



Suppliers' perceptions of an electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province



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Declaration

I, Tumelo Ntlaba declare that this Innovation Project submitted for the Master of Business Administration degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own, unaided work and has not been previously submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes. Any assistance that I have received has been duly acknowledged in the report.

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Abstract

This study assesses the perceptions of government suppliers towards implementing the electronic marketplace as a sourcing strategy as an e-procurement platform for government suppliers in Gauteng province. The study will inform the government, policymakers and suppliers of public goods and services on whether the electronic marketplace as an e-procurement strategy will change the status quo by ensuring transparency, speed of service and eliminating or reducing corruption. This research study used a quantitative technique since the researcher wanted to compare different variables or statistical data measures; thus, the quantitative approach entails measuring, sampling, and evaluating relations using statistical analysis. The questionnaire link was sent to 384 individuals. Taking into consideration that in the context of diminishing response rates to survey research, a response rate of 50% is regarded appropriate, thus 192 questionnaires were considered to be enough for data analysis. Descriptive statistics depicted participants' responses across categories (Electronic marketplace awareness (EMP), Intention to use (INT), Perceived value (P), Expectation (E), Readiness (RD), Electronic marketplace as a sourcing strategy (EM)), showcasing means and standard deviations. Correlation analysis unveiled relationships where most correlations were significant. Positive correlations indicated concurrent increases or decreases, while strong associations highlighted substantial relationships. The study found that electronic marketplace strategies (EMP) also significantly impact readiness practices (RD), underscoring how the practices associated with electronic marketplaces contribute to overall readiness. Furthermore, electronic marketplaces' awareness practices are significantly associated with intentions to use (INT), highlighting the role of user satisfaction, buying and selling experiences, and effective awareness efforts in driving electronic marketplace adoption.

Key Words: Electronic marketplace, e-Procurement, Supply Chain, and Supplier perceptions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background

The National Treasury Supply Chain Management Review report indicates that the South African government spends billions of rands annually to procure goods, services and workers to deliver services to its citizens (Dlamini and Naicker, 2018). A quarterly bulletin report published by the South African Reserve Bank in 2021 estimated that the government's procurement spending for the 2020/21 financial year was approximately R934 billion (Mavodyo, 2022). The government tendering system is designed to provide equal opportunities to all individuals and companies interested in doing procurement business with the government. However, it has been criticized for various reasons, including corruption, inefficiency and lack of transparency.

Several studies have shown that the procurement system in South Africa is susceptible to illegal acts, which translate to unfair processes which unfairly enrich certain individuals and discriminate against others during the procurement process (Sebudubudu, 2017; Oyedele, Owolabi, Gbadamosi & Ajayi., 2020). According to a report by the South African Institute of Race Relations, approximately R1.5 billion is lost annually due to corruption and irregularities in government tenders.

Moreover, the tendering system is also criticised for being inefficient and leading to project delays. According to a report by the National Treasury, the procurement process takes an average of 95 days, leading to delays in project implementation and cost overruns (National Treasury, 2017). The complexity of the tendering system, coupled with the lack of capacity and expertise in government departments, further exacerbates the problem (Oyedele et al., 2020).

Another significant disadvantage of the South African public procurement regime is small and medium enterprises' lack of access to procurement opportunities. According to a study by Nkambule and Sebola (2017), small businesses face several barriers, including complex tender documents, high bid costs and a lack of information about available tenders. As a

result, small businesses are often unable to compete with larger firms, leading to a concentration of tenders in the hands of a few dominant firms.

The system is also criticised for its bureaucracy and red tape. According to a study by Ruiters and Parnell (2019), the procurement process is complex, lengthy and bureaucratic, leading to delays and inefficiencies. The study argues that the tendering process needs to be simplified, focusing on transparency and accountability.

Introducing an electronic marketplace platform is one of the tools that can simplify doing procurement business with the government, especially for small businesses. This would make it easier to provide the goods that the small and medium enterprises (SMME) sell and for government buyers to procure the goods in a very simplified and transparent manner. An electronic marketplace is a digital platform that facilitates online transactions between buyers and sellers. It is a virtual market that allows businesses to trade goods and services electronically without physical contact. The electronic marketplace enables buyers and sellers to interact with each other online and provides features such as product listings, price comparisons, deliveries, reviews and ratings and electronic payments.

Electronic marketplaces are increasingly important across several industries because they promise to significantly increase economic efficiency, decrease the price-to-cost margin and expedite complex commercial transactions. Electronic marketplaces have opened a plethora of opportunities for small sellers to sell via electronic marketplace platforms. Small businesses sell more items on electronic marketplaces like Takealot.com (Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick., 2019).

Although there are challenges, small businesses have different Information Technology (IT) requirements than larger enterprises and often face various IT infrastructure challenges, including budgetary and labour constraints. Although there are existing studies on eMarketplace (Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick., 2019; Chen and Chen (2019); Tóth, Varga & Tóth, (2020)), there study will add to the existing literature by assesses the perceptions of government suppliers towards implementing the electronic marketplace as a sourcing strategy and e-procurement platform for government suppliers in Gauteng province.

1.2 Problem Statement

Given that the public procurement tendering system challenges and complexities relating to corruption, lack of transparency, red tape and bureaucratic processes, there is an opportunity to introduce a new sourcing strategy that is transparent, can eliminate or reduce corruption, is cost-effective, and improves competition and efficiency. This will take the form of an electronic marketplace for the government. Although there are existing studies on eMarketplace (Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick., 2019; Chen and Chen 2019; Tóth, Varga & Tóth, 2020; Madzimore et al., 2020), the existing studies did not cover the context of government entities on the supplier's perceptions. This study assesses the perceptions of government suppliers towards implementing the electronic marketplace as a sourcing strategy and e-procurement platform for government suppliers in Gauteng province. The study will inform the government, policymaker, and suppliers of public goods on whether the electronic marketplace as an e-procurement strategy will change the status quo by ensuring transparency, speed of service and eliminating or reducing corruption.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to determine the government suppliers' perceptions regarding implementing an electronic marketplace as an alternative, transparent and competitive e-procurement strategy in Gauteng province.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

The following are the objectives of this study:

- To determine the weaknesses of existing procurement strategies used by the South African government in Gauteng province.
- To determine the perceived strengths of the electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng government departments from the suppliers' perspective.
- To determine the perceived weaknesses of the electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng government departments from the suppliers' perspectives.

- To make recommendations based on how government suppliers perceive the implementation of the electronic marketplace platform as a sourcing strategy in Gauteng government departments.

1.4 Research Questions

What are the perceptions of government suppliers' regarding implementing an electronic marketplace as an alternative, transparent and competitive e-procurement strategy in Gauteng province?

1.4.1 Specific objectives

The following are the objectives of this study:

- What are the weaknesses of existing procurement strategies used by the South African government in Gauteng province?
- What are the perceived strengths of the electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng government departments from the suppliers' perspective?
- What are the perceived weaknesses of the electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng government departments from the suppliers' perspectives?
- What recommendations can be made based on how government suppliers perceive the implementation of the electronic marketplace platform as a sourcing strategy in Gauteng government departments?

1.5 Empirical Studies on Online Marketplaces

Electronic marketplaces are online platforms that enable buyers and sellers to interact and conduct transactions. Several empirical studies on e-marketplaces have investigated various aspects, such as their impact on procurement efficiency, buyer-seller relationships and adoption factors.

One empirical study by Chen and Chen (2019) assesses how electronic marketplaces have impacted the effectiveness of procurement in the Chinese construction industry. The study found that adopting an electronic marketplace improved procurement efficiency by reducing procurement lead time, increasing supplier competition and reducing procurement costs.

Another empirical study by Martínez-López, Gázquez-Abad, Pérez-Pérez & Esteban-Millat (2019) analysed how electronic marketplace acceptance has impacted business-to-business networks in the Spanish automotive industry. The study found that electronic marketplace adoption improved buyer-seller relationships by reducing communication barriers, increasing transparency and trust and promoting collaborative relationships between buyers and sellers.

In terms of adoption factors, an empirical study by Wu, Tsai, Chen & Huang (2019) investigated the factors influencing electronic marketplace acceptance among SMEs in Taiwan. The study found that top management support significantly influenced electronic marketplace adoption among SMEs.

Tóth, Varga & Tóth (2020) studied the influence of electronic marketplace adoption on business performance in the Hungarian agri-food industry. The study discovered that electronic marketplace adoption improved business performance by boosting revenues, lowering transaction costs and enhancing customer satisfaction.

Haji, Ismail & Zainuddin (2015) researched the adoption of electronic marketplaces in the Malaysian public procurement system. They found that electronic marketplaces increased efficiency, transparency and competitiveness in the procurement process.

Lau and Teo (2015) conducted a study on adopting electronic marketplaces in the Singaporean public procurement system. They found that electronic marketplaces led to increased competition, transparency and efficiency in the procurement process.

Empirical studies have consistently found that public procurement electronic marketplaces can increase efficiency, transparency, competitiveness and cost savings. These platforms can potentially revolutionise the procurement process and improve public procurement outcomes.

The following are some of the theories that have been introduced in the functioning of electronic marketplaces:

- a. Williamson (1985) introduced Transaction Cost Theory. It raises the point that the cost of a transaction is a crucial factor in determining whether it takes place through an electronic marketplace. According to transaction cost theory, electronic marketplaces can reduce transaction costs by providing a centralised platform for buyers and sellers to transact, reducing search costs and facilitating trust.
- b. Eisenhardt (1989) discussed Agency Theory, which suggests that buyers and sellers in an electronic marketplace have different interests and incentives, which may lead to conflicts of interest. Electronic marketplaces can reduce the potential for disputes by providing a framework for monitoring and enforcing agreements between buyers and sellers. According to Liao, Chen and Hu (2018), this framework for monitoring buyers and sellers was used to examine the importance of electronic marketplaces in reducing information asymmetry and enhancing trust between buyers and sellers.
- c. Castells (2011) presented the concept of network theory, which contends that online markets are a type of networked organisation in which the value of the network is inversely correlated with the number of members. This theory contends that the development of a network of buyers and sellers through the use of an electronic marketplaces can lead to the large-scale exchanges of commodities and services.
- d. Han and Wei (2019) discussed Institutional Theory, which suggests that the adoption and success of e-marketplaces are influenced by institutional factors such as social norms, regulations and the legal environment.

These theories provide insights into the benefits and challenges of electronic marketplaces and can be used to guide the design, management, and efficiencies of these platforms.

1.6 Ethical Considerations

Individuals who engaged in the study were required to provide informed consent. All responses will be kept totally private. Because no personal identifiable information was stored on the data collection form, the study was completely anonymous. Here are some more ethical considerations:

1. Informed Consent: Participants were fully informed about the research's nature and aim, the procedures involved and any potential risks or benefits. They were given the choice to decline or withdraw from the programme at any time.
2. Non-Discrimination: the study was conducted without discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender or the individual characteristics.
3. Research Integrity: the study was conducted with honesty, transparency and accuracy and all data was reported truthfully and without manipulation.
4. Respect for Participants: the participants were treated respectfully, avoiding any behaviour that could cause harm or distress.

1.7 The Rest of the Chapter Outlines

- Chapter 2: The Review of Literature

The important literature on e-marketplaces, e-procurement and the effect of e-marketplaces and e-procurement on supply chain management in the South African context of supplier integration is discussed in Chapter 2. It further discusses the benefits and strategies of e-marketplace usage in organisations. Related studies are reviewed to select the constructs that assisted to develop measuring items to test suppliers' perception of the implementation of an e-marketplace in Gauteng.

- Chapter 3: The Research Design and Methodology

The justification for the decision to utilise a quantitative research method for this study is discussed in this chapter. An examination of the qualitative and quantitative approach, together with the discussing the design's motivation, was done. The selected participants, research methodologies, data reliability and validity, population size and data collection techniques, are clarified and examined in this chapter.

- Chapter 4 Analysis of Results

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse, debate and present the research findings in relation to the research themes. The data were analysed using the statistical software, SPSS.

- Chapter 5 Discussion of Results

Chapter Five evaluates the key research study findings in connection with the research questions. The importance of the results is discussed, as well as how they relate to the four study topics. Any obstacles encountered throughout the research endeavor are recorded, along with suggestions for additional investigation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The contents in this chapter was derived from published papers as well as books on topics associated with the research's content. It looks into the claims made by many academics and authors regarding the effects of electronic marketplaces and electronic procurement techniques on supply chain performance. The difference between electronic marketplaces and electronic procurement and an overview of suppliers doing business with the South African government, are discussed. The literature discussion is organised and structured around the primary topics, themes and theories addressed in the research.

2.2 Difference between Electronic Marketplaces and Electronic Procurement

An e-Marketplace and e-procurement are two business buzzwords that are growing in prominence. While the two notions may sound similar, there is a significant distinction between them. Understanding the distinction can help organisations to better judge their online sales approach. E-Procurement, particularly in the form of an e-Marketplace, is now one of the most important e-business applications, as it may yield significant returns on investment. Electronic procurement, or e-procurement, means the practice of purchasing and selling products and services over the internet (Nandankar & Sachan, 2020). According to Kaur and Hundal (2017), an online marketplace is a location where buyers and sellers can interact and do business. E-tendering is a form of online tendering that is a part of e-procurement (Nandankar & Sachan, 2020). Government cooperation with suppliers and transactions between them are greatly facilitated by the usage of the electronic marketplace and electronic procurement.

2.2 Overview of Electronic Marketplaces

Electronic marketplaces, or online marketplaces, are digital platforms that facilitate transactions between sellers and the consumers of goods and service (Ali, Ejaz, Aleem, Saeed, Tahir & Kashif., 2015). These marketplaces have gained popularity in recent years due to their convenience, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Several studies have investigated electronic markets' influence on different business characteristics such as price,

competitiveness and innovation (Ali et al., 2015; Kaur and Hundal, 2017; Pant & Rastogi, 2018).

