Research Article

The Impact of Key Account Management Practices on Customer Purchase Intentions Amongst Food Catering Enterprises in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions through a case study of selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo. The objectives of the study were to: examine the importance of key account management amongst catering organisations in Bulawayo, ascertain key account management strategies that are being used by catering organisations in Bulawayo, analyse customers' perceptions regarding their purchase intentions after experiencing the key account management strategies, investigate the benefits that catering organisations in Bulawayo are experiencing in adapting to the introduction of key account management strategies and evaluate the challenges that catering organisations in Bulawayo experienced in adapting to the introduction of key account management strategies. In Zimbabwe, catering businesses are increasingly being recognised as generating meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities. However, these businesses face many challenges that negatively impact on their viability. In order to mitigate those challenges, catering businesses employ a number of strategies that enable them to survive and continue operating. The research utilised the pragmatist paradigm through a sequential explanatory mixed methods design in terms of which both quantitative and qualitative data were used. The population in this study was 135 organisations registered by Zimtrade (2022) as catering organisations giving personalised catering services. Using purposive sampling, a sample size of 100 catering companies was selected. It was found and concluded that key account management practices have a positive and significant impact on customer purchase intentions amongst selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo. Key account management (KAM) is a vital function in business-to-business (B2B) organisations, which focuses on developing and maintaining long-term relationships with high-value customers. It was recommended that food catering companies employ key account management champion leaders, establish KAM policies and employ a phased implementation of KAM.

Keywords: key account management, catering organisations, challenges, pragmatism, customer, small medium enterprises, customer relationship management,

INTRODUCTION

Key accounts are customers in a business-to-business market identified by selling companies as of strategic importance (Lacoste, 2018). Key account management (KAM) is an approach adopted by selling companies aimed at building a portfolio of loyal key accounts by offering them, on a continuing basis, a product/service package tailored to their individual needs. Success depends partly on the strategic importance to the customer of what is being supplied, and the degree of receptivity demonstrated by the customer to a partnership approach, as well as the skills of the supplier in meeting customer needs. To co-ordinate day-to-day interaction under the umbrella of a long term relationship, selling companies typically form dedicated teams headed up by a key account manager. Key account management is a natural development of customer focus and relationship marketing in business-to-business markets. It offers critical benefits and opportunities for profit enhancement to both sides of the seller/buyer dyad (Mahlamaki, Rintamaki & Rajah, 2019). Hence, the study aims to assess the impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions through a case study of selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Globally, the fine art of catering dates back to China in the 4th millennium BC. Thereafter during the time of prosperity in Egypt (2050 -1450 BC), the culture of eating and drinking became very important (Chavez-Campuzano, Herrera-Cervantes, Guevara, Romero, Moyano, Renteria-Ramos & Chong, 2022). In the 20th century technical innovation, improvement of transport routes, increase in population and an extraordinary rise in travelling gave gastronomy a quick lift which made catering an important factor for transport and national economy. In the 21st century the demand for catered services increased (Kumar, Rajan, Gupta & Dalla Pozza, 2019). The need to change the trend where catered services were available at a certain location changed to the catered services being brought to the customer hence caterers adapted to this change and began preparing and serving food and drink at customers' work place, home and to self-service parties. These changes were mainly

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due to large number of family members employed, limited facilities and space in households and apartments, need to get professional help so that customers have a good time with guests and at the same time have good food graciously and professionally served. With this came numerous challenges where outside caterers were required to offer products and services of high quality. Quality is difficult to define in relation to hospitality operations but easy to recognise since it is a perception of how good or bad a product is based upon an individual's point of view. Martin, Elgm and Gremyr (2020) refer to quality as the ability of a product to consistently meet or exceed customer expectations. Also quality requires management as it just does not happen, thus quality in outside catering has to be embraced in order for customer satisfaction to be achieved (Wani and Sarode, 2019).

In Africa, successful catering in today's market is a combination of many important components which affect the outcome of the service. Just to mention poor quality, complaints and dissatisfied customers can destroy the image of caterers and consequently cause losses that can result in closure of the business, lawsuits and many more. Regardless of the customer's choice of location the caterer is expected to give flawless service irrespective of other numerous technical and aesthetic challenges (Hlatshwayo, 2020).

In Zimbabwe, catering businesses are increasingly being recognised as generating meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities. However, these businesses face many challenges that negatively impact on the viability of those businesses. In order to mitigate those challenges, catering businesses employ a number of strategies that enable them to survive and continue operating. Zimbabwe's catering industry shrunk dramatically during the hyperinflation era experienced from the year 1998 to 2008 with the inflation rate reaching an official figure of 231 percent (Berger, 2008). As a result, many fast-food owners failed to operate their businesses normally. Catering entrepreneurs were faced with huge challenges of controlling costs, as prices of raw materials were continually rising within a short period of time. The period was also characterised by stock outs, as there was no guarantee of supply for raw materials, lack of working capital, high wages, credit and liquidity crunch. As a result, many well-known local and international catering companies closed some of their branches during this period (Zimtrade, 2023).

Since the turn of the century Zimbabwe's economy has faced a series of challenges including hyperinflation, economic isolation, international sanctions and high levels of unemployment. The resulting effects on local businesses included declining business activity, widespread company closures, mounting bad debts and mass exodus of trained and skilled manpower resources. These factors have contributed to a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment (VUCA). The uncertainty and instability in the economy has made it difficult for enterprises to effectively plan and execute their intended business plans (Mukucha, Rootman & Mazibuko, 2019). To that end, the study seeks to assess of the impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions through a case study of selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the face of economic challenges facing Zimbabwe, the business environment has lost stability and predictability. The volatility of the market as a result has hampered effective long term planning for catering businesses as well as weakening the liquidity of the businesses whose operation do not rely on credit facilities to procure inputs. On the other hand, relationships with customers are jeopardised when the customers' payment terms fail to sync with the dynamic changes of market prices as well as challenges to meet the customers' expectations as a result of the escalating gap between what they pay for in advance and what they expect to receive. Therefore, the study sought to assess the extent to which a shift towards a VUCA affected traditional customer relationship model towards Key Account Management, contributes towards customer purchase intentions in the catering industry particularly focusing on entrepreneurial businesses.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do benefits of key account management impact on customer purchase intentions in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe?
- To what extent does the importance of key account management impact the customer purchase intentions in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe?
- How do strategies of key account management impact the customer purchase intentions in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe?
- Where do the perceptions of key account management impact the customer purchase intentions in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Definition of Key account management (KAM) and Customer purchase intentions

Key account management (KAM) refers to the strategic management of a company's most important customers in order to build and maintain long-term relationships, increase customer satisfaction, and maximize revenue growth (Frost, 2023). The goal of KAM is to identify and prioritize key accounts based on their potential for growth, profitability, and strategic importance to the company, and to develop customized solutions that meet their specific needs and preferences. KAM involves a range of activities, including customer segmentation, account planning, relationship

management, and performance measurement (Davies & Ryals, 2020).

