

# Building Commitment in Supplier–Retailer Relationship in Developing Economies: The Case of Tanzania

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## Abstract

This article investigates the establishment of commitment in developing economies between suppliers and retailers. Previous studies in supplier–retailer commitment relationship used data only from one side. Furthermore, knowledge of institutions governing relational exchanges was limited. Network relationship theory and cross-case analysis of sixteen cases that comprised retailers and suppliers were used. The study shows that affective and behavioural commitments are important in understanding the level of relationship between retailers and suppliers in Tanzania. Implications of the study and areas for further research were provided.

## Keywords

Retail, Tanzania, Commitment, Trust, Supplier–retailer Relationship

## Introduction

Understanding the determinants of commitment in a supplier–retailer relationship is very important in creating effective marketing (Stanko, Bonner, & Calantone, 2007). In this respect, some prior studies focused on understanding how to build commitment among actors. Prior studies also focused on the effects of commitment in building relationships. Other studies on the other hand, focused on commitment in relationship as a marketing strategy especially in international business (Havila, Johanson, & Thilenius, 2004). These previous efforts therefore limited their focus on one partner of the relationship either a retailer or a supplier and the influence of the context in this relationship. For example, Stanko et al. (2007) used only data of purchasing managers to understand commitment building among downstream actors. Heide and John (1992) argue that in order to understand the relationship as a marketing strategy, it is important to include both actors of the relationship instead of a single key informant, which is a popular data collection technique in the previous studies (Kozlenkova, Hult, Lund, Mena, & Kecec, 2015). To avoid these limitations, the current study used a case study approach that includes data from retailers and suppliers to investigate commitment formation among downstream actors in Tanzania. The current study intends to address the

question ‘what factors influence commitment formation in newly modern food distribution in Tanzania and how?’

The most important starting point in the recognition of benefits and liabilities of commitment in the marketing channel relationship is the examination of its formation. Previous studies in Africa noted a lack of commitment between retailers and suppliers (Louw, Vermeulen, Kirsten, & Madevu, 2007). However, these studies focused on the upstream actors like linkages of farmers to modern retailing. Furthermore, the studies ignored the influence of external actors in the commitment formation among actors in the food value chain. Therefore, the emergence of modern food retailing in Tanzania makes the understanding of the establishment of commitment among actors very important. As Gundlach, Acharol, & Mentzer (1995) argue, the use of power as a coordinating mechanism makes sense in the organizing exchanges that begin as unstructured (for historical reasons, trade cultures or because of industry peculiarities) (p. 79).

Fearne, Duffy, & Hornibrook (2005) argue further that a study on fairness and commitment of actors in the marketing channel is very challenging because many actors may be afraid of participating in the study for fear of damaging their relationships or tarnishing their reputation. In this respect, using a survey was thought unsuitable because of

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the possibility of missing some of the information which is more specific to the context.

## Theoretical Literature Review

Network theory is divided into two major streams: structural and relationship (Henning, Henningsen, & Henningsen, 2012; Weitz & Jap, 1995). Structural network approach is guided by contract among actors in the food value chain, with the desire of reducing or controlling opportunistic behaviour among actors. This is done through actors' responsibilities which are well stipulated in the implicit or explicit contract. The relationship stream of network theory sees cooperation of the actors is influenced more by their social relation rather than by their contractual obligations.

There is a general understanding that firms can gain more if they operate within a certain network. Some of the benefits can be financial resources, technology and marketing information that would support firms to compete in an open market. However, as Uzzi (1996) argues, the firms' ability to benefit from that network depends much on the level of embeddedness and positions the firms have in the structure. By embeddedness, Uzzi (1996) is referring to social ties more than traditional economic principles that govern market exchange and which are different from factors like contract arrangements. In general, actors in a certain network might work together to solve constraints that limit their performance with minimum opportunistic behaviour. In this regard, the network theory holds that social relationship is important in minimizing personal gains and in reducing transactional costs by establishing trust and reciprocity for the firms which are working together (Powell, 1990; Uzzi, 1996).

