiency, and purposes. Therefore, procurement managers must improve their knowledge of forces of suppliers and buyers to impact competitive forces within their organizations.

Procurement has transformed from an ordinary method of buying goods and services for organizations to the processes needed to acquire goods and services to accomplish user necessities (Furneaux & Barraket, 2014; Rajesh, Pugazhendhi, & Ganesh, 2014). Procurement, as a function, has progressed through a few changes to emerge as a mainstream business administrative role for gaining competitive advantage in global business (Hoppe & Schmitz, 2013). Supplier management has become a critical element in procurement. In the 1990s, the role of procurement began changing into strategic sourcing (Johnson & Robinson, 2014). Procurement professionals encouraged suppliers as partners and long-term contracts (Munch, 2015), which marked the genesis of the contemporary evolution of procurement.

In the recent times, procurement professionals have been critical to organizational achievement. Procurement professionals are the managers of supply, which ranges from identifying and evaluating material needs to working with qualified vendors and other supply-related activities (Hoppe & Schmitz, 2013). Procurement has a significant effect on an organization's profits, and hence, procurement professionals help their organizations in developing and reaching strategic and operational aims (Munch, 2015).

Advanced technologies continue to change procurement processes. Technologies known as e-procurement solutions include Source Suite, which creates a more efficient method to strategic sourcing (Papajorgji, Pinet, Guimaraes, & Papathanasiou, 2015). With the paradigm shift to strategic sourcing, the software that supports e-procurement bids and vendor management can save time (Papajorgji et al., 2015). Organizational leaders can focus on organization initiatives and supplier relationships (Papajorgji et al., 2015).

Nigerian plastics companies. The historical evolution of plastics in Nigeria is not certain as European traders may have introduced completed plastics products to Nigeria (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014). However, as early as 1984, Nigerians had tapped natural rubber latex from a rubber tree botanically known as Funtumia and unique to the tropical rain forest (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014). Consequently, Sir Henry Wickhman planted Havea seeds and thus created a way to plant rubber trees in commercial quantities (Nkwachukwu, Chima, Ikenna, & Albert, 2013). In 1903, the Nigerian government established the first rubber plantation in Sapele, a city in southern Nigeria (Nkwachukwu et al., 2013). That move led to more investments in rubber production by successive administrations (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014).

In 1960, when Nigeria had political independence, there were five plastics companies with a capacity of 100 tons (Nkwachukwu et al., 2013). The number of private and government-owned plastics companies subsequently increased to 500, with about 500 employees turning out approximately 100,000 tons of plastic in 1990 (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014). The consumers of plastics mainly adopted them for packaging and domestic affairs in Nigeria. The most popular package was carrier bags produced from tabular films generated from low-density polyethylene. Other packages derived from plastics were bottles for cosmetics, detergents, pharmaceuticals, and domestic containers, as well as general hollow objects. Plastics have virtually replaced glass as a packaging item in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and food and beverage industries (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014).

Plastics play an essential role in the Nigerian economy; hence, the need exists to explore the skills that allow some procurement managers in private plastics companies to succeed (North & Halden, 2014). The plastics industry has energy-saving potential in Nigeria (Oyedepo, 2013), which indicates its central role in the economy. Several scholars (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014; Nkwachukwu et al., 2013, North & Halden, 2014; Oyedepo, 2013) have observed a growth opportunity in the plastics sector of the Nigerian economy.

Nigerian private plastics company's procurement process challenges. The manual procurement processes used by some private companies result in increased costs and contract fulfillment delays (More & Basu, 2013). In a case study, Dewi, Anindito, and Suryadi (2015) estimated the increased cost of procurement at 20.44%, with corresponding fulfillment delays of 7.02%. Despite positive research findings, some procurement managers of private companies have been relatively slow in adopting strategies shown to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays (Dewi et al., 2015).

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the manual procurement method in private plastics companies has involved luring contractors to bid for jobs (Nwogwugwu & Adebayo, 2015). In the manual procurement method, contractors can prequalify or tender for advertised projects in hopes of becoming the bidders awarded the project (Dewi et al., 2015; Nwogwugwu & Adebayo, 2015). Information concerning the strategies successful procurement managers use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays in Nigerian private plastics companies was lacking.

Central to global daily activities is the procurement of goods, works, and services, which are the benchmark of countries' economic ratings (Ijewereme, 2015). Akaninyene (2015) found evidence in a preliminary study that indicated that the demise of some Nigerian private companies was due to its procurement procedures. There are difficulties in the manual methods of procurement in some private plastics businesses in Abuja, Nigeria (Mahmood, 2013). Such difficulties include inflexible bottlenecks in the tender or order processing, large amounts of paperwork, physical intimidation of bidders, and contractors lobbying to overturn competition (Kiama, 2014; Nwogwugwu & Adebayo, 2015). Other pitfalls are the human interface at every stage and alternative treatment of bidders throughout the entire tender procedure (Kiama, 2014; Nwogwugwu & Adebayo, 2015). The challenges in some Nigerian private plastics companies' procurement processes were that procurement managers do not have strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. Having completed a literature review of foundational elements of procurement next was a synthesis of relevant procurement strategies.

Procurement Strategies

Procurement strategies are long-term plans for guaranteeing a timely supply of goods and services at a reasonable cost (Johnson, Sawaya, & Natarajarathinam, 2013; Queen, 2015). Various scholars (Kauffman & Tsai, 2014; Loppacher et al., 2015; Musau, 2015) have defined strategic objectives as achievable objectives that must have the potential to enable organizations to actualize their predefined strategies. Strategic objectives must be adaptive to the external environment (Kauffman & Tsai, 2014; Musau, 2015). Strategic goals include a marketing plan, innovation, human resources, financial resources, physical resources, productivity, social responsibility, and profit maximization (Loppacher et al., 2015; Kauffman & Tsai, 2014). Marketing plan reflects the organizational leader's desire to maintain current, or acquire new, market share (Cohen, Collins, Hunter, Ghosh-Dastidar, & Dubowitz, 2015). Innovation encompasses the leader's development of new goods and services, as well as the skills and processes needed to drive it (Chatterjee & Ravichandran, 2013; Ren & Su, 2015). Human resources refer to manpower (De Villiers & Moodley, 2015). Financial resources are the sources of capital leader's use and the spheres of capital deployment (Irenaeus, 2014). Physical resources refer to how leaders deploy equipment and facilities; and productivity signifies that leaders have efficiently adopted any necessary resources commensurate with the projected output (Mestry & Bodalina, 2015). Social responsibility is the awareness and responsiveness of the organizational leaders to their immediate environment (Arzumanova & Ayrapetyan, 2015). Profit maximization demonstrates the leader's accomplishment of measurable fortuity and growth of a company (Queen, 2015).

Procurement managers must continuously subscribe to new strategies that are critical to business success.

Intense competition and globalization have occurred in world markets (Loppacher et al., 2015) and fostered the continuous advancement of procurement strategies (Xue et al., 2014). Procurement strategy advancements include price cutbacks, quality and delivery improvements, enhanced cycle periods, improved responsiveness to customers, and better financial conditions (Xue et al., 2014). Company leaders, who wish to stay competitive in the face of a globalization trend, develop innovative strategies for procurement management sustainability (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016).

Company leaders place a premium on acquisition as one of the key factors in their operations management. In some private companies, procurement costs require a substantial financial outlay of the companies' aggregate cost (Bichler et al., 2015). Procurement has a significant impact on Nigerian private plastics companies' cost and competitive benefit (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014). Fundamental to these enterprises is the management of procurement costs, which underscores the maintenance of a list of suppliers with varying cost arrangements to secure their supply (Shu, Wu, Ni, & Chu, 2014). Nonetheless, the ensuing intricate procurement structure culminates in various management challenges (He, Huang, & Yuan, 2014). Among such challenges is how to select suitable suppliers and allocate demand to each vendor (Shu et al., 2014).

Xue et al. (2014) advised procurement experts and scholars to develop decision-making models that will enable procurement managers in private companies to unfold strategies to sustain productivity at reduced cost and contract fulfillment delays.

Extended term agreements between companies and their vendors with sacrosanct or flexible terms in price or quantity are the standard (He et al., 2014). With such extensive term agreements, company leaders can continuously protect the supply and sustain standard procurement costs in the interim (He et al., 2014; Xue et al., 2014; Rota, Renolds, & Zenasi, 2013). Conversely, Xue et al. noted that, as reported in a global investigation by McKinsey, with the sudden paradigm shift in the business environment, the confidence level of suppliers will also be in doubt. Thus, contracts fulfillment delays became one of the main problems in procurement practices that have been of concern to experts and scholars (Shu et al., 2014). In 2000, Sony's stock price decreased by 9% because of contract fulfillment delays by suppliers of the LCD and flash memory (Xue et al., 2014). The failure of suppliers to deliver on time resulted in Sony's inability to meet demand for PlayStation (Xue et al., 2014). Similarly, in 2005, leaders at Peabody Energy, one of the leading privately owned coal companies, reported a loss of $3.4 billion in its interim statement of affairs because its suppliers could not deliver in accordance with the supply agreement (Xue et al., 2014).

Apart from the typical extended-term agreement, e-procurement methods have played a vital role in some Nigerian private plastics companies' procurement strategies (Bichler et al., 2015; He et al., 2014; Plantinga & Dorée, 2016) as a solution to those discrepancies in supply and demand, particularly with the advent of information technology (Papajorgji et al., 2015). Furthermore, Papajorgji et al. (2015) concluded that e-procurement methods had enhanced the manual procurement process concerning reduced cost and contract fulfillment delays.

Evolution of e-procurement. Various scholars have indicated the procurement process is manual based. Procurement professionals once used telephones and paper to carry out their functions, but these tools have undergone a transition (Wagner, 2014). The strategic prominence of procurement is so common that it has become a general theme (Norese, Novello, & Salassa, 2015; Wagner, 2014). Latif (2014) and Nurmandi (2015) contended that the proficiency in procurement is a significant strategic dimension that revolutionized the way organizational leaders operate. Toyasaki, Wakolbinger, and Kettinger (2013) indicated that another critical change in the sphere of procurement was the growing rate of Internet use, which led to the emergence of e-procurement. More far-reaching information and decisions regarding cost and strategy are accessible online (Hass, Bichler, & Guler, 2013; Sakulte & Manager, 2013). E-procurement emerged in the mid-1990s as a supply management apparatus (Shirzad & Bell, 2013). Wagner (2014) and Kang, Wang, Tan, and Zhao (2015) defined e-procurement as using communication technology at various levels of buying goods and services. E-procurement involves sourcing (Hass et al., 2013), bargaining with suppliers (Yang & Lai, 2013), and research and development through the Internet and other electronic media (Shirzad & Bell, 2013). The e-procurement system evolved because of its potential to provide better information to enhance effective and efficient procurement management systems.

Comparing manual and e-procurement processes. Understanding the differences between the two types of procurement systems underscores the intention to use e-procurement technology (Johnson & Robinson, 2014; Papajorgji et al., 2015). The e-procurement system is unlike the manual or traditional procurement system (Mahmood, 2013; Spiekermann & Korunovskia, 2014). The traditional or manual system is paper and conversation oriented (Hoppe & Schmitz, 2013; Papajorgji et al., 2015). Procurement officers communicate with long-established partners or suppliers and purchase goods or services at bargain prices (Chan & Chong, 2013; Johnson & Robinson, 2014). The traditional procurement method is slow, and the e-procurement system is faster (Queen, 2015). An e-procurement system is a striking contrast to the manual system and involves adapting a computer system to move the procurement process online (Papajorgji et al., 2015). Operators using the electronic process can skip some steps inherent in the manual procurement system (Mahmood, 2013; Plantinga & Dorée, 2016; Queen, 2015). The manual processing system is cost-intensive, consumes time, and encourages corruption, the electronic or e-procurement system reduces cost and contract fulfillment delays (Kauffman & Mohtadi, 2015).

E-procurement process disadvantages. Although scholars (Mahmood, 2013; Plantinga & Dorée, 2016; Queen, 2015) have noted several key advantages to adopting e-procurement systems, other scholars (Korana, Boucher, & Kerr, 2014; Shirzad & Bell, 2013) have highlighted disadvantages of integrating e-procurement systems. A problem with the e-procurement system is that e-procurement system implementation means a reduction in the overhead costs (Queen, 2015), and some workers will lose their jobs as fewer employees will be necessary to operate the system more efficiently and effectively (Kirthwood & Price, 2013; Shirzad & Bell, 2013). Korana et al. (2014) contended that organizational leaders resisted adopting e-procurement systems. Leaders of large organizations only recently began to exploit e-procurement entirely (Costa & Grilo, 2015). Korana et al. indicated that achieving the full value of e-procurement needs the acceptance of users regarding both contracts and systems. Despite the disadvantages of adopting e-procurement systems, organizational leaders continue to implement them because the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.

E-procurement Process Advantages

Integrating e-procurement technology into the procurement process is necessary (Mahmood, 2013; Plantinga & Dorée, 2016; Queen, 2015). E-procurement increases the efficiency and effectiveness of procurement (Rotchanakitumnuai, 2013b). Adopting an e-procurement tool increases the efficiency and effectiveness of procurement (Rotchanakitumnuai, 2013b). As a result, e-procurement is rapidly becoming the procurement system of choice in all sectors (Wagner, 2014). Latif (2014) indicated the leaders of many businesses now only sell using real-time online processes. The focus on online sales has led business leaders to reduce overhead costs and to have a larger client base (He et al., 2014). Another benefit is that e-procurement systems allow operators to search for goods and services from certain suppliers with negotiated amounts and options, check the stock level, and seek authorizations in line with the prescribed rules and regulations (Chang, Tsai, & Hsu, 2013). Additionally, Mahmood (2013) noted e-procurement is user-friendly with automatic setup, and its features include a procuring entity with valued data to access the available types of sourcing methods (Huang, Kauffman, Xu, & Zhao, 2013). Adopting an e-procurement system is a direct variation on discounts when an organization procures a certain number of goods in line with the rules and regulations (Piotrowicz, 2015).

Therefore, procurement professionals with adequate, relevant information embedded in e-procurement systems become strategists (Kauffman & Mohtadi, 2015; Ren & Su, 2015). As strategists, procurement professionals can concentrate on strategic functions such as contract negotiations and supplier agreement (Kauffman & Mohtadi, 2015; Stephens & Valverde, 2013). The benefits of e-procurement include reduced overhead costs, corruption, and time to fulfillment and thereby the ability to transform a procurement department into an asset to an organization (Huang et al., 2013; Plantinga & Dorée, 2016).