Customer purchase intentions refer to the likelihood that a customer will purchase a particular product or service in the future based on their perception of its value and benefits (Khan, Haque & Rahman, 2012). Purchase intentions are influenced by a variety of factors, including product quality, price, brand reputation, customer service, and marketing communications (Razak *et al.*, 2019). Understanding customer purchase intentions is important for catering companies as it can help them to develop effective marketing strategies and tailor their offerings to meet the needs of their target customers.

In the food catering industry, the effective management of key accounts and understanding of customer purchase intentions are essential for business success. Organisations that employ KAM strategies are able to build stronger relationships with their most important customers, which can lead to increased customer loyalty, repeat business, and higher profits (Saini & Kaur, 2021). Similarly, companies that are able to accurately predict and respond to customer purchase intentions are better positioned to meet the needs of their customers and gain a competitive advantage (Razak *et al.*, 2019). However, it is important for catering companies to regularly evaluate and adjust their KAM and marketing strategies to ensure they are meeting the evolving needs and preferences of their customers (Frost, 2023).

The relationship between key account management and customer purchase intentions

Key account management (KAM) is a vital function in business-to-business (B2B) organisations, which focuses on developing and maintaining long-term relationships with high-value customers (Lim *et al.*, 2020). KAM aims to create a win-win situation for both the supplier and the customer by understanding their needs, aligning their interests, and delivering value-added solutions (Hansen *et al.*, 2020). This approach is particularly important for companies that rely on a small number of major customers for a significant portion of their revenue (Brennan *et al.*, 2019).

The importance of key account management lies in its ability to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the supplier and the customer. By focusing on the needs and goals of key accounts, it can aid companies to increase customer loyalty, reduce churn, and improve profitability (Hansen *et al.*, 2020). One of the main utilities of KAM is that it allows companies to develop a deep understanding of their customers' business needs, enhancing tailor solutions to the customer's specific requirements, creating a competitive advantage for the supplier (Lim *et al.*, 2020). In addition, KAM can help companies to identify new opportunities for growth and innovation, by

collaborating with key accounts to develop new products or services (Brennan *et al.*, 2019).

Another important utility of KAM is that it can help to reduce the cost of sales through focusing on a small number of high-value customers, companies can reduce the resources required to acquire new customers and win new business resulting in improved profitability and a more efficient sales process (Lim *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, KAM can help to improve the overall customer experience, by providing a dedicated point of contact for key accounts and ensuring that their needs are met in a timely and effective manner, yielding increased customer satisfaction and a stronger relationship between the supplier and the customer (Hansen *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, KAM can help companies to differentiate themselves from their competitors, by offering a superior level of service and support to their key accounts, specifically in highly competitive markets, where customers are looking for suppliers who can provide added value and a competitive advantage (Brennan *et al.*, 2019). Moreso, KAM can help companies to manage risk by focusing on a small number of high-value customers, companies can reduce their exposure to market fluctuations and economic downturns. This can help companies to maintain a stable revenue stream and weather economic uncertainty (Lim *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, KAM can help companies to strengthen their brand and reputation, by demonstrating their commitment to their key accounts and their ability to provide high-quality solutions and services. This can be especially important in industries where trust and reputation are key drivers of success (Hansen *et al.*, 2020).

Key account management (KAM) is a critical business strategy that focuses on building and maintaining strong relationships with a company's most important customers. In Africa, where the business environment can be challenging, KAM can play a crucial role in helping companies succeed. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, KAM can help businesses navigate the country's economic and political landscape, particularly important in Africa because of the continent's unique business environment. According to Akinyomi *et al.* (2020), African companies face a range of challenges, including poor infrastructure, political instability, and economic volatility, making it difficult for companies to succeed, particularly if they do not have strong relationships with their key customers.

In Zimbabwe, KAM is particularly important given the country's economic and political challenges. These challenges can make it difficult for companies to succeed, particularly if they do not have strong relationships with their key customers. KAM can help companies navigate these challenges, providing a stable source of revenue and helping to mitigate risk. Akinyomi *et al.* (2020) argue that KAM is essential for companies operating in a dynamic and rapidly changing business

environment. According to the authors, KAM helps companies to adapt to changing customer needs and preferences, and to develop strategies that can help them stay ahead of the competition. However, other scholars suggest that KAM may not be suitable for all companies, for example, Maboa *et al.* (2019) argue that KAM may not be appropriate for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as these companies may not have the resources to invest in specialised personnel or technology. Instead, the authors suggest that SMEs may need to focus on building strong relationships with a broader range of customers, rather than just a few key accounts.

Key account management (KAM) is a business strategy that focuses on building and maintaining long-term relationships with a company's most important customers. KAM has become increasingly important in recent years, as companies realise the benefits of retaining and growing their key accounts (Hansen *et al.*, 2020). Five KAM strategies are outlined in this study:-

- To focus on customer satisfaction by providing excellent customer service and support. This strategy is based on the idea that satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal and continue doing business with the company. According to a survey conducted by the Aberdeen Group, companies that focus on customer satisfaction as a KAM strategy have higher levels of customer retention and revenue growth (Aberdeen Group, 2021).
- Building strong relationships with key decision-makers within the customer's organisation. This strategy involves identifying the customer's key decision-makers and building relationships with them through regular communication and engagement. According to a report by McKinsey & Company, companies that adopt this strategy have higher levels of customer loyalty and are more successful in generating new business from their key accounts (McKinsey & Company, 2020).
- Providing customised solutions for key accounts. This strategy involves tailoring the company's products or services to meet the specific needs of the customer. According to a study by the Hinge Research Institute, companies that adopt this strategy have higher levels of customer satisfaction, as well as higher levels of revenue growth and profitability (Hinge Research Institute, 2022). However, not all experts agree on the best KAM strategy. Some argue that a more transactional approach, where the focus is on maximising short-term revenue from key accounts, is more effective. According to a report by Deloitte, companies that adopt this approach have higher levels of profitability and return on investment (Deloitte, 2019).
- Prioritise the alignment of goals between the company and its key accounts. This involves working closely with key decision-makers to identify their goals and objectives and aligning them with the company's own goals and objectives. This

strategy can help to build trust and credibility with key accounts and increase the likelihood of long-term partnerships. According to a report by Gartner, companies that adopt this strategy have higher levels of customer retention and are more likely to achieve their revenue targets (Gartner, 2021).

