

Challenges in Implementing Moral Legitimacy in Supply Chain Performance of Crop Production SMEs in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: Globally there is rising pressure in modern SMEs businesses to make sure or ascertain improved moral standards in the supply chains operations on the grounds of sustainability, competitiveness, and growth in the face of the constantly changing global supply chains. In SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe, are exposed to tremendous challenges in the implementation of moral legitimacy in the day-to-day working in their operations, in the most effective, efficient, and most economic possible manner to improve performance. The goal of the article is to identify, describe and evaluate challenges faced in crop production by SMEs in Zimbabwe settings and also in the context of strengthening and improving their supply chain performance. SPSS v 20 was employed to analyse quantitative data. Surveys were conducted to gather data using questionnaires using five-point Likert scale. Sample size of 105 SMEs in crop production SMEs from Harare Central Business District was utilized in the study to measure and analyze factors interdicting moral legitimacy implementation in crop production SMEs chain to improve responsiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness in their value chains. Descriptive data were utilized to explicate how respondents were associated with moral legitimacy issues in supply chain performance. SMEs crop production, just like most business enterprises could not afford to disregard business moral practices. Many crop production SMEs business failures are as the result of a lack of moral legitimacy practices, especially those associated with employees, internal processes, environmental impact, product footprint, and top management. The article aims to contribute to the already existing body of literature on the moral practices of SMEs in developing countries. As such, SME owners and managers will find it useful to utilize the findings of this article to design policy frameworks and guidelines to improve organization reputations, productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability.

Keywords: Moral Legitimacy, Supply Chain Performance, Crop Production, SMEs

1. Introduction

Currently, the pressure is increasing for business organisations to be morally upright. In addition, these business entities, get pressure in running their operations in the most economical, efficient, and effective manner possible to increase performance [20] As a result of fast and constantly changing competitive environments, businesses are left with the need to adapt, innovate, altogether with new ways of meeting competition rather than the traditional ways of offering better products, or lower prices [25]. In order to

achieve this, these SMEs, businesses need to evaluate parts of their supply-chain process. Again, there is need to understand processes that are not competitive enough, study, understand and analyse what customers needs, that are not met, institute improvement goals, and quickly implement essential improvements. SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe, presume that ethical issues are impartially confined to the way of production, but it is critical in other layers in supplies, production, traders, and retailers till it finally reaches the consumer. In the whole system, there is a significant number of concerns that can be generally shared into diverse categories, which are can be named farming

ethical practices, labor and welfare, health, safety and environment in supply chain assimilation, information partaking, and supply chain system design. In many illustrations, supply chain demands employing a network of people with different experiences in terms of nationality, culture, race, political affiliation, education, and socioeconomic status. Each and everyone of these persons comes into the system with dissimilar values, goals, and perceptions of acceptable behavior. This diverse experiences creates moral contests issues for individuals as well as managers [1]. These challenges must be identified and interpreted accurately in the value chain.

On other hand, in its daily operations and activities, most organizations may affect the way those in society perceive it [13]. The organization's actions or activities and operations will, in the longer run, determine whether it is recognized or favored by the wider society as being lawful or not. If an organization persistently carries out its activities in a way that most people in the society believe is irresponsible or uncontrolled, there are high chances that its legitimacy will be taken away and its existence will become debatable. As for crop SMEs in Zimbabwe, one must consider the numerous and critical concerns involved when the product, information and financial change, going through various stages on their way up and down the chain in terms of processes, storage, packaging, transportation, distribution, and consumption.

