



# Factors influencing urban pest management professionals' pesticide purchase commitment: price, quality trace credit, and supplier relationship

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Understanding the factors influencing professionals' commitment to suppliers when acquiring pesticide products is crucial in urban pest management. The study assesses how price, quality, trade credit, and supplier relationships impact commitment to purchasing pesticides. Employing partial least squares structural equation modelling, the study's findings indicate that when urban pest management professionals decide on pesticide purchases, their decisions are notably influenced by product price, the availability of trade credit, and product quality. Surprisingly, a positive relationship with suppliers does not influence their commitment to purchasing pesticides. This study discusses the variations and offers implications for managers in the Philippines.

*Keywords:* price, purchase commitment, quality, supplier relationship, trade credit, Philippines

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## Introduction

The urban pest management sector is key to public health and environmental sustainability. Amidst the challenges professionals face in this field, dealing with various pesticide products and suppliers has become a constant endeavor. Despite its significance, a notable gap exists in the literature concerning the factors influencing professionals' commitment to specific pesticide products and suppliers. The prevailing literature mainly investigates the technical aspects of pest management, leaving the aspect of commitment in procurement decisions largely unexplored. Professionals operate in a complex marketplace where economic conditions fluctuate, regulations evolve, and consumer preferences shift. Comprehending the perceived factors influencing professionals' pesticide purchase commitment—such as price, quality, trade credit, and supplier relationship—becomes essential for aligning their business approaches. This is pertinent in the present marketing environment, as Chen et al. (2016) emphasized, where the traditional marketing mix model, often called the 4Ps, is not universally effective for all businesses. The modified modern marketing 4Ps were introduced to embody the holistic marketing

concept and provide a more comprehensive context that includes the current realities of marketing, including people, processes, programs, and performance (Chemo et al. 2023).

A thorough examination of existing literature revealed research gaps that demanded particular attention. A primary concern surfaced in the contextual limitations prevalent in the scrutinized literature. While the constructs discussed in these studies were undoubtedly relevant, they mainly originated from research conducted in different industries. This contextual gap highlighted the need for dedicated investigations into the factors specifically shaping pesticide procurement in the Philippines. The geographical constraint raised concerns about its applicability in the Philippines, underscoring the need for local studies to accurately represent the unique setting of the Philippine pest management industry. The sample size issue further compounded the identified research gaps. This issue impeded the statistical reliability assessment, compromising the research's external validity. This highlights the need for an increased inclusion of parametric studies in future investigations, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the research landscape.

The researcher argues that trade credit is the strongest factor in urban pest management professionals' pesticide purchase commitment. Bhutta et al. (2020) emphasize trade credit as a crucial element in optimizing firm performance, staying permanently in business operations with lower opportunity costs and collateral-free access. Karakoc (2023) highlights the reliance on trade credit by SMEs facing financing constraints, particularly during crises like the 2008 financial downturn. The study indicates that firms, especially SMEs, lean towards trade credit rather than bank loans to finance capital expenditures in economic distress. With all the information and experiences of the purchasers, they find happiness essential for the patronage of a specific product (Kim & Yoon 2023).

Therefore, the study assesses how price, quality, trade credit, and supplier relationships impact commitment to purchasing pesticides using partial least squares structural equation modeling and pest management professionals as a unit of analysis. The following section presents a literature review, conceptual framework, hypotheses, and methodology, followed by results and discussion.

### **Literature Review**

One contributing factor to the success of an urban pest management business is evidently influenced by the decisions of professionals managing pesticide acquisition. Numerous factors played a significant role in determining this operational landscape. This comprehensive analysis of factors influencing urban pest management professionals' pesticide purchase commitment systematically explicitly examined the effects of price, quality, trade credit, and supplier relationships. Exploring the insights provided by Tingbani et al. (2022) and Khoirunnisa et al. (2022), this review served as a compass for urban pest management professionals and suppliers seeking to refine their approaches to business. The following factors—price, quality, trade credit and supplier relationship—appear to influence the purchasing commitments of pest management professionals toward suppliers.