Use of the following approaches:

a) use of **customer-centric** strategies that focus on understanding the needs of the customer and aligning the business's offerings with those needs. According to a study by Njoroge *et al.* (2021), this approach is used by businesses in the banking industry in Kenya. The study found that banks that adopted a customer-centric approach to key account management reported higher customer satisfaction and retention rates compared to those that did not.

b) use of **technology** to improve key account management processes. For example, in South Africa, businesses in the telecommunications industry are using digital platforms to manage their key accounts more effectively. According to a report by Frost and Sullivan (2019), the use of digital platforms has enabled businesses to monitor customer interactions, track sales performance, and identify opportunities for cross-selling and upselling.

However, some experts argue that KAM strategies should not be viewed as mutually exclusive, but rather as complementary approaches that can be combined to achieve the best results. For example, a company may adopt a transactional approach to maximise short-term revenue from key accounts, while also focusing on building strong relationships with key decision-makers and providing customised solutions to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. It is also important to note that the effectiveness of KAM strategies may vary depending on the industry and market conditions. For example, in highly competitive industries, a focus on customer satisfaction and relationship building may be more important than a transactional approach.

Customer perceptions amongst catering organisations

Key Account Management (KAM) is a vital strategy for businesses, particularly for maintaining and developing long-term relationships with customers (Noble, Sinha, & Kumar, 2021). According to Canning, Keeling, and Wilkins (2019), a successful KAM strategy involves identifying key accounts, developing a customised approach, and building strong relationships with customers through communication. Furthermore, they submit that KAM is a continuous process that requires regular communication with customers, understanding their needs and expectations, and providing tailored solutions to meet those needs. However, the effectiveness of KAM strategies is dependent on the perception of customers towards the

approach taken by companies. According to Kucukusta and Kara (2019), customer perceptions of KAM can be shaped by various factors, including the quality of the relationship, the level of communication, and the value provided by the company. Moreover, they suggest that customers are more likely to perceive KAM positively when they feel that their needs are being understood and met as well as when the company provides them with added value beyond their expectations.

On the other hand, some authors argue that KAM strategies may not always be effective in creating value for customers. For instance, Brink and Berthon (2020) suggest that KAM can be perceived as a self-serving strategy, where companies focus more on maximising their own profits rather than meeting the needs of customers. They argue that this approach may lead to a lack of trust between customers and companies, ultimately affecting the success of KAM strategies. Another factor that can influence customer perceptions of KAM strategies is the level of trust between the company and the customer. According to a study by Kabadayi and Şimşek (2021), trust is a critical factor in building long-term relationships with customers in a KAM context. The study suggests that companies can build trust by demonstrating their expertise, showing a genuine interest in the customer's needs, and being transparent in their communication and actions.

Moreover, the study by Kucukusta and Kara (2019) highlights the importance of providing value to customers in KAM strategies. The authors argue that companies should focus on delivering customised solutions that meet the specific needs of their key accounts. By doing so, they can create a perception of added value and enhance customer satisfaction, ultimately improving the success of KAM strategies. In contrast, some authors suggest that KAM strategies may not always be suitable for all types of customers. For instance, a study by Ellegaard and Medlin (2020) argue that KAM is more suitable for customers who have complex needs and require a high level of customisation. For simpler customers, a more standardised approach may be more effective.

Benefits of key account management amongst catering organisations

KAM strategies have been shown to offer several benefits to organisations, including increased customer loyalty, improved customer satisfaction, and higher profitability (Maia, 2020).

One of the key benefits of KAM is increased customer loyalty. According to Salehi *et al.* (2019), KAM strategies help companies to develop a deep understanding of their customers' needs, preferences, and challenges, which enables them to provide tailored solutions that meet their unique requirements. This, in turn, fosters a sense of trust and loyalty between the customer and the company, leading to long-term

relationships that are beneficial to both parties. Another benefit of KAM is improved customer satisfaction. By focusing on their most important customers, companies can ensure that their needs are consistently met and that any issues are addressed quickly and effectively. This leads to higher levels of customer satisfaction and a reduced risk of losing valuable customers to competitors (Maia, 2020). KAM strategies have been shown to increase profitability by companies focusing on their most important customers and identifying opportunities to cross-sell and upsell additional products or services, leading to increased revenue and profitability (Salehi *et al.*, 2019).

While many authors agree on the benefits of KAM, there are also differing views on the most effective KAM strategies. For example, some authors argue that a collaborative approach to KAM, where the customer and the company work together to achieve mutual goals, is more effective than a transactional approach, where the focus is on short-term sales (Hinterhuber & Liozu, 2019). Other authors argue that a hybrid approach, which combines elements of both collaborative and transactional KAM, is the most effective (Maia, 2020). Another benefit of KAM is that it helps organisations to prioritise their resources and efforts towards their most important customers, which can lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness. According to Maia (2020), KAM enables companies to allocate their resources and efforts to the customers that generate the most revenue and profitability, allowing them to maximize their return on investment. Moreover, KAM can also provide valuable insights into market trends and customer needs, which can inform product development and innovation through working closely with key customers, companies can gain a better understanding of their evolving needs and preferences, which can help them to develop new products and services that meet those needs (Salehi *et al.*, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, where the business environment is highly competitive, KAM strategies can provide several benefits to companies like increased customer loyalty. According to Ndlela and Mhaka (2021), KAM strategies enable companies to understand their customers' needs and tailor their products and services to meet those needs resulting in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Mudavanhu and Manyani (2020) argue that KAM strategies help companies to build strong relationships with their customers, which enhances customer trust and loyalty. Another benefit of KAM strategies in Zimbabwe is increased revenues. According to Chikandiwa, Mhlanga, and Muzenda (2020), companies that implement KAM strategies are likely to experience increased revenues from their key accounts because it allows companies to identify and focus on high-value customers who generate a significant proportion of their revenue. Moreover, KAM strategies in Zimbabwe can also lead to reduced costs. According to Musakwa and Mavhundutse (2020),

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KAM strategies enable companies to streamline their operations and reduce costs associated with customer acquisition and retention. By focusing on key accounts, companies can reduce marketing and sales costs while still achieving their revenue targets. However, some authors argue that KAM strategies may not be suitable for all companies in Zimbabwe. For instance, Ibuddin and others (2021) argue that KAM strategies may not be appropriate for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that lack the resources to implement such strategies effectively. They suggest that SMEs should focus on other customer relationship management strategies that are more suited to their resources and capabilities.