However, some reseachers formulated, an interconnected themes paper which is identified as being essential determining corporate issues for use in exposing challenges in enforcing moral legitimacy in supply chain organizations [35]. These themes are borrowed in this research to study challenges encountered by crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe. To begin with, the impact theme maintains that an item must have a firm-specific impact to be an issue [3]. In giving an example, the construct of sustainable development is a movement in environmental debates worldwide, but unless that trend affects the business now, or in near future, it is not an issue, thus issue identification. The second and third critical constructs are controversy and the existence of expectation gaps, such as dynamic corporate operations or changing stakeholder anticipations and expectations contribute to controversy as gaps are exposed and possible resolutions to the gaps challenge both corporate legitimacy and stakeholder costs and benefits gap closure [10]. In most third world countries, in giving an example of Zimbabwe, the suppliers (SMEs) play a pivotal function because they assist firms to improve and increase supply chain responsiveness cost, competitiveness and reliability.. It is vital for management of crop production SMEs to be highly aware and cognisant of critical moral concerns for supply risks, such as delays in receipt of the material; or disparity in quantity supplied, material being of poorer quality or damaged; and the variation in commercial terms and delaying the supplies.

While many large companies have acquired the reputation of the moral standard by applying moral standards, crop

production SMEs in Zimbabwe have a weakness in identifying and interpreting issues concerning moral legitimacy in their supply chains activities, such as the significance of trustworthiness with employees, clients, suppliers, and society at large. The unequaled challenges and opportunities that these SMEs come across mostly tempt them to deviate from normally accepted societal practices and norms when dealing with their respective stakeholders, in product design, innovation and employees [30]. These sediments, negatively compromises legitimacy in their farming, production, marketing, and distribution of their proceeds. As can be noted that globally customers nowadays tend to need more quality, good choice, design, convenience, innovation, and service, and they want to spend less with little effort, time money, without risk.

In Zimbabwean instance, it is noteworthy to mention that, the crop production SMEs, which are heading the land reform program, in the first decade after spearheading the land reform they did not cohere to acceptable norms or behaviors when it comes to the transfer of property, and remained outside the streams of review concerning the issue of moral legitimacy in their supply chains. There are also routine failures when it comes to behavior associated with not maintaining transparency, honour, integrity, trustworthiness, and engaging in legitimate commercial practices, and together with not taking responsibility and accountability for their actions. Such attitudes, has negatively affected their' reputations as once cited by Ononogbo, M. C [26]. The expanding role of crop production SMEs locally, regionally, and globally, issues and events to do with their supply chain, moral legitimacy towards their agri- business are imperative for them [30]. Furthermore, it is important to note that for crop production SMEs business organizations in Zimbabwe and the managers need to identify, strengthen and interpret moral issues and events in their supply chains and ethically protect their stakeholders and their business interests if they are to survive and remain competitive [1].

To delve into more on challenges in implementing moral legitimacy, this paper is organised as follows; first section based the author described moral legitimate issues in the supply chain which crop SMEs in Zimbabwe fail to identify and interpret as a gap in their business activities, on a synthesis of existing literature on socially accepted practices in supply chain management, environmental management, and small business management. In the second section, for the research method, the author presents the results of the empirical analyses and a discussion. In the third section, the author highlights implications from the results, conclusions and limitations of this study along with directions for future research.

2. Issues and Events Ignored by SMEs in Crop Production

Today, customers oriented focus is of importance, as most businesses are clambering to meet demands, options, styles

features, quick order fulfillment, and fast delivery in ethical ways [6]. Attention to quality has been a long-time competition differentiator and also drawing close equality across the board. As such, meeting specific demands of customers for ethical product delivery, appropriate lead times and acceptable products packaging, have emerged as the new pivotal opportunities for competitive advantage [15]. Crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe appear not to adapt to time in identifying and acting on these issues to exist and prosper in today's modern way of conducting business in their values chains. Challenges such as corruption in supply chain integration, lack of transparency in information sharing and dishonesty, untrustworthy in supply chain system design are some of the issues which need identification and interpretation by crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe to be morally legitimate to regain the mantra breadbasket of Southern Africa'.

2.1. Corruption in Supply Chain Integration

Integration of supply chain, basically incites the essence of the organization process efficiency and optimization of business operations on a crop SMEs in Zimbabwe. The greatest challenge these crop production SMEs face is failing to identify, track and evaluate the stages that come before products enter their production, even after the product has reached the customer. They fail to reflect what will happen after a product is returned after it has been sold. Above the most unattainable challenge for this industry is to prove the owners that from the initial days of their company, they need to organize, monitor, track all the operations that are of great relevance to their companies. In most instances, these SMEs try to make inducements from regular vendors, even potential vendors for them to do transactions with them in the future. Sometimes they prefer companies that bill them with higher prices if they promise to get a contract.