In pesticide product acquisition, the primary considerations consistently revolve around are the pricing aspects of these resources. Olajide et al. (2016) succinctly articulated the fundamental inquiries of "What was the cost?" and "What value did it hold for us?" These questions underscore the central role that price plays in influencing the decisions of urban pest management professionals. A study by Hakim and Merkert (2016) highlights that price positively and significantly affects purchasing decisions. As such, strategic pricing evaluation remains essential in urban pesticide acquisition, emphasizing the lasting impact of cost considerations on decision-making processes. Many emerging markets grapple with low-income challenges, posing barriers to accessing critical products (Anderson & Markides 2007, Ernst et al. 2015). Affordability is a significant concern for these consumers, making "good enough" innovation, prioritizing low-cost and reliability, an effective strategy. To capture these market segments, innovation must simultaneously focus on cost reduction and value creation in the same citation (Dubiel & Ernst 2013,

Nakagawa et al. 2021). This approach addresses the primary issue of price sensitivity and ensures successful adaptation to the evolving needs of these markets.

Research in this area consistently emphasized the significant role of product quality in influencing consumers' purchase decisions. Ongoing efforts to improve product quality are essential for enhancing performance and meeting changing customer needs (Tariq et al. 2013). This highlights the importance of a continuous commitment to quality improvement. Tsiotsou (2005) investigated the effects of different quality levels on consumer involvement, overall satisfaction, and purchase intentions, providing a more detailed view of this relationship, including the relationship between product quality and consumer behaviour. Tariq et al. (2013) further expounded that continuous improvement in product quality had significant benefits for both businesses and consumers. It builds brand loyalty and positive associations for businesses by consistently meeting and exceeding customer expectations. For consumers, a focus on quality ensured satisfaction and increased the likelihood of repeat purchases.

Trade credit is an important financial instrument for corporations experiencing financial challenges. The role of trade credit as a viable alternative to traditional bank finance offers valuable insights (e.g. alternative financing source) into its significance for financially constrained corporations (Tingbani et al. 2022). This was particularly relevant for corporations facing financial distress, where trade credit served as a lifeline, providing a feasible means to secure necessary funds. The scarcity of external finance options makes reliance on suppliers' credit integral for enhancing growth. It is an alternative to bank finance but has become indispensable for corporations striving for growth under financial constraints. Thus, it is a financial tool that offers flexibility and support when traditional sources are limited.

Khoirunnisa et al. (2022) shed a significant relationship between communication and buying decisions. The positive direction of this relationship signifies that a higher level of communication correlates with elevated buying decisions, underscoring the importance of effective communication in fostering positive interactions between buyers and suppliers and ultimately influencing the decision-making process. Building on this understanding, a strong and communicative relationship could have far-reaching business implications. Effective communication contributes to trust, transparency, and collaboration, which are essential to cultivating a positive relationship. This could impact various aspects of the procurement process, including commitment to specific suppliers, reliability, and overall satisfaction.

Therefore, investigating the factors influencing urban pest management professionals' pesticide purchase commitment provides helpful insights that shape decision-making in this field.