Challenges of key account management amongst catering organisations

While key account management (KAM) strategies offer several benefits to companies, they also come with their own set of challenges. One of the challenges of KAM strategies is the high cost of implementation, as its strategies require significant investment in resources, including personnel, technology, and training (Kull, Korkman, and Tahtinen (2020) which can be a challenge for companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with limited resources.

According to Cannon and Homburg (2021), another challenge of KAM strategies is the difficulty of identifying and managing key accounts, as different customers may have different needs and expectations. Moreover, managing key accounts requires specialised skills and expertise, which may be lacking in some organisations resulting in increased competition and conflict among key accounts. According to Ndlela and Mhaka (2021), focusing on key accounts may lead to less attention being paid to non-key accounts, which can result in increased competition and conflict among key accounts, especially problematic in highly competitive industries.

Some authors argue that KAM strategies may not be suitable for all types of businesses. For instance, Shamsuddoha and Hossain (2019) argue that KAM strategies may be more appropriate for business-to-business (B2B) companies than business-to-consumer (B2C) companies. This is because B2B companies typically have a smaller number of high-value customers, making it easier to identify and manage key accounts.

Another challenge of KAM strategies is the potential for over-reliance on key accounts. As noted by Homburg, Workman, and Jensen (2020), relying too heavily on key accounts can be risky, as it can leave companies vulnerable to changes in the market or the loss of a key account. This can be especially problematic for companies that have not adequately diversified their customer base.

Theoretical framework

Due to its widespread and interdisciplinary use, key account management is a well-known concept. It is understandable why it has developed into a corporate need as well as a popular academic issue. Experience determines strategic business outcomes, notably future consumer behavior and overall organisational performance, according to Jordaan and Badenhorst (2022), who view it as a key cornerstone for customer-oriented business operations (Gao, Melero & Sese, 2019). The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) serves as the theoretical framework for this research study.

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP)

It is based on the idea that how satisfied customers perceive their experiences reflects how closely the performance actually lives up to their prior expectations. According to Zhang, Chen, Petrovsky and Walker (2021) these expectations are what customers anticipate from the performance of goods and services. Favero and Kim (2021) posit that these expectations are based on four perspectives: what people anticipate to get from a service experience relative to the effort they put in, their desired or benchmark performance experiences, and how they feel about their interaction with the frontline employees. These viewpoints all agree that expectations are typically said to have developed in advance of the product or service encounter based on prior product or service experience, or, in the case of a new customer, expectations are informed by recommendations as well as advertising/promotional messages in various media (Abbas, 2020). Customers then subjectively assess the actual performance following a product or service experience by contrasting it with their prior expectations. Authors such as Noda (2019) distinguish between two types of disconfirmation in this regard: positive disconfirmation (actual performance previous expectations) and negative disconfirmation (actual performance > prior expectations) as shown in Figure 1.
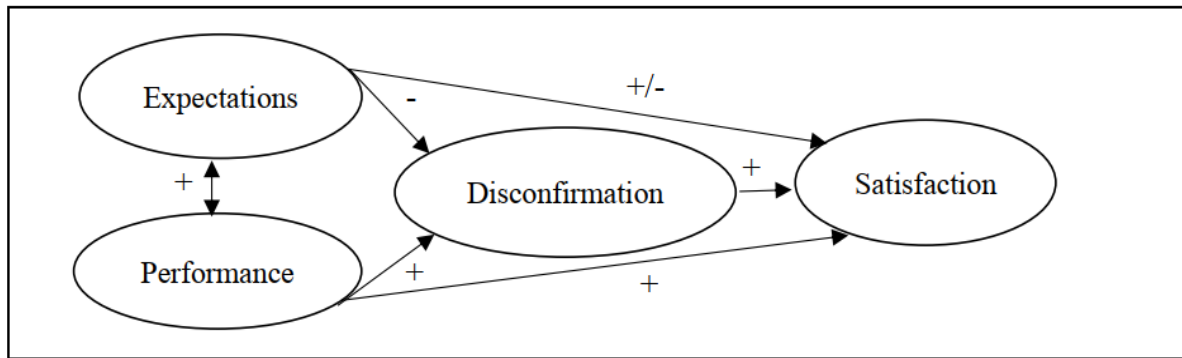
Figure 1: The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model
Source: Grimmelikhuijsen and Porumbescu, 2017.

According to the principles of this theory, the assessment process should thus place equal emphasis on actual performance and expectations (beliefs and assumptions). Ali, Saleh, Akoi, Abdulrahman, Muhamed, Noori and Anwar (2021) argued that, one's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction depends on how successfully these expectations have been met. Additionally, variances in these expectations lead to variations in the results of satisfaction. Positive disconfirmation would result in satisfaction whereas negative disconfirmation would result in discontent, according to the findings of earlier research that applied the EDP to the catering industry (Zhang *et al.*, 2021). When applied to the catering sector, confirmation happens when the customer service experience matches prior expectations, while disconfirmation happens when the experience falls short of those expectations. This study focuses on the disconfirmation, best defined by Devesh (2019) as the mismatch between pre-purchase expectations or wishes and actual performance, or, as Raviadaran, Dastane, Maarif and Satar (2019) put it, the dissonance between one's perception of something and its actuality. Although it is generally agreed that a customer's level of satisfaction is determined by how well the service experience dimensions performed in comparison to their prior expectations, there have been theoretical disagreements in the literature about whether these expectations are best evaluated separately or together (Gao, Merelo-Polo & Sese, 2019).