Using e-procurement to reduce costs. After considering the operational impact of implementing e-procurement in 193 organizations, Yu, Mishra, Gopal, Slaughter, and Mukhopadhyay (2015) found some maintenance, repair, and operating (MRO) procurement managers have leveraged e-procurement as a strategy to cut costs. Leaders of a growing number of companies are adopting e-procurement software to reap the benefits that other private organizations have already realized (Rotchanakitumnuai, 2013a). E-procurement solutions support the online acquisition of goods and services (Kim, Suresh, & Kocabasoglu-Hilmer, 2015). Further, Kim et al. (2015) confirmed that users of e-procurement systems could use it to search, source, negotiate, order, and perform post-acquisition reviews on-line. Using survey data from 193 MRO procurement managers, Per Yu et al. (2015) reported that organizational savings attributed to the e-procurement ranged between 25% and 50% annually. It may be possible for leaders at Nigerian private plastics companies to realize similar results. As noted by Yu et al., adopting e-procurement systems might bring to the fore the strategic significance of creating efficient purchasing systems that reduce costs.

In a study, Xiaolin, Pillutla, Huang, and Dong-Qing (2015) found that several Chinese organizational leaders placed a high premium on cutting costs by adopting e-procurement systems. Due to the possible savings from adopting an e-procurement system, the European Union prioritized e-procurement as a sphere for initiatives (Bellantuono, Ettorre, Kersten, & Pontrandolfo, 2014). Leaders of Nigerian private plastics companies can adopt e-procurement solutions that are available on demand at every stage of the purchasing process; Xiaolin et al. confirmed e-procurement solutions enabled agents to direct spending through purchase orders to chosen suppliers. Further, leaders can also use e-procurement to manage catalogs from numerous vendors and contract prices quickly and precisely with a unified operator experience (Bellantuono et al., 2014).

Leaders of private plastics companies in Nigeria can adopt e-procurement systems to reduce costs by incorporating some important features. Such features include purchase orders and template management for easy reordering and purchase order authorizations with audit trails (Barahona & Elizondo, 2014; Kauffman & Tsai, 2014; Xiaolin et al., 2015). Other features include advance ship notices, full order management, and manage access within the organization (Barahona & Elizondo, 2014). Cutback costs are one of the e-procurement's greatest attractions, for instance, such savings can result in improvements to organizations' bottom line, which differs from the benefits gained from increased turnover (Kauffman & Tsai, 2014). Cost savings associated with e-procurement; however, are not absolute, as poorly implemented systems can lead to a cash drain and disorder within organizations (Bellantuono et al., 2014).

The methods for organizational leaders to adopt e-procurement to reduce costs are numerous (Bellantuono et al., 2014; Chang et al., 2013; Plantinga & Dorée, 2016; Queen, 2015). The first method is to make suppliers answerable to an organization's structured templates (Queen, 2015), which would involve adopting an organization's e-procurement models, subjecting its suppliers to answering individual questions, and responding in the organization's desired format (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). Suppliers will do what organizational leaders prefer or the suppliers' bids will not proceed through the correct channel, which saves time for purchasers, results in quick processes, and leads to precise bid evaluation (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). The second method is to structure an organization's e-procurement templates to eliminate doubt on the suppliers' side (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016; Wang, Liu, & Liu, 2013). Vendors must organize the data they make available when using e-procurement systems and create prompts that ask suppliers to select certain fields before moving to the next form field (Chang et al., 2013). Purchasers, for instance, can assess their choices and choose the vendor who provides the right price and the most agreeable terms (Costa & Grilo, 2015). The third method is to use an e-procurement system to solidify the supply base of an organization should problems arise with services, procurement leaders can quickly reject through its options and come up with a vendor list for specific adjustments (Chang et al., 2013; Costa & Grilo, 2015). The fourth method will involve taking advantage of global situation planning by adopting data created by the organization's e-procurement systems to develop effective proactive scenarios (Chang et al., 2013; Costa & Grilo, 2015).

Plantinga and Dorée (2016) found evidence in a study that indicated the need for procurement leaders to develop a strategic approach to adopting appropriate tools to make efficient procurement decisions. For example, various types of e-procurement software have capabilities to support both multilingual environments and multiple currencies, which allow leaders to encourage worldwide buying (Mahmood, 2013; Shirzad & Bell, 2013). Such software interprets the information and presents it in the practical format needed, thus saving the organization's employees both time and energy (Agyrus & Monu, 2015; Korana et al., 2014).

Using e-procurement to reduce fulfillment time. Purchasing goods and services is the largest cost for organizations worldwide (Van den Bossche, Vanmechelen, & Broeckhove, 2015). Researchers (Barahona & Elizondo, 2014; Raventos & Zolezzi, 2015) have also reported on the money wasted because of inefficient procurement systems. The increase in technology adoption has led organizational leaders to leverage advantages from the point of suppliers to consumers (Lewis-Faupel, Neggers, Olken, & Panda, 2014; Raventos & Zolezzi, 2015). Inefficient manual procurement systems are so costly that organizational leaders noted a continual reduction of profit (Barahona & Elizondo, 2014). In the traditional manual-based procurement system, purchase orders move through layers of expensive labor that include managerial assistants who filled out the order, accounting officers who approve it, managers who endorse it, and clerks who dispatch it (Van den Bossche et al., 2015).

The Aberdeen Group (2001) evaluated the spending methods used in 157 organizations and concluded that few organizational leaders recognized and understood how much they spent on goods or services, or which suppliers they used. More and Basu (2013) and Sungau and Ndunguru (2015) demonstrated that procurement officers in manual-based purchasing activities wasted resources on time-intensive transactions such as data input; facilitating delivery; and proffering solutions to quality issues and errors in ordering, costing, and invoicing.

Users of procurement methods that cannot help reduce time to fulfillment are cost intensive; hence, the need exists for e-procurement solutions to reduce such costs (Barahona & Elizondo, 2014; Raventos & Zolezzi, 2015). The methods are costly to trace and time consuming, but organizational leaders can leverage e-procurement systems to reduce paperwork and increase transparency (Raventos & Zolezzi, 2015). The advent of e-procurement technologies has made it possible for organizational leaders to reduce the lead times and enhance communication within the supply chain (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016).

The supply chain is a term that implies efforts directed toward the production and delivery of a product or service from the supplier of raw materials to the consumer (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). Procurement and fulfillment are critical factors in the supply chain, and growth of the Internet has led to the need to redesign and reorganize the procurement system (Reuter, 2015; Xiaolin et al., 2015). E-procurement refers to new methods of procurement and fulfillment used to leverage technology to digitize particular spheres of these processes (Bellantuono et al., 2014). The adoption of e-procurement systems in organizations helps to reduce time to fulfillment (Mital, Pani, Ramesh, 2014). Reduction in cycle time is one of the reasons for the increasing acceptance of e-procurement systems in both private and public sectors (Barahona & Elizondo, 2014; Raventos & Zolezzi, 2015).

Adopting technology to procure goods and service is not new in the area of procurement (Eei, Husain, & Mustaffa, 2015). From the 1980s to the early 1990s, the leaders of a few organizations used electronic data interchange technology to transmit purchase information such as orders, invoices, order handling, and delivery notices (Costa & Grilo, 2015). Electronic data interchange refers to the use of a predetermined format to transfer information directly (Costa & Grilo, 2015; Li, Pillutla, Zhou, & Yao, 2015). Adopting this technology was possible by interfacing with the conventional client or server technology, in which the sender or source needed an application that could send information in a copyrighted arrangement that the reading or target application could read or decode (Wagner, 2014).

The norm was the network means of moving from the source to the target for these activities was a value-added network (Bellamy & Basole, 2013; Latif, 2014). There was also no alternative to the system, and the design of the format must have occurred before the transfer (Latif, 2014). The changes that occurred following the emergence of the Internet meant only a web browser was necessary, which cut off the traditional client or server (Wagner, 2014). Procurement managers can generate brand or product details from an online catalog and ordering can take place through e-mail (Toyasaki et al., 2013). Employees had the authorization to make legitimate real-time purchases for organizations by completing transactions from their computer systems in offices, thereby removing managerial personnel from the process (Toyasaki et al., 2013). In the late 1990s, organizational leaders adopted the web for fundamental purchases, sales, and auction capabilities (Wagner, 2014). The focus changed to order or service delivery, which led to the paradigm shift to integrated procurement sequence administration (Bollaporagada, Kuppusamy, & Rao, 2014; Toyasaki et al., 2013).

Organizational leaders customize their platforms to incorporate contracts, supply evaluation, and consolidation of suppliers' data (Hass et al., 2013). As business leaders focus on cycle-time reduction in procurement, investments in e-procurement software are increasing substantially (Johnson & Robinson, 2014). One of the reasons organizational leaders adopts e-procurement systems is to reduce fulfillment time and order-processing cost (Johnson & Robinson, 2014). Kauffman and Mohtadi (2015) noted that e-procurement systems include the maximum chance for organizational leaders to enhance processes, reduce costs, and increase productivity with the supply chain.

The focus of the study was improved efficiency in procurement systems in private plastics companies in Nigeria. Efficiency refers to lower procurement costs and fewer unauthorized purchases, decreased fulfillment time, and an improved backward integration to office systems (Mestry & Bodalina, 2015). The leaders of Dubai World, an investment company in the United Arab Emirates, launched an e-procurement marketplace called Tejari.com and owned the trademark in neighboring countries such as Oman, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Pakistan (Papajorgji et al., 2015). The initiative undertaken by the leaders of Dubai World led to the awareness of the benefits of e-procurement applications for making efficient procurement systems (Papajorgji et al., 2015). The adoption of an e-procurement system in Nigerian private plastics companies might eliminate a need to re-input data from paperwork, which is a potential source of errors, and thus reduce clerical errors (Mestry & Bodalina, 2015). Adopting an e-procurement system might also reduce the lead time for receipt and fulfillment of orders, thereby minimizing inventory costs and increasing the cash flow of private plastics companies in Nigeria (Hass et al., 2013; Papajorgji et al., 2015).

As demonstrated by Devi et al., (2015), More and Basu (2013, and Sungau and Ndunguru (2015), leaders of private businesses in other countries are embracing e-procurement systems, reducing fulfillment time, and thereby saving costs, Nigerians can as well. Leaders in Nigeria's private sector can use e-procurement systems to increase efficiency (Hass et al., 2013). Organizational leaders in a few developed countries have adopted e-procurement systems to raise the level of effectiveness in their businesses (Sobhani et al., 2014). Company leaders around the world adopt procurement strategies and implementation mechanisms to address procurement issues (Hass et al., 2013). Leaders of business organizations around the world have widely accepted e-procurement in the search for acquisition efficiencies similar to the private sector (Van den Bossche et al., 2015). Based on the literature reviewed, the potential of adopting e-procurement systems to reduce fulfillment time in the private sector is high. The leaders of a few private companies in developing countries have joined this trend (Barahona & Elizondo, 2014; Hass et al., 2013). Integrating e-procurement systems into procurement activities in Nigerian private plastics companies that have not followed the trend might help to reduce cycle time.

Transition and Summary

Business leaders have experienced the emergence of intense competition and globalization, which resulted in the continuous advancement of procurement strategies (Loppacher et al., 2015; Xue et al., 2014). From each dollar derived from the sale of a product, company leaders spend more than 50% on the procurement of goods and services (Sobhani et al., 2013). Procurement is a strategy for increasing the efficiency of procurement activities and reducing production costs (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). Although some procurement managers in private companies continue to develop strategies to lower costs and contract fulfillment delays, others are not following the trend. Procurement managers of Nigerian private plastics companies should start to use strategies that will help them reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. Plastics are useful in the Nigerian economy (North & Halden, 2014). Some procurement managers in private plastics companies in Nigeria should adopt procurement strategies that other colleagues use to reduce costs and fulfillment delays (North & Halden, 2014; Oyedepo, 2013). The benefits may result in economic growth, income sustainability, an improved standard of living for those in the workforce, and reduced social vices in Abuja, Nigeria.

As synthesized in the review of the literature, researchers (Hass et al., 2013; Loppacher et al., 2015; Mestry & Bodalina, 2015; Papajorgji et al., 2015; Xue et al., 2014;) have expanded the literature on global procurement best strategies, reductions in costs and in contract fulfillment delays. I used this research to advance the strategies successful procurement managers have used to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays in private companies. If procurement managers gain better insights of strategies to lower costs and reduce contract fulfillment delays, the benefits may include economic growth, sustainability of income, and improved standards of living for those in the local community.

In Section I, I provided the background of the problem, the problem and purpose statements, the nature of the study, the research and interview questions, the use of Weiss's (1 TOC as the conceptual framework, and definitions of essential terms in procurement discussions. The section also included assumptions, limitations, delimitations, the significance of the study, and the literature review has discussions on global supply best processes, strategies, cost reduction, contract fulfillment delays, electronic procurement processes, and manual procurement processes. I also illustrated the importance procurement processes in Nigerian private plastics companies and the need for procurement managers to adopt strategies to manage procurement processes for their businesses effectively and efficiently.

In Section 2, I reiterated the purpose of the study, included the role of the researcher, described the participants of the study, justified the research method and design, provided the rationale for the population and sampling, discussed the ethics of the research, outlined the details of the data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis, reliability and validity, and the transition and summary of the research. Section 3 includes a summary of the purpose of the study, presentation of the research findings, the application of the research findings to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for further research, reflections, and a strong concluding statement.

Section 2: The Project

The project is a qualitative, multiple case study that involved exploring the strategies some procurement managers of Nigerian private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. This section includes a description of the research design; the steps that were required to carry out the study; and a discussion of the procedure, method, plan, and system needed to administer, collect, and analyze the data. The section also includes a description of the reliability of the data collection instrument and threats to the validity of the research project.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The targeted population included three procurement managers of plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, selected because they have implemented the strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The results from the study contain additional insights of strategies that managers in private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The implication for positive social change could include the potential to increase employment among the youth, improve standards of living of the workforce, and reduce social vices in Abuja, Nigeria.

Role of the Researcher

The key role of a researcher is to establish procedural thoroughness (Corman, 2010; Gray, 2013; Shields & Rangarjan, 2013). As the researcher, I recruited participants, collected data, explored the body of knowledge, and reported the results. A purposeful selection of eligible individuals recruited in person, by telephone, and through e-mail secured participants for the study. With over 20 years of work experience in the Nigerian government, I have obtained procurement knowledge from a government perspective with a professional connection to the issues. Simon (2011) emphasized the inclusion of contextual details that connect a relevant business background and assumptions. I had no personal relationships with the study participants because they worked in the private sector. The research plan included devotion to ethical actions as directed by the Walden University Institutional Review Board and the American Psychological Association. I also adhered to all protocols established for the safety of human research (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979), as recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (National Institutes of Health, 2014).