In marketing, the desire to understand the impact of networks among actors came about in 1960 (Weitz & Jap, 1995) when the focus at the time was on corporate or inter-organizational network. Globalization has increased competition and the difficulty of gaining access to customers (Möller & Halinen, 1999). Thus, a firm has to use distributors as a means of reaching ultimate consumers. With the rise of retailers as the drivers of the value chain, researchers are more interested in understanding how actors cooperate in the value chain activities. Therefore, it is very important for suppliers to build relationships with retailers in order for them to reach ultimate consumers. This would allow suppliers to access marketing information which is shared between retailers and suppliers (Sheth & Sharma, 1997). This sharing creates the need of understanding the channel of network relationship in the marketing. Management and marketing scholars (e.g., Sheth & Sharma, 1997) advocate that the 1960s era of traditional marketing approach or of studying marketing using transaction cost and other theories is gone; it is argued further that the relationship networks theory is appropriate for understanding how customer-supplier interaction and

relationships form and emerge in the network in the new business fields (Lindgreen & Wynstra, 2005; Möller, 2013; Möller & Svahn, 2009).

Despite these previous efforts of understanding the impact of network theory on marketing channel distribution, researchers do not seem to have discussed the dimensions that constitute this theory (Powell, 1990; Wathne & Heide, 2004). There are, however, some scholars who discussed the dimensions which form the theory. For example, Uzzi (1996) considers trust to be a parameter of governance. On the other hand, Morgan and Hunt (1994a, 1994b) consider trust and commitment as important for relationship. There are other scholars who consider some dimensions as subsets of the other dimensions. For example, Uzzi (1996) considers trust to be within governance dimensions. If the domains of the two theories say marketing channel, whereby governance is highly considered (from transaction economic theory, see Möller, 2013; Sheth & Sharma, 1997) and relationship marketing (trust and commitment) are relatively close, then it is reasonably safe to integrate them to form a theory (Möller, 2013). In this regard, this study considers marketing relationship theory as being guided by three major components, namely, trust, commitment and governance. But only commitment will be focused in this study.

## Commitment Relationship in Marketing

Literature of marketing relationship shows that commitment study has been operationalized in different levels (Kim & Frazier, 1999). This study considers commitment in terms of three different components as proposed by Kim and Frazier (1999) and these are continuance commitment, behaviour commitment and affective commitment. These components have been used by Stanko et al. (2007) in the study of building commitment in buyer-seller relationship in the USA. Furthermore, this study sees commitment as a means of creating a relationship. That is, it is the construct of relationship theory.

Continuance commitment is the need and desire of partners in the value chain of maintaining their relationship (Kim & Frazier, 1999). Studies have shown that partners may support or invest in some of the issues in showing continuance of commitment among them in a marketing channel. Continuance of commitment among partners shows a desire to maintain a long-term relationship through the support which can last longer and bound them for a long period. For example, in food channel distribution, a partner might invest in training, seed distribution or transport to support downstream actors (Louw et al., 2007). In making this investment, the partner does not intend to control another actor in the chain, rather the partner seeks to show his/her desire to continue with the relationship and make it grow. Furthermore, the continuance commitment in food business marketing distribution can be seen in the

manner in which partners support each other to meet some of the environmental changes which cannot be controlled by firm managers.

Behaviour commitment is defined as the extent to which a distributor provides special help to its suppliers in the time of need (Kim & Frazier, 1999). This means that actors are expected to help each other for the unforeseen occurrences. In general, suppliers in developing economies are facing many challenges and which need a quick response from their partners in the food value chain. For example, seasonality of supply of raw materials may make food processors require assistance in finance in the form of a soft loan from retailers to buy raw materials. In general, behaviour commitment is based on psychological perspectives that each actor feels and sees in the reaction of partners during bad and good times. Empirical study shows that trustworthiness would not influence partners into supporting each other during bad times (Kim & Frazier, 1999).

Affective commitment can be defined as the feeling of higher unity and cohesion in a relationship among partners. As Kumar, Scheer, & Steenkamp (1995) note, affective commitment is characterized by both business and personal bonds. With business bonds, the literature shows that willingness of partners to help each other in solving some of the challenges in their value chain activities could increase their chances of increasing their commitment.