Its globally agreeable, that the exercise of rendering unworthy paybacks to someone or business to obtain workplace, unfitting market, or economic advantage is universally judged and perceived as an immoral business exercise. This is owing to the evil consequences of corruption, bribery, and fraud. Corruption is mainly institutionalized by several cash crops such as tobacco, wheat, cotton, and maize which are perceived as the effective way of doing business [1]. This practice is widespread in most crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, blindly they illegitimize themselves in so doing.

In legitimate practices, the grandness of SMEs incorporation in the Multi-National Company (MNC) lies in the divergence advantage to be acquired through power to exploit differences in product markets and capital, to transmit innovation and learning throughout the firm, as well as handling uncertainty in the economic and political environment in different countries or regions. However, the broad sympathetic approach of conducting business in most crop production SMEs environments is thorough competition which has increased. Furthermore, conditions under which agri- business is made are more turbulent, so legitimate supply chain integration has

no merit. Supply chain integration weakness in these SMEs encompass, the challenge of system associations, which are the synergies amongst sub-systems, and the association amongst the business strategies and supply chain strategies considering the nature of their SMEs limited size, there are more prone to bullying and being bossed around by other bigger unethical customers and suppliers in the supply chain which reduces down the productivity complete supply chain [11]. This arrangement stresses the technical challenges however in most common instances, the challenges by these SMEs do not come from the external environment but from within. Moral legitimacy requires the means of how agri- business integrates its core values, such as honesty, trust, respect, and fairness into decision-making policies and practices, [18].

Nevertheless, it is of great importance to take note that, the failure in some of these values is a major hazard, which is a threat to any organization. This in turn unswervingly affects organizational sustainability. In this regard, SMEs need to be cautious especially to equilibrate the goals of profits maximisation with values of individuals and society through practicing good business practices [32]. Faced by universal operations, market growths, and stricter product quality and regulatory standards, enterprises are becoming drowned and overcome by huge amounts of information from numerous suppliers and customers in different geographic locations that they need to be intelligently managed. This encompasses data from all stages within the supply chain such as pricing of direct and indirect materials, rental contracts, labour agreements, tax documents, compliance certificates and freight bills amongst many others. In business practices by crop SMEs, there are evidence to propose that, moral weaknesses of bribery, corruption, and fraud deter the creation of acceptable legal systems, promote red tape and bureaucracy, which wear away trust, public confidence and hindering the development of the infrastructure on which organizations depend on, as cited by Unruh, G. & Arreola, F., [33]. In addition, counterfeiting practices and piracy have become more dominant in food processing. this is evidenced by the rise of fake seeds and fertilizers sold in the markets. Counterfeiting and piracy have negatively affect society and many agri-businesses operations [1]. It is recommended that SMEs must be action fair, honest, and carry out their decisions of operations with integrity, be trustworthy, respond to stakeholders' needs for and community engagement, to be morally legitimate [13].

Supply chain integration determinations supply chain management contests at the greatest level of the value chain and in all activities. Furthermore, offering supply chain visibility is not for manufacturers, but also for suppliers and partners which potentially increase reliance and improve long-term associations. In the supply chains of most crop SMEs in Zimbabwe, there is reluctance in data management integration. But Abiodun noted with great concern that, data management and supply chain integration are grounded on broad values of integrity, fairness, transparency, responsibility, accountability and focuses based on internal stakeholder issues which includes customer satisfaction,

product quality, employee wages and benefits, Local community and environmental responsibilities would be enhanced [1]. This is a very common phenomenon in crop SMEs in Zimbabwe that looks for morally illegitimate schemes such as getting low-quality goods at lower prices and circumnavigate tax to yield the cutting edge over their competitors in their supply chains as expressed by [31]. When it comes to other businesses they are engaged in contracts at lower prices than necessary because of lack of rules governing their conducts. Krebs proclaims that morality is the balance of individuals, which connotes that, interaction takes place in harmony with some set of rules that balances the burdens and benefits of collaboration [21].