Electronic marketplaces which utilise the Internet for delivering promotional materials to clients, are quickly becoming a hot topic in a variety of commercial industries (Kaur and Hundal 2017). They are a vital component of an organisation's multi-channel marketplace strategy. According to Kaur and Hundal (2017), electronic marketplaces include email marketplaces, social media marketplaces, search engines of the marketplaces, various display advertising formats (including online banner adverts) and mobile advertising.

However, Talafuse (2015) discusses how email, the internet and other digital information technology channels have completely changed how businesses engage. Using a variety of channels, a company can communicate with the customer in a personalised way. Two-way contact is formed through "social media channels" like MySpace, Twitter and Facebook for further producing and expanding positive connection opportunities within organisations. Online advertising, like traditional kinds of advertisements, often consists of publishers including adverts in their online content and advertisers offering advertisements to be displayed on the published material (Pant & Rastogi, 2018). The variables are the ones which are relevant to investigate what influences the dependent variable (Giunta, 2020). According to prior studies (Kresh, Laible, Lam, & Raisinghani, 2013), the electronic market place has played a significant, reliable role.

Taiminen and Karjaluo (2015) assert that suppliers who invest in the e-marketplace have a positive impact on the marketplace's success, as evidenced by the creation of new businesses and lower prices for products sold, which may lead to increased profitability, increased marketplace share, and expanded brand equity. Another significant conclusion that SME owner-managers should consider when considering the e-Marketplace is the influence of pre and post sales marketplace activity.

2.3 Overview of Electronic Procurement

Electronic procurement, according to Bahambari and Kelidbari (2015), is defined as an online store platform comprising four (4) elements: electronic resources, electronic planning, electronic assessment and electronic negotiation. Electronic procurement is a method of conducting business with other organisations that incorporates the use of online resources to

find the new suppliers, place orders, pay vendors and interact with them (Punyatoya and Patanayak, 2020). E-procurement is defined by Madzimure, Mafini and Dhurup (2010) as the use of technological innovations to facilitate electronic transactions between businesses for products and services. Electronic bidding, e-marketplaces, e-auctions, and e-catalogues are all part of electronic procurement that concentrate on one or more stages of the procurement process. In a broader sense, the e-procurement application can be thought of as an end-to-end solution that integrates and streamlines various procurement procedures within the firm. The four functions of an electronic procurement system are e-sourcing, electronic negotiation, electronic design and electronic evaluation (Wisdom, 2015).

E-Procurement will demand the interchange of information and electronic documents between government employees and suppliers (Nandankar & Sachan, 2020). The challenge with e-procurement is that suppliers must create an electronic communication policy to implement e-procurement effectively. Wisdom (2015) believes the positive goals of electronic procurement are to reduce the effort and costs related to doing business for both suppliers and buyers, to increase competition and get more ‘bang for your buck’, streamline procurement procedures throughout departments or agencies to provide every supplier a chance at success and to improve the supply chain's accountability.

2.3.1. Advantage of e-procurement

There are many benefits to an e-procurement system, including:

- **Streamline processes** - An e-procurement system can automate order processing, bidding, invoicing, and payment. This allows the organization and suppliers to save time on repetitive operations and focus more on value-creating activities (Pattanayak & Punyatoya, 2020)..
- **Management of inventory** - Inventory is a crucial aspect of procurement. An e-procurement system improves inventory tracking and assures adequate stock for production (Waithaka & Kimani, 2021).
- **Reduce human errors** - Procurement paperwork can be time-consuming and error-prone. E-procurement eliminates the need for documentation. The transaction can be completed with greater accuracy and proficiency (Waithaka & Kimani, 2021).

- **Productivity improvement** - Companies can purchase and sell supplies more quickly and affordably by conducting transactions online (Pattanayak & Punyatoya, 2020).. They can also evaluate products and services to determine which ones offer the best value. They can also evaluate products and services to determine which ones offer the best value. The shorter purchase time reduced manufacturing delays and increased revenues (Waithaka & Kimani, 2021).

2.3.2 Disadvantage of e-procurement

The primary disadvantage of e-procurement is its high reliance on software and electronic systems. This leaves the company open to hacker attacks (Mongwaketse, 2021). Technology also necessitates frequent updates and worker training, which may incur additional expenditures. It is also challenging to get all suppliers on board, particularly older vendors who are unfamiliar with new technologies (Muhia and Afande, 2015). For example, they may have difficulty maintaining digital catalogues.

2.4 Overview of South African Government Suppliers

A supplier is anybody who provides something that another person, business, or entity needs. In trading, there are providers (suppliers) and buyers (purchasers). Purchasers get goods and services, whereas suppliers give or supply them. By expediting the procedure for conducting business with the government in the background of supply chain management (SCM), the office of the Chief Procurement Officer (OCPO) achieved its objective of enhancing the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of SCM. The Central Supplier Database (CSD) is the initial stage in this journey, serving as a forerunner to government e-procurement.

All suppliers' data for all levels of South African government purchases is housed in a single database called the CSD. By consolidating the government's supplier database, suppliers and the government can avoid duplication of effort and expense while also facilitating the computerised procurement processes. Future business intelligence (BI) reporting on subjects like expenditure analysis and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) aiming for enablement and development through all government sectors is made possible by using one supplier number and common service categories.

Suppliers must self-register with the CSD by going to the CSD website. Computerised access to data on CSD providers who have been successfully registered is available to all state

organs. Suppliers should register on the CSD if they currently provide goods and services to an Organ of State or plan to do so in the future. Categories are as follows:

- Individuals,
- Foreign Companies,
- Sole Proprietors,
- Public Companies (LTD),
- Closed Corporations,
- Non-Profit External Enterprises,
- Joint Ventures;
- State Owned Enterprises (SOC LTD),
- Partnerships,
- Private companies (PTY LTDs),
- Trusts,
- Non-Profit Companies,
- Personal Liability Companies (INC),
- Co-operatives,
- Government Entities,
- Statutory Bodies.

Due to the lack of a single integrated supplier database for federal, provincial, or municipal government, there was duplication and fragmentation of supplier data across governmental spheres prior to the establishment of the CSD. With roughly 700,000 suppliers to diverse sectors of government, this resulted in heavy compliance and documentation burdens. According to each province, the following numbers of CSD providers have registered:

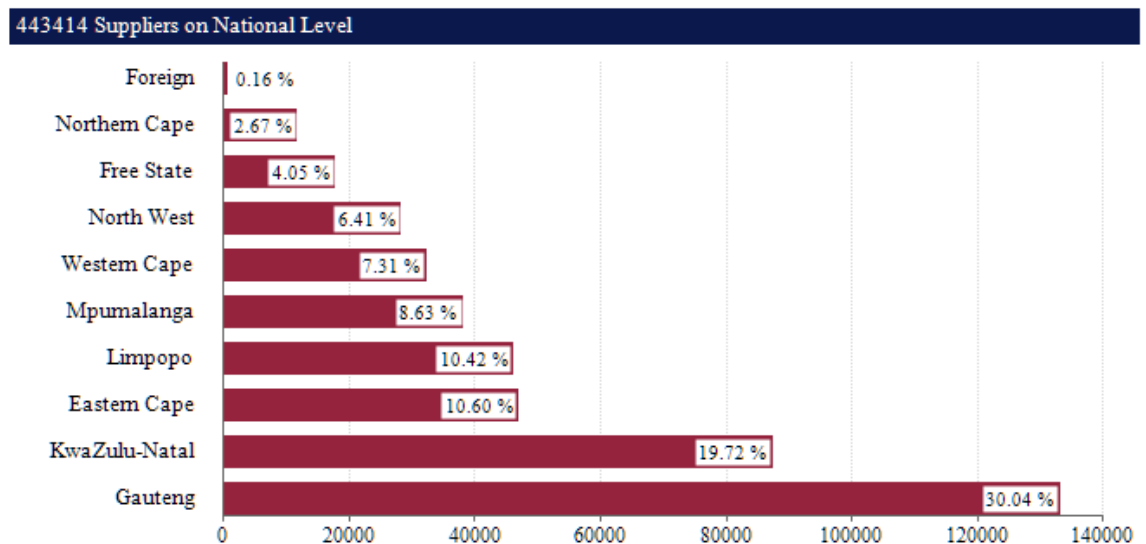


Figure 2.1: No of registered suppliers per province

Source: National Treasury Report (2018)

In all nine provinces, campaigns and informational events were held to nudge suppliers toward CSD registration. Several government sectors, including provincial treasuries have specialised procedures in place to ensure that suppliers register on the CSD and that they continuing supporting these suppliers.

2.5 Implementation of e-Procurement on Supply Chain Management

Supply chain success is an evaluation of the management of supply chains that considers factors that are tangible as well as intangible. Waithaka and Kimani, (2021) posit that enhancing Supply Chain performance in the current economic climate requires a value creation viewpoint, therefore an e-procurement system is more relevant when evaluating Supply Chain performance than other e-business applications. A procurement system must be a part of a company's supply chain system. Since the operations and aims in these two domains are so dissimilar, a firm's purchasing department is usually divided into both operational and strategic procedures (Pattanayak & Punyatoya, 2020). Strategic procurement frequently assigns tasks like supplier management, buy requisition pooling and product development that is focused on procurement.

Businesses can centralize their strategic procurement processes through e-procurement while decentralizing their tactical approaches to achieve the improved supply chain

transparency that e-procurement technology bring about. Pattanayak and Punyatoya (2020) contend that e-procurement can strategically assist the association of purchasing approaches, resulting in greater savings and improved supplier services. Additionally, it speeds up the client's communication of critical information. Meanwhile the procurer cuts down on administrative time, freeing up staff to work on other projects. As a result, there is a greater chance that the company will win new business from highly competitive new market entrants (Pattanayak & Punyatoya, 2020).

Electronic procurement also offers a number of opportunities, including enhancing buyer-supplier interactions and corporate trade partnerships. To lessen the possibility of an order being delayed or being incorrect, mutual cooperation is required. Errors in transactions are removed (Waithaka & Kimani, 2021). By enabling workers and auditors to check and track the movement of orders via the system, e-procurement enhances auditing and security. As a result of reducing the need to wait for papers to arrive in the mail, inventory levels are reduced and delivery times are shortened. Because e-procurement may be used at any time of day, it also eliminates time zone restrictions. Moreover, the expenditures associated with inventories are reduced. Furthermore, e-procurement aids in labour optimisation by enabling employees who wish to conduct product transactions that are appropriate for their job (Nandankar & Sachan, 2020).

2.6 Implementation of e-Marketplace in Supply Chain Management

In principle, the links among the management of supply chains and the eMarketplace appears to be troublesome. Cooperative supply chains strive to decrease the amount of suppliers in order to develop long-term strategic alliances that "lock in" providers and "lock out" competitors. In contrast, the e-Marketplace supports "transaction-based" cooperation while promoting competition and letting buyers search for appropriate suppliers. Supply chain management and the e-marketplace are not merely complementary from a logistical standpoint; the electronic marketplace heavily relies on supply chain management. Chingarande and Saayman (2018) point out that every company presently engages in competition across two markets: the market, where resources and goods are physically present and the marketpace, a digital environment for electronic commerce where information acts as the main transaction object. Every company faces substantial conceptual

and operational hurdles when managing these two interconnected value-adding processes in two interdependent environments.

The following trading relationship involves the exchange of information or data. At least one of the following configurations is required as stipulated by Chingarande and Saayman (2018):

- a) A system containing the shared information is made accessible to the partners, and
- b) One partner shares information with the other.

Web-based catalogues, for instance, permit purchasers to access product information automatically. Buyers and sellers can communicate several sorts of information before or after a transaction. This knowledge could be about the sellers or the buyers to offer solutions to future needs. Trading partners have traditionally communicated little information online. Information-sharing, on one hand, does little to lessen the uncertainty that trade partners confront in forecasting demand in the future and cannot enable the other party to share their viewpoint or understanding of customer wants or other market prospects (one-way information flow). Furthermore, there are few opportunities to work collectively to align suppliers with estimated consumer requests.

The marketplace, according to Chingarande and Saayman (2018), is a component of the supply chain's web-based linkages, which may be divided into three company perspectives: business2business, business2consumer, and the marketing space. The market space in this incident includes the firm, its partners and its customers. It enables the creation of communication exchanges such as consumer surveys and the sharing of information on issues such as product guarantees and deal competences. Furthermore, rethinking the typical value proposition in the marketing sectors, it is stated that supply chain management must deal with the organisational complexity of implementing a dynamic mix with the emphasis on context, infrastructure and content (Chingarande and Saayman, 2018). In the virtual market, integrating the supply chain can be perceived as a combination of formal and informal integrating procedures, comparable to Internet infrastructures.

2.7 South African Integrated Supplier Management Foundation

The Central Supplier Database (CSD) provides the basis for government supplier management that is efficient and effective. Due to an absence of knowledge and entree to appropriate and correct data to carry out this vital duty, there is currently an absence of supplier management from state institutions. To enable wise procurement, the almost 444,000 potential vendors registered on the CSD must be handled. This comprises—without being limited to—the following:

Supplier segmentation: is required to distinguish supplier strategies since not every supplier qualifies as a "partner." If a supplier is classified, state organs may elect to form agreements and facilitate efficient sourcing.

Accreditation information verification: technology and the CSD's strength is the capacity to electronically validate information. This will be considerably improved in the coming years to guarantee that additional accreditation organisations are included and information is confirmed to be complete.

Performance management: a two-way method will be employed to provide a fair review that includes both the supplier and the procurement organisation. This is a crucial part of effective suppliers management. It prevents difficulties and encourages progress by paying attention to the performance of both.