## Methodology

The study followed a qualitative case study drew from interview-based empirical data. As Decrop (1999) argues, a case study is good in investigating agribusiness issues in the emerging and dynamic economic environments with high degrees of uncertainties where questions such as whom, why and what are not easy to answer. Deshpande (1983) argues further that qualitative study is appropriate for a new phenomenon. Modern food retailing is a new phenomenon in Tanzania and little is known about the manner in which downstream actors make decisions on what to purchase in developing economies. In this regard, this study used qualitative case study approach to investigate the building of commitment between suppliers and modern food retailers in Tanzania.

Semi-structured interview was used in this study. This research tool enabled the researcher to ask the same questions for each case study thereby overcoming the problem of having different questions for different cases selected. Furthermore, the interview guideline was useful in maintaining consistency across all interview sessions. Interview questions were developed from the previous literature on retailing in Africa and the linkage of small-scale farmers (Reardon & Weatherspoon, 2003), and supplier-retailer relationships (Hingley, 2005; Hingley, Lindgreen, & Casswell, 2006; Kim & Frazier, 1999; Morgan & Hunt, 1994a, 1994b). Different interview guides were developed

for retailers, suppliers and institutions. The typical interview lasted for an average of 60 minutes and was conducted at the participants' premises. A voice recorder was used after getting participants' permission to use it.

The semi-structured interview guide had six sections focusing on the following events and processes in the commitment. (a) Do you get any support that improves your performance from the supermarket you deal with? (b) Which of the following support services do you expect from the supermarkets that you deal with? (i) Financial support to upgrade your technological capacity (ii) Transfer of management skills (iii) Transfer of quality control competencies. (c) How are these services offered? (d) Are you satisfied with your relationship with the supermarkets? (e) What can you do to improve the relationships? (f) How do the supermarkets make sure that you are a reliable partner to them?

Purpose sampling technique was used to recruit participants in data collection. As Yin (1994) argues, the selection of a participant for a study depends on the richness of the information which may be gained for the study. Table 1 shows seven supermarkets, which include foreign and local stores that participated in the study. For retailers, branch managers and deputy directors were selected to participate in the study. For local food suppliers, Table 2 shows that nine local food suppliers participated in the study. In general, the local food suppliers' group comprised operational managers, financial managers, senior sales officers and owners. Therefore, nine food suppliers and seven retailers participated in the study. Furthermore, three government institutions which are dealing with food regulations and promotion of indigenous businesses were interviewed. One organization from the private sector and which deals with advocacy and promotion of business in Tanzania also participated. From policy-based organizations, five officers were recruited for the study.

The study used thematic qualitative analytical technique for data analysis. In practice, thematic analysis is governed by a predetermined framework with a list of variables that would guide the researcher in searching for patterns. These forms of variables can be developed from empirical research or theory. However, the choice does not intend to limit the researcher into focusing on the emerged patterns from the data (Miles, 1979; Yin, 1981). Based on literature that deals with supplier-retailer commitment relationship (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987; Gundlach et al., 1995; Kim & Frazier, 1999; Morgan & Hunt, 1994a, 1994b), a number of parameters related to commitment were developed. In this regard, the study considers a commitment to comprise three elements, with the parameters in brackets: (a) affective commitment (social events and strong social bonds), (b) behaviour support (helping specifically in times of need), (c) continuance commitment (investment).

This study gathered secondary data from newspapers, magazine and reports to complement primary data which were collected from commitment building in modern food

**Table 1. Profile of the Participants**

Case Company	Year Started (Entered Tanzania)	Number of Outlets	Number of Employees	Participants Position	Number of Participants	Gender
Nakumatt holding supermarkets	2014 (International)	4	208	Branch	1	Male
Uchumi supermarket <sup>**</sup>	2008 (International)	6	400	Procurement Floor management, floor manager	2	Males
Game supermarket		1		Fresh food merchandizing manager and branch manager	2	Male and female
TSN supermarket	2004	6	80	Procurement officer, managing director	2	Males
Panone supermarket	2008 (Local)	12	30	Deputy managing director	1	Male
Imalaseko supermarket	1998 (Local)	4	200	Personal assistant to manager	1	Male
Shop-N-Save supermarket	2000 (Local)	3	20	Branch Manager	1	Male