Personal experience, knowledge, and ideals can form a bias in evaluating research data (Yin, 2014). However, the interviewer's previous knowledge can also be useful in understanding the perspective of interviewees (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Marshall and Rossman (2016) advised that researchers bracket their personal views to avoid potential bias in collecting and interpreting data. I also conducted member checks of the data to help reduce bias. Harper and Cole (2012) noted that member checking is a quality control process used to reinforce precision, credibility, and validity of the interview data. The data collection process included semistructured interviews with participants in serene locations, and that included interview protocols containing interview questions (see Appendix A). I used an informed consent form and followed the interview protocol.

Participants

The study included purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, also known as a judgmental sampling, is a method of selecting participants who possess the ability to contribute relevant information regarding a phenomenon fundamental to the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Suri, 2011; Uprichard, 2013). The purposeful sampling method involves targeting a population that meets the qualification criteria (Suri, 2011). The participants in the study were three procurement managers from some private plastics companies who implemented strategies to cut costs and contract fulfillment delays at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria.

In this study, I gained access to the participants by e-mail, telephone, and in person (see Appendix B). The contact information for private companies was from a Business Connect database in Abuja, Nigeria. E-mail addresses of the participants came from the database. I established a working relationship with the participants through telephone contact and e-mail after they agreed to participate in the research study.

I obtained a sample of suitable participants who were certified via informed consent, which were important steps for the study. Obtaining informed consent from eligible participants may culminate in fruitful research results (Bristol & Hicks, 2014; Van Wijk, 2014). Research validity occurred in tandem with the recruitment and retention of participants. Participants for the qualitative, multiple case study had experience in the private sector procurement process (Yin, 2014). Simon (2011) recommended selecting participants interested in the questions posed and who would appreciate the possible influence of the research findings.

Research Method and Design

Scholars find defining the most relevant research method and design important, as individuals differ in understanding problems. The available research methods are the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Each method includes varying design choices (Daae & Books, 2015; Jamshed, 2014; Johnson et al., 2014). In the following subsections, I justify my selection of the qualitative method and the multiple case design.

Research Method

A qualitative methodology was the best research method for exploring the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The qualitative research method originated from the social and behavioral sciences and is suitable for exploring human science research and leadership behavior to understand the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Shield & Rangarjan, 2013; Stake, 2010). Leko (2014) and Gale, Health, Cameron, Rashid, and Redwood (2013) noted that researchers adopt the qualitative method to discover unexpected circumstances or possibilities for subsequent exploration by using open-ended inquiries. Hence, the choice of a qualitative method to explore participants' strategies assisted in linking the gaps in strategies the procurement managers of private companies used to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays.

There were benefits to conducting qualitative research rather than quantitative or mixed methods research. The focus of a qualitative method, as opposed to that of a quantitative or mixed method, is forming knowledge through obtaining information and from discussions with the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Ivey, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Knowledge lies in the perceptions and understandings of individual participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Ivey, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In contrast to quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers do not measure phenomena or report quantities, amounts, intensities, or frequencies (Hunt, 2014; Ingham-Broomfield, 2014; Staller, 2010; Uma & Pansiri, 2011). Qualitative research is appropriate for understanding individuals' conceptions (Myers, 2013; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014; Potter, 2013). By adopting a qualitative approach, I had a better understanding of the research topic than by conducting a quantitative or mixed methods study. Therefore, a qualitative methodology was the best research method for this study.

Research Design

The multiple case study design was the best way to explore the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. A multiple case study design is ideal for exploring research participants' understanding of a phenomenon in a real-world context by amassing information through stories and personal experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; McMullen & Braithwaite, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Additionally, the multiple case study design enables the researcher to incorporate multiple methods of collecting data and develop common factors among the data (Walsh, 2013).

In contrast, a phenomenological design is used to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of participants about a phenomenon (Finlay, 2013; Ivey, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). A phenomenological design was not suitable for the intent of this study. Similarly, ethnographic researchers seek to answer questions concerning to how the individuals of a culture coexist in society (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999; Mannay & Morgan, 2015). Ethnography design was not appropriate for this study because I did not focus on the lives of a cultural group in society. Researchers use a narrative design to identify the life stories and experiences narrated chronologically by individuals (Yin, 2012). The narrative design was not a part of this study because of the lack of collection and analysis of individuals' comprehensive narrative explanations and stories. Because the focus of the central research question was to explore the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays, a multiple case study design was the most suitable for the proposed research.

Population and Sampling

In this study, I selected participants using a purposive criterion of three procurement managers from private companies who have implemented strategies to cut costs and contract fulfillment delays in Abuja, Nigeria. Purposive sampling is a relevant process for participant selection in qualitative studies that include interviews as a data collection method (Elsawah, Guillaume, Filatova, Rook, & Jakeman, 2015). Elo (2014) noted that purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative studies in which researchers want participants who have the most valuable information relating to the research topic. Some procurement managers had useful information relating to success factors that contributed to an efficient and effective procurement process. Purposive selection demonstrates that a population aligns with the overarching research question (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Managers may use the results of this study to help minimize procurement costs and contract fulfillment delays.

The most suitable sample size differs by methodology; therefore, studies with qualitative methods usually have smaller sample sizes than studies with quantitative methods (Nakkeeran & Zodpey, 2012). O'Reilly and Parker (2013) noted that it is not suitable for qualitative researchers to adopt quantitative ways to choose the number of participants in the sample because the aim of qualitative research is to explore various descriptions of a phenomenon rather than to count perceptions or persons. Researchers often do not agree on a typical sample size for multiple case research because researchers know that smaller samples should result in a more detailed inquiry and should reflect data saturation (Elsawah et al., 2015). An appropriate sample size for qualitative interview studies typically ranges from 15 to 30 (Cardon, Gregoire, Stevens, & Patel, 2013). In case study research, determining appropriate sample size can be challenging (Marshall et al., 2013); however, Rowley (2012) recommended a sample size of 1 to 10. A purposeful sample size of three participants, therefore, justified the qualitative method of this study.

Saturation is a means of ensuring adequate and quality data are available for the study. Data saturation occurs when a researcher can no longer glean new ideas from participant interviews or focus groups (Bekhet & Zausziewski, 2014). To achieve data saturation, I asked participants to expand on answers and asked additional questions to clarify meanings, as suggested by other researchers (Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Saturation depends on a variety of factors that are not under the researcher's control, such as the possibility of the population's similarities or differences and the competency level of the researcher to establish data saturation. In qualitative research, the appropriateness of a sample size depends on number needed for saturation (Bekhet & Zausziewski, 2014; Chronister, Marsiglio, Linville, D., & Lantrip, 2014; Tembo, Parker, & Higgins, 2013). The participants in this study included individuals who were knowledgeable about the research topic. As a qualitative researcher, I interviewed three participants, and I knew data saturation could happen when one or more subsequent interviews were completed and did not include new themes. An appropriate sample size for qualitative case study interview typically ranges from 1 to 10 (Rowley 2012).

The participants in the study were three procurement managers from private companies who have implemented strategies to cut costs and contract fulfillment delays at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria. To gain access to the participants, I contacted them by e-mail, telephone, and in person (see Appendix B). I scheduled a meeting to obtain access to potential participants and discussed the study in detail. The contact information for private companies was from a Business Connect database in Abuja, Nigeria. E-mail addresses of the potential participants came from the database. Chenail (2011) suggested that the interviewer starts with a review of the consent form to certify participant clarity.

I established a working relationship with the participants by explaining the purpose of the invitation letter (see Appendix B), consent form, their participation, and the study. I obtained consent from potential participants with the understanding that any information they provided in the study would remain confidential. As recommended by Davis (2013), the interviews took place in a quiet setting with no distractions to participants. Participants determined which time and location were appropriate to prevent interruptions (Davis, 2013). I asked each participant to meet in a mutually agreed upon location outside of the manager's work site to conduct the face-to-face interviews. Tsesis (2014) and Yin (2014) advised that researchers safeguard participant's identities by coding and labeling each participant's data with alphanumeric codes such as P1 through P20 to enable researchers to reduce the spillage of data to the public.

Ethical Research

Researchers adopt a fair process to safeguard participants and guarantee research quality (Mikessell, Bromley, & Khodyakov, 2013; Oliver & Barr, 2014). Organizational leaders who adopt ethical integrity in business are morally and functionally active (Avasthi, Ghosh, Sarkar, & Grover, 2013). I received Certificate Number 883363 for successfully completing the National Institutes of Health training course on protecting human research participants. The Walden University IRB reviewed and approved this study and sent the approval number 01-20-17-0323394 to me before I conducted the study. Researchers using a qualitative method must understand and cautiously consider the issues of ethics, integrity, and honesty (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Walden University, 2013). I began the process of obtaining consent by notifying participants of the aim of this study and the voluntary and confidential nature of the interview. Before the data collection session began, I asked participants to renew their consent to participate.

Informed consent is compulsory for participation, researchers collect signed consent forms to ensure their study meets published ethical guidelines (Festinger, Dugosh, Marlowe, & Clements, 2014; Lad & Dahl, 2014). On the consent form, I asked participants to acknowledge their deliberate intention to participate in the research. Following Owen's (2014) advice, before interviews, each participant read and signed the informed consent form. Participants replied using the words, "I agree", through email notification and in writing before being a part of this research. Furthermore, the format of the semistructured interview will include an opportunity for participants to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, even after completing the interview (Pollock, 2012). As recommended by Cane et al. (2010), participants could withdraw from the study at any point by indicating their preference to withdraw via email or telephone call. No participants withdrew from the study. Participants did not receive any incentive or financial reward for their participation in the research. All data collected from participants in the interview would remain stored in a locked fireproof safe for 5 years to protect the rights of the participants. I used the consent form to explain that any information given in the study would remain confidential. Tsesis (2014) advised that researchers preserve data to safeguard their participants by coding and labeling each participant's data with alphanumeric codes such as P1 through P20 to reduce the spillage of data to the public. I used alphanumeric codes P1, P2, and P3 to maintain participant confidentiality.

Data Collection Instrument

A qualitative study includes the collection and study of firsthand materials that reveal the repetitive and challenging parts of life (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). When identifying the researcher as the primary data collection instrument, knowing the interview method as a shared communication is important (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; McDonald, 2015; Norlyk & Hall, 2014). Researchers should aim to simplify communication in such a way that participants feel relaxed and safe sharing their lived experiences and perceptions (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012).

I was the primary instrument for data collection. The expertise, feelings, and knowledge of the researcher are central to creating quality results (Myers, 2013; Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Three procurement managers from private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria who used strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays participated in face-to-face interviews. The semistructured interviews included five open-ended questions that facilitated in-depth answers. Onwuegbuzie and Byers (2014) stressed that understanding and sharing communication could result in a successful interview. Semistructured interviews are the best way to address open-ended questions in a multiple case study, as researchers use semistructured interviews to probe participants' responses and thus collect extensive amounts of data from all participants regarding each issue as they continue to share information and clarify their comments (Kvale, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Elsawah et al. (2015) opined that additional insights might result from follow-up probing during the interviews. Using an interview protocol (see Appendix A) alongside the semistructured interview guide was necessary to justify the thoroughness and liberty required for collecting quality data. Semistructured questions will serve to expand the depth of knowledge from the participants regarding the phenomenon, and an analysis of the research data will follow (Block & Erskine, 2012). The tertiary level of data collection included a review of companies' documents relating to their procurement practices. This step facilitated member checking to improve the validity and reliability of the data gathered during the interviews.

I used the interview questions to guide the process, and I observed, captured on paper, audio recorded, and described all responses provided by participants without influencing their behaviors to ensure validity, reliability, and no bias in the study. The process for ensuring reliability and validity involves receiving feedback from participants and interpreting a descriptive analysis of the results (Block & Erskine, 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Turner, 2010). For consistency, each participant received the same questions (see Appendix A). The raw data formed part of the appendices upon study completion. Member checking could reinforce validity and lead to quality data saturation by attaining complete verification. Researchers use member checking to improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of a study (Harper & Cole, 2012; Kelty, Julian, & Ross, 2013; Yin, 2014). In addition to enabling participants to review the transcripts to verify personal accuracy, Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Harper and Cole (2012) concluded that member checking results in personal validation as participants scrutinize a researcher's interpretation of their declarations. I adopted member checking to support and validate my analysis of data collected in the course of this study.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection involved using a purposeful selection of participants and semistructured interviews. Purposeful selection is appropriate for orally administering open-ended questions in a face-to-face interview with willing and qualified participants (Myers, 2013; Ponerotto, 2014). The goal of the interview method is to glean information to understand a phenomenon (Brod, Tesler, & Christensen, 2009). I administered the interview questions to three procurement managers of Nigerian private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria who have used strategies to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays (see Appendix A). Furthermore, I conducted scheduled interviews with all participants, audio recorded the interviews, and transcribed all answers. Researchers who adopt a semistructured interview design probe discussions concerning the related problems in depth (Brod et al., 2009). Using semistructured interviews can lead to better discussions (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Researchers discover concepts and achieve insights through deep interviews more than through other research approaches (Diefenbach, 2009).

The benefit of a qualitative research interview is that researchers use the research interview process to understand the views of the interviewees to leverage insights to ascertain implications of the phenomenon under study (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Researchers write comprehensive and open-ended questions to explore the subjects of the research study (Brod et al., 2009). Petty et al. (2012) identified the three prominent classes of interview approaches: (a) unstructured, (b) semistructured, and (c) structured. Unstructured interviews encompass examining the perspectives of participants who provide sources of knowledge and skill (Petty et al., 2012). The interviewer and interviewees share thoughts and feelings through the interview (Qu & Dumay, 2011). In unstructured interviews, participants discuss significant matters without the control of the interviewer (Stevens & Palfreman, 2012).

The disadvantage of qualitative research interviews is researchers need to follow the pathway of the interviewees (Petty et al., 2012). Furthermore, Stevens and Palfreman (2012) concluded that adopting unstructured interviews is a challenging undertaking. During the semistructured interviews, I used probing follow-up questions to ensure complete answers to each prepared research question. In contrast, the unstructured interview is appropriate for researchers conducting studies in the field of psychology (Qu & Dumay, 2011; Kelty, Julian, & Ross, 2013). With structured interviews, all participants give responses to the similar questions in an equivalent way to elicit concise answers from a predetermined question (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The structured interview was not suitable for this study.