Relationship management: through open communication, taking into account the concerns of the supplier, and involving them in the process, managing relationships with suppliers ensures that state organs develop confidence. As a result, suppliers become invested partners in providing services. Effective relationship management results in faster time-to-delivery of services and goods, increased transactional efficiency, productivity, management of risks and considerable economic advantages. Nevertheless, it will take a lot of work to manage the mindset change needed to depart from the way authorities are accustomed to thinking and acting in this area. Therefore, a legal framework and basis will be introduced by the proposed procurement bill to allow practitioners to implement this component.

Managing debarments: every now and again, there are situations where providers have failed the state by breaking their contractual responsibilities, committing fraud, etcetera. These situations result in restrictions on the guilty vendors' future interactions with the government. Currently, the CSD is in charge of managing these suppliers to prevent them from doing any more business with the state while they are under restriction.

Identifying and delivering opportunities: the CSD makes computerised bidding possible, expands access to additional commercial prospects and creates avenues for it. Suppliers

could receive automatic notifications to alert them as and when opportunities are posted, the base of individuals taking part in the supply chain management process could be expanded.

2.8 Advantages of Integrating Suppliers into the Electronic Marketplace

Electronic procurement between businesses, suppliers and the government includes buying and selling goods and Internet services and other information as network technologies, as well as online information exchange and monitoring, are available (Wisdom, 2015). Supplier integration is how a company engages and collaborates with its suppliers to ensure an adequate supply flow (Madzimore et al., 2020). A long term connection is developed amongst the supplier and the organization they are servicing (Madzimore, Mafini & Dhurup, 2020). Integrating suppliers into the e-marketplace and e-procurement is one of the most important building blocks of supplier chain management (Madzimore et al., 2020). By integrating with a suppliers, a commercial business may participate at an earlier stage, collaborating in product improvement, or consultation stages. Partnering is a departure from the traditional constraints that larger clients place on small and medium-sized firms, which were traditionally considered as inconsequential.

Electronic procurement, as defined by Muhia and Afande (2015), is the use of Internet based data integration and technologies for carrying out any or all of the purchasing procedures, including searching, negotiations, placing an order, receiving it and post purchase verification. A system that unifies and streamlines heterogeneous procurement methods across the firm is one of the various types of electronic procurement, all of which focus on any number of components of the purchasing procedure (Muhia & Afande, 2015). The short-term competitive relationships between customers and suppliers centered on purchasing, buying, reduced costs, and faster shipments are giving way to long-term partnerships, a smaller supplier foundation, shorter lifecycles of products, and a concentration on core company operations and distributing a small number of products. Suppliers must be included in order for a new product launch to be successful. The performance of the supply chain must be improved over greater integration. For instance, the issue of on-time delivery is one that is frequently addressed by most firms (Mongwaketse, 2021). Contrarily, integrating with suppliers enables firms to communicate order and inventory information is shared with their vendors.

Incorporation of suppliers including operative communication, data exchanges and supplier collaboration, can also aid in reducing upstream complexity (Mongwaketse, 2021). Among the advantages of integrating suppliers are increased responsiveness, flexibility and time savings (Madzimore et al., 2020). By reducing manufacturing costs and uncertainty, supplier integration can also assist minimise transaction costs, which improves operating performances (Yu et al., 2016). Supplier collaboration minimises opportunistic behavior in favor of common aims and shared visions (Prajogo et al., 2015). The suppliers, in turn, are able to connect with firms and share transaction and inventory details. Integrating suppliers which comprises efficient interaction, exchange of data and working together with suppliers, may help minimise pipeline complications (Wisdom, 2015). According to Madzimore et al. (2020), supplier integration improves responsiveness, flexibility and time efficiency. By cutting manufacturing costs and minimising uncertainty, supplier integration also lowers transaction costs (Madzimore et al., 2020), improving operational performance.

Supplier integration provides increased responsiveness, flexibility and time savings (Boehmke & Hazen 2017). By lowering uncertainty and manufacturing costs, supplier integration is crucial for cutting transaction costs (Kanyoma, Agbola & Oloruntoba 2018). Supplier integration boosts operational efficiency as a result. Opportunistic behaviors are significantly reduced in supplier integration under shared visions and cooperative goals (Kanyoma et al., 2018).

2.9 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Electronic Marketplaces for Suppliers

Electronic marketplaces necessitate significant fixed expenditures in systems development. However, if implemented, they are guaranteed to manage bigger volumes of market transactions more quickly before reaching saturation and to reduce the marginal costs of inter-organisational coordination (Mongwaketse, 2021). If suppliers and governments can keep this promise, they will be likely expand due to their better cost/performance features. Furthermore, some writers have claimed that information technology would encourage coordination through market-based rather than hierarchical governance methods (Wisdom, 2015), giving electronic marketplaces a more significant role.

The e-marketplace enables firms to reach out to customers in several ways. Wisdom (2015)

posits that the internet allows businesses to reach out to their clients in various ways, one of which is worldwide research. (Mongwaketse, 2021) explain that, "the internet eliminates geographical protections and limitations of local businesses, and it gives smaller firms a wider audience." As a result, the internet is frequently regarded as integrally tied to the greater force of corporate change. Businesses perceive the capacity to contact clients who use internet connections everywhere, including globally as a considerable value-added benefit (Malik, 2018). It makes reaching, attracting and retaining consumers easier and more successful. This opens up new avenues for reaching out to consumers.

Malik (2018) further explains that it may further customise marketing to a greater extent. This enables companies to design items which can "meet customer specifications, and in recent years, the advancement of this type of marketing has been perhaps the most significant long-term development in e-marketing" (Malik, 2018: 14). According to business strategists, corporations will be able to acquire enough information from social media to adapt their goods and services in a way that will appeal to clients. This is because the goods and services advertised on social networking websites will be of personal or close personal interest to them.

Nonetheless, the e-marketplace provides vital additional channels for organisations to engage their clients, such as interactive and integrated marketing. Butler (2014) defines interactive marketing as a buyer-seller communication-driven advertising process in which the customer controls the amount and type of information received from the marketer (Butler, 2014). Butler (2014) elaborates that integrated marketing is a marketing approach in which all communication and promotional efforts are synchronised to create a single, customer-focused promotion campaign. The e-marketplace allows you to reach out to present and future customers in various ways. To close off this section, it has critically examined how the e-marketplace has been and may be utilised to reach the customer.

2.10 Strategies of Utilising Electronic Marketplaces in Organisations

E-marketing is used by organisations to reach millions of customers and suppliers and this kind of technology has changed how organisations communicates with suppliers. Because of the internet's nature, suppliers can view tendering advertisements from anywhere (Kaur

& Hundal, 2017). The ever-increasing global internet usage explains the popularity and promise of e-marketing technologies. The e-marketplace will continue to exist on the internet for a very long time to come and smaller businesses can 'use it, use it, use it, use it' (Mongwaketse, 2021). This is due to the complexity and speed of technological advancement as well as the availability of cheap and simple internet access devices.

Customers spend a large amount of time online, claim Chaffey and Chadwick (2016). Data from 2016 shows that 2.3 billion Internet users, or 67%, also regularly use social media. Despite the fact that people between the ages of 18 and 29 continue to make up the bulk of social media users, evidence suggests that usage among adults 65 and older has grown since 2010. According to statistics, 80% of Facebook users utilise mobile devices (Perrin, 2015).

A company's web presence may be a successful e-marketing approach. A website, according to Mongwaketse (2021), is a set of HTML pages that allows users to access material such as graphics, text, video and audio. The same websites can be used by viewers to send emails, submit registration or enquiry forms, use debit card payments or purchases online. Websites may be used in conjunction with various e-marketing methods, such as hyperlinks, which guide people to specific websites (Musina and Gao, 2016).

Market research is used to create search engine marketing products that recognise targeted marketing groups and give examined data to the market segment in a globally accepted fashion. Businesses in the tourism industry can share information by syndicate via partners' website. Customers gain from this strategy because they may obtain informed data in appealing and cost effective destinations by just pressing a button (Musina and Gao, 2016). Tourism operators can also market time sensitive discounts, local temptations, hotel updates, social events, destination specific updates and online videos (Musina and Gao, 2016).

According to Nobre and Silva (2014), online communication with a technology framework and platform aids small company owners' branding efforts. Information regarding websites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube was provided by their study findings. These websites are frequently used by businesses to increase brand recognition, foster consumer interactions and concurrently reach millions of individuals. Social networking can benefit small business owners tremendously in terms of communication, consumer empowerment and reduced marketing expenses (Swanson and Leventhal, 2016). Through websites like

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram, users can freely provide personalised information and social group advertising that is highly targeted (Musina and Gao, 2016; Tafveez, 2017). The accessibility of mobile devices has increased demand for and interest in social networking sites among both customers and marketers.

The government and its suppliers may readily exchange and access information (Tafveez, 2017). Government may reach more significant global suppliers than with other conventional media, which are exclusively available to regionally focused groups. Government can also communicate with suppliers in real-time via procedures such as queries, reservations and payments using cellphone or comparable technologies (Musina and Gao, 2016; Tafveez, 2017).

A lot of suppliers now have smartphone access to Internet technology, and the government departments have capitalised on this trend by developing mobile websites to advertise tenders. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a type of electronic marketing method that allows users to optimise or arrange websites so that they appear at the top of search engine results pages when specified keywords are entered (McGill, 2018). Search Engine Optimisation(SEO) is a method of changing web content and appearance to make it more consumer-friendly. This is an affordable strategy for attracting prospective clients to a company's business webpage. SEO is a continual development in which salespersons regularly adjust optimisation algorithms in order to maintain a specified top position inside search engine inquiries (McGill, 2018).

Furthermore, Dann and Dann (2011) advise that while establishing e-marketing within a government sector, selecting one or two complementing technologies is critical, so that while establishing e-marketing within a government, selecting one or two complementing technologies is critical. They claim that while striving to administer e-procurement procedures, many corporations should be selective when it comes to social media marketing outlets or e-marketing websites. Rather than striving to administer many sites ineffectively, the firm should focus on fewer issues and properly manage them. There are numerous social networks available that people and the South African government may use as part of their e-marketing efforts. This study looks into some popular social networking sites, including Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn. The following table indicate the summary of advantages and disadvantages of electronic marketplaces for suppliers:

advantages of eMarketplace	disadvantages of eMarketplace
• Marketplace brand recognizability. • A high number of clients in one place. • Low entry barrier (no need to invest in a sales platform or to know legal aspects etc.). • Additional channel of sales and a source of revenue • Ability to reach clients abroad. • Sales and logistics support. • Better promotion of products (lower expenses on SEO and advertising). • Increased seller credibility. • Access to innovative solutions (new tech, marketing and logistics solutions used by marketplaces). • Access to analytical and benchmarking data	• The main disadvantage of marketplaces is the huge competition. Your product will be displayed alongside similar products from your competitors. • Service Costs is one of the expense that you have to consider is promoting your products through paid social media ads. • Restrictive requirements concerning product descriptions and images, customer service. • Risk of competitors copying ideas or marketplaces / other sellers offering the popular products

2.11 Classifications and Motivation of Adopting e-Marketplace by Governments

A thorough literature review was used to identify the motives for building and participating in e-marketplaces by government departments. There are different types of incentives for taking part in e-marketplaces, depending on whether the rewards are monetary, interpersonal, social, or communal. The Western Australian Government built and operates a hierarchical e-marketplace because it is the sole buyer and has many vendors (Kresh et al., 2018). The State Government Electronic Market (GEM) is Australia's first full-featured online government purchasing platform. GEM services cover a wide range of government purchases. GEM was established with the goal of decreasing government costs by implementing more efficient procurement practices.

The state regime has also emphasised the importance of supply chain service enhancements. The formation of a private e-marketplace by the government was less likely to result in security difficulties than using an intermediary. Because many small and medium-sized businesses are wary of the government's motivations for building the e-marketplace, GEM

has yet to garner a critical mass of transactions (Tafveez, 2017). Some SMEs believe the motivation is primarily to promote supplier competition and, consequently, reduce prices. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are sensitive to the government's power imbalance, and the government's access to fresh market information via GEM will exacerbate the situation (Nandankar & Sachan, 2020).

In addition to saving expenses, GEM includes a variety of other aims targeted at enhancing supplier service (derived from the GEM Website) (Talapuse, 2015):

- Boosting government purchasing accountability and transparency;
- Increasing adherence to state supply guidelines;
- Publishing procurement and purchasing policies of the Commission (includes regulations governing Buy Local and Common Use Contracts);
- Taking the lead in adopting the Australian Procurement Construction Council (APCC) regulations and standards for electronic procurement;
- Assisting Western Australian businesses in accessing the world of e-commerce in a safe and secure government environment.

Porter's (2001) early study was expanded to account for the influence of internet on business rivalry. Porter (2001) contends that while the Internet has significantly influenced certain elements, the importance of the five competing forces in business has not altered significantly. The Five Forces Framework is applied to B2B e-marketplaces in Figure 2.2.