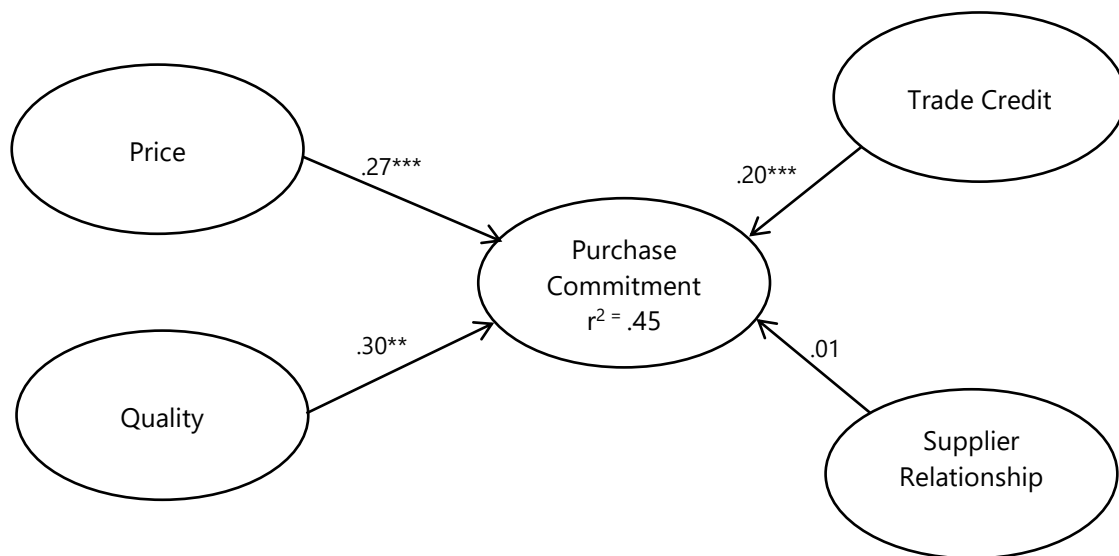
### **Theory and Conceptual Framework**

Xiao and Porto (2019) view that the resource dependence theory explains the organizational decisions and actions being influenced by securing resources, resource considerations, and establishing control on the enhanced resources supply. The theory highlights the importance of external financing for firms to operate smoothly and build mutual relationships with the firm and the suppliers. The firms may need help to source the resources. The effects are imbalanced and different in power, authority, and access to such resources. The firms then act to manage and control the price, quality, finances, and stable supply of essential resources through political interventions, growing scale, networking with suppliers, and diversification.

The theory further highlights the importance of external financing for firms to operate smoothly. Bhutta et al. (2020) emphasize trade credit as a crucial element in optimizing firm performance, staying permanently in business operations with lower opportunity costs and collateral-free access. The study underlines that aligning trade credit offerings with industry averages promotes fair business practices and enhances business performance. Further, Karakoc (2023) highlights the reliance on trade credit by SMEs facing financing constraints, particularly during crises like the 2008 financial downturn. The study indicates

that firms, especially SMEs, lean towards trade credit rather than bank loans to finance capital expenditures in financial distress.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework linking price, quality, trade credit, and supplier relationship factors that affect purchase commitment. The framework incorporates inputs from elements that shape pesticide purchase commitment within the pest management industry, incorporating the emerging marketing mix elements. Chemo et al. (2023), proposed the modern marketing 4Ps that reflect the holistic marketing concept and constitute a more representative set encompassing contemporary marketing realities such as people, processes, programs, and performance. Although not all elements of this new marketing mix are incorporated in this study, this inclusive approach recognizes the evolving landscape of marketing elements. It acknowledges the broader factors influencing businesses in the modern context.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework and Operational Framework**

\*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

Source: the author

### Hypothesis Development

Qalati et al. (2019) emphasize the crucial role of price in the decision-making process for high-value items, asserting that it positively influences consumer-purchasing behavior. Albari et al. (2020) confirm the positive impact of both price and brand image on consumers' decisions, emphasizing the need for informed pricing strategies and a positive brand image to encourage consumer choices. Mahmood and Jaafar (2022) further support the positive influence of fixed and fair prices on purchasing decisions. In urban pest management, financial investment is linked to pesticide products' prices and influences professionals' dedication to procurement decisions. This proposition is rooted in the anticipation that professionals, perceiving favorable value and affordability in pesticide products, will demonstrate increased commitment to consistently acquiring these products for pest management. Moreover, price emerges as a key factor in purchasing decisions, especially for products with frequent acquisition. This, in turn, influences choices related to the selection of stores, products, and brands (Albari & Safiltri 2020). So the first hypothesis to be tested is:

*H1. Price positively affects Purchase Commitment.*

Quality is defined as the standard and effectiveness of pesticide products in addressing pest management needs and is hypothesized to influence professionals' commitment to purchase positively. Product quality significantly influences purchasing decisions (Pahmi et al. 2023). It was emphasized that products are the main factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions, so the better the product, the better the purchasing decision (Pramesty et al. 2022). Multiple studies reinforce that product quality is a key determinant of consumer satisfaction and purchase commitment. Bhowmick and Seetharaman (2023) define product quality as the capacity of a product or service to meet customer requirements and adhere to essential benchmarks, emphasizing its vital role in achieving repeat purchases. They stress that a harmonious balance between product quality and price encourages customers to purchase repeatedly. Pasco and Lao (2021) confirmed that quality products and services lead to quality customer experience and repeat purchases. Ellitan and Suhartatik (2023) establish a direct relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction. The researcher also argues that prices influence the purchasing decisions of pest management professionals after establishing comparable product specifications and baseline quality. The second proposed hypothesis is:

### *H2. Quality positively affects Purchase Commitment.*

Trade credit is a tool for retaining customers in a competitive business environment. Improvement in sales may also be taken by a supply of trade credit (Bhutta et al. 2020). Favourable trade credit terms, including payment periods and credit limits, positively impact professionals' commitment to pesticide purchases. As professionals experience advantageous financial arrangements, their commitment to specific pesticide products and suppliers is anticipated to strengthen. Astvansh and Jindal (2021) assert that supplier trade credit enhances a firm's profitability by mitigating financing and opportunity costs. The researchers argue that increased provision of trade credit allows firms to defer payments, providing extended access to cash reserves for profitable ventures. Mahmud et al. (2022) reveal an inverted U-shaped relationship between trade credit and firm profitability in India, suggesting the importance of aiming for an optimal level of trade credit to maximize profitability. The researcher considers that credit terms and lines are important for pest management professionals to support the firm's cash flow, the sufficient inventory of pesticide chemicals, and the time required for payment processing. The third proposed hypothesis is:

### *H3. Trade Credit positively affects Purchase Commitment.*

The notion of internal marketing and the recognition of the crucial role of individuals in marketing are well accepted. The purpose of establishing relationships with persons and organizations that directly or indirectly influence a company's marketing endeavors is increasingly gaining significance in marketing (Adnan et al. 2018). Relationship marketing is an approach that prioritizes establishing lasting and mutually advantageous alliances with significant stakeholders, aiming to acquire and retain their patronage (Doney & Cannon 1997). The commitment of pest management professionals to pesticide purchases is affected by positive and collaborative relationships with suppliers (Khan et al. 2022). The researcher argues that customers are more open to suppliers who are perceived as friends rather than foes. The suppliers who listen to their customers win their attention. The connections between leaders of the functional departments of the supplier and the customers in pest management are important for building relationships and establishing solutions to each functional concern. The researcher hypothesizes that, as relationships are established and nurtured, the dedication of professionals to acquiring specific pesticide products from suppliers will experience a positive influence. The researcher proposes to test the fourth hypothesis.

### *H4. Supplier Relationship positively affects Purchase Commitment.*

## Methodology

The methodological approach in this study is grounded in a non-parametric research design, selected for its appropriateness when handling ordinal or non-normally distributed data and when the assumptions of parametric tests are not met. This ensures the reliability of the analysis concerning the relationships among the variables of interest—price, quality, trade credit, supplier relationship, and pesticide purchase commitment. The study in the Philippines involved 84 pest management professionals affiliated with duly registered companies. Data collection was executed through structured surveys and tailored to the specific context of the Philippine pest management industry. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to over 150 Pest Management Professionals (PMPs), primarily based in Metro Manila, Philippines, with records in the Philippine Association of Professional Fumigators Inc. and the Philippine Federation of Pest Management Operators (PFPMOA). However, only 84 professionals responded. The selected PMPs must have a minimum of five years of experience in the industry and demonstrate engagement in this field. We employed PLS-SEM and non-parametric methods to ensure a systematic approach to test the influence of price, quality, trade credit, and supplier relationship on pesticide purchase commitment.