The progression of semistructured interviews involves asking open-ended questions and letting detailed specifics concerning a phenomenon emerge (Kingsley et al., 2010). The most common method of a qualitative research interview is the semistructured interview (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The semistructured interview is an exceptional foundation for obtaining robust and descriptive information (Parry, 2003).

The semistructured interview process includes asking questions to identified participants in a systematic way that produces robust and comprehensive responses (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Kingsley, Phillips, Townsend, and Henderson (2010) noted that semistructured interviews involve asking open-ended questions and capturing descriptive details regarding the phenomenon under study. Qualitative researchers use a semistructured interview to unravel new themes from the participants that a structured or unstructured interview cannot generate (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The answers to the questions may help to understand different strategies some managers in private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays.

Conducting pilot studies is important in qualitative research; however, the need may vary with the nature of the research question and target population (Yin, 2014). Researchers conduct pilot studies to monitor regular use of the interview protocol (Morin, 2013). Paradoxically, strict adherence to protocol is not as important as obtaining reliable data, even with short time allotted to ask questions (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, I did not conduct a pilot study before carrying out the interviews. After receiving IRB approval, each interview began once a participant replied, using the words “I agree”, and had also returned the consent form through email notification (See Appendix A). Participants who agreed to participate in the study made their decisions on a voluntary basis and received no gifts or compensation of any kind for their participation. On the day of each interview, I met each participant and reestablished the purpose of the study, reviewed with the participant the consent and confidentiality forms, and clarified the purpose of recording the session. I informed each participant that the interview may last up to two hours duration or until the participant fully completes his or her responses to the interview questions. Data collection involved recording and transcribing the interviews. I encouraged participants to ask questions for clarity on any ambiguous question that may result in confusion. Once each participant responded to all of the interview questions, I stopped the recorder. After the participants completed the interviews, an analysis involved synthesizing each question for received responses and grouping the answers into overall themes of each question using NVivo 11 computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software.

Member checking is a method a researcher uses to ask the participant for feedback after the collection of all data (Kelty, Julian, & Ross, 2013; Stake, 1995). I performed member checking by asking each participant to verify the accuracy of my transcriptions and interpretation of their responses to interview questions and documents collected. Using member checking in a qualitative research can help increase the consistency and reliability of the study (Chronister et al., 2014). Participant confirmation of transcripts enhances the credibility of the study (Koelsch, 2013; Ozertugrul, 2015; Reilly, 2013). After analyzing the data, participants have the chance to review my interpretations of the findings, through member checking, as the time delay between the data collection and member checking periods might result in participants forgetting interview processes (Harper & Cole, 2012; Ozertugrul, 2015).

Data Organization Technique

The data will remain in folders on my computer to ensure I do not lose or misplace them. I created and labeled the main folder and subfolders to avoid confusion and kept a research spreadsheet and updated as data collection continued. Researchers establish codes, symbols, descriptive words, or group names to label phenomena from interviews (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Broda et al. (2005) suggested that researchers should adopt either electronic or manual coding for the interview data. Researchers might save time by using software to keep track of variations in the data (Brod et al., 2009). Central to the analytical process is to read and understand the ideas of themes or information (Brod et al., 2009). Although hand coding is obsolete, the process may be more useful to understand interview data (Brod et al., 2009). To safeguard the confidentiality of the participants, I used codes such as P1, P2, through P3 to identify the participants throughout the research study. Petty et al. (2012) advised that researchers read interview material several times after the interviews are complete to develop a coding or labeling system to assign codes and themes to sentences, phrases, paragraphs, or terms.

The method of collecting, sorting, and evaluating data is iterative (Petty et al., 2012). Perusing and understanding data numerous times are essential to ensure the correctness of the research study (Brod et al., 2009). Researchers interpret raw data to gain familiarity with the interview responses to understand the experiences of the participants (Petty et al., 2012). An electronic audio recorder is helpful when recording interviews. After recording the interviews, researchers transcribe and interpret the interview data and assemble reports (Brod et al., 2009; Yin, 2014). The research data will remain securely stored in two different locations so that, in the event of the loss of data in one place, there will be a backup file in the other place. Information such as interview transcripts, raw data, and research files will remain in a secured and locked safe for 5 years from the date of the interview to protect the rights of the participants. After 5 years, I will delete all materials by shredding them electronically or mechanically. All participants can request a copy of the doctoral study upon approval by the Chief Academic Officer at Walden University.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the practice of analyzing and evaluating all pertinent information that can support better decision making (Gill, 2014; Irwin, 2013). Van Manen (1990) noted that a detailed qualitative study method encourages researchers to identify the significant meaning of participants' shared experiences. The most appropriate data analysis process for the multiple case study research is methodological triangulation (Gorissen, van Bruggen, & Jochems, 2013). A researcher arrives at a more wide-ranging picture through methodological triangulation than by adopting only one category of data collection alone (Heale & Forbes, 2013). I used methodological triangulation for this study. The logical and sequential steps for the data analysis included (a) listing data and evolving groupings for the data, (b) minimizing the data to create themes of the phenomenon, (c) arranging the emerging and recurring themes into groups, (d) authenticating the recognized themes against the interview transcripts, (e) developing textual explanations of the themes, (f) developing structural clarifications grounded on these textual descriptions, and (g) developing documented structural explanations.

The detail process of the data analysis included examining the data on different levels, from general to specific. Most qualitative researchers use recordings, notes, transcriptions, and NVivo 11 software for data analysis to ensure the validity of research study (Christie, Bemister, & Dobson, 2015; Miller, 2014). I recorded participants' interviews, took notes, and used NVivo software to code, mind-map, and identify emerging themes. NVivo 11 is support for data collection, analysis, and writing a research report (Hilal & Alabri, 2013; Kikooma, 2010). Researchers adopt computer software for storing and arranging interview data and codes in a qualitative research study (Humble, 2015; James, 2012; Rush, 2014). Using a digital recorder during the interviews enabled me repeatedly review my audio data. I transcribed interview recordings into a text format, organized and coded the raw data, reviewed the interview questions and carefully processed the transcripts through several iterations, searching for data that supported or contradicted themes in the literature. Data analysis methods consist of comparing and contrasting emerging themes from the data, the literature, and the conceptual framework (Grossoehme, 2014). The conceptual framework that grounded this study was the Weiss's TOC. I identified strategies procurement managers at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays and compared the strategies to previous literature findings.

I allocated participant codes such as P1 through P3 to all participants to preserve and safeguard their identities. Coding is useful in organizing and classifying data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2014). The published study did not include participant or company identification to protect their confidentiality. The next step involved perusing the data for themes. NVivo can assist with coding the data and ascertaining themes through regular comparisons of the data (Heale & Forbes, 2013; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Yin, 2014). I looked for data alignment between the interview, participants, and company documentation. Central themes relating to Weiss's TOC that surfaced encompassed (a) definitions of the problems mitigated, (b) the identification of needs, (c) the identification of factors that could affect the desired change, and (d) the rationale for the chosen strategies suitable to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays in the procurement processes of Nigerian private plastics companies.

Reliability and Validity

The critical issue for qualitative researchers is substantiating the quality of data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Without graphical details to support findings, qualitative researchers must demonstrate the reliability and validity of their assumptions (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Wahyuni, 2012). Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested using a single benchmark for judging qualitative research, which is different from evaluating quantitative research. Internal and external validity are two kinds of validity in the sphere of social science research (Abowitz & Toole, 2010).

Researchers regulate validity in qualitative studies using internal and external substantiation, the ability to reproduce the study, and rationality (Morse, Dimitroff, Harper, Koontz, Kumra, Mathew-Maich, & Murphey, 2011). Internal validity indicates the ability of researchers to create a causal relationship between variables in quantitative research (Abowitz & Toole, 2010). Researchers describe external validity in quantitative studies as the generalizability or transferability of study findings to a larger context (Abowitz & Toole, 2010; Ali & Yusof, 2011; Oluwatayo, 2012). In qualitative research, researchers consider credibility to be equivalent to internal validity in quantitative studies

(Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Because this study is qualitative, I used dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability to check reliability and validity, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The ensuing sections include steps used to address and accomplish thoroughness in this qualitative, multiple case study.

Dependability

Dependability indicates the replicability of similar results from all participants in repeated trials (Bernardi, Merseguer, & Petriu, 2012; White, Oelke, & Friesen, 2012). Dependability is the ability to provide a trustworthy and acceptable result that includes the traits of availability, reliability, protection, integrity, and maintainability (Rodrigues, Alves, Silveira, & Laranjeira, 2012). An example of dependability is an individual conducting research relating to procurement strategies, and procurement managers can repeat the same design, ways, and details as provided in the study and attain similar results. Dependability refers to a process of research focused on repeated trials by researchers to achieve justified and trusted findings (Silva, Leandro, Macedo, & Guedes, 2013). As the researcher, I ensured the interview questions contained no bias and were not ambiguous; the questions aligned with the objective of the study. I carried out a quality research study and the data from the field may foster a firm understanding of a qualitative research study. Explaining the features that influence results presented a clear framework to obtain similar results on replications.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the existence of convincing outcomes from the perspectives of the participants (Harvey, Cushion, & Sammon, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Trochim, 2006). If a study has credibility, it includes portrayals of individuals' lived experiences from their perspective (Henderson & Rheault, 2004). For instance, credibility in research results from a lengthy analysis of data gathered from participants and member checking (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Member checking as a strategy helped to demonstrate credibility. Member checking can occur at any point during a study (Henderson & Rheault, 2004). By conducting member checking, researchers ensure the findings of their study are accurate reflections of each participant's representations (Henderson & Rheault, 2004). Member checking will be the final step in demonstrating the verification, validation, accuracy, and credibility of the data recorded during the interviews (Harper & Cole, 2012; McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2011). Member checking involves distributing research results and statements of the study to the participants to examine and certify the representations of their views are accurate (Harper & Cole, 2012).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the level to which a researcher's findings can apply to other contexts or locations (Fan & Sun, 2014; Hitchcock & Newman, 2013). In qualitative research, transferability referred to generalizability determined by exhaustively unfolding context and assumptions key to the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability supports a researcher's ability to transfer and use research outcomes in related organizations, situations, and locations (Henderson & Rheault, 2004; Jiménez-Buedo, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Thomas, 2015). An example of transferability may involve using findings with other private companies similar in background, location, and situation.

I adopted a method of ensuring thorough explanation to achieve transferability in the study. A detailed description entails participants elucidating their experiences in sufficient detail to allow researchers to evaluate the level to which the assumptions transfer to other periods, situations, people, and locations (Houghton et al., 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Approaches for transferability include gathering excellent background information relating to the assessment of participants, connecting the participants' qualities to more demographic statistics, and certifying that participants characterize a distinct population (Henderson & Rheault, 2004). Cautious reflection of each factor listed increases reliability and validity through an effort to set the stage for readers and future researchers who might contemplate transferring the results to other spheres of study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree to which an individual can authenticate the results that others confirm or validate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Trochim, 2006). Discussions about data collection, organization, and analysis culminating in the results of a study are examples of confirmability. Confirmability guided the adoption of procurement strategies when supporting the results of this research study. Confirmability includes objectivity and involves checking that processes and outcomes of the study are without bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morse, 2015).

Member checking could reinforce validity and lead to data saturation by attaining complete verification. Member checking culminates in satisfaction (Harper & Cole, 2012; Yin, 2014). In addition to enabling participants to review the transcripts to verify realistic and personal accuracy, Marshall and Rossman (2016) concluded that member checking culminates in personal validation as participants scrutinize a researcher's interpretation of their declarations. I adopted member checking to support and validate my analysis of data collected in the course of this study.

Maintaining an audit trail of both the data collection and the data analysis leads to precise, complete records of methods and undertakings in research (White et al., 2012). An audit trail is a strategy researchers use to demonstrate confirmability in a study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). By adopting the audit trail, I was able to foster a truthful representation of events in the course of the data analysis. Ensuring confirmability enabled me to discern any inadequacies and inconsistencies to check and rechecked the data during the study. Participants will review transcribed data for precision (Kisely & Kendall, 2011). As observed in addressing dependability, an autonomous researcher must examine the data to help validate interpretations and assumptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Adopting audit trails provided a logical procedural justification that the chosen framework, themes, methodology, and interpretations fell within their contexts.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 included a restatement of the purpose of the study; the role of the researcher; and a description of the participants, research method, research design, and population and sampling. Other discussions in Section 2 included ethical research, the data collection instrument, data collection technique, data organization technique, and data analysis. Section 2 included exhaustive information regarding reliability and validity that I adopted to ensure the high quality of the study's findings. In Section 3, I provide a comprehensive summary of the study's outcomes and analyzed comparative implications to the research question. Deliberating the effects of the study leads to recommendations for action and future research concerning business practices and positive social change.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In Section 1, I provided the rationale for why this study is important to business leaders. In Section 2, I explained the study design and research implementation procedures. In Section 3, I present the research findings and discuss (a) the application of the study to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations for action and further research, and (d) personal reflections on my research experience.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. Through purposive sampling I recruited as participants three procurement managers from private businesses who have implemented strategies to cut costs and contract fulfillment delays at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria. De Matos and Leis (2013) established that a qualitative method of interviewing managers was helpful in producing strategic ideas.

The participants in this study expressed their opinions about how they believed their organizations implemented and sustained strategies to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays. Findings included five themes related to strategies for implementing and maintaining a reduction initiative for mitigating costs and contract fulfillment delays: (a) change implementation, (b) strategies to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays, (c) change implementation barriers, (d) employee-focused factors, and (e) approachability to external factors. Managerial participants indicated that their knowledge of strategies to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays was because of (a) a clear and comprehensible vision of outcomes of the desired change initiative, and (b) adoption of an active, positive managerial culture that supported change initiatives.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question adopted to guide the study was:

RQ: What strategies do procurement managers use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays?

To present the findings in a logical order, I first present each of the five major themes and a summary table that highlights the related subthemes and frequencies. Next, I consider support for the subtheme found in the body of literature considered and the conceptual framework. Finally, I highlight the evidence from the findings that support that subtheme.

Emergent Theme 1: Change Implementation Strategies

The first emergent major theme, as summarized in Table 2, was the desire to implement improved procurement processes that could result in reducing cost and contract fulfillment delays. One hundred percent of the participants mentioned the need for procurement managers to understand the change implementation strategies as major components of improving procurement processes that could result in reducing cost and contract fulfillment delays. The change implementation strategies mentioned included (a) problem definition, (b) needs assessment, (c) change assumptions, and (d) factors that may affect the expected change. The findings aligned with the study's conceptual framework, Weiss's (1995) TOC. Weiss developed the TOC framework to explain the process of organizational change strategies by outlining necessary linkages in activities and mapping each activity as the pathway. Millar (2013) found case study evidence that understanding and adopting a suitable change theory framework is imperative for change agents to increase the possibility of success. Individual participants identified the change implementation strategies they have observed based on their experiences with procurement employees and organizational leaders.