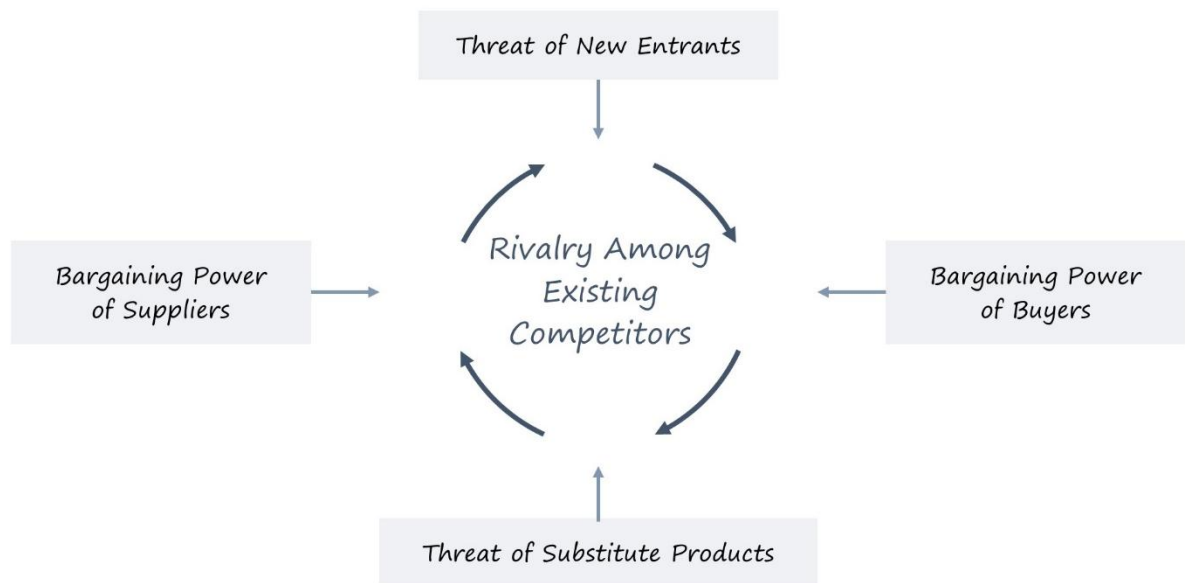


Figure 1.2: Five Forces Framework

Source: Madzimore et al. (2020 adapted from Porter, 2001)

According to Madzimore et al. (2020), the inherent influence of suppliers and consumers in the product sector is the most significant predictor of the profitability of the marketplace. Buyers and sellers gain influence and profit if they are in the minority or have distinct items. Madzimore et al.'s (2020) discussion on e-marketplaces focuses on intermediaries. Customers, on the other hand, are less likely to use intermediary e-marketplaces and more likely to create their own private e-marketplaces if they can communicate directly with suppliers (Waithaka & Kimani, 2021). The simplicity with which e-marketplaces can be founded poses a dilemma for profitability, and even business groups that take over the management of digital exchanges to provide a "public good," may fail to produce benefits in the long run.

Several online marketplaces are built with a sense of community considerations. Often this is accomplished via promoting economic activity, with the notion that if local/regional businesses thrive, so will the areas in which they operate. The market maker, which is frequently a local or state government sector, promotes e-marketplace trade by boosting the level of general e-business knowledge, skills, and technology across the business community (Madzimore et al., 2020). The e-marketplace can be considered a digital business for communities. Overall, the Australian GEM developers discovered that the digital marketplace lowered procurement transaction fees, which produced economic advantages

when combined with greater competitive pressure on suppliers.

2.12 Factors Influencing the Adoption of e-Marketplaces

According to Eyholzer and Hunziker (2000), just 18% of the Swiss enterprises studied employed computerised product catalogues, auctions, or requests for quotations in 2000. However, according to this study, many firms were considering e-marketplace and e-procurement systems at the time. Other studies, such as Industrial Distribution and Administration for the United States, report comparable findings. About half of all American enterprises now use e-marketplace and e-procurement platforms, according to a study by Wyld (2004).

Wyld (2004) found that only 30% of the firms examined in the United States, utilise online auctions, or e-markets for RFPs, while 33% employ e-procurement platforms. Another issue is the continued existence of proprietary systems like the electronic data interchange (EDI), which must be integrated into a company's overall e-procurement architecture, despite the overwhelming evidence supporting the advantages of e-procurement systems. Companies must first comprehend the crucial success factors before putting e-procurement strategies, practices, and technologies into practice.

Trainor, Rapp, Beitelspacher and Schillewaert (2011) investigate how merging information technology with marketing potential and the firm's resources affects a company's success. Their study is founded on a paradigm that investigates the concept of e-marketing as a technique for leveraging a company's resources (including technology) to increase commercial success. In this study, Trainor et al. (2011) focus on enhancing e-marketing potential through market and technology orientation. They found that this process boosts the company's success by enhancing customer satisfaction and encouraging repeat purchases.

Eid and El-Gohary (2013) investigate the use of the e-marketplace and its impact on the marketing success of small business enterprises. The study underlines the positive influence of accepting and employing e-marketing on the success of a small firm. Furthermore, Eid and El-Gohary (2013) discovered that a company's use of e-marketing is positively related to performance and how businesses acquire and retain customers.

According to Bala et al. (2018), who discovered an advantageous link between electronic marketplaces and government, online business is an essential skill for enterprises to acquire and maintain, and agile governance is a rising business discipline to satisfy this need. Important studies have also revealed that the business's marketplace performance is mostly determined by its website, social marketplace and digital advertising, all of which are components of the digital marketplace; additionally, savings generated via the usage of an electronic marketplace can be reinvested elsewhere.

Ellis-Chadwick (2019) suggests that the productivity benefits discovered by manufacturing enterprises were likely impacted by suppliers and consumers, who typically compelled these SMEs to adopt the technology as part of their customer relations and supply chain operations. The most significant relationships were found among e-marketplace expenditure and preliminary sales operations, the e-marketplace cost and marketplace efficacy, service after the sale and marketplace success.

2.13 Proposed Constructs of the Study

For this study to explain the suppliers' perceptions of an electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province, the study adopted a number of constructs. Electronic marketplace awareness, Perceived value, Expectation, Readiness and Intentions to Use are identified as relevant items to measure the perceptions of suppliers' towards electronic marketplace platforms as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province. Some of the constructs are adopted from the Technology Readiness and Acceptance Model (TRAM). TRAM is the most recent addition, combining the common personality component of TRI with the particular dimension system of TAM (Compernelle et al., 2018). This illustrates how personality traits might influence a person's experience and how he uses new technologies (Kotler, et al., 2016). Thus, the adopted constructs will be successful if they offer value and happiness to users of the electronic marketplace platform, according to the relationship between user perception, perceived value and expectations of suppliers. Depending on the application suppliers believe offers the most value, they may choose to employ an electronic marketplace platform. The application of the above-mentioned constructs is explained below.

2.13.1 Electronic marketplaces awareness

Because of the rapid advancements in Information Technology (IT) and Information Systems (IS), many conventional buying and selling activities are now completely supported and executed through e-marketplaces, enabling automated transactions and collaboration between suppliers and buyers. The results of these contracts characterise the awareness level of these marketplaces by suppliers doing business with the government in Gauteng Province. To understand electronic marketplaces, information will be useful in giving suppliers the chance for boosting brand recognition, communicating with clients and improving commercial sustainability.

2.13.2 Perceived value

The perceived outcome of participation is closely tied to supplier and buyer motivation for e-marketplace involvement, not only in terms of the benefits of joining an e-marketplace but also in terms of the likely consequences of not participating. Furthermore, the mediating variable perceived value only partially mediates the impact of lower service costs and convenience on customer purchase decisions for specific e-marketplaces. Value perceptions are intimately tied to perceived quality (Zielke, 2014) and values are prevalent from the consumer's perspective throughout the whole consuming process. Perceived value is a consumer's overall perception of the net benefit of a good or service based on their appraisal. According to Steenkamp and Geyskens (2006), organisations may increase customer buying intentions through product value since perceived value is increasingly essential nowadays.

People acquire confidence in an online shop based on various criteria, including previous experiences and perceived value (Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2021). A user's acceptance of new technology is based on two factors, according to Davis (1989), which are the technology acceptance model: perceived usefulness (The extent to which the user views technology will aid in improving performance and efficiency) and perceived ease of use (how comfortable the suppliers are with the technology's features). As a result, this study uses perceived value as the primary predictor of user behaviour during both the initial adoption phase and the post-adoption period.

2.13.3 Expectation

In this study, anticipation refers to a supplier's belief that using the e-marketplaces system will help to obtain tender advertisements (ads). Consumers form expectations about the quality of a service before purchasing it based on personal requirements, prior experiences, word-of-mouth recommendations and service provider ads (Kotler, et al., 2016). These contracts will be used as benchmarks to investigate provider expectations on e-marketplaces. All UTAUT factors, mediated by gender, had a significant effect on acceptance of e-government by staff members in a developing country's state organisation, with effectiveness and expectation having the biggest effects (Gupta, Dasgupta & Gupta, 2008).

For example, when the model was applied to analyse Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software training acceptance, three of the four predictors of use intention were found to be significant. While effort expectation, performance expectation and enabling conditions all influenced employees' willingness to use training materials, the effect of social influence was not proven. This study examines suppliers' perceptions towards an electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province, as determined by the effects of performance expectancy and effort expectancy.

2.13.4 Readiness

In this study, readiness refers to a supplier's willingness to accept and utilise a new electronic marketplace platform to achieve procurement goals. The construct may be understood as a gestalt of mental facilitators and inhibitors that collectively influence a supplier's propensity to use an electronic marketplace platform (Kotler, et al., 2016). Technology readiness has four underlying dimensions:

- *Optimism*, a favourable attitude toward technology and the conviction that it gives individuals more power, flexibility, and efficiency.
- *Innovativeness*, the predisposition to be a thought leader and pioneer in technology.
- *Discomfort*, a feeling of being outmatched by technology and having little control over it.

- *Insecurity*, a skepticism of technology and worries about its functionality (Kotler, et al., 2016).

This for Technology readiness dimensions will be used as a measuring item to investigate suppliers' readiness to use e-marketplaces as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province. Technology readiness is aided by optimism and creativity, but hampered by unease and uncertainty. The paradox that providers may concurrently possess positive and negative beliefs is captured by the model (Kotler, et al., 2016).

2.13.5 Intentions to use

The study looks at which elements affect intentions to use e-marketplaces as an e-procurement strategy by suppliers. Trust is an essential aspect in facilitating customer purchasing intentions to buy online, increasing e-retailer final sales (Huang and Chang, 2017): The personality of a website is an essential factor in consumer happiness and trust, both of which can have an impact on purchase intentions. Website elements like privacy, security and design improve users' purchasing intentions (Li, Chung & Fiore, 2017). According to Al-dweeri, Obeidat, Al-dwiry, Alshurideh and Alhorani (2017), contentment has a moderating effect on customers' intentions to make further purchases and is crucial to their e-loyalty. This study looks into items that may affect the intention of suppliers to use e-marketplaces as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province.

2.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter aimed to provide a detailed overview of e-marketplaces, e-procurement, South African Government Suppliers as well as factors influencing the adoption of an e-marketplace towards promoting an electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province. The literature study concentrated on the strategies of electronic marketplaces in organisations, the benefits of electronic marketplaces to suppliers, and the intentions of suppliers to use e-marketplaces as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province. The literature research also described numerous technology adoption models that may be used for e-marketing and implementation of e-procurement in supply chain management. Electronic marketplace awareness, perceived value, expectation, readiness and intentions to use are identified as constructs to measure the perceptions of suppliers' towards

electronic marketplace platforms as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter established the supporting literature for the current enquiry. The goal of this chapter is to outline the research methodology employed to conduct the current investigation. This chapter discusses the research paradigms, research methodologies, research tactics and study design procedures used in this study. In addition, the validity and reliability of the research will be addressed in this chapter. According to Kumar, Kumar, Palvia and Verma (2019), research methodology encompasses research methods as well as the logic behind the chosen methods of the study and is a systematic approach to solving a research topic scientifically.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The word research paradigm refers to a general belief or way of thinking about a specific topic (Kumar et al., 2019). The selection of a paradigm is an important first step in doing research because it offers the framework for subsequent decisions about research design, literature and procedures (Yin, 2014). In research philosophy, mental models or frames of reference are described as a way to describe people's observations and worldviews (Kumar et al., 2019). The paradigms are discussed below:

- **Positivism** - The Positivists hold that civilisations strive for a specific order and have a real existence. These presumptions result in the emergence of a measurable, value-free aim. It has been demonstrated that research may be carried out in an impartial and value-free manner with a quantifiable reality (Stage & Manning, 2015). Given that the current study is a correlation study with two different research designs—explanation and prediction—it can produce actual explanatory and predictive knowledge about reality. In positivism, results can be extrapolated from the study group to the larger target population. The assumption could be based on cause-and-effect relationships that can be tested (through theory or model testing) and linked by its belief in a deductive reasoning technique.

- **Interpretivism** - Research in interpretative studies is arbitrary and value-bound (researchers' value). In addition, several realities (other points of view) are always shifting and may be studied but not anticipated. Additionally, it is impossible to verify the causal connections. This suggests that the only way to develop a theory is to combine evidence using inductive reasoning. Based on the study's goals and research questions, one should choose between these two philosophical tenets (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To satisfy the aims and research questions specified in Chapter 1, this study requires an objective analysis of the phenomena in a large sample.
- **Realism research** - Aims to eliminate power dynamics, issues and inconsistencies that contribute to a power imbalance and marginalisation. There is a need to dispute the statement's veracity as well as the relevant studies on realism research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The authors sometimes think that an explanation for a claim can lead to unethical behaviour, particularly in critical research when the methodology is ambiguous.

To assess the perceptions of government suppliers regarding the implementation of an electronic marketplace, it was determined that positivism was the best paradigm for the investigation. Because the current study involves creating research themes, it follows the positivist paradigm. Coy (2019) points out that the quantitative research methodology which examines hypotheses to ascertain the truthfulness of goals, is related to positivist studies. According to Blumberg (2014), "positive research" is described as "research that draws on the idea that the social reality may be examined objectively, research is value-free, and the researcher is independent." According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), it is assumed that studies in social sciences can be conducted using natural scientific procedures, that reality can be generally known and that hypotheses can be rejected or provisionally proven.

3.2.1 Justification for following positivist paradigm

A common approach in research related to government electronic marketplaces is to adopt a positivist paradigm. This philosophy emphasises using empirical methods, quantitative data and objective measurements to test hypotheses and establish causal relationships. Positivism is often used in research related to government electronic marketplaces because of the focus

on data analysis and quantitative metrics to measure the effectiveness of the marketplace. For instance, a study by Siti-Nabiha and Abdul-Kader (2013) on the adoption and implementation of electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) in Malaysia, used a positivist research approach to analyse data from government agencies to measure the impact of e-GP on procurement efficiency and effectiveness.