**Source:** Nandonde (2016).

**Note:** \*Uchumi closed its operations in Tanzania in 2015.

**Table 2. Profile of the Local Food Processors Participated in the Study**

Case Company	Year Started (Entered Tanzania)	Location	Number of Employees	Deals with	Participants Position	Number of Participants	Gender
Mzomo Services Limited	2008	Morogoro	20	Meat processing and packaging	Managing director	1	Male
Meat King	1996	Arusha	30	Meat processing and packaging	Managing director	1	Female
Namazone Business Centre	2010	Arusha	3	Growing and distribution of fruits and vegetables	Owner	1	Female
Happy Sausage Limited	1990	Arusha	43	Meat processing and packaging	Financial director	1	Male
Kijenge Animal Products Limited	1984	Arusha	202	Poultry keeping and processing	Senior sales officers	2	Males
Darsh Industries Limited	1999	Arusha	200	Food processing and packaging	Production manager	1	Male
Monaban Farming and Trading Company Limited	1994	Arusha	500	Maze, wheat flour processing	Deputy managing director	1	Male
Foot Loose Tanzania Limited	1999	Dar es Salaam	15	Maize flour, rice cooking oil, and dried beans	Managing director	1	Female
Basic Element Company Limited	2010	Dar es Salaam	45	Maize flour	Marketing manager	1	Male

**Source:** Nandonde (2016).

distribution in Tanzania. According to Decrop (1999), secondary data may be used in triangulation to achieve generalizability and external validity. Information from the transcripts of the recorded interviews was coded manually to relate to the different research questions used in the study. As Basit (2003) argues, the use of software or manual coding depends on the work load. If the interviews conducted are less than 24, coding can be performed manually. In this regard, this study conducted manual coding because the sample size is less than 24. This coding process was guided by the analytical framework from theories obtained from literature. Themes were developed from within-case analysis based on how actors build commitment as defined by the research questions addressed in this study. A cross-case analysis stage then followed the themes developed within-case study. At this stage, some codes appeared in more than one theme.

## Findings

### **Affective Commitment**

Affective commitment is characterized by sentiments of allegiance and faithfulness and reflects the party's positive feelings towards its exchange partner (Ganesan, Brown, Mariadoss, & Ho, 2010). In general, affective commitment assumes that actors would be obliged to succeed through feelings. In this regards, affective commitment originates from personal relationship which replaces formal rules in the formation of relationship and trust between partners. The study findings show that interpersonal relationship influences commitment between suppliers and retailers in Tanzania (see Table A2 for details). The interview results show that international retailers invite local food suppliers for firms' anniversary as a way of building affective commitment. For example, Uchumi and Game invited suppliers for dinner gala during their anniversary marking the time they have been in Tanzania since opening their stores in Tanzania. However, none of the interviewed local food suppliers attended the anniversary dinner gala. Also, the local food suppliers organize social events but they do not invite retailers. In general, study findings show that local food suppliers neglect the use of formal events like dinner gala, which are used by international retailers in the formation of affective commitment.

Also, when some of the local food suppliers organise their events, they do not invite modern food retailers. For example, Monaban Farming and Trading Company Limited organises a 'Monaban Day' which is an annual event held in Arusha. However, the event has not been used to bring together modern retailers. Furthermore, Monaban has set incentives for distributors who reach a certain tonnage to visit a company and stay with them for a week at the firm's cost. The social event has been designed as a means of uniting stakeholders with the firm and building strong relationship. However, retailers are not always

considered as major stakeholders by the management compared with employees and distributors.

The strict trade credit conditions between retailers and suppliers often require that the suppliers take back items that have not been purchased before their expiry dates. This policy creates serious disadvantages for the suppliers. Some of them end up incurring losses in the process. The respondent from 'Basic Element' reported the difficulties in the following words:

Last time we received call to exchange good that amounted to Tsh 30,000 which was near the expiration date. Actually, the goods were not expired but they were about to expire, because the Sembe shelf life is 90 days and usually we pay visit after 60 days to see what is going on.