Table 2

Frequency of Change Implementation Strategies Subthemes

Subthemes	*n*	Rate of occurrence
Problem definition	16	34.78%
Needs assessment	14	28.00%
Change assumptions	8	17.39%
Factors that may affect the expected change	12	24.00%

Problem definition. Participants indicated committed procurement managers should use change implementation strategies for achieving continued transformational success. The findings also aligned with the selected conceptual framework, Weiss's (1995) TOC. As earlier stated, Weiss developed the TOC framework to explain the process of organizational change strategies by outlining necessary linkages in activities and mapping each activity as the pathway. Millar (2013) found case study evidence that understanding and adopting a suitable change theory framework is imperative for change agents to increase the possibility of success. The study findings also aligned with Bakotić's (2015) conclusion. Bakotić found that when change managers do not accomplish proper actions and appropriately sequence them in the change implementation process, employees will not be happy with the change efforts and the process is futile. Participants specifically addressed the problem definition subtheme in the course of interviews.

P1 shared, “My organizational leaders were not happy with me because of the high cost incurred in the process of raw materials acquisition.” P2 explained that before the improvement on their manual procurement process, the organizational leaders threatened to downsize the strength of the workforce because of the consistent downward movements of annual profits. P2 then shared, “The leaders felt we could not identify the company’s problems to proffer solutions.” P3 said, “As their business experienced an economic downturn; executives invited information and communication technology consultants to investigate and identify the problems with their procurement system and suggest solutions for resolving it.” Further, P3 said, “The experts discovered the problem was with the manual procurement methods.”

P1 stated, “Before 2012, we operated a manual procurement process whereby we would publicize in the two national newspapers inviting vendors to bid for supply of those items needed for the manufacturing of different forms of plastics.” P1 mentioned that there were problems with their manual procurement system because it entailed too much paperwork and that nonprofessional procurement employees handled the process. P1 also said the problems led to huge financial resources committed to the purchasing of raw materials and its turnaround time.

P2 explained,

> I stated my experiences in my company to a friend who is a procurement expert residing in London. Immediately, he affirmed the problem with our business was the use of the manual purchasing methods. Based on his honest advice, I informed the leaders of the company of my findings, and they invited him to Abuja, Nigeria for a needs assessment.

P3 claimed, “As soon as the consultant identified the challenges with their procurement was the manual method, with the expressed permission of the leaders, the ICT experts swung into action for the needs assessment to improve the procurement system.” P1 mentioned, “On identification of the inherent gaps with their purchasing methods, the organizational leaders directed a consultant to carry out feasibility studies to initiate the need for an improved procurement method.”

Needs assessment. Lohe and Leger (2014) suggested that change managers must be capable of persuasively articulating the need for change to impacted stakeholders. Hence, when individual participants discussed the need for problem identification with the existing procurement method, they further stressed the importance of needs assessment for the feasibility of desired procurement improvement. The findings aligned with the study by Weiss (1995), which postulated that the way to make a convincing and persuasive argument is for managers to leverage four TOC steps: a) appraising the results of their analysis, b) explaining the current position of the business, c) projecting the anticipated future desired position, and then d) justifying it. Antony (2015) also admonished that nonadaptability to change might mean the price for the current system processes is meaningfully more complex than the price of change.

Participants reinforced the importance of conducting a needs assessment for change. Of note, P1 said, “The consultant studied our manual procurement method and described to the leaders and I the actions that were likely to happen to enhance it. And, my leaders asked the consultant questions to know whether the plan would be successful.” P2 claimed,

> The needs assessment conducted by the invited procurement expert on our manual process was important. First, the results showed my business leaders and I the general picture of the anticipated change. Second, it resulted in us asking whether we should buy into the initiative to improve our current system, or whether it would step up our profit level and possible competitive advantage.

P3 said, “Our stance led to the consultant stating clearly the assumptions that would be associated the planned change.”

Change assumptions. As previously noted, Msila and Setlhako (2013), Stame (2004), and Vachon et al. (2013) had leveraged TOC as one means for emphasizing the assumptions that clarify both the processes culminating in the long-term goal and the linkages between program activities and expectations. Designers of process restructuring initiatives should be sure about the theories of change that guide their work (Weiss, 1995). All study participants emphasized that dialoguing with the organizational leaders on the type and cost implication of the identified change is necessary to gain their buy-in and visible support.

In regard to the advice shared by the consultant, P1shared, “Procurement managers, during a briefing of the business stakeholders on the planned change, must unambiguously state the ways to reach the expected long-term goals of improving the procurement process." Similarly, P2 shared, "In stating the change assumptions, consultants and procurement managers must spell out the life-cycle of a change, ranging from feasibility study to the postimplementation review, to the organizational leaders." On change assumptions, P3 shared,

> As the consultants and I were able to state clearly each of those stages and cost benefit analysis of expected change implementation to my business' leaders, immediately, we got their approval to carry out an absolute procurement system reengineering to enhance the business as a route to realizing a more aggressive growth plan.

Factors that may affect the expected change. Davidoff et al. (2016) suggested an approach to encapsulate the sequence of expected outcomes as the result of an intervention. Best practices for organizational change also encompass planning for an evaluation strategy to track whether the desired results emerge (Msila & Setlhako, 2013). Consequently, as individual participants discussed factors that may affect the planned change, they emphasized the absence of an easily articulated overview of the expected future state. Thus, developing a change initiative vision can entice the stakeholders to engage versus fostering a situation of planned change resistance. The rate of occurrence of the factors that may affect the expected change subtheme was 24.00%. Therefore, taking the factors into consideration might ensure the change success. Regarding those factors, P1 said,

> My company's consultant advised that when envisaging the expected factors that may have an adverse impact on change implementation, there is a need for managers to state and analyze both the success and imperfections, taking into cognizance employees' sentiments to the transitional method.

P2 shared, "Managers should develop a refined framework that may refer to the factors needed for successful change such as employees' feelings, alignment, committed leadership, clarity of direction, and target." P3 expressed that "I learned skills required to make a decision and effect communication that allow a structure for change and motivate employees to organizational shared behavioral understanding." P2 asserted that a manager must have the skills to develop robust partnership regarding expertise, reputation, and relationship to drive the planned change. Accordingly, P2 shared, "As a procurement manager of my organization, I encourage teamwork by drawing their attention to the problems and opportunities of the organization and persuade them to imbibe a sense of trust and communication." P3 said, "An actual transformation takes time, and change efforts may lose momentum if there is a lack of achievable short-term goals." To this end, P3 admonished, "Managers should create ways to obtain clear performance indicators and identify employees with outstanding performance and reward them appropriately."

Participants shared their views on how to foster the change initiatives. P1 said, "Managers can reinforce the change process by hiring, promoting, and training people who live up to the change initiative." Likewise, P2 advised, "If motivation is not internalized in the organizational culture, the planned change might be in futility because of employee- resistance."

Emergent Theme 2: Strategies to Reduce Cost and Contract Fulfillment Delays

The second emergent theme, summarized in Table 3, included strategies to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays that were missing in the manual procurement method. The literature is full of studies on strategies to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delay, and therefore witnessing the topic occur in each interview was not principally astonishing. For example, procurement strategies are long-term plans for guaranteeing a timely supply of goods and services at a reasonable cost (Johnson, Sawaya, & Natarajarathinam, 2013; Queen, 2015). Strategic procurement advancements include price cutbacks, quality and delivery improvements, enhanced cycle periods, improved responsiveness to customers, and better financial conditions (Xue et al., 2014). Participants mentioned strategies such as (a) prequalified reliable suppliers' database, (b) electronic procurement system, (c) effective inventory management system, and (d) competent procurement employees, as represented in Table 3. Each participant identified the strategies they use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays in their individual capacity as procurement managers in their respective organizations.

Table 3

Frequency of Strategies to Reduce Cost and Contract Fulfillment Delays Subthemes

Subthemes	*n*	Rate of occurrence
Prequalified reliable suppliers' database	12	34.78%

Electronic procurement	36	28.00%
Effective inventory management system	21	17.39%
Competent procurement employees	42	24.00%

Prequalified reliable suppliers' database. Participants' responses conveyed the challenges they faced in their respective organizations when they selected and created their suppliers' database. Based on the frequency of occurrence (34.78%), prequalifying reliable suppliers and setting up a database is one of the main strategies for management of purchasing costs. The findings corresponded to the work of Shu et al. (2014) in which they found that fundamental to the management of procurement costs, is the maintenance of a list of suppliers with varying cost arrangements to secure their supply. Nonetheless, the ensuing intricate procurement structure culminates in various management challenges (He, Huang, & Yuan, 2014). Among such challenges is how to select suitable suppliers and allocate demand to each vendor (Shu et al., 2014). Participants' reasons for creating a supplier database supported a study by Queen (2013). Queen found that organizational procurement managers select and create suppliers' database to make suppliers answerable to a specific structured template. Organizational leaders customize their procurement platforms to incorporate contracts, supply evaluation, and consolidation of suppliers' data (Hass et al., 2013). Participants echoed the literature regarding having a database of prequalified, reliable suppliers.

For example, P1 shared that "When I started to select our suppliers to build their database, I found it challenging as there were not many tools available then to carry out an enterprise-wide investigations and data procedure to reconcile the suppliers." P2 said, "During the time my organization shortlisted its suppliers, I never understood all the risks suppliers run, until we started maintaining registers or catalog tied to particular customer's risks to enable us to track them in the case of problems." P3 stated, "Suppliers share relative amount of risk, and therefore it was difficult for me to ensure my organization commits its suppliers to the highest risk to ensure their reliability."

P1 stated, "In ascertaining the reliability of our suppliers, I treated each vendor uniquely as I designed rules that enable me to focus investigation carefully on them successfully." In another vein, P2 shared, "In my organization, risk management does not have a particular owner. However, I established a group of suppliers and gave them decision-making rights." P3 said, "Building suppliers' database using information technology is complicated, and therefore, we bought a multiple-purpose advanced application off-the-shelf and customized it to my organizational desire."

P1 shared, "We built reliable suppliers' database to enable us exercise control over them, and it is smoothly ongoing." Similarly, P2 stated, "The primary benefit of maintaining reliable suppliers' database provides a coherent approach to all stakeholders." Furthermore, P2 shared, "In my organization, we have been using suppliers' database to provide suppliers adherence and performance control against contracts, by allowing organizations to monitor the suppliers' performances effectively." P3 said, "We built and used reliable suppliers' database to keep track of them individually and transactions in transit." P3 also stated, "We adopt the suppliers' database to improve transparency and automatic notifications for contracts in the source to minimize the time required to get the correct information at the reasonable time."

The findings affirmed Plantinga and Dorée (2016) and Wang et al.'s (2013) statements that it is imperative to structure an organization's electronic procurement template to eliminate doubt on the suppliers' side. The findings also confirmed Plantinga and Dorée's (2016) assertion that suppliers would do what organizational leaders prefer. Otherwise, the vendors' bid will not proceed through the correct channel, which saves time for purchasers, results in quick processes, and lead to accurate bid evaluation (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016).

Electronic procurement system. As noted previously, Devi et al., (2015), More and Basu (2013, and Sungau and Ndunguru (2015) demonstrated that leaders of private businesses in other countries are embracing e-procurement systems, reducing fulfillment time, and thereby saving costs. One of the reasons organizational leaders adopts e-procurement systems is to reduce fulfillment time and order-processing cost (Johnson & Robinson, 2014). Therefore, when participants discussed how they use e-procurement process to reduce the cost associated with the manual procurement system, they also focused on how they use e-procurement to minimize contract fulfillment delays. The findings aligned with the study by Yu et al. (2015), in which they used survey data from 193 MRO procurement managers and reported that organizational savings attributed to the e-procurement ranged between 25% and 50% annually. Similarly, Yu et al., noted that adopting an e-procurement system might highlight the strategic significance of creating efficient purchasing systems that reduce costs.

P1 shared, "For the past four years, we have been using the electronic commerce platform, which is a part of the marketplace Internet technologies, a website that we developed to interact with our suppliers through their respective websites." P2 asserted, "We use an intranet of Internet technologies through closed computer networks of websites in which I granted access to procurement employees and internal auditors within my organization." P2 also said, "I built into this website audit trail to track all authorized users and their activities as unauthorized employees cannot have access to this website." Likewise, P3 shared, "The kind of Internet technologies we adopt is extranets, whereby we limited computer networks of websites to a few number of procurement employees in my organization." P3 stated, "However, I gave access to my organizational leaders, but they can only view transactions and not perform any."

P1 stated, "Our suppliers customized catalogs for my organization which they stored in their respective e-commerce server websites so that we can access the records." P1 also said, "We use our e-procurement software to manage many purchasing activities automatically such as order placement, catalog management, transaction, generating payment reports and other purchase-oriented activities." P2, said, "As we use the e-procurement system, we focus a reasonable time on other activities to be more responsive to the competitive market." P3 contributed that, "Our company's suppliers, have their individual policies for purchasing, which they predefined in our system to elude incorrect purchases."

Additionally, P3 asserted, "Should any of our employees place an unauthorized order on the suppliers, the e-procurement software automatically will not process such an order." P1 said, "We store our records in the system to trail any transaction processed." However, participants' expressions also indicated that e-procurement systems have their limitations as they mostly conduct all purchases online. For example, P3 shared, "Since the integration of direct items is a remarkable job to accomplish, we integrate varying processes and activities."

Effective inventory management system. Individual participants' discussion indicated the need for organizations to develop and adopt improved technologies as strategic tools for encouraging collaboration and information sharing among trading partners. In the review of the procurement strategies literature, I did not note recommendations for a mix of an inventory control and e-procurement systems to reduce cost and contract fulfillment. However, the findings showed that the rate of occurrence of inventory management system was 17.29%. Synergizing the inventory control technology with e-procurement technology is important to achieve improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness. For example, P1 shared,

> Our mix of an inventory control and electronic procurement methods has been an essential part of our comparative advantage over our competitors in Abuja, Nigeria. I integrated inventory control system into our electronic procurement process as synergies to reduce organizational spending and to rationalize supplier relationships.