Conceptual Framework

The study is based on the following conceptual framework, with Key Account Management practices viewed as an independent variable and customer purchase intentions as a dependent variable.
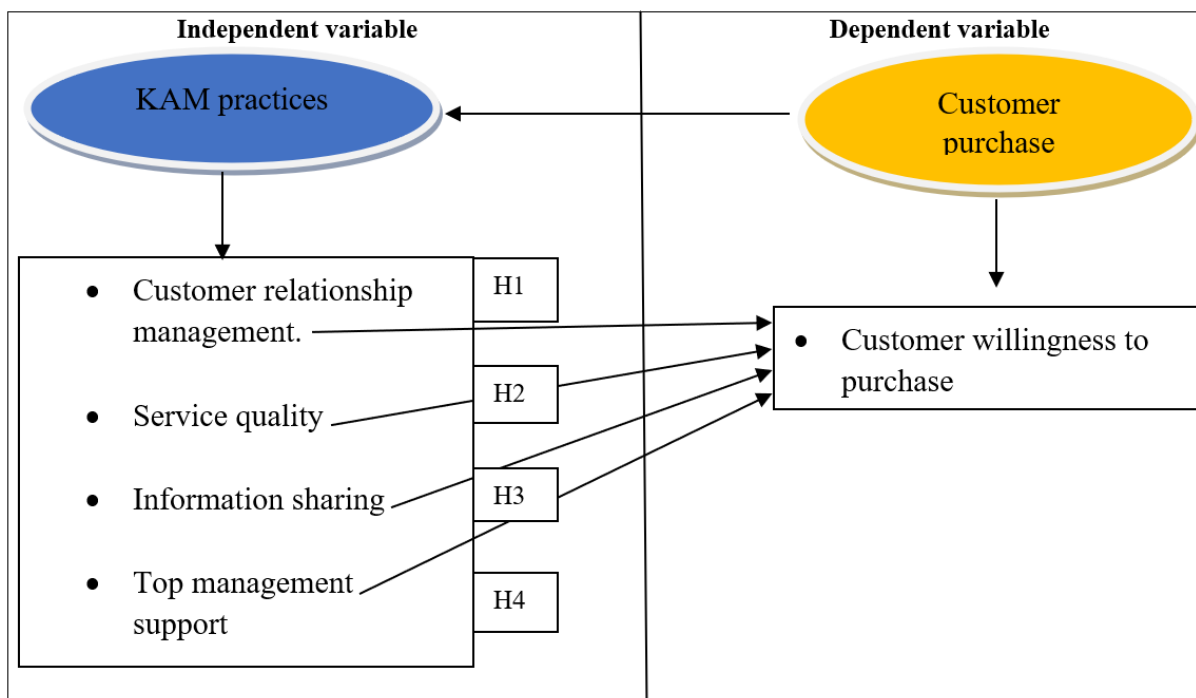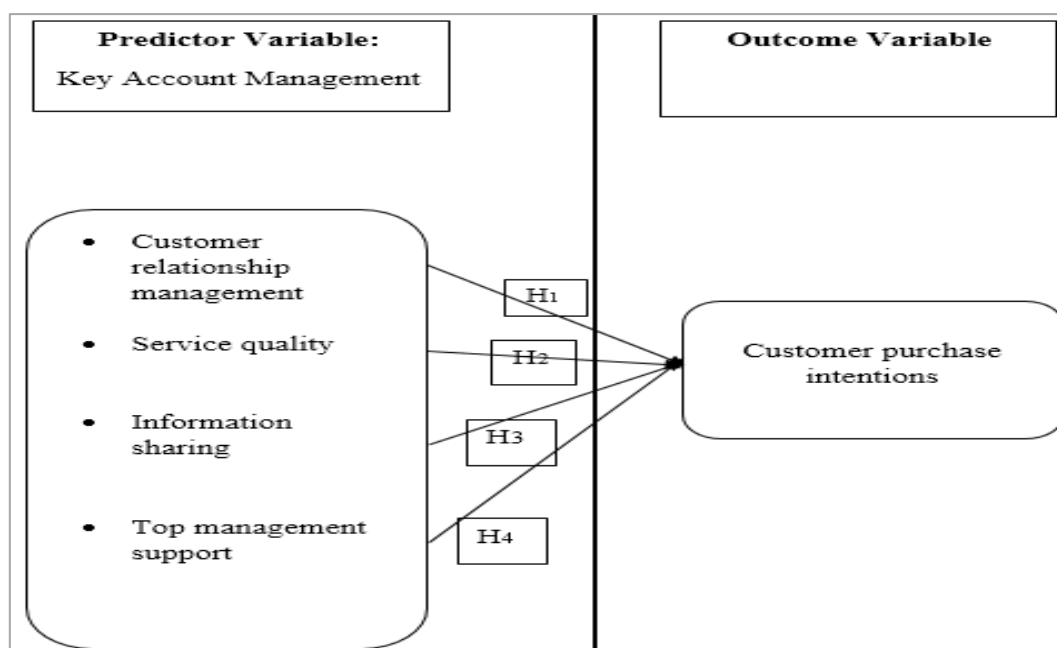

Figure 2: Conceptual framework
Source: Researcher's Derivative, 2025.

Source: Researcher's Derivative, 2025.

The conceptual framework above reflects the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research utilised the pragmatist paradigm to generate solutions to the research problem. Pragmatism is concerned with "what works" and solutions to problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study the researchers adopted a pragmatist research philosophy thus implying the adoption of the mixed methods approach which is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The study was based on the sequential explanatory design method. The sequential design consists of a linear data collection and analysis process in terms of which the assembly of one set of data (for example quantitative data from managers catering company enterprises) will be followed by the collection and analysis of another data set (for instance qualitative data from customers or clients/key accounts) (Mareee, 2019). The study utilised a merged approach of deductive and inductive approaches known as integrative adbuctive approach. The survey strategy was chosen as it enabled the gathering of data from the sample in the food catering sector without the use of many resources. Data was collected through both drop-and-collect strategy and online communication, using questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The researchers used 100 owners of catering organisations as respondents. Purposive sampling was employed to select research participants for the questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Thus, food catering company managers (using questionnaires) and customers (using semi-structured interviews) were purposively chosen as they were considered to have the necessary information regarding the impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 26 package while qualitative was analysed using thematic analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Managers and key customers were the targeted respondents in this study. A total of 120 questionnaires were physically administered out of which 100 were completely answered which translated into an 83.33% response rate. Pertaining to the interviews, 8 out of the scheduled 15 interviews were carried out translating into a 53.33% response percentage. The sample that resulted from the response rate was suitable enough for inferences to be proffered on the characteristics of the all-inclusive population.

The importance of key account management amongst catering organisations in Bulawayo

The respondents' views on the importance of key account management amongst catering organisations in Bulawayo were established through the use of a five-point Likert scale. In this regard, the descriptive statistics of these scale items are presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on the importance of key account management amongst catering organisations in Bulawayo

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Key account management plays a critical role in building strong relationships with their most important catering clients.	100	1	5	4.15	1.473
The organisation prioritises its key account management program as a critical component of its overall business strategy.	100	1	5	2.25	1.459
The organisation's key account management program ensures that it understands and meets the specific needs and preferences of its most important catering clients.	100	1	5	4.16	.615
The organisation's key account management program has contributed to increased revenue and profitability from top catering clients.	100	1	5	2.21	1.282
The organisation invests significant time and resources into training and developing our key account managers to ensure they are equipped to effectively manage our most important catering clients.	100	1	5	2.51	.969
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2025.

Respondents agreed that key account management plays a critical role in building strong relationships with their most important catering clients as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.15$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 1.473. The importance of key account management lies in its ability to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the supplier and the customer.

