

UGSM-Monarch Business School Doctoral Research Plan

Supply Chain Management Practices: An Empirical Study on the
Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development in Botswana

PROGRAM:	D. Phil/Ph.D in Business Research
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RESEARCH DOMAIN OVERVIEW

In 1966, Botswana's independence marked tremendous socioeconomic and political transformation that resulted in a true model of a liberal democracy on the African continent (Ruele, 2009). This liberalization has led to important increases in external trade (Msimangira, 2003). These increases in external trade have resulted in improvements in the public enterprise sector and led to greater competition and restructuring throughout the economy (Msimangira, 2003).

However, one issue that appears to remain illusive is the improvement in purchasing and supply chain management practices. Msimangira (2003) has commented that there is a general lack of familiarity about policies and procedures with personnel involved in purchasing and not all organizations possess purchasing policies and procedure manuals. Moreover, not all employees involved in purchasing departments are aware of the existence of written policies and procedures within their organizations (Msimangira, 2003). Therefore, one may ask the important question as to how supply chain management may be implemented within organizations while there exists poor comprehension and knowledge of the existing policies and procedures pertaining to the subject.

LI et al (2005) have suggested that the lack of successful implementation of supply chain management practice is attributed to unavailable research conducted on the subject. They postulates that it is due to the missing comprehensive format of supply chain management policies together with a subsequent deficiency in studies that has led to the need for further research on the topic. Within Botswana there appears to

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be a pressing need to define supply chain management practices and their strategic implementation. That is, there appears to be many inconsistencies and a lack of clarity found within its definition both within the domain of study as well as professional practice within the specific geography of Botswana.

Within the larger domain of study, Sundram et al (2011) has defined supply chain management practices as a set of activities undertaken in an organisation to promote effective management of its supply chain. De Sousa Jabbour et al (2011) define supply chain management as an integrated systematic approach commencing with the planning and control of logistics, materials and services. Information in supply chain management therefore streams from suppliers to manufactures and service providers and ultimately the end-user clients (De Sousa Jabbour et al., 2011). Ageron et al (2013) has defined the term as an expression of the extent to which the corporation is connected to other firms in a sequential form of networks which are essential for customer satisfaction. It is postulated that supply chain management becomes an integration of the key business processes from the end-user through the original suppliers to add value for customers and stakeholders alike (De Sousa Jabbour et al., 2011; Lambert, Cooper, & Pagh, 1998; Lambert & Garcia-Dastugue, 2006).

The contemplated research will analyse supply chain management practices, their implementation and their relation to organizational performance within the national context of Botswana. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development will provide the specific case study. The contemplated research will aim at developing a

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clearer image of the purchasing and supply chain management as practiced as within the governmental infrastructure of Botswana. In this regard, the contemplated research will focus on six critical areas:

1. Supplier strategic partnerships;
2. Customer relationship management;
3. Information sharing;
4. Information quality;
5. Agreed vision and goals; and
6. Risk and reward sharing (Sundram et al., 2011).

Also, the research aims at investigating these practices as antecedents of basic customer needs satisfaction. As far as performance is concerned there seems to be a need to understand the influence of supply chain management policy in terms of supply chain management activities meant to satisfy customers. In summary, the contemplated research is to examine:

1. The extent of implementation of supply chain management practices and their influence on the budget and management of the Ministry;
2. The status quo of supply chain management practices in the Ministry;
3. The supply chain management practices in the literature contrasted to the current practices within the Ministry with respect to their effectiveness;
4. The design of a new conceptual model of supply chain management with a focus on the particular needs of the Botswanian marketplace.

PROVISIONAL RESEARCH QUESTION

“What are the characteristics of a new conceptual model that assists in explaining the levels of implementation of supply chain management practices with regard to improved customer satisfaction within the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development of Botswana?”

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

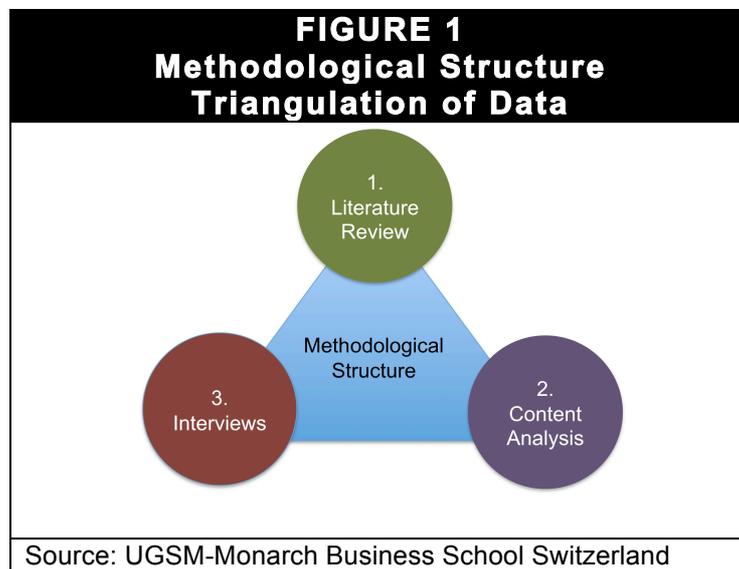


Figure 1 shows that the aim of the contemplated research is to respond to the provisional research question by way of a triangulation of research data, being: 1. literature review of existing seminal academic authors (desk research); 2, content analysis of existing corporate data (desk research) and; 3. Interviews with primary stake holders in the ministry (field research).