Correspondingly, P2 said,

> We centralized our procurement information and inventory control, by giving the flexibility to our authorized procurement employees to search for the products and vendors that are most appropriate to our needs at a point of replenishment of materials for the daily productions. Our acquisition strategies concentrate on

> streamlining the entire order-to-delivery method reasonably than on individual tasks. Therefore, we established a level of integration between the inventory control solution and current information systems.

Also, P3 stated,

> We centralized our procurement information and inventory control, by giving the flexibility to our authorized procurement employees to search for the products and vendors that are most appropriate to our needs at a point of replenishment of materials for the daily productions. Our acquisition strategies concentrate on streamlining the entire order-to-delivery method reasonably than on individual tasks. Therefore, we established a level of integration between the inventory control solution and current information systems. My company's decision to link the electronic procurement to the inventory control is to inspire the commitment of creating interpersonal behavior amongst the employees and suppliers. Our inventory control and electronic procurement systems are simultaneously playing a vital role of information technology to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays. For instance, we set all levels of stores control concerning to reorder, minimum, maximum, economic order quantities, etc., and has helped us in making decisions as to when to initiate orders to replenish items as various levels are easily noticeable.

Competent procurement employees. Schultz (2014) suggested that effective plan management skills are imperative when implementing transformation. Thus, when participants shared their personal concepts of strategies to reduce cost and contract turnaround time, they also emphasized the importance of developing the necessary managerial skills to harness all elements of technologies' implementation to success. Paradoxically, all participants also noted that a lack of change management skills could be responsible for the failure of a great change program.

The findings aligned with the studies by Packard (2013) and Yuan et al. (2013), whereby management skills include assessing the accomplishment of targets and the ability to achieve the agreed upon indicator measures. Innovation encompasses the leader's development of new goods and services, as well as the skills and processes needed to drive it (Chatterjee & Ravichandran, 2013; Ren & Su; 2015). Accordingly, Xue et al. (2014), advised procurement experts develop decision-making models that will enable private company purchasing managers to unfold strategies that sustain productivity at reduced cost and contract fulfillment delays. Aligned to this insight, P1 shared,

> During the implementation of our contract delivery and cost-reduction initiatives, we laid off some non-professional procurement employees who were over the years unwilling to improve their skills. When the retained employees observed losing their valued colleagues, they had to learn quickly about how to work with fewer colleagues and on the new technologies. Employees started providing support to themselves, colleagues, and managers to get things done, and thereby keeping them productive through the change to moment.

P2 said,

> The quickness of change in my organization was directly comparative to the level of trust employees have in me. Our employees depend on me as their manager for information on how the change was going to affect them individually. However, employees were unlikely to trust my business' leadership presentation about the desire for change until I consistently reflected it among my priorities.

P3 admitted that staff competence plays a fundamental impact on the implementation of their organization's procurement innovation. P3 said, "Building trust with my procurement employees is important to me as they support themselves to implement the change effectively." P3 also stated,

> Initially, as some of my employees were struggling with the change, I used my coaching skills to deal with them on individual basis and that was because I understand individual's relative responses to planned initiatives. I taught them to sustain personal resilience to reach achievable results. I also coached our employees how to create a workable plan by considering the details of how things work; thus, delivering according to the plan as a driver of self-reliance.

Emergent Theme 3: Change Implementation Barriers

The third theme to emerge was the change implementation barriers, which were the possible challenges change managers, faced in the course of implementing change. Noted below in Table 4, is a display of the frequency of reference to change implementation barriers mentioned, which were leadership support, intensive cost, and change resistance. Each participant identified the change implementation barriers that they observed based on their experiences amongst business leaders and employees.

Table 4

Frequency of Change Implementation Barriers Subthemes

Subthemes	*n*	Rate of occurrence
Leadership support	43	47.78%
Intensive cost	8	8.89%
Change resistance	39	43.33%

Leadership support. Participant responses indicated the importance of anticipating and understanding possible change implementation challenges, and preventing them from hindering the transformation success. The finding aligned with the study by Bereznoi (2014) who found that the choice of process change did not mean the change has already taken place. Further, change managers must be capable of articulating the need for change, both persuasively and convincingly to impacted stakeholders (Lohe & Leger, 2014).

All participants also discussed the need for a realistic change implementation budget, as most business leaders are unlikely to buy-in to the idea of an upward variation review in the budget. The study outcomes align with the study by Benson-Rea et al. (2013), who found that weak change motivation might mean that organizational leaders are not likely to adapt to the planned change. To aid the motivation of organizational leaders, managers must inform organizational leaders about the negative consequences for a company if changes to fill the identified performance gaps fail to occur (Van Dijk et al., 2015). Rosell (2014) found stakeholders who had bought into planned objectives and outcomes were key to assisting managers in creating successful strategies for identifying and implementing change. Participants specifically addressed the leadership support subtheme during interviews. For example, P1 explained,

> It is my view that change managers do not have the freedom or trust to create change from the bottom to the apex. Irrespective of the type of change, change managers need leadership's total commitment to actualize successful change management.

P2 shared, "during our change implementation my business' leaders played a dominant role in organizational progress. My leaders spent considerable time and resources to enable me harness and update the desired skills of procurement employees to drive the change". P3 explained,

> I think the main reason for the lack of leadership support in planned change, is the inability of the managers to solicit and act upon feedback from the organizational leaders. Also, responsible for the lack of leadership support might be the inability of managers to come up with an articulated change financial implications and communicate the same to the leaders.

P1 also shared, "If the change was vague, poorly thought-out, or even needless, and maybe, or ill-timed, and the unavailability of resources, could result in the leadership support". On another hand, P3 said, "If some leaders perceived the behavior of some managers could lead to change failure, they are most unlikely to give their support to the conceived change in the first place".

Intensive cost. Financial resources are the sources of capital leader's use and the spheres of capital deployment (Irenaeus, 2014). Hass et al. (2013), noted the initial cost of implementing innovation is expensive but diminishes and becomes justifiable in the long run. The findings aligned with the study by Antony (2015) who warned that nonadaptability to change might mean the price for the current system processes is meaningfully more complicated than the price of change. Participants' discussions on the intensive cost of implementing change suggested that some business leaders feel financially pressured as they deal with the rising demand and uncertainty relating to planned change implementation. Organizations' three-year financial documents, shared by each participant, revealed that each organization invested a large capital outlay in navigating from the manual to e-procurement processes.

P1 shared, "as you could observe in my organization's three-year financial documents that we invest continuously in training and retraining our procurement employees evolving enterprise resource planning software to advance our organization". P2 said, "our local and foreign procurement employees' development program routinely occurs biannually". P3 stated, "We maintain and update our electronic procurement system regularly to sustain its benefits, which outweigh the expenses the company incurs on it."

However, P2 noted that demonstrating managerial skills with revenue and cost administration strategies is vital to maintaining quality change implementation plans. P3 shared, "normally, we approximate funds that we require to implement change activities such as making a work analysis arrangement of the activities in the process and estimating time for full implementation requires carefulness as the high cost may discourage sponsors of change". P1 asserted,

> As you have correctly observed in our financial documents that, despite those preliminary costs of change and the current economic recession in our country, Nigeria, our annual earnings since we have been using the e-procurement system has been growing as against losses that characterized our manual method.

Change resistance. Change resistance is the exhibition of an action by individuals and groups when they perceive a new change initiative as a threat to their existence (Weiss, 1995). The findings confirmed the study by Bereznoi (2014) which alluded that though the threat might not be factual or outsized to generate resistance; however, resistance to change may be available in all areas of business organizations. From the perspective of employees, Lohe & Leger (2014) explained resistance as the behavior following a person's attitudinal opposition to an incident.

As participants discussed change resistance, they also emphasized the importance of anticipating change resistance, and preparing for it from the beginning of the shift management program to manage oppositions effectively. Benson et al. (2013), noted the employees' acts of resistance to change frequently demonstrated via adverse reactions because of their negative perceptions of the impact of implemented change on their livelihoods or comfort zone. The outcomes aligned with Bereznoi (2014), who found that the resistance to fulfilling innovation could affect an employee's motivation and aggravate an environment favorable to hostility. Hence, Bereznoi (2014) noted that working on the notion that the choice of process change has already occurred does not mean the change has already taken place. As P1 shared, “Before the introduction of a change initiative to my organization, I had comprehended the commonest reasons why people object to innovation and therefore, have enabled me to plan a strategy for tackling any form of employee’s resistance”. P2 said, “Though I was not aware of all sources of change resistance, I expected that there will be change resistance, and I planned to manage it as it unfolds”. Participants recommended that by being cognizant of behaviors that likely signpost resistance culminated in awareness of the necessity to streamline apprehensions.

P3 found innovation was difficult to avoid because new ideas promoted the company’s competitive advantage and growth supported stakeholder’s interests. P1 asserted, “Innovation happens for various reasons, but my organization’s change took place because of decreases in returns on investment”. As P2 noted, “While my organizational change opened new opportunities for us, but the initiative was initially criticized from resistant individuals in the organization until the developed a new culture to streamlined it.”

Emergent Theme 4: Employee-Focused Strategies

Employee-focused strategies is the fourth theme derived from the research findings. If organizations motivate their staffers, in turn, staffers will give in their excellent performances to their organizations. Employee-focused strategies are powerful motivational tools necessary to reinforce employees’ behaviors to foster their continuous positive flexibility to the overall objectives of the organization. Plantinga and Dorée (2016) advised company leaders to subscribe to the globalization process by encouraging their managers to develop necessary strategies for motivating employees; success and sustainability of a process depend on high employee morale. Employee-focused strategies are internal drives to satisfy employees' desires to achieve certain goals or to stimulate a performance set by an objective. Included in Table 5, is the frequency of references concerning to employee-focused strategies, which include understandability of proper motivation, and effective communication.

Table 5

Frequency of Employee-Focused Subthemes

Subthemes	*n*	Rate of occurrence
Understandability of relevant motivation	58	72.50%
Effective communication	22	27.50%

Understandability of relevant motivation. Participant responses expressed the significance of motivating employees for the effective implementation of change. Guaranteeing employee satisfaction is a problem for leaders during change initiatives (Agarwal & Mehta, 2014; Saner & Eyupoglu, 2015). The study findings aligned with the study by Penava and Šehić (2016) who found that when change managers develop proper motivation skills, the interaction between them and employees is enhanced and job satisfaction increased. Motivated employees tend to accomplish the change process and organizational objectives (Agarwal & Mehta, 2014; van der Smissen et al., 2013). Following are a sample of related comments from participants.

P1 shared, “Ability of managers to identify what motivate individual employees is imperative, as individuals are motivated by different things and in different ways”. Furthermore, P1 sentimentally said, “I passed through painstaking moments before arriving at the desired motivations for my employees”. P2 stated, “Before electronic procurement implementation in my organization, I acquired skills with responsibilities for handling, motivating, and developing employees”. Accordingly, P2 said, “I built an environment of honesty, transparency, and trust among the workforce within the organization”. P3 shared, “change agent needs basic understanding of principles of motivation, which are invaluable for building a friendly climate and confidence among employees”. Additionally, P3 stated,

I monitor my employees by wondering, and on finding any of the employees working well, I pat such staff on the back and utter praises for doing the right thing. My honesty is without appearing to watch over their shoulders. On discovering a better way to enrich employees' work, I do not shout them out instead; support them to get their way through. It is better for a manager to earn employees’ respect by exemplary actions that are not essentially to do everything better than their staff but to make it clear what levels of support employees can anticipate.

Effective communication. Participant responses underscored the importance of effect communication in organizations for success. The findings aligned with the study of Msila and Setlhako (2013) who found that for stakeholders’ to buy into the change, process leaders should communicate specifics for how the changes will close the gaps, in what order, and by whom. As participants discussed the need for effective communication, they highlighted that communication is a two-way method of disseminating information from a source to a target. The study findings aligned with the study by Plantinga and Dorée (2016) that the advent of e-procurement technologies has made it possible for organizational leaders to reduce the lead times and enhance communication within the supply chain. For example, P1 said, “Before the change in my organization, I observed there was inadequate communication of the planned change because of non-proper transmission of thoughts and message development to the employees”. P2 shared, “Developing effective channels of communication in the workplace entails an understanding of employees’ competences and building a complete team structure”. P3 stated, “During my organization’s transformation process, we focused on areas of the workforce to achieved new effective channel of communication”.

P2 enhanced individual employees and team performance to meet additional useful channel of communication. P3, in another hand, created more channels of communication by inspiring creativity through full participation in organization’s change. P1 took up the responsibility of developing an appropriate channel for communicating the planned change to employees. P2 shared, “In my organization, I regularly attain an effective communication by adopting several tactics. I initiated that approach on the discovery that methods produced specific outcomes as a team, and individual morale showed a sign of an improvement”. P3 reporting creating a friendly relationship with team members through body posture, contemplation, and using a respectful tone of voice.

Emergent Theme 5: Approachability to External Factors

The fifth theme to emerge was the strategies for responding to the external factors, which were lacking in some private companies' procurement managers. The strategies included were responding to the changing technological environment, legislative environment, and culture in a workplace environment, as displayed in Table 6. Individuals shared the specific strategies deployed for responding to changing technological, legislative, and cultural workplace environments.

Table 6

Frequency of Strategies for Responding to External Factors Subthemes

Subthemes	*n*	Rate of occurrence
Changing technological environment	37	37.76%
Changing legislative environment	19	19.39%
Changing workplace cultural environment	42	42.86%

Strategies for responding to changing technological environment. As previously noted, Plantinga and Dorée (2016) stressed that company leaders must subscribe to the globalization process by encouraging their procurement managers to develop innovative strategies for process sustainability. The study outcomes aligned with the studies by Senge (2006) and Nesbit and Lam (2014) that indicated organizational leaders who plan to either sustain or transcend their current competitive advantage could benefit from an adaptable organizational culture. To influence organizational performance, study participants noted the need for procurement managers to be adaptable to emerging technological innovations; business processes have advanced and employees are now empowered to carry out activities more efficiently.

Recently, the technological revolution and other variables have fostered a quicker speed of transformation that changed business methods into a more self-motivated environment (Tongo, 2014). Participant responses signified that managers willing to sustain their businesses must embrace new strategies for responding to the emerging technological atmosphere. As P1 shared,

> I noticed paradigm shift in the business environment where a sharp speed of transformation assumed the new standard. Those companies in our line of business that could not cope with the norm folded up. I felt as a manager; I have the potential to make a difference to the organization concerning the technological evolution. I leverage technology capabilities to research and discover global best procurement practices, and share emerging business thoughts with my employees both physically and through social networks.