In most lawful and law-abiding enterprises, they manage and seamlessly integrate mission-critical data to do increase efficiencies in projecting future tasks, effective material procurement, inventory management, order fulfillment stock replenishment, and other key manufacturing processes which improve business reputation in the entire supply chain [24]. Investing in a good reputation usually has positive effects in the long run, as the organization develops well-endorsed policies which business stakeholders acquire new relations with its customers. Hence, good reputation can shape lifetime customer value as it leads to stronger business and customer relationships [27]. However, crop production SMEs in multiple developing countries (Zimbabwe included), fall short in cognizance and considerate of the grandness of supply chain integration and its benefits in their value chains. Their only focus is most inclined on individualistic practices for survival in the short term.

2.2. Transparency Data Information Sharing

Data Information sharing in most supply chains face several steepchases. The first and foremost hurdle is alignment of incentives and motivators of diverse partners. It could be naïve of a partner to conceive cooperation and sharing of information as a positive cause to increase business profit. In crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, most partners are suspicious of the possibility of partners misusing information data and harvesting benefits from information sharing. This is characterized by not effectively choking downstream effects from delays caused by one partner and supplier. Many researchers postulate that, the supply chain involves a third-party testing facility, a contract manufacturer, and a freight company warehouses to store inventory [12]. If any of the stages is delayed, it negatively disturbs all the others [34]. Crop production SMEs in most cash crop categories, supply chain partners occasionally share data that relates to subtle cost data, production data, or acquisition price of parts. Some fear that a partner can yield more economic profit from particular partner, but it's much wise to defend a positive profit from the weaker parties through keeping cost hidden and maintaining information superiority. Profits affiliated by superior information is termed the information rent. It's a proven knowledge that businesses or organisations cannot survive or effectively operate if their directors and managers never say the truth, buyers and sellers

do not trust each other even when employees refuse to deliver support to one another and customers [5].

It has been observed by many researchers that SMEs in developing countries, Zimbabwe no exception, even when every partner is definite on positive gain in yield for information sharing, every partner can show a non-cooperative game and bargain over how much. This usually lead to potential failure to in sharing information. Thus, trust and collaboration become critical elements in supply chain partnership. It is advisable for crop production SMEs understand that legitimate way of sharing information is the only way to make sure that the information shared will not be used outside the original intent. These issues remain under cloaks in the past, but it is not so now. With the arrival of media and quick communications methods, the information is just a click of a button away from the people. Consumers are now much more conscious and make decisions based on these perceptions, thus being "ethical shoppers or consumers" [5].

Technology is now an extra constraint issue in information data sharing. Application of cross-organizational information system is believed to risky, time-consuming and costly. Partners fail to agree on specifications of technical systems, for instance, EDI principles, or even on how to divide and share investment in the system. Accuracy, timeliness, and fullness of the shared information may also be a major hurdle. In the same vein, researchers like Collins, observes that most SMEs in developing countries, such as Zimbabwe, the greatest common forms of illegitimate practices practiced by many of them, are misuse of company's resources, lying to employees abusive behaviour towards employees, internet abuse, conflict of interest, falsifying informations to stakeholders, discrimination, employee privacy violation, employee benefit abuse, and falsifying expenses [11]. These issues need to be identified and interpreted as that sharing information is only enabler for better harmoniation and planning in the supply chain. Henceforth, companies need to reinforce capabilities to utilise the shared information in most effective and efficient way. Therefore, crop production SME manager owners must view agri-business investment, progression and sales as stauching around a circle of trust of data sharing [32].