Representative of an impediment to key account management, respondents disagreed ($\bar{x} = 2.25$: SD 1.459) they prioritised key account management programmes as a critical component of the overall business strategy. It was agreed that the key account management program ensures that the organisation understands and meets the specific needs and preferences of the most important catering clients as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.16$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.615. KAM can help to improve the overall customer experience, by providing a dedicated point of contact for

key accounts and ensuring that their needs are met in a timely and effective manner.

Some respondents disagreed that their key account management programme has contributed to increased revenue and profitability from their top catering clients. This was substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 2.21$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 1.282. Respondents disagreed that they invest significant time and resources into training and developing their key account managers to ensure they are equipped to effectively manage their most important catering clients. ($\bar{x} = 2.51$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.969).

The key account management strategies that are being used by catering organisations in Bulawayo

The respondents' views on the key account management strategies that are being used by catering organisations in Bulawayo were established through the use of a five-point Likert scale. In this regard, the descriptive statistics of these scale items are presented in detail in Table 4.6.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on the key account management strategies that are being used by catering organisations in Bulawayo

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organisation regularly conducts an analysis of its key account management strategy to identify areas for improvement.	100	1	5	4.35	.925
The organisation has a formal process in place for identifying its key accounts and assigning dedicated account managers to manage them.	100	1	5	4.64	.785
The organisation's key account management strategy involves regular communication and collaboration with key clients to better understand their needs and preferences.	100	1	5	4.62	.801

The organisation uses data analytics to track and measure the success of its key account management program and make data-driven decisions.	100	1	5	4.73	.633
The organisation's key account management strategy includes a focus on developing long-term relationships with its most important catering clients.	100	1	5	4.55	.704
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2025.

Respondents agreed that their organisation regularly conducts an analysis of its key account management strategy to identify areas for improvement as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.35$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.925. Furthermore, respondents highlighted that they had a formal process in place for identifying their key accounts and assigning dedicated account managers to manage them ($\bar{x} = 4.64$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.785). This strategy involves tailoring the company's products or services to meet the specific needs of the customer.

It was agreed that key account management strategy involves regular communication and collaboration with their clients to better understand their needs and preferences as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.62$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.801.

Respondents noted that they use data analytics to track and measure the success of their key account management program and make data-driven decisions. ($\bar{x} = 4.73$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.633). Thus, another approach is the use of technology to improve key account management processes. For example, in South Africa, businesses in the telecommunications industry are using digital platforms to manage their key accounts more effectively. Lastly, the data showed that key account management strategy includes a focus on developing long-term relationships with their most important catering clients as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.55$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.704. This involves working closely with key decision-makers to identify their goals and objectives and aligning them with the company's own goals and objectives. This strategy can help to build trust and credibility with key accounts and increase the likelihood of long-term partnerships.

Theme 1: Key Account Management Strategies

In support of the quantitative findings, a variety of key account management strategies were mentioned culminating in the first theme:

Dedicated key account management departments

Managers from selected organisations echoed the presence of dedicated key account management departments: -

"We are in the process of trying to recruit someone to champion this space." (R4, F, Age 40 – 45 years).

"We have a fully-fledged department for key account management." (R1, M, Age 40 – 50)

"We don't have enough personnel to take care of service issues right across the organisations." (R1, M, Age 40 – 50)

"When it comes to the marketing side, the integration is not very seamless. Relationship managers prefer to handle their clients so service team does not have enough influence on that side." (R1, M, Age 40 – 50)

"We do have a dedicated team through our corporate affairs and their major objective is to make sure that in terms of our key account management we remain relevant and we please our customers." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).

"We have embraced key account management projects. We have a program that focuses on key account management." (R3, M, Age 40 -45).

"Normally it was under risk, but we have done we have created centres that deal with key account management." (R5, M, Age 40-45).

Food catering organisations are social environments where customers interact with service components in order to engage in both individual and group activities. Food catering organisations, according to a growing body of literature, provide unparalleled opportunities for human contact. It is the researchers' interpretation that dedicated key account departments will serve this purpose.

Senior management involvement

Senior management involvement was noted as critical in ensuring key account management buy in:

"From time to time they're [top management] visible, sometimes they visit a branch and get feedback from customers." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).

"Senior management are involved but at different levels." (R4, F, Age 40 – 45 years).

"Senior management is involved. Everyone is involved from bottom to top. We are in business cause of customers." (R3, M, Age 40 -45).

The senior management team is in charge of selecting the best candidates for the position, training them in best practices, inspiring and encouraging them to produce outcomes, and keeping track of their performance. It is the researchers' interpretation that

organisations will see success when they have a knowledgeable workforce on the ground.

Use of technological tools in key account management.

The use of technological tools in key account management was one of the key strategies highlighted:

"Chatbot enhances key account management." (R4, F, Age 40 – 45 years).
"Need for automation to ensure customers can give feedback on their experience real-time." (R3, M, Age 40 -45).
"A digital interface leads to better quality feedback. There is a huge opportunity in ICT for harnessing customer feedback." (R3, M, Age 40 -45).
"We have contact centre which runs 24/7. Technology is the way to go. We must maximise on technology. We have WhatsApp chatbots, mobile applications." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).
"They [key account management technologies] are user friendly for any use of any age." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).
"We must continue upgrading our systems." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).

"Some of the systems deal with network so we might not have control for example when there is no network at Econet." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).
"The paperless system has brought relief to customers who are away." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).
"We have a CRM system. Customer experience is ongoing and not a once off thing." (R4, F, Age 40 – 45 years).

It is clear therefore, that retaining customers must be a major pre-occupation for food catering organisations, and that so as to survive, they must have a strategy.

Customers' perceptions regarding their purchase intentions after experiencing the key account management strategies.

The respondents' views on the customers' perceptions regarding their purchase intentions after experiencing the key account management strategies were established through the use of a five-point Likert scale. In this regard, the descriptive statistics of these scale items are presented in detail in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on the customers' perceptions regarding their purchase intentions after experiencing the key account management strategies

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The key account management strategies in place have positively influenced their customers' intention to continue using our catering services.	100	1	5	2.75	1.029
Their key account managers regularly communicate with customers to understand their needs and preferences, and this has positively impacted their perception of the brand and services.	100	1	5	4.34	.934
The key account management strategies implemented by the organisation have resulted in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.	100	2	5	4.50	.704
The organisation's customers have reported a positive experience with their key account managers, which has led to an increase in referrals and new business.	100	1	5	4.39	.994
The organisation regularly measures and evaluates the success of our key account management strategies, using customer feedback to continuously improve the program.	100	2	5	3.84	.884
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2025.