Darsh Industries Limited also has this to say about trade credit policy:

Yes Uchumi does not have our peanut because we stopped to supply them because of payment problems. So it creates shortage to them ... While with the supermarket we sell the product we have to wait for 90 days to get pay. Sometimes six months and this business, we are running with the facilities from the banks. And the banks are charging 18 per cent on loan. It is an interest rate. So, all those raw materials like tomatoes you are buying from suppliers you have to pay them cash. While when you sell to the market, market is going to pay after six months. So, who is going to pay after six months?

### **Continuance Commitment**

Continuance commitment is seen in a degree to which partners maintain their relationships despite the ups and downs of the business activity. The findings show that continuance commitment is low when payments to the suppliers are delayed (Table A3). This is because local food processors cannot supply for more than a month without payment due to poor working capital. Mishandling of goods can also lead to low level of continuance commitment. Study findings show that local food suppliers are the ones who bear the loss when the products are poorly handled by modern retailers. This suggests that a mistake by a retailer can lead to a loss to a supplier. This makes some suppliers decline to continue with some of the modern food distributors. Simply, these factors would lead to low trust between local food suppliers and modern food retailers.

Participant from Meat King Limited said,

Not selling to Shoprite because they could not keep their fridges in a good condition. We used to supply and then we went there the fridge is broken and the meat is rotten. We stopped to supply to them. No! They said we would change. But it was not good to trust. Also they were not good payers. We have to fight for our money. It took a long time. So from there it was not worth to take it.

Surprisingly, the present study shows that reliability, price and volume do not influence continuance commitment on the part of retailers. For price procurement one Officer from Uchumi Supermarket had this to say,

For example, if you are growing some crops during the drought season the price is higher compared to rain season while for Nakumatt no price changes as per season. I have decided not to supply some of the products if the price is not increased. For example, they asked me why you don't supply lettuce Mama. I told them that at the farm level the price has increased while you don't want to increase. They boasted in the first week, in the second week they told me, "Mama just supply for the newly suggested price". Therefore, you are saying no price increment until you resist supplying for the current price? They can listen to price change but you have to stop supplying otherwise they will not consider your outcry.

Furthermore, the study findings indicate that the location of merchandizing officer who deals with particular supermarkets increases the continuance commitment as perceived by retailers. In general, international retailers see this fact as more important than do the local retailers. It is only Panone Supermarket that considers the appointing of a merchandizing officer as an important factor for local modern food retailers. The failure of locating a merchandizing officer does not lead to the rejection of the products of the particular food processors. The deputy managing director of Panone Supermarket had this to say:

Also locate their Merchandiser Officers at our stores to assist us in display, educating our customers on the use and benefits of their products. But for our local food processors most of them don't do these things; as I said this limit the market acceptance of their products...

### **Behaviour Commitment**

Behaviour commitment can be operationalized in terms of future resource commitment and investments (Gundlach et al., 1995). The study findings show that both retailers and suppliers see a possibility of a long-term relationship. In spite of the fact that retailers do not support food processors with finance and technology, the overall behavioural commitment seems not to be affected. The study findings indicate that retailers provide free space support and marketing information (Table A1). However, trustworthiness of retailers has been affected by payment delays which lead to low level of behavioural commitment. Interviews' results show that in comparison between international and local retailers, only local retailers provide help to local food suppliers. The support is in the form of transportation of goods. However, both local and international retailers provide support of free space to local food suppliers in Tanzania.

Retailers are ready to share information from consumers' feedback on improvement of the quality of the products. However, some retailers are sceptical about sharing other types of information (including prices) with their suppliers. For example, Shop-N-Save manager admits that he is not ready to share all kinds of marketing information like price and techniques used by some other food suppliers with other suppliers. There is also no transparency in sharing information on prices which different local food suppliers offer to different retailers for similar products. This confidentiality and variation in price setting reduce the chance of having good relationship between suppliers and retailers in Tanzania. For example, the interview with Uchumi revealed that price is not the same to all retailers in the country. This is in contrast to the relationship spirit with suppliers of international products who have set the recommended retail prices which are known to all buyers.