2.3. Collaboration In Supply Chain Network Design

Consumer hassles are changing constantly everyday, whether its demand for a earlier order fulfillment owing to the e-commerce preceding mile race presently occurring or meeting customer needs for omnichannel communications and improved service [26]. Keeping track of consumers need togetjher with their buying behaviours provoke a large challenge for emerging firms such as crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe. Many areas of their supply chain are greatly exaggerated by this omni-channel revolution, as that disturbs every stage of their supply chains. These ever varying buyer habits will later on require complete connections within any organization for sustainability and competitive advantage. This poses overall a very complex challenge to agro-

business operations of these SMEs.

With hyperinflation rocking Zimbabwe for more than two decades, it virtually ceased the formal food markets as gazetted set prices could not meet inflation. This makes basic food crop production, processing, wholesaling and retailing commercially unviable [8]. Most crop production SMEs still take on manual processes, which are wasteful and costly blunders as a mode of life. It is now public knowledge that business owners in Zimbabwe, can't trust their supply chains. In certain organizations, getting an order during the stipulated time, rarely happens, until the original due date becomes obsolete. It is now a norm that goods do not arrive in time which is costly in today's real-time business world, where a day shipping and prompt fulfilment are the norm. It is very difficult for crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe to prove their legitimacy to their stakeholders.

Another aspect which command consideration is the complete integration of forward and reverse actions in crop production SMEs supply chain management. Given the shift conveyed by the land reform programme in Zimbabwe in early 2000, there was mushroom of small to medium scale farmers involve primary vagaries in the synegetic relationships between supplier farmers and retailers. The fast and instant variations in many rural supply chains meant that growers need to shift on how they do business so as to adapt to the new norm. For the retailers, it means altering marketing channels, which means going to the growers. In crop production SMEs, its generally highlighted that, the conditions set for marketing in each system greatly influence the final marketing decision by the producers. The commercial retail markets stress on consistency and quality to meet customer demand, usually leaving the supplier farmers with little chance of pushing their fresh produce through to them. In certain instances, SMEs see these morally unacceptable actions as essential for survival. Their size make them reduce resources and capabilities to avoid bribery, fraud and corruption in the subsectors [28]. Clients and business stakeholders want to affiliate their businesses with business owners whom they can fully trust with happiness, needs and wants, money and safety, health and well-being [13].

In fast changing, dynamic, complex, unpredictable environments, ethical and socially responsible behaviour assists business and individuals to acquire assistance from diverse external stakeholder groups [16]. This kind of behaviour allow for protection from the unpredictability they may face. In this regard, firms or organizational reputation and image are normally influenced by the good practices it shows to its customers and the general public [19]. Social crisis in Zimbabwe, which is evidenced with delapidating housing, health and education sectors. This has led to and erosion of household incomes hence genesis of food insecurity and general vulnerability. Crop production SMEs, in order to maximize profit, resorted to illegitimate agro-business behaviour. Hasnah, and others agree that businesses with moral legitimacy observation are usually committed to enhancing integrity and adhere to strict ethical

codes of conduct which makes not only lucrative but most likely succeed and sustain in a competitive commercial world [17].

There is a significant number of crop SMEs owners who consider moral legitimate programmes as expensive activities in their organisations, failing to acknowledge that there are societal rewarding [25]. Research from Ferrell assure that, businesses and firms which are viewed ethically by their key stakeholders do bask in numerous competitive privileges such as better levels of efficiency in operations, delicate levels of loyalty and commitment by employees, higher levels of professed product quality, higher customer retention and loyalty, and profitable financial performance [14]. Furthermore, the role of facility location is key in supply chain system planning. This role is fetchingly more important with the swelling need for more comprehensive mockups that capture concurrently many aspects pertinent to real-life problems. In this regard, in the 21st century, power in the end markets has shifted from producers and sellers to buyers and consumers [36]. Stakeholders have greater control over markets and hence this in turn disturb business performance as such, ethical practices are critical success factors, as far as business management is concerned [32].