Respondents disagreed that the key account management strategies in place have positively influenced their customers' intention to continue using their catering services. ($\bar{x}$ = 2.75 out of 5; and standard deviation of 1.029). Thus, the effectiveness of KAM strategies is dependent on the perception of customers towards the approach taken by companies. Furthermore, respondents highlighted that key account managers regularly communicate with customers to understand their needs and preferences, and this has positively

impacted their perception of their brand and services ($\bar{x}$ = 4.34 out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.934). It was agreed that the key account management strategies implemented by their organisation have resulted in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x}$ = 4.50 out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.704.

Respondents noted that customers have reported a positive experience with their key account

managers, which has led to an increase in referrals and new business ($\bar{x}$ = 4.39 out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.994). On the other hand, some authors argue that KAM strategies may not always be effective in creating value for customers. The study suggests that companies can build trust by demonstrating their expertise, showing a genuine interest in the customer's needs, and being transparent in their communication and actions. Respondents were indifferent regarding whether their organisations regularly measure and evaluate the success of their key account management strategies, using customer feedback to continuously improve the programme. This is shown by an overall mean score of $\bar{x}$ = 3.84 out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.884. Some authors suggest that KAM strategies may not always be suitable for all types of customers hence the indifference to measure.

The benefits that catering organisations in Bulawayo are experiencing in adapting to the introduction of key account management strategies

The respondents' views on the benefits that catering organisations in Bulawayo are experiencing in adapting to the introduction of key account management strategies were established. Respondents were indifferent regarding whether the implementation of key account management strategies has improved the profitability of the food catering organisation. This is shown by an overall mean score of $\bar{x}$ = 3.96 out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.852. However, some authors highlight that another benefit of KAM strategies in Zimbabwe is increased revenues because it allows companies to identify and focus on high-value customers who generate a significant proportion of their revenue. Respondents were neutral regarding whether key account management strategies have helped their organisations build stronger relationships with top clients. This is shown by an overall mean score of $\bar{x}$ = 3.81 out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.971. It was agreed that the use of key account management strategies has resulted in more efficient use of resources in their food catering organisation as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x}$ = 4.01 out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.927. KAM enables companies to allocate their resources and efforts to the customers that generate the most revenue and profitability, allowing them to maximise their return on investment.

Respondents noted that key account management has helped their organisations better understand the needs and preferences of top clients ($\bar{x}$ = 4.09 out of 5; and standard deviation of 1.016). This is likely to lead to increased customer loyalty and in turn, foster a sense of trust and loyalty between the customer and the company, leading to long-term relationships that are beneficial to both parties. Some respondents were indifferent regarding whether overall, food catering organisations had benefited from the implementation of key account management strategies. This is shown by an overall mean score of $\bar{x}$ = 3.75 out of 5; and standard

deviation of 0.989. In Zimbabwe, where the business environment is highly competitive, KAM strategies can provide several benefits to companies. One of the benefits of KAM strategies in Zimbabwe is increased customer loyalty.

Theme 2: The role of key account management

The role of key account management was also delineated in the qualitative findings:

Service is the competitive differentiator

Service was mentioned as a key competitive differentiator:

> *"Once complaints and queries are brought, the next step is for the business to look for a solution (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).*
> *"Service is the competitive differentiator in our industry. The products are pretty much the same." (R1, M, Age 40 – 50)*
> *"As organisations we are pretty much doing the same things. So the real differentiator is key account management (R3, M, Age 40 -45).*
> *"So when you cannot render your service correctly, you will not be able to retain clients." (R1, M, Age 40 – 50).*
> *"It enhances responsiveness to customer issues." (R4, F, Age 40 – 45 years).*
> *"Turnaround time for customer related issues is now actually shorter which is something the customers actually noticed." (R3, M, Age 40 - 45).*

It is the researchers' interpretation that pursuant to ensuring the food catering sector organisations compete efficiently in their markets and are profitable and sustainable, they must not only focus on attracting new customers but must also take into consideration means to maintain a rich relationship with current customers through key account management.

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction was viewed as a consequence of key account management:

> *"Positive feedback from customers. There are more touch points and customers are seeing it." (R4, F, Age 40 – 45 years).*
> *"We continue to have some initiatives that would actually improve our customer service." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).*
> *"From key account management systems you get to know what the customer wants and know what the customer goes through." (R5, M, Age 40-45)*

Quality service through key account management has come to be viewed as a strategic tool for accomplishing business operational efficiency and enhanced business performance resulting in businesses

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with higher quality outperform those exhibiting poor key account management.

The challenges that catering organisations in Bulawayo experienced in adapting to the introduction of key account management strategies

The respondents' views on the challenges that catering organisations in Bulawayo experienced in adapting to the introduction of key account management strategies were unveiled as follows:-

It was found that food catering organisations faced significant challenges in implementing key account management strategies as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.42$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 1.056. While key account management (KAM) strategies offer several benefits to companies, they also come with their own set of challenges, like high cost of implementation which is a problem, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with limited resources. Respondents noted that the introduction of key account management strategies has caused disruptions in existing business processes ($\bar{x} = 4.13$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 1.031). Another challenge of KAM strategies is the difficulty of identifying and managing key accounts.

Some respondents were indifferent regarding whether their organisation has faced resistance from staff members in adapting to key account management strategies. This is shown by an overall mean score of $\bar{x} = 3.99$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 1.150. Some authors argue that KAM strategies may not be suitable for all types of businesses because B2B companies typically have a smaller number of high-value customers Business to consumer B2C, making it easier to identify and manage key accounts. Respondents noted that it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of key account management strategies in the food catering organisation ($\bar{x} = 4.16$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.788). Some authors argue that KAM strategies may not be effective in all industries. For example, in highly fragmented industries with many small customers, KAM strategies may not be cost-effective (Kull *et al.*, 2020). In such cases, other customer relationship management strategies, such as mass customisation or customer segmentation, may be more appropriate.

Lastly, it was noted that overall, their organisations found it challenging to fully integrate key account management strategies into their business operations as substantiated by a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.39$ out of 5; and standard deviation of 0.994. Managing key accounts can also be time-consuming and resource-intensive, can divert resources away from other important activities, such as new product development or marketing to non-key accounts.

Theme 3: Challenges

Lastly, people and system challenges were mentioned as key impediments pursuant to realising the envisaged gains of key account management.

People challenges

The following people management issues were identified:

> *"One of the problems was staff appreciating the role they had to play. The message we were trying to sell is key account management is everyone's role." (R3, M, Age 40 -45)."*
> *"People are much more used to the traditional way of doing things." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50)."*

Notwithstanding the documented importance of key account management, there have been methodological problems and application issues regarding its operationalisation leading to poor performance (Keiningham, Askoy, Bruce, Cadet, Clennell, Hodgkinson and Kearney, 2019).