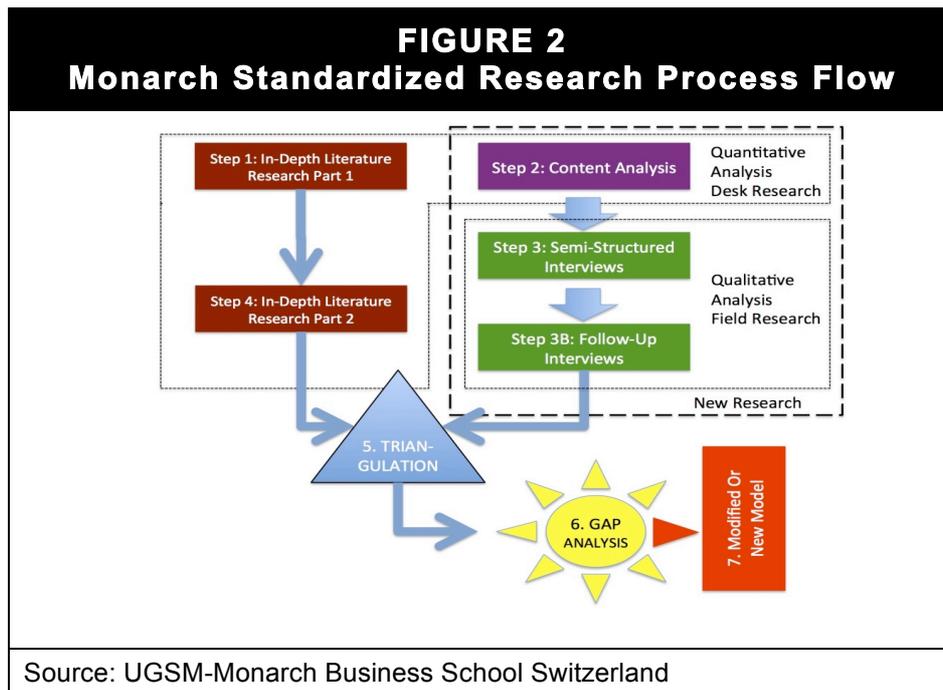


Figure 2 illustrates the steps within the Monarch Standardized Research Process Flow that will be followed within the contemplated research, as:

1. **In-Depth Literature Review-Part 1:**In-depth review of the seminal authors within the domain of Supply Chain Management will be the first step completed in order to provide a solid academic foundation to the research.
2. **Content Analysis:**An analysis based on data obtained from annual reports, white papers, supporting commercial documents and other commercial data sources will be examined.
3. **Two-Step Semi-Structured Interview Process:**
 - Step 1. **Preliminary Interviews:** The development of preliminary interview questions will be informed by and synthesized from the review of the literature and content analysis. Stakeholders to be interviewed will be ministerial institutions considered knowledgeable with respect to the research at hand. A minimum

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sample of thirty (30) unique participants will be interviewed.

Interviews will be held in person at a location amenable to the subjects and are expected to be approximately thirty (30) minutes in length. Telephone interviews will be used in the case that physical interviewing is impossible due to resource or time constraints. Interviews will be tape recorded unless objected to by the participant in which case manual notes will be taken.

Step 2. Follow-Up Interviews: of a more specific and narrow view informed by the first round of interviews, content analysis and literature review will be concluded with a smaller sub-set of 15 respondents obtained from the first round sample. These interviews will seek to uncover deeply held personal beliefs and understandings on the research subject that will further uncover important aspects in responding to the provisional research question.

4. Step 4-In-Depth Literature Review-Part 2:A second more in-depth literature research review will be completed to further refine the scope and consideration of the existing knowledge within the academic field to add more expertise and specificity to the research analysis.

5. Step 5 & 6-Triangulation of the Data & Gap Analysis:A triangulation of the data will be considered and analyzed in order to determine whether or not the existing academic knowledge is congruent with the practical application of the field on a commercial basis. The result of this analysis should dictate whether

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or not a “Knowledge Gap” exists between the academic (theoretical) and the practical (applied) domains.

6. Step 7: Development of New Model: Building on the Gap Analysis a thorough analysis of the existing frameworks within the academic domain will be made. This analysis will inform whether or not the existing frameworks sufficiently address the requirement for practical application within the ministry and whether or not they may be further improved or modified.

RESEARCH TIMELINE AND BUDGET

TABLE 3 Provisional Research Timeline													
		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
PART A	Pre-Literature Review												
	Literature Review Part 1												
	Research Plan												
	Chapter 1												
	Chapter 2 & 3												
	Content Analysis												
		Official Submission of Chapters 1, 2, 3 and Slide Presentation To Obtain Authorization To Continue On To Field Research											
PART B	Interviews Part 1												
	Literature Review Part 2												
	Interviews Part 2												
	Data Analysis												
	Chapter 4, 5, 6												
	Manuscript Perfecting												
	Submission												
			Source: UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland										

The contemplated research is expected to conclude over a 36 month period. A breakdown of the time allocation by the different phases of the research is outlined in Table 3 above.

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TABLE 4 Research Budget	
	In US\$
Conferences	1,700
Hotel Accommodations	2,800
Books and Article Purchases	500
Travel Expenses	4,800
Reproduction Expense – Questionnaires	300
TOTAL	10,100

The research will be privately funded. No requests for supplementary grants, assistantships or scholarships will be made. The total budget of the project is approximately \$10,100 US. No additional resources or funding will be requested of UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland. The budget is presently funded and research may begin immediately upon approval.

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