Another reason a positivist paradigm is suitable for government electronic marketplace research is that it allows for using objective measurements to assess the marketplace's success. For example, a study by Orare and Nkirina, (2019) on the effectiveness of the Kenyan Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) used a positivist approach to analyse financial data and measure the impact of IFMIS on the efficiency and transparency of public procurement.

3.3 Research Approach

Research is predicated on a few core conceptual and theoretical assumptions about what makes a valid study and which research methodologies are appropriate for collecting knowledge in a given setting. The research problem that needs to be addressed in the study has a considerable impact on the research approach used. There are three different categories of research methods: mixed, qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative techniques typically concentrate on gathering and analysing numerical data. Qualitative approaches focused on collecting and analysing non-numerical data. They support semi-structured, in-depth interviews as a technique of enquiry. These interviews might include open-ended questions that enable interviewees to go into further detail about their replies. The mixed-method combines numerical and non-numerical data gathering and analysis, as well as quantitative and qualitative elements (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.3.1 Quantitative approach

The emphasis of a quantitative research study is on obtaining numerical data through tools such as surveys and then analysing that data through methods of statistical analysis (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). Objects such as frequency tables, graphs that take the form of bar and pie charts and statistic such as means, medians, standard deviations and correlation analyses may be utilised to aid in the presentation of the findings, depending on

the study's goals and objectives. To investigate a phenomenon objectively, a positivist research approach is supported by quantitative research (Antwi and Hamza., 2015).

The advantage of using quantitative research is that the researcher may swiftly collect a large amount of data and the results may be extrapolated to comparable studies. Validity and reliability are frequently high because to the large amounts of data collected and the researcher's ability to change the degree of accuracy statistics (Vogt, Gardner & Haeffele, 2012). The survey technique's strength can also be shown through its ability to research, characterise, and analyse relationships between physically scattered subjects, which is important to the current study's geographically distributed population. According to Rahman (2020), survey research is arguably the greatest tool available to social scientists interested in gathering original data from a population that is too large to observe firsthand.

The main disadvantage of quantitative research is that it does not provide a comprehensive grasp of the complicated nature of human experience and perception. The approach may give a deceptive appearance of sample homogeneity where it does not exist, which is another disadvantage (Avella, 2016). The length, number and time required to complete the questionnaire may impact participants' desire to engage (Cunningham et al., 2015).

3.3.2 Qualitative Approach

Prior to analysing the data with methods such as theme analysis, frequency tables or rankings, graphs and even video, personal cues, audio, and gestures, the focus in qualitative research is on acquiring textual and other non-numerical data (videos, gestures, personal cues, and audio). The largely descriptive conversations provide the researcher with in-depth knowledge about the topic under examination (Rahman, 2020). A method for conducting qualitative studies includes an interpretivist or phenomenal method in which researchers collect data in a subjective manner as the investigation progresses. In qualitative research, researchers influences the flow or direction of the study while remaining objective, as opposed to quantitative research, in which the researcher assumes a neutral or external perspective (Nardi, 2018).

A qualitative investigation has the benefit of revealing novel theories and concepts, as well as being able to compare and contrast previously held notions. Another advantage is the

ability to see respondents in their natural surroundings or context, which provides the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of their behaviour (Patten, 2016). The primary disadvantage of qualitative research is that it cannot be generalised due to its small sample size and subjective nature. The third drawback is that dependability is weakened in qualitative investigations since various individuals, times and locations might provide different findings (Burns, et al, 2014). As a result, meticulous preparation is required to increase its effectiveness.

After comparing qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study found the quantitative methodology more effective in revealing why suppliers find e-marketplaces appropriate for procurement. Thus this research used a quantitative technique since the researcher wanted to compare different variables or statistical data measures as the quantitative approach entails measuring, sampling, and evaluating relations using statistical analysis.

3.4 Research Strategy

The phrase "research strategy" refers to a detailed plan for how the work should be carried out in order to answer the work question(s) and achieve the study's objective (Saunders, et al. 2023). Notably, case studies research, experimental research, surveys and action research are all useful as research strategies.

3.4.1 Action research

Action research is defined as a method in which a client and an action researcher collaborate to diagnose a problem and develop a solution based on the diagnosis (Saunders, et al. 2023). One of the key characteristics of action research is the collaboration between the researcher and a member of the company to address organisational difficulties. Action research is predicated on the idea that society is changing continuously and that academics are able to influence this change. According to Coy (2019), action research often belongs to one of three subcategories: positivist, interpretive, or critical.

3.4.2 Case study

This strategy focuses on a particular person or group. When there are disparities, it helps to clarify the distinguishing characteristics of each sample and evaluate the significance of contextual and cultural factors (Bell et al. 2018)). This strategy is preferable for financial analysis. Case studies examine a single unit in order to identify and explain its fundamental qualities without oversimplification (Saunders, et al. 2023). For example, conducting this type of research can help financial researchers compare the outcomes of investments made in various locations.

3.4.3 Survey research

The methodology for surveys and the deductive approach are closely related. One of the most effective and worthwhile scientific methods exists (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). The collection of complete and reliable data is made easier by this tactic. In quantitative research initiatives, surveys are frequently utilised, and this includes sampling a representative population subset (Bell et al. (2018)). Finding the factors that affect various forms of data is the main goal of the survey technique. It enables extensive data collection to address the study topic.

3.4.4 Experiment research strategy

Experimentation is better suited to causal research, which examines cause-and-effect correlations. It works effectively for analyses that need a small number of independent variables that can be changed or controlled (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). Indoor and outdoor experiments can be carried out. Laboratory experiments are often quite valid internally in laboratory (artificial) settings, but this comes at a cost in terms of external low validity (generalisability), as the artificial (laboratory) settings used may not be exactly like the real world. For use in a company's actual field conditions, both internally and externally conducted field studies are reliable (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). Nonetheless, since these are difficult to be managed and tracked, these studies is not generally well-liked.

Even though there are numerous research methods, this research used the survey method.

Surveys provide unbiased evidence in the form of verifiable, illuminating facts. The fundamental objective of the study, according to Babbie (2020), is to collect data from surveys that reflects the opinions of the population. To gather quantitative data from surveys and validate the study model, inferential statistics can be utilised as a plausible explanation for a certain variable link. Any style of study, including exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory, can use the survey strategy. This technique works best in studies where the primary unit of analysis is the individual participant.

3.4.5 Justification for following survey research strategy

Since this research focuses on businesses trading with the government, the quantitative research method was used to survey businesses dealing with government institutions. A survey was utilised to collect data for this investigation. It was used to survey suppliers to see what they think about implementing an electronic marketplace by the government and their willingness to adapt and use this technology for trading. The study primarily targeted business owners and managers in order to better understand the constraints and challenges associated with utilising electronic markets as a sourcing strategy.

The survey is still the most common and widely utilised research strategy among business researchers. Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019) define a survey as questioning individuals on a topic and then describing their responses, which is what this research study did. A survey research strategy, according to Coy (2019), involves questionnaires, structured interviews and structured observation. However, only questionnaires were used in this investigation.

3.5 Research Design

Decision-makers and researchers will be able to draw conclusions from the research's conclusive research design, which in turn helps them make decisions (Coy, 2019). The research design is an empirical study "blueprint" that focuses on a minimum of three methods: (1) the method of developing the instrument, (2) the sampling strategy, and (3) the sampling strategy of gathering the data (Bhattacharjee, 2012). A research design is a strategy or set of guidelines for gathering information or data that is required and appropriate for testing hypotheses.

This researcher undertook a cross-sectional study to obtain information about people throughout a certain time period. Only one survey was conducted (Stockemer, Stockemer & Glaeser, 2019).

3.5.1 Sampling technique and population

The research sample is a group of people, a topic, or a circumstance that has been chosen to be a part of the study. According to Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019), in statistics, sampling methods are how a sample is taken from the targeted populations. Methods of sampling are characterised as either probability or non-probability. Probability sampling methods randomly select elements from the population, Each element has a similar likelihood of getting chosen. Non-probability sample methods do not give each element an equal opportunity of being chosen and often depend on the judgment of the person taking the sample (Stockemer et al., 2019).

According to the objectives of their study, the sampling strategy is used by researchers to select a sample of individuals from an established population to be utilised as data sources for experiments or observation (Sharma, 2017).

The two different types of samples are probability samples and non-probability samples. According to Yin (2014), Sharma (2017) and Coy (2019), probability samples include random stratified samples, basic random samples, random cluster samples, stratified randomised samples and systematic randomised samples.

- a. **Stratified randomised sampling:** this happens when the scholar separates the population into sectors or subcategories (for example, students, employees, jobless and self employed) and subsequently chooses individuals from those categories (Yin, 2014).
- b. **Simple randomised sampling:** occurs when every survey unit in a precisely defined population has a comparable probability of being studied (Sharma, 2017).
- c. **Cluster randomised sampling:** includes a sampling unit that does not represent a structure but rather a group of individuals that are naturally present in the general population, such as classroom students, religious organisations, or sports team (Yin, 2014).

- d. **Systematic randomised sampling:** is used to describe the use of multiple quantitative techniques in a single enquiry (Sharma, 2017).

Non-probability sampling includes handy samples, self-selection samples, snowball samples, quota samples, purposeful sampling, accidental or incidental samples and more (Sharma, 2017).

- a. **Quota sample:** - the researcher selects the ratios of levels or strata within the sample on purpose. The selection process must take into account the specific demographic category. The proportions might or might not be significantly different from the overall population proportion (Yin, 2014).
- b. **Purposive sample:** - is a non-representative subset of some larger group that was formed to fulfill a specific purpose or objective. A researcher might take into account a certain group, such top company executives. It is possible that the population cannot be located (Coy, 2019).
- c. **Snowball sample:** - is also known as sampling through chains or network referral sampling. When individuals are chosen from their social networks for sociological and statistical studies, it is advantageous (Babbie, 2020).
- d. **Self-selection sample:** - is useful when we wish to enable entities, such individuals or groups, to decide for themselves whether to take part in research (Coy, 2019).
- e. **Convenience sample:** - when correctly interpreted, everyone in the population has an equal probability of being chosen, selection is probably not random; yet, this is possible. Volunteers make up a convenience sample.

Regardless of the sampling strategies above, this study used a purposive sampling method. This study used Sharma's (2017) purposive sampling approach, which includes an examination of the study's problem, identifying the data necessary to solve the research problem, participant selection, and rigour in using a data collection approach in addition to methods for gathering data, leading to analysis and interpretation. However, there is no way to anticipate or guarantee that every component of individuals will be present in the sample in non-probability sampling research (Coy, 2019). Only providers from the Gauteng government were sampled in this study.

3.5.1.1 Population

The Central Supplier Database (CSD) is an example of how technology can be wisely used to increase government effectiveness and efficiency, cut down on bureaucracy, lower entry barriers and open up commercial prospects for many South Africans. Since the CSD's mandatory introduction on 1 April 2016, more than 440,000 potential suppliers have registered there (National Treasury Report, 2018). According to the Preferential Public Procurement Framework Act Regulations of 2017, more than 300,000 CSD-registered suppliers have updated their ownership information on the CSD (National Treasury Report 2018). It should be noted that 133711 of these suppliers are in Gauteng province, Figure 3.1 below depicts.

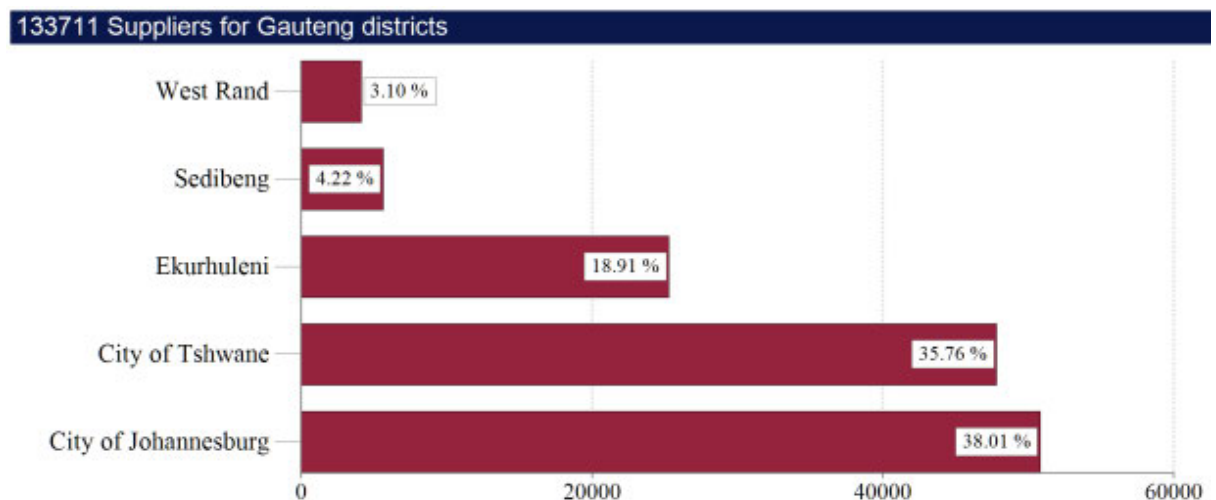


Figure 2.1: Gauteng Province Suppliers

Source: National Treasury Report (2018)

Gauteng remains the province with the highest number of suppliers registered in CSD. This study focuses on a government electronic marketplace platform as a sourcing strategy; therefore, this study sample only those government entity suppliers in Gauteng province, who make 0.07% of the population of Gauteng suppliers, as shown in Figure 3.2 below. The total expected population is 133711×0.07 , which equates to a population of 9359.