System and technical challenges

System and technical challenges proved to be a tall order;

> *"There are challenges in terms of security and the market being skeptical. Hence, the need to educate those concerned." (R2, M, Age 40 – 50).*
> *"There are some transactions that may fail and this is one of the painful points." (R5, M, Age 40-45).*
> *"The challenge as adoption rate." (R4, F, Age 40 – 45 years).*
> *".....Compatibility issues. We can't access some of the elements of the key account management system. We have a system that does not accommodate some of the benefits the key account management system offers." (R4, F, Age 40 – 45 years).*

It is the researcher's interpretation that this has the impact of reducing customers' confidence.

Inferential Statistics (Regression Analysis)

Regression analysis was utilised to establish the nature of the impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions amongst selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo. Tables 4.10 to 4.12 presents the model summary, as wells as the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and coefficients regarding the impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions through a case study of selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo.

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Table 4: Model Summary – The impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions amongst selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.737ᵃ	.543	.536	.654

a. Predictors: (Constant), Key account management practices
Source: SPSS Primary Data Analysis, 2025.

Table 4 shows the 'r' value which is the correlation coefficient that signifies the degree to which the criterion variable (customer purchase intentions) is in essence predicted by the predictor (key account management practices). The value derived of 0.737 consequently indicates a strong and high degree of prediction (positive relationship). Conversely, the r-square value speaks to the coefficient of determination regarding the proportion of criterion variable variance that can be credited to the independent variable. Therefore, key account management practices dimensions as the independent variables respectively accounted for roughly 54.3% of the variation in customer purchase intentions. Due to the fact that the remainder of the variance, 45.7%, was not accounted for, this insinuates there could be other variables that are within and also outside of the scope of this study that predict performance besides the factors studied.

Table 5: ANOVA - The impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions amongst selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	165.157	5	33.031	77.142	.000ᵃ
	Residual	138.734	324	.428		
	Total	303.891	329			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Key account management practices
b. Dependent Variable: Customer purchase intentions
Source: SPSS Primary Data Analysis, 2025.

In Table 5, the F-ratio examines the degree to which the whole regression model is a perfect fit for the data. Table 5 signifies that key account management practices statistically and meaningfully predict customer purchase intentions, $F (5, 324) = 77.142$, $p < 0.05$. Consequently, the regression model was a perfect fit of the data.

Table 6: Coefficients- The impact of key account management practices on customer purchase intentions amongst selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.022	.215		-.103	.918
	Key account management practices	.450	.044	.438	10.185	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer purchase intentions
Source: SPSS Primary Data Analysis, 2025.

In the coefficients table 6, the unstandardised beta (B) is the initial unit of analysis. In this regard, B is the slope of the independent variables (the predictor variables). In this regard, key account management practices had a positive relationship (extent noted at 0.450), with customer purchase intentions. Therefore, for each one (1) unit increase in the proportion of key account management practices, customer purchase intentions increased by 0.450. The overall value of p as established in the ANOVA table was 0.00 which was below 0.05. Therefore, the following hypothesis was reinforced:

H1: Key account management practices have a positive and significant impact on customer purchase intentions amongst selected food catering enterprises in Bulawayo.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:
1. Food catering organisations should conduct a comprehensive survey with their clients to provide a clear understanding of the effectiveness of key account management strategies currently being used.
2. Organisations should develop a comprehensive key account management strategy that outline the objectives, goals, and action plans for managing key accounts, taking into consideration the unique needs and requirements of each account. The strategy should also include a clear communication plan, performance metrics, and a feedback mechanism to ensure continuous improvement.

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3. There is need for a deep understanding of each account's business, goals, challenges, and preferences. Organisations must invest time in building relationships with key stakeholders, conducting regular account reviews, and gathering feedback to gain insights into their needs and expectations.

4. Appropriate metrics should be provided in order to encourage the delivery of good service whilst retaining pricing value.

5. To guarantee that the KAM strategy is implemented smoothly, the steps must be carefully planned and organised. Food catering organisations should overcome their inclination to start and finish more work too quickly.

6. Organisations should assign dedicated key account managers with the required expertise and knowledge is crucial for successful account management.

7. Effective key account management requires collaboration and coordination across different internal departments, such as sales, operations, and culinary teams. Therefore, organisations should encourage cross-functional collaboration and establish processes for sharing information and insights among teams.

8. Conducting a post-purchase survey among customers who have experienced key account management strategies can provide valuable data on their perceptions and purchase intentions.

9. Tailor catering services to meet the unique requirements of each key account is imperative. This may involve adapting menus, offering specialised dietary options, or providing personalised event planning and logistics services.

10. Organisations should regularly review the service levels provided to key accounts to ensure they align with their changing needs and expectations.

11. Analysing financial data of catering organisations before and after the introduction of key account management strategies can provide quantitative evidence of the benefits.

12. Organisations should establish standard procedures in terms of dealing with clients by employing the four-phased strategy as part of their policy framework in order to transform their organisation from one that is in turmoil to one that successfully delivers a marketing-driven client experience: (1) Establishing the issue and planning a solution is the first step. The next steps are to (2) ascertain the present state of KAM and composition across the organisation, (3) align marketing initiatives, and (4) streamline operations and experience to drive impact and growth.

13. To stay relevant and competitive, food catering organisations should continuously innovate catering offerings and stay ahead of industry trends.

14. KAM Strategy needs the active cooperation and buy-in of top management and inclusivity of all concerned stakeholders.

15. Food catering organisations should provide training and support to key account stakeholders to enhance their knowledge and understanding of catering services.

16. Regularly measure and demonstrate the value the organisation brings to key accounts. This involves tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) that align with their business goals and providing reports or dashboards that showcase the impact of catering services.

CONCLUSION

The major findings of the study concluded that key account management practices have a positive and significant impact on customer purchase intentions amongst selected food catering businesses in Bulawayo and are a vital strategy for businesses, particularly for maintaining and developing long-term relationships with customers. Catering businesses face many challenges that negatively impact on their viability and in order to mitigate those challenges, they should employ a number of strategies that enable them to survive and continue operating. It is concluded that by focusing on their most important customers, companies can ensure that their needs are consistently met and that issues are addressed quickly and effectively leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction and a reduced risk of losing valuable customers to competitors. Key Account Management (KAM) strategies offer several benefits to companies, they also come with their own set of challenges. The study established that in Zimbabwe, catering businesses are increasingly being recognised as generating meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities.

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