Nevertheless, there is still a research gap in the existing models and many moral issues that so far have not received enough attention. Resources in supply chain integration, supply chain information sharing and supply chain network design to increase supply chain performance have not yet been given much attention they deserve. In Zimbabwe the National Development Strategy (NDS1) agriculture sector, the government intends to put in place tariff structures that promote and increase the recovery of the local and indigenous food processing industries through charging customs duties on all imported non basic food stuffs and exempt local food manufacturers from paying duties for raw supplies and packaging regardless of the country of origin [29]. Crop production SMEs should grab the opportunity, so as to be morally upright. Ethical practices, are known of naturally creating a better and solid reputation that leads to recognition by stakeholders, such as customers this will increase their loyalty and are willing to purchase with more confidence and make referrals. As such, SMEs develop their moral legitimate presence and reputation in order to remain strong in their value chains [13].

At the other hand, its best for SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe to consider what it takes to meet customer requirements in a cost effective manner. Mudavanhu and others., agrees that one of these SMEs major challenge is accepting the correct cost of expending their supply chains and creating conversant decisions on product, and customer supply chain rationalisation from the data [23]. These SMEs purchasing people resort to bribes from vendors, including even potential vendors in return for doing business with them [23]. In the other hand, they prefer companies which bill them with exorbitant prices if they are promise to get a favour from that vendor if buy their raw materials or services. Many customers with bad business practice take advantage of

that vice and bargain for low prices and long credit terms which they usually do not respect moral values putting a further strain on their cash flows. The common immoral practices in maize and tobacco producing SMEs, include stuffing expense accounts, seeking settlement for questionable or non existent business expenses, taking provisions for personal use, soliciting for favours or offering kickbacks and price fixing [22]. Research propose that, these vices of corruption fraud and, bribery hinder the conception of an tolerable supply chain system, hearten red tape and officialdom, which erodes public confidence and trust, and jamming infrastructure development on which these SMEs depend upon [33]. Therefore, this dishonest behavior calls for attention as an issue to consider, in the supply chain performance of SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe.

3. Methodology

The study utilised cross-sectional and quantitative research design including 105 out of 150 crop production SMEs in Harare Central Business District. The SMEs were stratified according to their areas of operation; farm produce supplies, processes, distribution, logistics, storage, packaging, and retailing up to the final consumer [2]. Simple random sampling was done to ensure every stage had equal chance of being selected [9]. Purposive sampling was done to pick staff involved in supply chain activities as they could offer the required information for the study. Data was poised from at least 5 (five) members per stage which included farm owners, millers, logistics officers, retailers and general public. Collected data was combined and analysed at firm level so as to get the stand point of a particular stage as given by moral issue in the inquiry.

3.1. Variables Measurement

The variables for this study were measured based on continuous scale using items previously confirmed, developed, and published by former academics [20]. Pilot study was take on to adapt the items and tools to this study setting as well as checked for validity and reliability. Furthermore, the items were fixed on 5-point likert scale in a range of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), which

were measured as seen below:

Issues of Moral Legitimacy: Corruption in Supply Chain Integration, Transparency in Information Sharing, Trust Collaboration in Supply Chain Network Design (Velu, 2017).

Supply Chain Performance: Efficiency, Cost, Quality, Responsiveness and Flexibility [4].

3.2. Data Analysis Management

The content validity index for Issues of Moral Legitimacy was 0.91 and the score for Supply Chain Performance was 0.95 which proved the suitability of questionnaire captured constructs under study. For the reliability of the data, collection instrument and chronbach alpha coefficients (α) were calculated aided by SPSS v20. The scores for Issues of Moral Legitimacy were 0.90, the alpha for Supply Chain Performance was 0.91. These scores showed that the questionnaire was suitable for use in this study as the scores were overhead the acceptable cut off of 0.7 (Field 2009). In addition, the composite reliability of this study variables was computed. The scores for Issues of Moral Legitimacy was These scores proved sufficient because they were above the acceptable cut off of 0.6 [14]. Supply Chain Performance was 0.77.

Data cleaning and data analysis was conducted according to the research questions. Descriptive data was used, using 5 point Likert scale from 1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree to measure consistence of respondents using standard deviation of their responds.