Another support which food retailers were ready to provide to local food retailers is free space to display their merchandise. For Tanzania, this is very important and timely support based on the fact that food processing in the country is dominated with low investment and lack of finance. However, with the increase of competition and expansion of some retailing firms, this is not likely to be a long-time privilege. Interviewees reported that some food suppliers support retailers in other ways like financing promotion costs. Moreover, the newly entrant in the Kenyan food retailing, Carrefour, introduced space cost for suppliers and other conditions. This suggests that most of the suppliers may follow a similar trend. If Carrefour can get paid for this, other retailers are likely to follow.

For example, an interview with TSN supermarket indicated that the retailer excludes local food suppliers from participation in sharing of the marketing cost due to financial constraints.

Yes, we can agree with the suppliers on the cost which we would be ready to share for products. ...So, if we want to go for awareness promotions, they must share the costs. None of the local suppliers participate in this scheme of cost sharing of marketing promotion. I think their income is not good. You know advertisements are very costly nowadays.

Apart from these general support services, some retailers provide additional support in order to facilitate their operations with the local suppliers. For example, Nakumatt Supermarket provides informal marketing training services to local suppliers. Retailers such as Shop-N-Save, Panone and TSN operate with flexible modes of payment—in other words; they make earlier payments of their products in order to reduce their financial burdens. TSN also provides some logistic services to the selected local suppliers who have difficulties in transporting their products to the supermarket. This is possible for TSN supermarkets because the firm is a part of TSN group of companies which include

distribution and logistics. In this respect, it is possible for retailers to use facilities from other wings of the group of the companies to support local food suppliers to deliver.

## Discussion

Literature indicates that social and business events would enable actors in marketing channels to establish or destroy commitment among the downstream value chain actors. For social events, we dinner gala events organized by retailers were found not to have been preferred by suppliers. Food suppliers prefer informal meetings and provision of supports such as food to local or family events like funeral ceremonies. Furthermore, payment delay and return policies are considered to be signs of lack of empathy by local food suppliers. This perception threatens the existence of a committed relationship between modern food retailers and food suppliers in Tanzania. These business partners therefore need to be realistic about increasing inertia in relationships with high intensity and be able to demonstrate enough empathy in understanding how decisions truly affect each side's well-being (Day, Fawcett, Fawcett, & Magnan, 2013, p. 160).

Continuance and affective commitments are viewed as different phenomena in the literature of commitment formations. We found, however, that there is a correlation between the parameters of payment delay in affective commitment and continuance commitment; we observed interplay between these dimensions and payment delay parameter. Our findings provide empirical support and extend the concept that commitment is formed between the interplay of continuance and affective commitment and each of which is a very important step towards the establishment of relationship (Fullerton, 2003). Study findings showed that continuance parameter comprises payment delay and merchandizing challenges. These factors can lead to either low or high perception of continuance commitment of suppliers to retailers in the food downstream distribution in Tanzania. The study findings showed further that locating of a merchandizing officer would likely increase commitment of modern food retailer to suppliers.

Although the modern retailers impose stiff conditions on the local food suppliers, the former do not provide any support to the latter. At the same time, the suppliers are overwhelmed with the retailers' pressure of improving food standards. This conflict has resulted to frustrations and instances where local suppliers had to stop doing business with the retailers. For example, Mzomo Services Limited decided to cease its relationship with one of the retailing chain stores with four outlets in Dar es Salaam due to pressure on food standards. The findings of this study support previous findings of a study by Ganesan et al. (2010) that show affective commitment is not affected by non-ethical behaviour.

## Conclusion and Future Research Directions

Understanding the factors that influence the establishment of commitment in marketing channel is important for retailers and suppliers. Our study shows that commitment in the downstream food distribution in Tanzania is established on the basis of behavioural and affective commitment dimensions. Continuance commitment, which is more focused on investment of partners' activities, was not perceived to be strong especially in terms of its correlation with ending of the relationship commitment among partners in Tanzania. Evanschitzky, Iyer, Plassmann, Niessing, & Meffert (2006) suggest that continuance commitment could arise from lack of alternatives among actors. Therefore, low level of continuance of commitment could be attributed to three factors. First, this is perhaps influenced by financial constraints faced by both of the actors. Second, the study was conducted at the early stage of the emergence of modern food retailing in the country. Third factor could be the kinds of food which suppliers can access from suppliers as opposed to retailers; one example is maize flour. For example, in a recent study in Tanzania, Nandonde (2016) found that there are many brands of maize flour which are locally processed in the modern food retail chain.

