

ABSTRACT

Supply chain management (SCM) practices have emerged in the last decade as a strategic option to meet new challenges in global business environment. SCM seeks to enhance competitive performance by closely integrating the internal functions within a company and effectively linking them with the external operations of suppliers and channel members.

The objective of this study was to explore the supply chain practices in the current higher education environment with a focus on the University of Nairobi. The focus was on three research questions: What are the supply chain management practices at the University of Nairobi?, What are the potential benefits the University of Nairobi can derive from effective and efficient implementation and use of supply chain management practices? and What are the challenges affecting institutional readiness that are facing the University of Nairobi in the implementation and use of supply chain management practices?.

Questionnaires were used as the data collection method; they helped bring out the results of the study as expected. The results indicated that Supply chain management practices used at the university are mostly those that apply to the procurement philosophy. It emerged that most units appreciated the need for implementation and use of supply chain practices and hence a need for the university management to change the current mind set. With respect to benefits which could be derived from implementation and use of supply chain management practices, results indicated that they would open up the university to adapt to changes in the external environment, will result to more efficient inventory management system and improved customer service due to its customer focused approach and most benefits would not take time to be realized. While, not using Supply chain management practices, lack of adequate resources to facilitate the implementation and use of supply chain management practice and lack of employee empowerment currently hinder meaningful progress in supply chain management.

Current study though with some limitations in terms of response and scope has served the purpose of creating a quest for further research on supply chain management practices in an academic setup, which can be used as a basis for further study and benefit to the management of academic institutions.

Keywords: Higher education, Supply chain, Supply chain management, University of Nairobi.