### Analyses

Examining descriptive statistics provides insights into central tendencies and variability within each construct. Price has a mean of 6.68 and a standard deviation of .42, indicating a high average rating and moderate variability. Quality exhibits a high mean of 6.46 with slightly higher variability. Trade credit shows a moderate mean of 6.06 with higher variability. Supplier relationship and purchase commitment demonstrate moderate averages and variability. These statistics suggest response distribution and agreement in urban pest management.  $R^2=.45$  and Adjusted  $R^2=.42$  values for purchase commitment indicate substantial explanatory power.

In assessing construct validity, key metrics—Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability ( $\rho_a$  and  $\rho_c$ ), and average variance extracted (AVE)—were used for each variable in the research model. Trade credit demonstrates high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha=.88), reliability ( $\rho_a=.92$ ,  $\rho_c=.91$ ), and effective variance capture ( $AVE=.67$ ). Price, purchase commitment, and quality also exhibit commendable internal consistency, reliability, and effective variance capture. Supplier relationship's high Cronbach's alpha (.85), along with reliable reliability metrics ( $\rho_a=.89$ ,  $\rho_c=.91$ ) and substantial AVE (.77), affirm its construct validity. These findings provide evidence for the reliability and discriminant validity of the variables. Table 1 reports the Model fit indices essential for evaluating how well the proposed structural equation model aligns with the observed data. The Standard Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of .10 indicates the average standardized difference between observed and predicted correlations.

**Table 1. Model Fit**

<i>Saturated Model</i>	
Standard Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	.10
d_ULS	1.52
d_G	1.38
Chi-square	532.01
NFI	.57

The Standard Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of .10 indicates the average standardized difference between observed and predicted correlations. A lower SRMR is desirable, and in this case, the value suggests a relatively acceptable fit, indicating that the model adequately reproduces the observed covariances among the variables. The discrepancy-based fit indices, d\_ULS (1.52) and d\_G (1.38) measure the difference between the observed and reproduced covariance matrices. While these values indicate

some discrepancy, it is essential to interpret them in the context of the overall model complexity and the number of estimated parameters. Higher values suggest potential areas for improvement in model fit. The Chi-square statistic (532.01) assesses the difference between the observed and expected covariance matrices. Chi-square tends to be significant in larger samples due to its sensitivity to sample size. Despite its significance, it is crucial to consider additional fit indices for a more comprehensive evaluation. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) has a value of .57, indicating the proportion of improvement in model fit relative to a null model. While a value below one suggests an improvement over a null model, the NFI value suggests room for enhancement in capturing the underlying relationships among the variables. In summary, the model fit indices present a mixed picture. While SRMR indicates a relatively acceptable fit,  $d_{ULS}$ ,  $d_G$ , and NFI suggest potential areas for refinement. Considering the overall model complexity and theoretical context, it is essential to interpret these indices collectively. Further adjustments and refinement may enhance the model's fit and improve its explanatory power.

## Results and Discussion

Table 2 reports the PLS path coefficients and hypotheses test results about the factors influencing purchase commitment within the urban pest management industry. Price, quality, and trade credit significantly impact professionals' commitment to pesticide purchases, while supplier relationship is not statistically significant. These findings can guide practitioners in understanding critical decision-making drivers related to pesticide procurement, enabling the optimization of strategies for effective pest management and sustainable business.