The study findings suggest that behaviour and affective commitment are considered as important in understanding the levels of commitment of the other partner in the food value chain in Tanzania. Strategies could be developed by both actors in maintaining such commitment levels over time. Our finding is in line with the findings in a study by Kim and Frazier (1999) who found that behaviour commitment could be the most pressing problem. The current study has shown that local food supplier perceive modern retailer as having a low level of behaviour commitment as evidenced by their payment delay and return policies. We found that behaviour commitment manifests in the form of conflict between supplier and retailer; this is in contrast with the findings reported by Kim and Frazier (1999) who revealed that continuance commitment manifests in the form of conflict in the marketing channel. This contrast in the findings could be attributed to retailers' unwillingness of providing tangible resource investment like money for buying machines to local food supplier so as to improve the latter's production process. Behaviour commitment triggers conflict due to payment delays and delays in the changes in prices. Study findings have shown that in some cases, local food suppliers refuse to supply some of the commodities to retailers due to payment delays and disagreement in price changes.

Despite the contribution of the current study to literature in commitment formation in developing economies, the study faced some limitations. Based on these limitations, we propose the following areas which further studies can

focus on. The current study considered direct retailers purchase, but simple intermediaries were not considered in the study. As Samiee (1993) argues, intermediaries are important players in African consumers' goods distribution. The current study considered only commitment of the local food suppliers. Future studies can find out whether or not the factors that influence commitment formation between suppliers of locally made food products are different from those that influence commitment formation between suppliers of imported products. Furthermore, future studies can isolate suppliers of fresh food products (fruits and

vegetables) from suppliers of semi-processed such as packaged food products and chicken and beef.

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## Appendix

**Table A1. Practices Characterizing Behaviour Commitment in Supplier-retailer Relationship**

Codes	Category	Themes
1. Pad on the base of the packaging. 2. Put pressure that we have to put pad. 3. Not that much harm for us. 4. Then will be a burden to us special packaging for the supermarket. 5. We do not charge them extra for that. 6. Pack in imported labels, imported packaging. 7. It is much expensive for us. 8. Rejection could make sense if could be based on the queries from customer. 9. Can order 100 prices in two boxes of 50 pieces. 10. But when you deliver can accept only 50 prices. 11. You deliver the same rejected consignment rejected some days ago, today can be accepted without any queries. 12. Who is going to pay interest of 18 per cent to the bank after six months?	More cost Low margin No extra charge Lack of consistence	Lack of Empathy
13. Supermarkets want to buy goods from us on trade credit. 14. For us, we do not trade on credit. 15. The experience we had with supermarkets they are not good payers. 16. You will get answers like we do not have enough money. 17. It is like come to tomorrow or come next. 18. It is like come to tomorrow or come next. 19. Fight for our money. 20. It took a long time. 21. If they do not pay then I stop supplying them. 22. I do not allow them to collect meat. 23. Problem of dealing with these supermarkets is payment. 24. Payment is a big challenge. 25. We have an agreement that they will pay within 30 or 45 days. 26. Whatever has been agreed in our agreement. 27. But they are not paying. 28. We are wasting a lot of time following them. 29. We stopped to supply them because of the payment problems. 30. I have decided to stop supplying to Uchumi now it is about two months. 31. I have received order from them last week of about Tsh 6 million. 32. I will not supply to them. 33. They want cooking oil that worth 15 million. I will not supply to them.	Agreement Trade credit	Failure to perform to promise

(Table A1 Continued)

*(Table A1 Continued)*

34. Feel irritated with Uchumi behaviour.	Bribery Insufficient information	Unethical behaviour
35. I will drop this buyer.		
36. Young accountants like they want bribery from me		
37. Officer is not even receiving my phone call.		
38. I suspect he wants some money.		
39. He likes to beg for money from suppliers.		
40. I get irritated with the guy who is asking for money all the time.		
41. We do not get information from them if they do not have some items.		
42. If you owe them money and products have been finished, they do not even call.		
43. What supermarkets people can do is to blame you why you failed to supply on time?		
44. To tell you that there is nothing on the shelves for your company that one not.		