Furthermore, P1 found that change is overwhelming; however, there is the need for organizations' managers to embrace innovation by accepting the uncertainty of the future. P2 stated that today, their company operates with extensive data for business communication, processes, and sustainability. P2 shared,

> I am satisfied with my procurement employees because they can now analyze massive, intricate data sets to get superior business knowledge and numerical information. We continually use those massive data to advance our suppliers'

understanding, pricing, customer retention, tracking of goods, customer segmentation, inventory management, and other variables.

P3 stated, “The need for organizations to ensure data is not idle, but fully improve and take benefit of advanced analysis”. P3 also said, “That if information is stored for too long, it may lose its usefulness; hence, managers should utilize it to reinforce the competitiveness position of organizations”.

Strategies for responding to the changing legislative environment. Strategies managers use to respond to the changing legislative external environment implies how managers react to one of the most important non-controllable environmental factors to business. As all participants discussed evolving laws in the environment in which organizations conduct their business activities, they also noted that managers do not have control over legislative changes in the general economic conditions. Participant responses indicated that mangers have some control as to how the company responds to changes in its surroundings. In the review of the procurement strategies literature, I did not notice earlier references to strategies managers use to respond to the changing legislative external environment. P1 stated that at the start of their business, they had challenges meeting early to the evolving legislative business conditions because they could not immediately identify any of such changes. “Now, we can read any modification of the legislative external environmental changes in the media and develop strategic plans for responding to them.”

P2 said,

> Government do avail our organization with changes in its policies and sometimes, give us opportunities to deliberate or without notice. The changing monetary policies of the apex bank of Nigeria have regularly affected those commercial banks from we which, my organization seek financial supports. Government could stop the commercial banks from rendering financial assistance to organizations when there are changes in its monetary policies.

P2 also stated, “In such area, we adopt another strategy for responding positively, and raise funds from other sources.” P2 advised that managers must adhere to the government’s changing policies and create strategic plans for dealing with such anticipated situations to sustain the procurement of raw materials and other application of funds. I also noted the evidence in three-year financial statements of the participants’ respective organizations.

P3 expressed taxation as one of the areas frequently affected by changes in law by legislative means. P3 asserted, “Occasionally, tax changes happen abruptly at short notices, but sometimes, with a reasonable period for organizations to prepare for positive responses”. P2 said other legislative changes usually affecting their business include active adherence to industrial relations, workplace health and safety, and consumer protection and environmental laws. P2 stated, “We maintain long-term provisions for those various subheads to avoid financial embarrassment to the organizations. We respond to uncontrollable changing legislative external factors by making many guesses”. P3 shared, We developed a far-reaching knowledge of all legislations that can influence their activities to reduce the anticipated risk of non-compliance that might result in litigation. When government restricts some permissible business activities within our organizations, I might apply lobbying. We scan our business' environment continuously to identifying opportunities, threats, and effective strategies for responding to them.

Strategies for responding to the changing cultural workplace environment. Workplace culture includes the key tenets, beliefs, and principles guiding an organization's management process (Senge, 2006). The findings aligned with Nesbit and Lam's (2014) research. Managers with the enabling strategies for responding to the changing cultural workplace environment might lead to generating sustainable exceptional bottom-lines, which endears, motivates, and retains employees (Nesbit & Lam, 2014). Participant responses articulated the importance of workplace culture for instituting the rules of engagement and shared values of business. Participants particularly addressed the strategies for responding to the changing cultural workplace environment subtheme during interviews. For example, P1 explained that in their organization, a cultural shift had been one of the most difficult managerial tasks. Further, workplace culture is an intertwining role consisting of processes, values, information dissemination practices, attitudes, and expectations speculation. P2 concluded that workplace cultural variables are dependent as they jointly support each other as a proactive measure against any attempt to separate them. P2 mentioned, "Changing a facet of the system such as teams' creation, and knowledge management, will only lead to temporary process improvement." P2 also said that, when the interconnecting variables of the organizational culture eventually emerged, would unavoidably drain into the prevailing organizational culture.

P3 advised against excessive, and under-adoption of the coercive power in the management of employees. P3 said they found one basic strategy for managing employees; they start with a vision or story using the management tools that reinforces the behavioral changes in the organization. P1 said, they have a hierarchical management structure, aimed at reaching set goals, responsibilities, roles, values, and communications amongst employees of the organization. P3 asserted, “Not everything is achievable through the leadership supports, but through the existing employees within the organization.”

P1 said, because they use the hierarchical management structure, all employees then focused on the vision of rapidly responding to any form of changes within the organization. P1 shared, “We developed a clear vision of where our organization desired to be in the future, inform employees of that vision, and internalize it swiftly and compellingly.” P3 delineates employees to help drive innovation and leverage their full capabilities. P2 stated that they do not rush into initiating changes and processes, but they apply the practices of a gradual transition. However, P2 reported that they do share information about their next line of actions with their employees horizontally through friendly conversations and storytelling.

In conclusion, the summarized findings include five emergent themes related to strategies for implementing and maintaining a reduction initiative for costs and contract fulfillment delays. The five themes discussed include (a) change implementation, (b) reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays, (c) change implementation barriers, (d) employee-focused factors, and (e) approachability to external factors. Each theme was explored with frequency data, deepened through consideration of subthemes, and supported by the literature and the conceptual framework. Of interest, participants credited their knowledge to (a) understandability of a clear vision of outcomes of the desired change initiative, and (b) adoption of an active, positive managerial culture that supported change initiatives.

Applications to Professional Practice

The unemployment level in Nigeria is high, and increasing performances of private plastics companies might reduce or eradicate poverty (Oyedepo, 2013). Some private plastics procurement managers lack strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays (Dewi et al., 2015; Oyedepo, 2013). Sustainability of those private plastics companies depends on the procurement managers' insights into potential implementation strategies other procurement managers use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014). The findings include insights into strategies three procurement managers of private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria uses to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays. The study outcomes are applicable to professional business practices for procurement managers through actionable strategies for (a) change implementation, (b) cutting cost and contract fulfillment delays, (c) change implementation barriers, (d) employee-focused factors, and (e) approachability to external factors. The five strategies include advice that, if applied, might avert the extinction of private plastics companies in Abuja, Nigeria.

First, for change implementation to occur there must be problem definition to trigger the change initiative. Without a clear problem, the driving need for a complete change to the existing process does not exist and would be an unnecessary waste of scarce company resources. A best practice is to link the problems to the existing system, thereby advancing the argument for needed process enhancements. After the problem definition, organizational leaders and procurement managers should carry out a detailed needs assessment of the desired change. Further, the needs assessment performed in conjunction with the procurement staff, confirms the layered benefits of sequencing employees into the shift implementation process (Bakotić, 2015).

During the needs assessment, managers can link the expected innovation to the existing procurement method with a clear, well-structured approach to change. Then, procurement managers leverage the best TOC option by analyzing the various change stages during the procurement improvement and anticipating the consequences of different change initiatives. Highly recommended is that the change manager be an articulate, active advocate who understands the innovation can gain the support of organizational leaders and employees. During a briefing of the business stakeholders on the planned change, procurement managers can clearly state the ways to reach the expected long-term goals of improving the procurement process. Confirmed by Stame (2004) and Vachon et al. (2013), leveraging TOC is one means for clarifying process assumptions that culminate in the long-term goal and bolster the linkages between program activities and process expectations.

To sustain planned change, development of an immediacy mindset is essential. Most successful change initiatives begin when an employee reviews the organization's market share and competitive standing (Penava & Šehić, 2016), observing possible crisis or prospects. Procurement managers can encourage teamwork among the groups, draw their attention to the problems or opportunities of the organization, and foster a sense of trust through transparent and articulate communication. Managers are encouraged to create clear performance indicators, identify the employees that are contributing outstanding performances, and reward them appropriately. To foster the change initiative, managers must reinforce the process with new projects through hiring, promoting, and training people who embrace the change initiative and the rising performance standards.

Second, for cutting cost and contract fulfillment delays, organizational leaders and procurement managers can select and maintain reliable suppliers' database. Use of the database assists in defining a framework that enables parties to collaborate and accomplish results that diminish risk on all sides. As affirmed by Plantinga & Dorée, 2016; Wang, Liu, & Liu (2013), that it is imperative to structure the electronic procurement template of an organization to eliminate doubt on the suppliers' side. With a reliable suppliers' database, suppliers would do what organizational leaders prefer; otherwise, the vendors' bid will not proceed through the correct channel, which saves time for purchasers, results in quick processes, and lead to accurate bid evaluation (Plantinga &Dorée, 2016).

Procurement managers can use the electronic procurement processes to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays in their organizations. They can use electronic procurement regularly to purchase and pay for raw materials needed for their daily productions of various plastic items. Organizational leaders and procurement managers can adapt to the global procurement changes, as noted by Rotchanakitumnuai (2013a), leaders of growing number of companies are adopting electronic procurement software to reap similar benefits that others have realized. In addition to using the e-procurement processes, organizations may include a supportive inventory control system. With all levels of inventory control in place, including reorder, minimum, maximum, and economic order quantities, initiating orders can be automated. Organizations may train their procurement employees on prerequisite skills concerning how to perform automated procurement operations on the Internet. Therefore, by using the synergies of the prequalified suppliers' database, inventory management system, and competent procurement employees, procurement managers can drive and sustain successful implementation of electronic procurement process within an organization.

Third, procurement managers can anticipate the possibility of change implementation barriers during its implementation process. Envisaging these problems enable the change agents to prevent them from hindering the change process. Change managers may not have the freedom or trust to create change from the bottom to the top. The way to make a convincing and persuasive argument is for managers to leverage TOC steps, such as a) appraising the results of their analysis, b) explaining the current position of the business, c) projecting the anticipated future desired position, and then d) justifying it (Weiss, 1995).

Some procurement managers may observe that some business leaders continue to feel financially pressured as they deal with rising demand and uncertainty relating to planned change implementation. A clear projection of funds needed to implement change activities offers organizational leaders decision information. Careful projections may include a work breakdown arrangement of the activities in the process and estimation of time for full implementation. Though an e-procurement change process is cost intensive, active support from the business leaders throughout the change can culminate in favorable results. Therefore, procurement managers can exercise caution in seeking the buy-in of the organizational leaders. Managers can expect change resistance, which is the exhibition of an action by individuals and groups when they perceive a new change initiative as a threat to their existence (Weiss, 1995). Procurement managers can become cognizant of behaviors that signpost likely resistance and then proffer proactive solutions to streamline the apprehensions.

Fourth, procurement managers can develop employee-focused strategies, which are powerful motivational tools necessary to reinforce employees' behaviors to foster their continuous positive flexibility to the overall objectives of the organization. Plantinga and Dorée (2016) advised company leaders to subscribe to the globalization process by encouraging managers to develop necessary strategies for motivating employees; the success and sustainability of a process depend on high employee morale. Change success is aided by involving the company's employees in the planned change, and by developing a motivation culture through incentives, friendly atmosphere, communication, and training (Agarwal & Mehta, 2014). Further, managers can build an environment of honesty, transparency, and trust among the workforce within the organization (Saner & Eyupoglu, 2015). Managers may coordinate and motivate the employees through exemplary actions (van der Smissen et al., 2013). Also, managers can develop effective channels of communication in the workplace to understand employees' proficiencies and build a complete team structure (Agarwal & Mehta, 2014; van der Smissen et al., 2013).

Fifth, the changing external environmental variables include technological, legislative, and cultural workplace. Senge (2006) and Nesbit and Lam (2014) stated that organizational leaders who plan to either sustain or transcend their current competitive advantage could benefit from a corporate culture of adaptability. Managers willing to support their businesses must embrace new strategies for responding to the emerging technological atmosphere. Managers may continually leverage big data to advance their suppliers' understanding, pricing, customer retention, tracking of goods, customer segmentation, inventory management, and other variables. Procurement managers may change the traditional bureaucratic bottleneck by redesigning and adjusting processes to an ongoing real-time structure. Managers can read any modification of the legislative external environmental in the media and develop strategic response plans. Managers with the enabling strategies for responding to the changing cultural workplace environment might lead to generating sustainable exceptional bottom-lines, which endears, motivates, and retains employees (Nesbit and Lam, 2014).

Procurement managers can understand that workplace culture includes a weave of processes, values, information dissemination practices, attitudes, and expectations speculation. An attempt to separate the factors in the weave can only result in a temporary remedy. Senge (2006) and Nesbit and Lam's (2014) postulated that fostering a culture of learning is an indispensable element to managerial success. Managers may comprehend that transforming a culture is a significant responsibility, which can be critical to the chances of organizational success. Procurement managers can appreciate that not everything is achievable through just the leadership supports; engaging the discretionary efforts of existing employees within the organization, can bring success to a change initiative. Sudarno and Sukmaningrum (2016) confirmed that attempting to enhance culture can be an effort to increase the worth and resourcefulness of employees' effort. Therefore, organizational managers' that understand and deploy strategies to change the workplace culture can unleash the willingness of employees to accept change and markedly increase the likelihood of transformation implementation success.

Implications for Social Change

The manual procurement processes used by some private companies result in increased costs and contract fulfillment delays (More & Basu, 2013). Some individual plastics procurement managers lack strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays (Dewi et al., 2015; Oyedepo, 2013). Business leaders spend from 50% to 75% of annual organizational revenue on procurement costs (Sobhani, Malarvizhi, Al-Mamun, & Jayashree, 2013). A small decrease in acquisition cost can have a significant impact on the profitability of businesses (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). Outcomes from my research may provide insights to some procurement managers in private plastics companies to change business processes and enhance business strategies that could foster growth and sustainability.

Equity holders may use the results of my study to change their organizational practices. Therefore, the present organizational staff strength will either increase or remain the same. Some Nigerian private plastics companies still use the manual procurement processes and managers could use the findings to advance organizational sustainability and growth performance. The unemployment level in Nigeria is high, and increased performance of private plastics companies might reduce or eradicate poverty (Oyedepo, 2013). The effects of unemployment in Nigeria among the youth have led to social vices (Nwogwugwu & Adebayo, 2015). The outcomes of the study could lead to suggestions that may inspire business owners to change business processes that foster growth. Furthermore, the results of this study may contribute to the effective practice of business that culminates in additional insights into strategies successful managers in private plastics companies use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The findings from the study have many implications for social change, including economic growth, sustainability of income, improved standard of living of the workforce, and reduced social vices in Abuja, Nigeria.