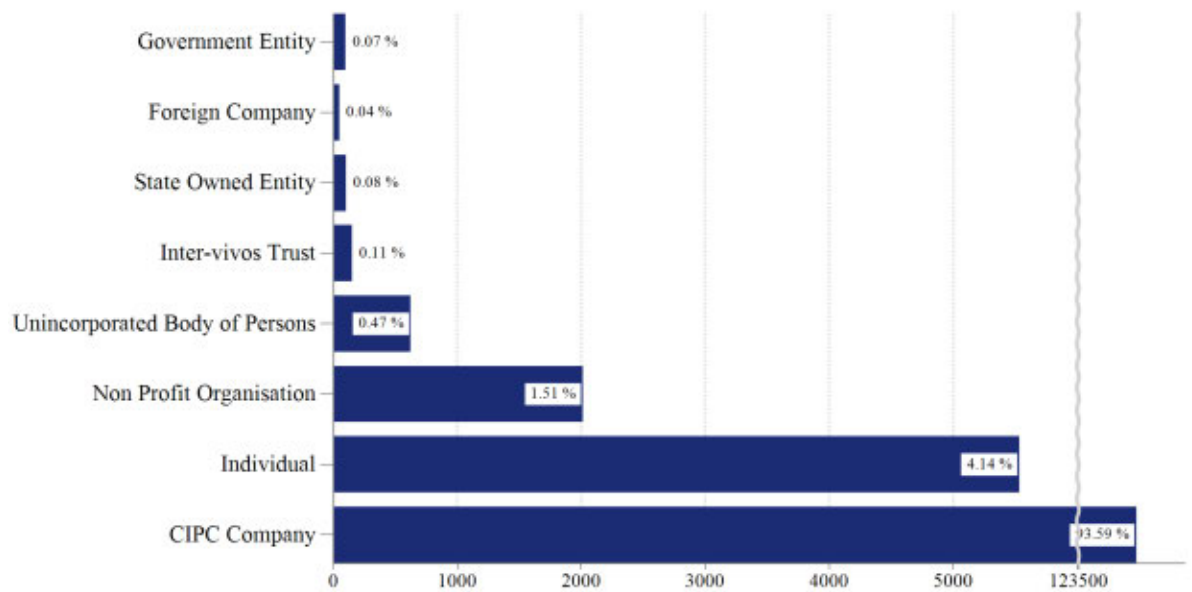


Figure 3.2: Gauteng Suppliers Registered on the CSD

Source: National Treasury Report (2018)

Furthermore, the sample size for this research study was determined prior to data collection to ensure that the range of confidence is statistically significant and relevant for decision-making. For this study, a total of 9359 suppliers from government entities was the focus, and the ideal sampling number to be derived for the desired degree of confidence and the permitted amount of error in the sample, which may be computed using an equation (Levine, David & Szabat, 2021). The sampling size is determined by three factors:

- The critical threshold from the standard normal distribution provides the appropriate confidence level, which decides the value of Z. There will be a 95% confidence interval ($z = 1.96$) used.
- The permissible sampling error is 0.07.
- The sample size is maximised when the population percentage is 0.5.

There are numerous formulas for determining an appropriate sampling number (n) from the population being studied (N). Slovin/Slonim's formula (1960), also known as Yamane's formula, is provided as $n = N / (1 + N e^2)$, whereby n represents the number of samples to be focused, N is the actual sample number, and e is the margin of error required from the accepted distribution table, such as 1% or 5%. The entire population of government suppliers is used to estimate the number of participants. The sampling population is calculated from the estimated population of 645 suppliers whom the research will have access to and are

registered in the Gauteng CSD:

$$n = N / (1 + N e^2)$$

$$n = 9359 / (1 + 9359 * 0.05^2)$$

$$n = 9359 / (1 + 9359 * 0.25)$$

$$n = 9359 / 24.3975$$

$$n = 383.6$$

Thus, the questionnaire link was emailed to 384 individuals; notably in the context of diminishing response rates to survey research, a response rate of 50% is regarded as appropriate (Nulty, 2008). Thus, 192 questionnaires were considered to be a final sample for data analysis.

3.5.1.2 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis was individual suppliers classified as government entities registered in Gauteng CSD. The analysis can focus on identifying characteristics of the particular supplier, their perception of the electronic marketplace and/or their capability to use the electronic supply chain management technologies. Finally, the analysis can examine the supplier's environmental impact and sustainability initiatives for using e-marketplace.

3.5.1.3 Data collection method

Data gathering is done to generate evidence for investigations (Mehrad and Zangeneh, 2019). To determine how government suppliers feel about adopting an electronic market, quantitative data were obtained. Questionnaires are the most popular data collection tools used in quantitative techniques. Along with a number of questions, the questionnaire also contains a number of statements. A questionnaire seeks input and opinions on a subject from subject-matter experts. According to Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019), one advantage of using surveys is that they may be distributed in a variety of ways, such as postal mail, telephone, hand delivery, individually or in groups, and through electronic channels such as e-mails and websites.

The questionnaire for this study was designed using Google Forms and the statistician tested the validity of the questionnaire rather than doing the pilot study. The link was emailed to

the suppliers classified as Government entities registered in Gauteng CSD. According to Benoit et al. (2018), the direction, a well-defined study topic and clearly stated objectives ensure the significance of the survey's responses and as a result, every response was closely tied to them.

3.6 Data Analysis

A research study cannot be considered effective until the data obtained through various data gathering processes is analysed and interpreted. Benoit et al. (2018) define quantitative data analysis as a strategy used by researchers to convert data into a clear and understood form of numbers, so that these may be statistically studied. Using this conversion to find solutions, it is feasible to study, assess, clarify, generate knowledge of, and draw conclusions regarding research concerns. The numerical data might be categorised, classified, calculated and reviewed using statistical analysis to provide context for the acquired data. In conclusion, Benoit, et al. (2018) explain that the detection of significant patterns of correlations in the data is aided by quantitative analysis.

The data were investigated utilising both inferential and descriptive statistical methodologies, along with SPSS, with a focus on questionnaire data (Pallant, 2011). Descriptive factors such as gender and level of education were utilised to illustrate the data in the present research. Exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the principal component matrix variables using varimax techniques. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha approach was employed to investigate the reliability constructs (Pallant, 2020). Cronbach's alpha was utilized to evaluate the constructs' internal consistency (Pallant, 2020).

3.7 Validation and Reliability

A measurement's validity is determined by how well-founded and accurate it is compared to the world existent. The term "valid" comes from the Latin *validus*, which means "strong." The extent of how an instrument is measured (such as a test in the SME business) and whether it evaluates what it claims to measure is referred to as validity. Accuracy and validity are synonymous (Drogar, Fathi-Ashtiani & Ashrafi 2020). Drogar et al. (2020) assert that all investigation types require validity.

The coherence with which an instrument for study generates the same results throughout time is characterised as reliability (Drogar et al., 2020). It is validated using many measurements taken from the same subjects. Low dependability harms both the accuracy of a single measurement and the capacity to track variations in measurements over the period of the study. This researcher started by ensuring that appropriate data sources were chosen. Top managers from the supply chain and procurement departments were chosen for the research because they had examined e-procurement procedures in health organisations. This provided incredibly insightful assurance that the appropriate data was being gathered from the relevant sources.

According to Ortega-Toro, García-Angulo, Giménez-Egido, García-Angulo and Palao (2019), the validity of findings and recommendations is a must for every research procedure. Reliability is often referred to as accuracy, consistency, dependability and the capacity to duplicate study results. Ortega-Toro, et al., (2019) define dependability as, if the study is repeated with the same individuals, the findings should hold true. Reliability is a crucial criterion for all scientific studies.

Respondents were invited to complete the online questionnaire when they had free time. To assess internal coherence of the items observed in the study, an analysis was conducted using SPSS (Pallant, 2020). The length of the questionnaire must also be considered. Some people may be hesitant to participate in the study due to the length of the questionnaire. As a result, the survey used for this study was designed to collect the necessary data without requiring participants to provide detailed responses (Babbie, 2020). Cronbach alpha values of 0.70 or higher were judged satisfactory for the instrument's internal dependability. Every single one of the variables/constructs in the study was treated in this manner, including supplier integration, e-marketplace and e-procurement.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked over the study technique in great detail, covering the concepts, strategy, approach and design. The findings of the study are reported and further explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The findings are discussed and presented in this chapter. This chapter discusses the data analysis results from the research instrument. SPSS 27.0 was used to perform statistical analysis on the data. The validity of the results was determined using exploratory factor analysis. The Cronbach alpha analysis was performed to determine the dependability of the variables of choice. These were assessed to see if there is a latent connection among the variables. This was done by assessing the correlation between the constructs for association. The predictor and predicted variables were then determined to be related using regression.

4.2 Data Collection

This study's data was gathered using an online data collection tool. Participants were suppliers registered on the Central Supplier Database (CSD) of government. Respondents were assured that personal information would not be disclosed, with the understanding that findings would be stored for ten years before being deleted. In total, 385 questionnaires were distributed, and 190 of them were completed.

4.3 Demographics

Participants' characteristics in the study, comprising 190 individuals, were examined to gain insights into their backgrounds. In terms of professional experience, the participants were distributed as stated in Table 4.1. A total of 34.2% had between 2 and 5 years of experience, 19.5% had less than 1 year of experience, and 46.3% had more than 5 years of experience. Regarding the size of their respective enterprises, 33.7% represented Emerging Micro Enterprises (EME), 4.7% were from Generic Enterprises with a turnover exceeding R50 million per annum, and the majority (61.6%) were from Qualifying Small Enterprises. The participants' marketplace skills levels were categorised as follows: 44.2% had high level skills, 11.1% had low level skills, and 44.7% had moderate skills, as shown in Table 4.1. This diverse participant composition, spanning various experience levels, enterprise sizes, and skills proficiencies, enhances the study's comprehensiveness in exploring the factors.

Table 4.1: Demographics

Demographics					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Experience	Between 2 and 5 years	65	34,2	34,2	34,2
	Less than 1 year	37	19,5	19,5	53,7
	Over 5 years	88	46,3	46,3	100,0
	Total	190	100,0	100,0	
Size	Emerging Micro Enterprise (EME)	64	33,7	33,7	33,7
	Generic Enterprise (turnover over R50 million per annum)	9	4,7	4,7	38,4
	Qualifying Small Enterprise	117	61,6	61,6	100,0
	Total	190	100,0	100,0	
Skills	High	84	44,2	44,2	44,2
	Low	21	11,1	11,1	55,3
	Moderate	85	44,7	44,7	100,0
	Total	190	100,0	100,0	

4.4 Exploratory Factor Analysis

For the study, the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (K of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)) was 0.888, indicating a high degree of shared variance among all of the variables. As indicated in Table 4.2, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provided a significant result of about 3615.665 (p 0.001), validating the data's eligibility for factor analysis.

Table 4.2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
KMO measurement of Sample Tolerability.		0,888
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3615,665

	Df	325
	Sig.	0,000

The communalities' analysis reveals the relationships between variables. Initial communalities were all 1.000. Following extractions using Principal Component Analysis, variable communalities ranged from 0.430 to 0.849, indicating the variance each variable shares with the extracted factors, as shown in Table 4.3. Communality with values less than 0.3 were deleted since they were deemed invalid (Pallant, 2020). EMP = electronic marketplaces awareness; INT = intentions to use; P= perceived value; E= expectations RD= readiness; EM= electronic market strategies.

Table 4.3: Communalities

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
EMP1	1,000	0,713
EMP2	1,000	0,849
EMP3	1,000	0,479
EMP4	1,000	0,847
INT1	1,000	0,665
INT2	1,000	0,484
INT3	1,000	0,669
INT4	1,000	0,671
INT5	1,000	0,741
P1	1,000	0,742
P2	1,000	0,677
P3	1,000	0,762
P4	1,000	0,731
P5	1,000	0,780
E1	1,000	0,791
E2	1,000	0,746
E3	1,000	0,786
E4	1,000	0,781
E5	1,000	0,654

RD1	1,000	0,430
RD2	1,000	0,765
RD3	1,000	0,751
RD4	1,000	0,766
RD5	1,000	0,751
EM1	1,000	0,557
EM2	1,000	0,679
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

4.4.1 Total Variance explained and rotated component matrix

The table below presents the Principal Component Analysis, in which the total of variation is explained by components. Table 4.4 shows that the first eigenvalues ranged from 10.073 to 0.106. Five components have eigenvalues greater than one. According to the extraction approach, the first component accounted for 38.741% for the variation, and the cumulative variance increased through subsequent components: 51.086% for the second, 59.339% for the third and 70.263% for the fifth. After the fifth component, the cumulative variance is not provided. The results demonstrate the distribution of variance across different components, illustrating their contributions to the overall variance in the dataset. The variance in this study was above the threshold of 60%; therefore, deemed valid for this study.