**Table A2. Practices Characterizing Affective Commitment in Supplier-retailer Relationship**

45. Officer whom you were together at school.		Interpersonal relationship	
47. Leave it to me I will work on it.			
48. At Nakumatt, we were luck to use one of my school mate to access that store.			
49. We also participate in other social events.			
50. If owners passed away, we have to send our condolence in monetary terms we also can deliver food.			
51. We use to communicate sometimes during the evening on 'Stuli Ndefu' (pub) to build our relationship.			
52. If they have some events used to invite me.			
53. Only those young employees who are asking for bribes.			
54. I think they value us more.			
55. Last time I got dinner Gala invitation from Uchumi.			
56. I did not attend that dinner anniversary but I received invitations.			
57. Uchumi used to invite me in different events I think one day I will attend.			
58. I did not attend that dinner anniversary but I received invitations.			Neglecting interpersonal relationship
59. Uchumi used to invite me in different events I think one day I will attend.			
60. People from supermarkets were not invited for Monaban Day.			
61. This year we will invite them to participate in that event because you have indicated to us that these are our major stakeholders.			
62. I do not have good network yet.			
63. These people are telling me go and see boss or come next day.			
64. They will just tell you put it there.			
65. They will just tell you put it there.	Bureaucracy		
66. Searching for a new order for more than a week, every day you are there and no change.			
67. But at their stock they do not have any products of yours.			
68. Those officers are telling each other that this seller ana mkono mfupi, so let him go.			
69. May be you can provide them with promotion t-shirt.			
70. Deep down the pocket and give him Tsh 5,000.			
71. You can hear please provide 100 pieces.			
72. Officers who want these small, small incentives.			
73. Bribery is there.			
74. There is bribery.			
75. All these harassments are just one way of saying we need something.			
76. Bribery is there.			

*(Table A2 Continued)*

(Table A2 Continued)

77. Some officers with that behaviour.		
78. Business that worth Tsh15 million.		
79. Their operation system is not good to me.		
80. Simply you cannot get access until you know somebody.		
81. You have to see the manager.		
82. You have to visit somebody at his house for a business talk that thing discourages me much.		
83. Until you know somebody who knows somebody then you may get acceptance.		
84. To know someone who can take you to his or her aunt who is working there through that means perhaps you may get access.		
85. They will advise you that this will not move.	Price	Sharing marketing information
86. At this price will be difficult for you to penetrate at the market.	Packaging	
87. Some many ideas we use to get from them.		
88. Not managerial and financial supports.		
89. Getting advice from them on the product.		
90. Marketing of our products.		
91. Marketing we are getting a huge support from them because they are ready to sale our products.		
92. They advised us to use barcode.		

**Table A3. Practices Characterizing Continuance Commitment in Supplier-retailer Relationship**

Codes	Category	Themes
93. Like merchandizing promotions.	No support	No marketing support
94. Other marketing activities.		
95. Direct supply that one is very difficult.		
96. A direct supply is very difficult for.		
97. We cannot have depot in each region.		
98. We need to have 9 refrigerators trucks and each one cost not less than Tsh 100 million.		
99. Almost one billion and we cannot afford.		
100. That means capital base has to be huge enough.		
101. We cannot handle.		
102. Do not get any support from supermarket?		
103. No we cannot supply there (Arusha), but they asked us to do so.		
104. I cannot take truck from Morogoro to Arusha for the current volume does not pay.		
105. I cannot take truck from Morogoro to Arusha for the current volume does not pay.		
106. For us, we do not trade on credit.		
107. The experience we had with supermarkets they are not good payers.		
108. You will get answers like we do not have enough money.		
109. It is like come to tomorrow or come next.		
110. It is like come to tomorrow or come next.		
111. Fight for our money.		
112. It took a long time.		
113. If they do not pay then I stop supplying them.		
114. I do not allow them to collect meat.		
115. Problem of dealing with these supermarkets is payment.		
116. Payment is a big challenge.		

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