Recommendations for Action

The intent of the study was to provide some procurement managers of private plastics companies strategies used to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. Recommendations from the results of this research study may benefit business leaders, procurement managers, employees, purchasing and supply-chain professionals, and students. Company leaders must subscribe to the globalization process by encouraging their purchasing managers to develop innovative strategies for process sustainability (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016). Based on the findings, procurement managers who desire process improvement must understand and apply strategies comprised of change implementation, cost and contract fulfillment delays reduction, change implementation barriers, approachability to external factors, and employee-focused factors. The application of the procurement process can have a significant impact on companies' costs and competitive benefits (Galadima & Abdullahi, 2014). Below, I detail five specific recommendations for action.

From the findings of this study, there is the need for business leaders and procurement managers to define long-term goals and then maps backward to find prerequisites for achieving success. Organizational leaders must determine their individual procurement problems through the assistance of a procurement consultant. The consultant should be able to find changes needed and map graphically in causal pathways of outcomes, showing each outcome in logical association to all the others (Weiss, 1995). Change managers can articulate the need for change, both persuasively and convincingly to impact the business leaders and employees. To gain buy-in and support, an invited expert and managers must discuss with the organizational leaders the type and cost implications of the identified change (P2). Procurement managers during a briefing of the business stakeholders on the planned change must clearly state the assumptions involved to reach the expected long-term goals of improving the procurement process (P1). Business leaders are most unlikely to subscribe to the planned change and employees may resist the change implementation if they do not understand purposes, results, and strategies that TOC delivers. Davidoff et al. (2016) suggested the sequence of expected outcomes be determined. Further, an evaluation strategy should include tracking whether the desired results emerge (Msila & Setlhako, 2013).

Change managers must possess the requisite skills to (a) make decisions that structure the change effectively, and (b) disseminate communication that motivates employees to a shared understanding. Procurement managers must encourage teamwork by drawing their attention to the problems and opportunities of the organization, and persuade them to imbibe a sense of trust and communication. Managers should create ways to obtain clear performance indicators, and identify employees with outstanding performance and reward them appropriately (P3). However, managers can reinforce the change process by hiring, promoting, and training people who live up to the change initiative (P1).

Participants recommended synergies of strategies such as prequalified reliable suppliers' database, electronic procurement system, effective inventory management system, and skilled procurement employees to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays. Therefore, I recommend that organizational leaders and procurement managers shortlist, prequalify, and maintain reliable suppliers' database with varying cost arrangements to secure their supplies. Queen (2013) found that organizations select and create suppliers' database to make suppliers answerable to organization's structured template. Organizational leaders customize their platforms to incorporate contracts, supply evaluation, and consolidation of suppliers' data (Hass et al., 2013). Consequently, corporate leaders and procurement managers should subscribe to an e-procurement system by purchasing their raw materials and other services on carefully chosen and tested Internet platforms. Per Yu et al. (2015), organizational savings attributed to the e-procurement ranged between 25% and 50% annually. Yu et al., noted that adopting e-procurement systems might bring to the fore the strategic significance of creating efficient purchasing systems that reduce costs. I also recommend a mix of an inventory control and e-procurement systems as they simultaneously play a vital role in reducing cost and contract fulfillment delays (P3). Equally important, I recommend that procurement managers and employees develop the necessary skills to harness all elements of technologies to ensure success. Chatterjee and Ravichandran (2013 and Ren and Su (2015) asserted that innovation encompasses technology, as well as the skills and processes needed to drive it.

I also recommend that procurement managers anticipate and understand possible change implementation challenges and develop proactive measures to stop them from hindering the transformation success. Accordingly, procurement managers should evolve a realistic change implementation budget, as most business leaders are unlikely to buy-in to the idea of an upward variation review in the budget in the middle of the transformation process. Change managers must be capable of articulating the need for change, both persuasively and convincingly to impacted stakeholders (Lohe & Leger, 2014). To aid the motivation of organizational leaders, procurement managers should inform organizational leaders about the negative consequences for a company if changes to fill the identified performance gaps fail to occur (Van Dijk et al., 2015). Antony (2015) warned that nonadaptability to change might mean the price for the current system processes is meaningfully more complicated than the price of change. Change managers should expect change resistance, and prepare for it from the beginning of the shift management program to manage oppositions effectively. Bereznoi (2014) alluded that though the threat might not be factual or outsized to generate resistance; however, resistance to change may be available in all areas of business organizations.

Guaranteeing employee satisfaction is a problem for leaders during change initiatives (Agarwal & Mehta, 2014; Saner & Eyupoglu, 2015). Penava and Šehić (2016) found that when change managers develop, proper employees motivation skills, the interaction between them and employees is enhanced; thus, resulting in job satisfaction (Penava & 2014). To this end, managers should develop skills necessary to identify what motivate individual employees, as what satisfies particular employees is relative. Similarly, managers should strive continually to build an organizational environment of honesty, transparency, and trust among the workforce. Managers should evolve performance evaluation strategy and learn to reward hard working staff. Additionally, managers can encourage sustainable capacity building to enhance employees' performances on their jobs.

Managers should develop effective channels of communication in the workplace through the understanding of employees' competencies and build a complete team structure. Building a friendly relationship with team members through body posture contemplation and using a respectful tone of voice is critical to achieving effective communication. Managers should also understand that communication is a two-way method of disseminating information from a source to a target.

Senge (2006) and Nesbit and Lam (2014) indicated that organizational leaders who plan to either sustain or transcend their current competitive advantage could benefit from a corporate culture of adaptability. Procurement managers' adaptability to emerging technological innovations is necessary to influence organizations' performances as business processes have enhanced and organizations are now carrying out activities more efficiently. Participant responses signified that managers willing to sustain their businesses must embrace new strategies for responding to the emerging technological atmosphere. Managers should maintain leveraging technology capabilities to research and discover global best procurement practices, and share emerging business thoughts with their employees both physically and through social networks.

Managers do not have control over legislative changes in the general economic conditions; however, managers should control how the company responds to the changing legislative environment. Managers must adhere to the government's changing policies and create strategic plans for dealing with such anticipated situations to sustain their businesses. In the same vein, managers can develop an in-depth knowledge of all legislations that can influence their activities to reduce the expected risk of non-compliance that might result in litigations. When government restricts some permissible business activities within organizations, managers and leaders may learn to apply lobbying.

Business' leaders and managers should understand that workplace culture is an intertwining role consisting of processes, values, information dissemination practices, attitudes, and expectations speculation. Any attempt to separate those interdependent variables will lead to efforts in futility. A primary strategy for managing employees is to start with a vision or storytelling using the management tools that reinforces the behavioral changes in the organization. Organizational leaders and managers can create a hierarchical management structure, to reach set goals, responsibilities, roles, values, and communications amongst their employees. Managers must note that not everything is achievable through the leadership supports but their existing employees. Managers may develop a clear vision of where their organizations desire to be in the future, inform employees of that vision, and internalize it swiftly and compellingly.

Publication of this study may provide literature for future scholars to consider when examining strategies procurement managers use to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays. Exhausting various channels to publicize findings will explore opportunities for private plastics companies' leaders and supply managers who are still experiencing challenges with their procurement processes to gain insights to relevant information from the study. Accordingly, I will pursue publication of this study in the ProQuest dissertation database and other peer reviewed business journals to make it available to students and researchers. Furthermore, I will share the outcomes of this study with participants and the National Board of Small and Medium Scale Industries, as well as business owners, to inspire business process redesign. I will also venture to present the findings at conferences, business workshops, training, and seminars that focus on enhancing procurement processes.

Recommendations for Further Research

Limitations are those occurrences and matters arising in research that transcend a researcher's control (Hyett et al., 2014). In this qualitative multiple case study, the main limitation was the sample size of participants. The interview findings of three private plastic companies' procurement managers were a small sample. As I analyzed the participants' input for themes and distilled the data, the purposefully selected participants in the study were procurement managers in private companies, and therefore, generalizations from the results may only apply to procurement projects in private companies. Data saturation occurs when a researcher can no longer glean new ideas from participant interviews (Bekhet & Zausziewski, 2014). I achieved data saturation after interviewing three participants in this study. A larger sample probably would offer further or diverse strategies from the same study. I recommend that researchers consider additional studies to include a larger sample size of participants.

Furthermore, the geographic locations of the organizations represented covered only Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. Recommendation for a study in a different geographical location is necessary to see if findings will be related or different on other sites. The study was a qualitative research method with a case study design; I recommend other methodologies and designs for further research on the same phenomena to see if there will be variations in findings. Further, the open-ended semistructured questions in the interviews may result in conclusions that impeded a generalization of the findings and therefore, recommended other interview methods for additional research on a similar study. Finally, I did not consider factors such as gender, religion, ethnicity, and nationality of the procurement managers and my recommendation would be to conduct a similar study that researches those factors to see if the findings will be different or the same.

Reflections

The motivation for this research originates from a personal desire to contribute my quota to the sustainability of businesses. Some companies fold up because of their nonadaptability to the changing business environment. I was inspired to research what strategies might be useful to managers to enhance procurement processes, which is the primary area of their application of funds.

My experience during the DBA Doctoral Study process was quite an experiential learning curve. Commencing the process of attaining my doctorate was something I knew would aid me in building additional knowledge and deepen my understanding of organizational strategy and change processes. Now, I have acquired additional knowledge about strategies some procurement managers in private plastic companies use to reduce cost and contract some private plastic companies and especially in Abuja, Nigeria. I have built the confidence to go out and share the results of my research with existing and prospective business owners. I proudly stand behind my recommendations as they could help each business with strategies to reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays. In a study by Sobhani et al. (2013), they found that business leaders spend from 50% to 75% of annual organizational revenue on procurement costs. A small decrease in procurement cost can have a significant impact on the profitability of businesses (Plantinga & Dorée, 2016).

As the researcher, I exercised procedural thoroughness to reduce error and research bias. Furthermore, I did not personally know my research partners and participants as a proactive measure to decrease bias. Throughout the interviews, I controlled my emotions to the interview responses not to influence the participants to answer questions inversely. I am optimistic that I did not influence the participants, in their responses to the interview question. My research participants use strategies to reduce cost and contracts fulfillment delays to sustain their individual business, and therefore, they were not overwhelmed to share their strategies. It was my pleasure to meet with the individual participants of the private plastic companies and to gain insights into their business sustainment strategies. The individual participants each shared a related urge and desire to flourish in business, despite the global economic recession. The participant responses to the interview questions suggested that, without their managerial skills and presence, the sustainability of each company would have been different in the face of Nigeria's present economic recession.

My level of respect for procurement managers with the desire for business sustainability increased. From the research findings, I identified how managers motivate their employees for optimal performance. After completing the study, I was stunned by the themes uncovered during the data analysis. What surprised me about research participants was their keenness to be a part of this study. The procurement managers showed gratitude to me for involving them in the research process. A participant told me that our interview had facilitated his thinking more deeply about being an experienced manager. Each participant articulated a desire for demonstrating good management practices and a love for the purchasing and supply industry. I was encouraged to see how participants indicated an appreciation for their employees' service. I am confident that my connections with the participants were as supportive of them as they were for me.

Conclusion

Plastics are so useful in the Nigerian economy that the need exists to explore the skills that some procurement managers in private plastics companies have used to succeed. The plastics industry has energy-saving potential in Nigeria, which dictates its central role in the economy. However, some procurement managers of private plastics companies lack strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays to sustain the business. Sustainability of those private plastic companies depends on how their leaders can subscribe to the globalization process by encouraging their procurement managers to develop innovative strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays.

Findings included five themes related to strategies for implementing and maintaining cost and contract fulfillment delays reduction initiative: (a) change implementation, (b) reduce cost and contract fulfillment delays, (c) change implementation barriers, (d) employee-focused, and (e) approachability to external factors. Each of the five themes deepened through consideration of subthemes. For example, the change implementation strategies mentioned include (a) problem definition, (b) needs assessment, (c) change assumptions, and (d) factors that may affect the expected change. Strategies for reducing cost and contract fulfillment delays consist of

(a) prequalified reliable suppliers' database, (b) electronic procurement system, (c) effective inventory management system, and (d) competent procurement employees. The change implementation barriers entail (a) leadership support, (b) intensive cost, and (c) change resistance. Employee-focused strategies encompass understandability of relevant motivation and effective communication. Finally, the strategies for responding to the changing external environmental factors involve (a) changing the technological environment (b) legislative environment, and (c) workplace cultural environment.

Attaining a sustainable cost reduction and growth by some private plastic companies revolves around procurement strategies. The bottom line of business is profit; therefore, investors do business with enterprise leaders that regularly adapt to positive external influences by offering improved business processes and encouraging viable growth. If organizational managers identify appropriate procurement strategies, it might result in increased employment among the youth, improve standards of living of the workforce, and reduce social vices in Abuja, Nigeria.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

This section includes the semistructured interview questions that I will use during the interview sessions. The results and themes will be summarized in part of section 3 of this study.

Time of the interview: ____________

Date: ___________________________

Place: ____________________________

Interviewer: Donald Osebhawe Areguamen (researcher)

Interviewee: (P1)

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study is to explore the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays.

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to reduce procurement costs and contract fulfillment delays?
2. What barriers have you encountered when implementing strategies to improve the manual procurement process?
3. What strategies have you adopted to respond to the changing technological, legislative, and cultural work-place environment?
4. What strategies do you recommend to individuals attempting to implement employee-focused motivational strategies?
5. What am I forgetting to ask that you have found to be helpful when improving

procurement methods in Nigerian private companies?

Appendix B: E-mail Invitation Letter

Email Subject: A Research Study That May Interest You

Dear Employee Name of Organization Name,

My name is Donald Osebhawe Areguamen and I am a doctoral candidate in Business Administration – Global Supply Chain Management at Walden University. My doctoral study project is "Pathways for Improving Nigeria's Procurement System" I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my Doctor of Business Administration degree, and received permission from your organization to invite you to participate. I am interested in exploring the strategies some procurement managers of private plastics companies located at Maitama, in Abuja, Nigeria, use to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays.

As a manager in a private plastics company, you are most suitable to help me with this study because you may have implemented strategies to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. The face-to-face interview will be will be scheduled at your convenience and is expected to take one hour. Your participation and information will be protected by adherence to Walden University's confidentiality guidelines. Your participation will be instrumental in providing the essential data to best analyze the strategies required to reduce costs and contract fulfillment delays. If you decide to participate, I will send you a consent form through email that specifies your rights during the process and the purpose of the doctoral study. At the end of this study, I will share results and findings with participants, scholars, and other stakeholders. Interview participation is voluntary; you have the right to decline to take part or to withdraw at any time during the interview. Please advise if you have any questions or require additional information. My contact information is XXXX or XXXX. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donald Osebhawe Areguamen (Walden University DBA Student).