Table 4.4: Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10,073	38,741	38,741	10,073	38,741	38,741	7,621	29,312	29,312
2	3,210	12,344	51,086	3,210	12,344	51,086	4,037	15,526	44,837
3	2,146	8,254	59,339	2,146	8,254	59,339	3,021	11,619	56,456
4	1,704	6,552	65,891	1,704	6,552	65,891	1,824	7,014	63,471
5	1,137	4,372	70,263	1,137	4,372	70,263	1,766	6,792	70,263
6	0,899	3,457	73,720						
7	0,775	2,983	76,702						
8	0,668	2,570	79,272						
9	0,622	2,390	81,662						
10	0,561	2,157	83,819						
11	0,499	1,921	85,740						
12	0,457	1,758	87,497						
13	0,428	1,648	89,145						
14	0,391	1,503	90,648						

15	0,36 2	1,391	92,039						
16	0,28 5	1,096	93,136						
17	0,25 7	0,990	94,125						
18	0,25 1	0,964	95,089						
19	0,21 6	0,832	95,921						
20	0,20 9	0,804	96,725						
21	0,19 1	0,735	97,460						
22	0,17 2	0,663	98,123						
23	0,14 2	0,546	98,669						
24	0,12 2	0,471	99,140						
25	0,11 8	0,454	99,594						
26	0,10 6	0,406	100,000						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

The rotated component matrix displays the loadings of variables on five components extracted from the data using a Principal Component Analysis. The loadings represent the strength and direction of each variable's relationship with the components. Component 1 is associated with variables INT1, INT2, INT3, INT4, INT5. Component 2 is related to variables E1, E2, E3, E4, and E5. Component 3 is associated with variables EMP1, EMP2, EMP3, and EMP4, and EM1 and EM2. Component 4 corresponds to variables P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. Component 5 is related to variable RD1, RD2, RD3, RD4, and RD5. Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation was used for rotation. The loadings are above the threshold of

0.3, which is the threshold suggested by Pallant in 2020. The loadings in Table 4.5 are deemed valid for a reliability test.

Table 4.5: Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix^a					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
EMP1			0,795		
EMP2			0,915		
EMP3			0,618		
EMP4			0,896		
INT1	0,733				
INT2	0,613				
INT3	0,792				
INT4	0,783				
INT5	0,809				
P1				0,829	
P2				0,779	
P3				0,788	
P4				0,803	
P5				0,778	
E1		0,792			
E2		0,834			
E3		0,801			
E4		0,828			
E5		0,718			
RD1					0,472
RD2					0,801
RD3					0,821
RD4					0,825
RD5					0,782
EM1			0,633		

EM2			0,685		
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.					
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.					

4.5 Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the constructions' dependability. Cronbach's alpha was utilised to assess the internal consistency of the chosen variables (Pallant, 2020). Cronbach alpha values in each of the chosen factors in this study were nearly identical to Pallant's (2020) recommendation of 0.7. The results show that the average reliability of internal consistency for the 26 items is 0.886, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.716 to 0.929. This information can be found in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha: Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
EMP1	8,13	18,301	0,699	0,816	0,856
EMP2	8,41	16,031	0,816	0,763	
EMP3	9,55	22,090	0,478	0,897	
EMP4	8,33	16,581	0,822	0,762	
INT1	15,64	16,963	0,725	0,851	0,880
INT2	15,83	17,700	0,561	0,889	
INT3	15,79	15,966	0,750	0,844	
INT4	15,63	16,086	0,742	0,847	
INT5	15,52	16,124	0,796	0,834	
P1	15,83	18,091	0,798	0,915	0,929
P2	15,67	18,456	0,801	0,915	
P3	15,73	17,777	0,832	0,909	

P4	15,88	17,299	0,806	0,914	
P5	15,91	17,494	0,831	0,909	
E1	17,83	10,501	0,818	0,885	0,913
E2	17,82	10,786	0,756	0,898	
E3	17,86	10,246	0,835	0,882	
E4	17,88	11,225	0,797	0,892	
E5	18,18	10,479	0,708	0,911	
RD1	17,12	11,091	0,234	0,657	0,716
RD2	16,42	9,927	0,460	0,511	
RD3	16,34	10,330	0,469	0,508	
RD4	15,93	12,111	0,393	0,557	
RD5	15,72	13,072	0,392	0,570	
EM1	4,31	1,102	0,693		0,815
EM2	4,03	1,406	0,693		

4.6 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics summarize the distribution of responses on a scale of 1 to 5 for different categories: EMP, INT, P, E, RD, and EM. These categories represent various aspects. On average, participants rated EMP at 2.87, INT at 3.92, P at 3.95, E at 4.48, RD at 4.08, and EM at 4.17, as shown in Table 4.7. These scores indicate that people agree based on the Likert scale. Standard deviations indicate the variability around these means. For each category, the replies ranged from 1 to 5.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EMP	190	1,00	5,00	2,8671	1,39103
INT	190	1,00	5,00	3,9200	1,00260
P	190	1,00	5,00	3,9505	1,04617
E	190	1,00	5,00	4,4789	0,80703

RD	190	1,00	5,00	4,0758	0,80300
EM	190	1,00	5,00	4,1684	1,02897

4.7 Correlation Analysis

The correlation matrix displays the relationships between different variables: EMP, INT, P, E, RD, and EM. The intensity and direction of relationships are indicated by correlation coefficients, which range from -1 to 1, as shown in Table 4.8.

- EMP has a positive correlation with INT ($r = 0.206$, $p = 0.004$), P ($r = 0.202$, $p = 0.005$), and EM ($r = 0.163$, $p = 0.025$), suggesting weak associations.
- INT and P are strongly correlated ($r = 0.792$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a significant relationship.
- INT and E are moderately correlated ($r = 0.512$, $p < 0.001$) indicating a significant relationship.
- P and E also have a moderate correlation ($r = 0.567$, $p < 0.001$) indicating a significant relationship.
- E and EM are moderately correlated ($r = 0.599$, $p < 0.001$) indicating a significant relationship.
- INT and EM show a strong correlation ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.001$) indicating a significant relationship.
- P and EM are also strongly correlated ($r = 0.722$, $p < 0.001$) indicating a significant relationship.
- RD and E have a positive but weak correlation ($r = 0.315$, $p < 0.001$) indicating a significant relationship.
- EM and RD are moderately correlated ($r = 0.378$, $p < 0.001$) indicating a significant relationship.

The significance levels indicate that most of these correlations are statistically significant. The positive correlations imply that there is a tendency for both variables to rise as one rises. Negative correlations indicate that the one tends to decrease as the other variable increases. Strong correlations highlight strong relationships, while weak correlations indicate weaker connections. Table 4.8 below depicts these correlations.

Table 4.8: Correlations

Correlations (N=191)							
		EMP	INT	P	E	RD	EM
EMP	Pearson Correlation	1	.206**	.202**	0,071	-0,062	.163*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,004	0,005	0,329	0,394	0,025
INT	Pearson Correlation	.206**	1	.792**	.512**	.308**	.712**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,004		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
P	Pearson Correlation	.202**	.792**	1	.567**	.275**	.722**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,005	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000
E	Pearson Correlation	0,071	.512**	.567**	1	.315**	.599**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,329	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000
RD	Pearson Correlation	-0,062	.308**	.275**	.315**	1	.378**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,394	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000
EM	Pearson Correlation	.163*	.712**	.722**	.599**	.378**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,025	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	

**.	Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*.	Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.8 Chapter Summary

This study's data gathering phase utilised a research tool (survey questionnaire) to gather information from participants involved in research projects using IT professional tools. Participants were informed that their information would be stored for a decade before deletion.

Demographic analysis encompassed 190 participants, revealing insights into their backgrounds. In terms of professional experience, 34.2% had 2-5 years of experience, 19.5% had less than 1 year, and 46.3% had over 5 years. Regarding enterprise size, 33.7% worked for Emerging Micro Enterprises, 4.7% for Generic Enterprises with a turnover over R50 million, and 61.6% for Qualifying Small Enterprises. Participant skill levels were distributed as follows: 44.2% had high skills, 11.1% had low skills, and 44.7% had moderate skills.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was piloted to understand underlying structures of collected data. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure indicated substantial shared variance among variables ($KMO = 0.888$), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity validated suitability for factor analysis ($p < 0.001$). Communalities post-extraction ranged from 0.430 to 0.849, reflecting the variance each variable shared with the extracted factors.

Five components with eigenvalues above 1 were extracted, cumulatively explaining 70.263% of the variance. Component loadings were analysed in a rotated component matrix, revealing associations of variables with the extracted factors. Reliability assessment using Cronbach's Alpha indicated satisfactory internal consistency (average $\alpha = 0.886$), enhancing construct reliability.

Descriptive statistics depicted participants' responses across categories (EMP, INT, P, E, RD, EM), showcasing means and standard deviations. Correlation analysis unveiled relationships where most correlations were significant. Positive correlations indicated concurrent increases or decreases, while strong associations highlighted substantial relationships. The study's comprehensive approach, incorporating varied experience levels, enterprise sizes, and skill proficiencies, contributes to its robustness in exploring factors.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The thesis' restrictions, contributions, chances for additional research, and conclusion are examined in this chapter. The findings from the previous chapter's results are explained, along with the conclusion. The analysis is done in consideration with the existing corpus of literature. Depending on how the study was carried out, the recommendations are constructed in the model that provides solutions to the study's research questions. Next, it looks at the thesis's contributions, limitations, suggestions for further research and conclusion.

5.2 Results and findings: EMP INT, P, E, RD and EM

Objective 1: To determine the weaknesses of existing procurement strategies used by the South African government in Gauteng province:

This objective focused on identifying the shortcomings and challenges within the current procurement strategies employed by the government in Gauteng Province. This could include issues related to corruption, inefficiency, lack of transparency, or any other problems that suppliers perceive. The weakness of existing procurement strategies was answered in the literature review.

Objective 2: To determine the perceived strengths of the electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng government departments from the suppliers' perspective:

This objective aimed to understand what government suppliers perceived as the advantages or strengths of implementing an electronic marketplace platform for procurement. This could include improved transparency, reduced bureaucracy, cost-effectiveness and enhanced competition as shown by the correlations below. The results shows correlation factors that are related and significant.

Objective 3: To determine the perceived weaknesses of the electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng government departments from the suppliers' perspectives:

This objective focused on identifying the potential drawbacks or concerns that government suppliers have regarding the implementation of an electronic marketplace platform. These

concerned could encompass technical challenges, security issues, or any disadvantages that suppliers foresee as shown by the correlations below. The results shows correlation factors that are related.

- *EMP practices have significant association with INT, P, and EM*
- *EMP practices have significant association with INT*
- *EMP has a positive correlation with INT ($r = 0.206, p < 0.05$), P ($r = 0.202, p < 0.05$), and EM ($r = 0.163, p < 0.05$), suggesting significant associations.*

The study finds that awareness practices in electronic marketplaces (EMP) strongly impact users' intentions to use these platforms. User satisfaction, engagement in buying and selling, and effective awareness campaigns are pivotal in shaping users' intentions (Bala et al., 2018). In government procurement, improved access, cost reduction, transparency, personal experience and recommendations also influence intentions, emphasizing the importance of these practices in fostering platform usage.

INT practices have a significant association with P

- *INT and P are strongly correlated ($r = 0.792; p < 0.05$), signifying a strong connection.*

Electronic marketplaces' perceived value (P) lies in their potential to reduce the high expenses related to manual transactions. In context of the government procurement, intentions (INT) to use these platforms are driven by factors like improved access to opportunities, cost reduction, enhanced transparency and fairness, personal engagement in selling products via the government's electronic marketplace, and a willingness to recommend its adoption to other suppliers (Zielke, 2014).

INT practices have significant association with E

- *INT and E are moderately correlated ($r = 0.512, p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship.*

Intentions to use (INT) practices significantly influence user expectations (E) and intentions to use electronic marketplaces, especially in government procurement. Users expect these platforms to enhance access to government procurement opportunities, reduce costs and increase transparency and fairness in procurement (Li et al., 2017). Personal engagement in

selling via government electronic marketplaces and a willingness to recommend adoption to other suppliers are key drivers of usage intentions. In summary, IT practices shape user expectations and intentions regarding electronic marketplaces in government procurement.

P practices have significant association with E

- *P and E also have a moderate correlation ($r = 0.567$, $p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship.*

Perceived value (P) practices significantly influence user expectations (E) regarding electronic marketplaces. Users anticipate that these platforms effectively reduce the elevated costs typically associated with manual transactions, highlighting the importance of perceived value in shaping expectations (Li et al., 2017).

E practices have significant association with EMP

- *E and EMP are moderately correlated ($r = 0.599$, $p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship.*

Expectation practices (E) significantly influence Electronic Marketplaces awareness (EMP) by shaping users' anticipations regarding the platform's benefits. Additionally, Electronic Marketplaces' awareness practices substantially impact intentions to use (INT), with user satisfaction, buying and selling experiences and awareness efforts collectively affecting EMP adoption (Gupta, Dasgupta & Gupta, 2008).

INT practices have significant association with EMP

- *INT and EMP indicate a strong relationship ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.05$) indicating a significant relationship.*

Intentions to Use (INT) practices significantly impact Electronic Marketplaces awareness (EMP), indicating that users' preferences play a substantial role in influencing the adoption and use of electronic marketplaces (Huang and Chang, 2017). This suggests that the strategies and practices related to intentions to use are crucial factors in shaping electronic marketplace dynamics.

P practices have significant association on EMP

- *P and EMP are also strongly correlated ($r = 0.722, p < 0.05$) indicating a significant relationship.*

Perceived value practices (P) notably impact Electronic Marketplace awareness (EMP) by influencing users' assessment of the platform's value. Electronic Marketplaces' awareness practices significantly correlate with intentions to use (INT), with user satisfaction, buying and selling experiences, and effective awareness efforts collectively influencing EMP adoption (Bala et al., 2018; Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

RD practices have significant association with E

- *RD and E have a positive but weak correlation ($r = 0.315, p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship.*

Readiness practices (RD) substantially shape users' expectations (E) regarding a specific context or system. These practices significantly influence users' anticipations, indicating the importance of preparedness in managing user expectations effectively.

EM practices have significant association with RD

- *EM and RD are moderately correlated ($r = 0.378, p < 0.001$), indicating a significant relationship.*

In this context, readiness practices (RD) significantly influence user expectations (E), emphasizing the importance of preparedness in shaping what users anticipate Table 5.1 depicts these associations. Simultaneously, electronic marketplace strategies (EMP) also significantly impact readiness practices (RD), underscoring how the practices associated with electronic marketplaces contribute to overall readiness. Furthermore, electronic marketplaces' awareness practices are significantly associated with intentions to use (INT), highlighting the role of user satisfaction, buying and selling experiences, and effective awareness efforts in driving electronic marketplace adoption.