Table1 below shows different responds concerning bribery increasing supply chain integration, fraud increasing efficiency in supply chain integration, corruption, fair trade, information sharing on transparency, profitability, truth for customer loyalty, collaboration for order fulfilment, trustworthy for cooperation, cohesion for competitiveness. Their responses had some inconsistencies as their various standard deviations with exceptions on corruption increasing supply chain integration and collaboration increasing order fulfilment. Inconsistences in responses demonstrates that crop production SMEs have challenges in identifying and interpreting moral legitimate issues to increase their supply chain performance. The exceptions, are clear indications that ideas to do right in these SMEs are there but not thoughtfully implemented.

Table 1. Challenging issues in implementing moral legitimacy in supply chain.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Bribery increase supply chain integration	88	1	5	2.43	1.329
Fraud increase efficiency in supply chain integration	90	1	5	1.93	1.322
Corruption increase supply chain integration	90	1	5	2.51	1.334
Fair trade enhance supply chain integration	90	1	5	1.88	1.169
Transparency increase information sharing in supply chain	90	1	5	3.20	1.567
Information sharing increase profitability in supply chain	90	1	5	3.69	1.346
Truth increase customer loyalty in supply chain	90	1	5	3.30	1.328
Trustworthy increase cooperation in supply chain	90	1	5	2.87	1.439
Collaboration increase order fulfillment in supply chain	90	1	5	2.94	1.284
Cohesion increase competitiveness in supply chain	90	1	5	3.03	1.293
Cooperation increase quality in supply chain	90	1	5	3.06	1.344
Integrity increase growth in supply chain	90	1	5	3.40	1.234
Valid N (listwise)	88				

3.3. Results

In a total of 102 questionnaires distributed to different range of respondents, 90 of them managed to return completed scripts. Their responses were computed using SPSS to get means and their standard deviations. The means ranged from 1.88 to 3.69, with respondents agreeing with the notion that fair trade enhance supply chain integration being the lowest and information sharing being the highest. Standard deviations were group between 1.169 and 1.439 around the means (Table 1) above. This demonstrates that respondents had mixed views on how they perceived ethical practices in their supply chains to increase performance. Fair trade enhance supply chain integration and fraud increase efficiency in supply chain integration had low means and small standard deviations, which clearly showed the disparities on understanding how moral legitimacy influence supply chain performance in crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe. Integrity increase growth in supply chain, fair trade enhance supply chain integration, collaboration increase order fulfillment in supply chain and cohesion increase competitiveness in supply chain had smaller standard deviations (>1.3) around the means and the rest slightly above 1.3, as shown on the table above. The computed data, demonstrated that, there are some challenges when it comes to the implementation of moral legitimacy in crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, as clear understanding of respondents is so diverse.

4. Discussions

It is research proven that employees, managers and owners of Crop SMEs in Zimbabwe are ill capacitated when it comes to coping with moral legitimacy constraints due to several reasons [7]. Therefore, some of them fail to perceive, identify and understand moral legitimate issues in their supply chains so as to increase supply chain performance. From normative view, shortage of moral awareness has potential to intensify the risk of behaving immorally and as well increase business moral misconduct [7]. As such, moral awareness prove to be the backbone for an individual's sense of moral behaviour and ethical decision-making [37].

The research shows relationship amongst honesty, trust, respect and fairness into organizational practices, policies, decision-making and organisation sustainability. Supply chain integration challenges in these SMEs ranges from farm produce to final consumer, through the challenge of system relationships, which are the relation between sub-systems, and the relationships between supply chain system and business strategies in much sincere practices. In this study, supply chain of most crop SMEs in Zimbabwe there are hesitant in processes and data management integration at the detriment of profit loss, customer disloyalty and stakeholders cooperation. But Abiodun and Oyeniya, ascertained that process and information sharing and supply chain integration built on broad values of integrity, accountability,

transparency, fairness and responsibility to increase performance [1]. In addition, focusing on internal stakeholder issues such as customer satisfaction, product quality, employee wages and benefits increase supply chain performance. In doing so, local community and environmental responsibilities would be enhanced. Management should seamlessly integrate critical data, in an honesty and transparent manner to improve efficiencies in, inventory management, forecasting, order fulfillment, material procurement, stock replenishment, in supply chain and other key manufacturing processes to increase firm reputation and productivity.

In crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, each member is suspicious of the possibility of other channel members abusing shared information and gaining all the benefits from information sharing. It has been observed by many researches that SMEs in developing countries, Zimbabwe no exception, even if each partner is guaranteed a positive gain in return for information sharing, other members could play a non-cooperative game. It is advisable for crop production SMEs to understand that legitimate way of sharing information is only to ascertain that the information shared should not be used outside the original intent.

Co-operation and collaboration within an organisation and between and among trading partners, is important to truly remove waste across the entire supply chain. Many crop production SMEs accept manual processes, which are wasteful and costly mistakes, as a way of life. It has become common knowledge that these SMEs can't trust their supply chains. In some various organizations, receiving orders on-time, in the original scheduled date, happen so rarely.. Research ascertain that small agri- businesses that are regarded as ethical by their key stakeholders, (customers, suppliers, employees, and public) do enjoy numerous competitive advantages such as greater levels of efficiency in operations, greater levels of commitment and loyalty by employees, greater levels of professed product quality, better financial performance, greater levels of customer loyalty and retention, [14].

Assessing supply chain performance in an organization, leads to identification of threats and opportunities in the value chains of crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe. Having strategies and measuring key supply chain performance parts are necessary to appreciate and take control of their value chains. They should put the process, procedures, structures, people and technology integrated in honest and transparent way to generate competitive advantage, both for today and future. All these working together with trust in a company provide coordinated and unified effort to use supply chain management as a powerful force in customer satisfaction and competitive advantage, with service and productivity.

5. Conclusions

The results prove the claim made by some researchers, complying with regulations such as acceptable right

businesses practices and environment in supply chain promotes good reputation which in turn attracts a talented workforce and employees [7]. This improves supply chain performance and productivity of employees and also helps in building customer loyalty and increase revenue. Investors allover the world use business good practices and values as primary considerations in their decision-making. As such, customers are becoming increasingly aware of their rights, they value moral legitimate business practices. Furthermore, identifying and assuming moral legitimate practices crop production SMEs supply chains help increase efficiency, reduce costs, enhance quality and build good reputation.

Crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe need to be educated about the benefits of moral legitimate on how they should conduct themselves in their supply chain processes, procedures, structures and portrayals to be competitive, sustainable and grow. Power has shifted from suppliers to customers (buyers) whose demands are satisfied by various needs, such quality, environmental friendly processes, good reputation and many more acceptable business practices. Identification and appreciation of these virtues need to be part of the norms of these SMEs.

6. Further Research Area

The results of this study point to several opportunities for further research area into moral legitimacy and supply chain performance. This include but not limited to the following:

A acute review of relevant literature shows much connotation between business ethics and supply chain performance, which are similar to this study but different on social acceptance and the originality of morality compared to ethical behaviours in crop production SMEs supply chains. Further studies would benefit from including other theories of morality in SMEs organizational behaviours.

To study more about challenges in implementing moral legitimacy in supply chain performance, needs more time than this research was allocated, a longitudinal study is more appropriate than cross –section used in this study.

7. Limitations of the Study

i) The population used in this study, it was mandatory to select a sample which could have excluded some of the respondents with vital information. The researcher ignored this aspect because of time limit of the study.

ii) The questionnaire design used might had limited additional responses. This was eased through instigating respondents to provide extra information.

iii) The some food processing officials, employees of certain farmers and some members of the public were skeptical in giving private information for the organizations they worked for, this affected final results of this study. Here, the researcher made certain that respondents who the information provided was for academic purposes only.

iv) Scales in the questionnaire limited the respondents

choices to five even if others thought otherwise. The researcher assumed that scale was adequate as it is mostly used by other researchers.

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