Table 5.1: Relationship between Construct and Decision

Relationship	Correlation	Decision
EMP - INT	$r = 0.206, p = 0.004$	Supported

EMP - P	$r = 0.202, p = 0.005$	Supported
EMP - EM	$r = 0.163, p = 0.025$	Supported
INT - P	$r = 0.792, p < 0.001$	Supported
INT - E	$r = 0.512, p < 0.001$	Supported
P - E	$r = 0.567, p < 0.001$	Supported
E - EM	$r = 0.599, p < 0.001$	Supported
INT - EM	$r = 0.712, p < 0.001$	Supported
P - EM	$r = 0.722, p < 0.001$	Supported
RD - E	$r = 0.315, p < 0.001$	Supported
EM - RD	$r = 0.378, p < 0.001$	Supported

Objective 4: To make recommendations based on how government suppliers perceive the implementation of the electronic marketplace platform as a sourcing strategy in Gauteng government departments:

Promote Awareness and Training (EMP and INT):

Government departments should invest in awareness campaigns and training programmes for suppliers to familiarise them with the electronic marketplace platform. These initiatives can help suppliers understand the benefits and functionality of the platform, increasing their intentions to use it.

Highlight Perceived Value (P) and Expected Benefits (E):

- Emphasise the cost-saving potential and transparency benefits of the electronic marketplace platform. Government departments should communicate how using the platform can reduce transaction costs and improve fairness in procurement processes.
- Engage Suppliers Actively (E, INT, and EMP):
 - Encourage active participation of suppliers in buying and selling through the electronic marketplace. Create incentives and mechanisms for suppliers to engage with the platform regularly. Their engagement positively influences their intentions to use it.
- Ensure Readiness (RD) for Implementation:
 - Prior to the launch or expansion of the electronic marketplace platform, ensure

that government departments are well-prepared for its implementation. This includes having the necessary infrastructure, policies and support systems in place to facilitate a smooth transition.

- Continuous Monitoring and Improvement (EMP, INT, P, E, and RD):
 - Government departments should continuously monitor the performance of the electronic marketplace platform and gather feedback from suppliers. This feedback can be used to make improvements in terms of functionality, user experience, and addressing any concerns raised by suppliers.
- Collaborate with Stakeholders (EMP, INT, P, E, and RD):
 - Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including suppliers, industry associations and technology experts, to make certain that the electronic marketplace platform comes with the evolving requirements and expectations of the supplier community.
- Incentivise Adoption (EMP, INT, P, E, and RD):
 - Consider offering incentives to suppliers who actively participate in the electronic marketplace. Incentives could include discounts, recognition, or priority access to procurement opportunities.
- Promote Transparency (EMP, P, E, and INT):
 - Highlight the transparency features of the electronic marketplace platform, such as real-time access to procurement data and fair competition. Transparency can be a key motivating factor for suppliers to engage with the platform.
- Regular Communication (EMP, INT, P, E, and RD):
 - Maintain open and transparent communication channels with suppliers. Keep them informed about updates, improvements, and success stories related to the electronic marketplace platform.
- Evaluate Impact (EMP, INT, P, E, and RD):
 - Continuously assess the impact of the electronic marketplace platform on procurement processes, supplier satisfaction and reduction in corruption. Use this data to fine-tune strategies and ensure the platform's effectiveness.

5.3 Dissertation Chapter Overview

Chapter one: The Introduction to the Study

This introductory chapter includes the study's context, a description of the problem, its study purpose, research objectives, and research questions. The chapter also includes a plan for one of the dissertation's chapters. The problem statement, research aim, research objectives and research questions are all included in this first chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

It was necessary to compile relevant literature for this section of the investigation. Recent studies on the subject under investigation that were found during the study, are included in this section. Recent studies on the topics that were uncovered throughout the course of the examination are included in this section. This section discusses conceptual and theoretical frameworks, as well as ways for analysing empirical evidence from previous studies.

Chapter Three: The Research Methodology

This chapter of the study describes the research approach used for this topic. This chapter covers the defining of the target population, sample tactics, data gathering methodology, and data analysis techniques and processes. This section of the report details the methods used in this research. Target population approaches for data collection, sampling strategies, target population definitions and techniques and processes for data analysis were all covered in this chapter.

Chapter Four: Results

This chapter analysed the study's results by looking at exploratory analysis, correlation, validity, data reliability and the variables used in the investigation. This chapter covered exploratory analysis, correlation, validity, and reliability of data, as well as the variables used as part of the research to evaluate the research findings.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Results

This chapter analysed the significance of the results for the purpose of this dissertation. This

chapter also discussed the study's research strategy, the dissertation's contributions and prospective future research directions. The final chapter of the dissertation provides conclusions according to the research results. The chapter looks into the results' applicability for this dissertation. This chapter also looks at the dissertation's contribution, the study's research strategy and potential future research areas. This final chapter of the dissertation includes recommendations according to the research outcomes.

5.4 Study Contributions

The contributions made by the current study are described in this section. They are discussed both theoretically and practically.

5.4.1 The theoretical contribution

The study's contribution to theory is that it amalgamated the relevant information systems literature in order to improve what is known about government suppliers' perspectives of establishing an electronic marketplace as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng province. That is, the study uncovered the characteristics that determine how government suppliers assess the implementation of the electronic marketplace platform. The study's constructs give a theoretical understanding that addresses gaps that are discovered in the examination of the existing research.

5.4.2 The practical contributions

The study offers constructs that are supported by the investigation as a theoretical understanding that addresses gaps revealed through an assessment of existing literature. Electronic marketplace platform designers, merchants and service providers may utilise these constructs to forecast the potential usage of the newly developed electronic marketplace platforms. This could help the government assess the strengths and drawbacks of the electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy across Gauteng government departments, among other things.

5.5 The Limitations, Assumptions and Future Research

5.5.1 Limitations and assumptions of the study

The survey's results may not be conclusive because they were restricted to Gauteng province and it is probable that this study's conclusions cannot be generalised to all provinces. Given the circumstances, it is possible that languages and cultures had an impact. As a result, additional research in different provinces may be required.

Another disadvantage of the present research is that it was cross sectional rather than longitudinal. The current study lacked sufficient time and resources for reaching out to as many vendors as required. A bigger targeted sample size may produce different findings. As a result, future studies may target as many providers as possible to provide better answers.

5.5.2 Future Research

The future studies could use a longitudinal time horizon to track the development of significant explanations. South Africa's total group of government suppliers could be the subject of the study. The evolution of significant explanations may be monitored by future longitudinal research.

5.6 Discussion

A variety of research methodologies are used in information systems studies. The motivation for employing research methodologies is frequently dictated by the objective of the research. The present research study aimed to describe how Gauteng suppliers reacted to the survey. To better understand the behaviors among the Gauteng government suppliers, a positivist philosophical perspective, a quantitative methodology, and a survey research approach were judged appropriate.

Based on this study on the implementation of an electronic marketplace for the South African government in Gauteng province, departments were able to set purchasing specifications online, find new or potential suppliers online, negotiate or make agreements electronically, collect and distribute purchasing information to and from internal and external parties via the internet and serve their customers online.

This study also demonstrated literature that discussed how electronic marketplace adoption can improve the performance of the supply chain by lowering costs throughout the supply chain, improving the time and effectiveness required to effectively finish the procurement procedure, decreasing administration expenses through improved efficiency, reducing erroneous mistakes associated with order transfers throughout the supply chain, and

shortening warehouse lead times. It was also determined that supplier collaboration must be able to directly connect to or affect supply chain performance because the Gauteng provincial government is able to maintain strong buyer\seller partnerships. An online market place is a viable sourcing strategy that is supported by Gauteng province suppliers give then other elements discussed earlier.

5.7 Chapter Summary

The study discusses the results and findings related to electronic marketplaces awareness (EMP), intentions to use (INT), perceived value (P), expectations (E), readiness (RD), and electronic market strategies (EM). The findings highlight significant associations among these variables, emphasising the role of awareness and user engagement in influencing intentions to use EMP, especially in government procurement. In addition, the chapter provides an outline of the dissertation structure and outlines limitations, assumptions and future research directions. It concludes by underscoring the significance of employing a positivist research approach and a survey strategy in understanding South African behaviors in the context of information systems research.

5.8 Research Conclusion

In conclusion, this study addresses pressing issues in South African government procurement by proposing the implementation of an electronic marketplace awareness (EMP) as a potential solution. The government's substantial procurement spending and the identified challenges of corruption, inefficiency, lack of transparency, and barriers for small businesses highlight the urgency for reform in the procurement system.

Chapter 2 lays the foundation by delving into the concepts of e-marketplaces and e-procurement, with a particular focus on their relevance in Gauteng Province. It underscores the importance of understanding supplier perceptions and the adoption of technology models to implement an electronic marketplace effectively.

Chapter 3 outlines the rigorous research methodology, ensuring ethical considerations, data collection, analysis techniques and validity/reliability measures, collectively contributing to the study's credibility.

Chapter 4 presents the findings, revealing key associations among variables such as EMP, INT, P, E, RD, and EM. These findings provide critical insights into factors influencing the implementation of an electronic marketplace for improved procurement practices in Gauteng Province.

Chapter 5 comprehensively discusses the results, acknowledges limitations and assumptions, and suggests future research directions. It underscores the significance of employing a positivist approach and survey strategy to understand and improve procurement behaviors within the South African context.

This research advocates for adopting an electronic marketplace as a strategic initiative to enhance transparency, efficiency, and competitiveness in South African government procurement, ultimately addressing the identified challenges and benefiting both suppliers and the government.

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APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES

Section A: About the business

1. What is the size of your business? (Please select one)
 - a. Emerging Micro Enterprise (turnover less than R10 million per annum)
 - b. Qualifying Small Enterprise (turnover between 10 and 50 million per annum)
 - c. Generic enterprise (turnover over 50 million per annum)
2. How long have you been in business?
 - a. Less than 1 year
 - b. Between 2 and 5 years
 - c. Over 5 years
3. What is the level of your computer literacy skills?
 - a. High
 - b. moderate
 - c. Low

Section B: Perceptions on Electronic Marketplaces

In the following questionnaire, indicate the extent to which each indicator is applicable to the electronic marketplace.

Using the scale of 1-5 Where: 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree

	electronic marketplaces awareness	1	2	3	4	5
1	Have you heard of electronic marketplaces before?					
2	Have you ever used an electronic marketplace to buy products?					
3	Have you ever used an electronic marketplace to sell products?					
4	Are you satisfied with the electronic marketplace(s) you have used?					

	Intensions to Use	1	2	3	4	5
5	Using electronic marketplaces will improve access to government procurement opportunities.					
6	Using electronic marketplaces will reduce cost of doing business with the government					
7	Using electronic marketplaces will Increase transparency and fairness in procurement processes.					
8	I will use the government electronic marketplace to sell our products					
9	I will recommend all suppliers to use the electronic marketplaces if it is adopted by government.					
	Perceived value	1	2	3	4	5
13	Electronic marketplaces will increase the level of service agreements.					
14	Electronic marketplaces will help in reducing higher costs of manual transaction.					
15	Electronic marketplaces will help will increase sales					
	Electronic marketplaces will help will increase competitive advantages of procurement process.					
	Electronic marketplaces will help in customer relation management					
	Expectation	1	2	3	4	5
17	I expect Electronic marketplaces system that is user-friendly					
18	I expect Electronic marketplaces system that will make it easier to track my online activities					
19	I expect Electronic marketplaces system that increases our company productivity.					
	I expect Electronic marketplaces system that will allow customization of products.					
	I expect Electronic marketplaces system that will have a threshold or maximum value for items that are procured through the electronic marketplace					

	Reediness	1	2	3	4	5
25	We have in-house technical support that will help to use electronic marketplaces					
26	I will require training on how to use the electronic marketplaces system.					
27	Assistance with bidding on procurement opportunities.					
28	We have a computer and internet access					
29	I have access to a smartphone that I can use to access electronic marketplaces system.					
	Electronic marketplace as a sourcing strategy	1	2	3	4	5
36	Do you believe a government electronic marketplace could level the playing field for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)?					
37	Government should introduce an electronic marketplace as an additional sourcing strategy					

APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH ETHICS



Our Ref: M. 380623
Enquiries: research@iie.ac.za

23 June 2023



Outcome of Ethics Clearance Application for Master of Business Administration



Student Name: Tumelo Ntlaba
Student number: [REDACTED]
Brand and campus: IIEMSA



Dear Tumelo,

Thank you for submitting the ethics clearance application for the study: **Suppliers' perceptions of an electronic marketplace platform as an e-procurement strategy in Gauteng Province.**



We are pleased to inform you that the IIE's Higher Degrees Committee considered and granted ethics clearance. This means that you may proceed with data collection. If you are collecting data from a specific organisation, ensure that you have a gatekeeper's letter that confirms their approval of the data collection being done.

You are reminded that any changes made to the research methodology or title of the research study must be signed off by the IIE's Higher Degrees Committee. Kindly ensure that all ethical considerations are duly applied whilst collecting, analysing and interpreting the data for the completion of your research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your programme team or supervisor directly.

All the best with your research.



Dr WH Engelbrecht
Chair: Higher Degrees Committee

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APPENDIX 2: TURNITIN REPORT

Final Paper			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
12%	9%	4%	5%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	Submitted to The Independent Institute of Education (IIE) Student Paper	1	%
2	Submitted to University of South Africa Student Paper	1	%
3	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	1	%
4	C. Standing. "Examining the Relationship Between Electronic Marketplace Strategy and Structure", IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, 5/2006 Publication	1	%
5	pdf.usaid.gov Internet Source	1	%
6	Submitted to INTI International University Student Paper	<1	%
7	luanvan.co Internet Source	<1	%
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