**Table 2. PLS Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Test Results and Interpretation**

Constructs	Coefficients	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
H1: Price → Purchase Commitment	.27	2.99	.00	Supported
H2: Quality → Purchase Commitment	.30	2.03	.04	Supported
H3: Trade Credit → Purchase Commitment	.20	2.72	.00	Supported
H4: Relationship → Purchase Commitment	.17	1.16	.24	Unsupported

*H1* that price positively affects purchase commitment is supported ( $\beta=.27$ ,  $p<.05$ ), i.e. as the pricing of pesticides increases, there is a corresponding rise in the responsibility of urban pest management professionals to procure these pesticides. Zhao et al. (2021) highlight the impact of pricing on buying behaviour, noting that higher-priced products correlate with lower sales volume, while products priced below market rates are expected to experience increased sales. Chen et al. (2016) emphasize that the repercussions of elevated prices may be the potential permanent loss of customers. Akdogan's (2021) research underscores the positive and negative influences prices can exert on consumer purchasing likelihood in the context of promotional products. The alignment of our study's findings with past studies plays a role in shaping consumer decisions and purchase commitments. The results are aligned with the confirmation of Albari and Safitri (2020) on the positive impact of both price and brand image on consumers' decisions but contradict the findings of Mahmood and Jaafar (2022) on the positive influence of fixed and fair prices on purchasing decisions. Zhao et al. (2021) also have opposite results that highlight the impact of pricing on buying behavior, noting that higher-priced products correlate with lower sales volume, while products priced below market rates are expected to experience increased sales. The results also contrast with the findings of Chen et al. (2016) related to the repercussions of elevated prices, which may be the potential permanent loss of customers. The collective evidence underscores the complexity of the relationship between price and purchase commitment in pest control in the pesticide industry. Urban

pest management professionals became more conscious of rising prices and wanted to secure their inventory before increasing prices.

*H2* that quality positively affects purchase commitment is supported ( $\beta=.30, p<.05$ ). Their findings suggest that higher-quality products, particularly those offering a diverse range of options, contribute to increased customer satisfaction, fostering a desire among consumers to revisit and repurchase existing products. Our findings are consistent with past studies that state that product quality leads to higher commitment (Irawan & Sitio 2021). The results corroborate the findings of Pasco and Lao (2021) and Ellitan and Suhartatik (2023) regarding the relationships between product quality, customer satisfaction, quality customer experience, and repeat purchases. This interplay between quality, reputation, and purchasing decisions underscores the integral role of quality in shaping consumer perceptions and urban pest management professionals' commitment to procuring pesticides. The researcher argues that urban pest management professionals are accountable for the performance of the pesticides and the eradication of intended pests. Their reputation and results are at stake in valuing product quality and realizing advantages and differentiation.

*H3* that trade credit positively affects purchase commitment is supported ( $\beta=.20, p<.05$ ). Financial perspectives from various studies shed light on the multifaceted role of trade credit in shaping firm behaviour and profitability. Managers aiming for wealth maximization should consider financing physical investments through trade credit to limit funds' use for private benefits, thereby reducing agency costs (Karakoc & Arcagök 2022, Karakoc 2023). The synthesis of these findings reinforces the understanding that trade credit significantly influences the commitment of urban pest management professionals to pesticide purchases. Trade credit is not the strongest factor in purchase commitment in this research, as argued by the author. However, sufficient time is also necessary to manage enough inventory, cash flow, payment, and accounting processes.

*H4* that supplier relationship positively affects purchase commitment is unsupported ( $\beta=.17, p>.05$ ). This unexpected finding challenges established perspectives within the literature. Still, it is essential to contextualize this result with insights from other studies. Contrary to the hypothesis, Kimario et al. (2022) research argues that communication is vital for establishing trust and commitment in buyer-supplier relationships to ensure procurement performance. However, the study did not find conclusive evidence to support this assertion within the urban pest management industry. Moreover, Sheth and Sharma (1997) (1998) emphasize the importance of relationships in effective marketing strategies. While the study recognizes the significance of various factors, supplier relationship did not emerge as a statistically significant factor influencing purchase commitment. Additionally, Doney and Cannon (1997) found that trust in the supplier firm and the salesperson indirectly influences future business engagements, highlighting the nature of buyer-supplier relationships. In our context, these factors did not directly impact purchase commitment, emphasizing the industry-specific details of the study. Furthermore, Khan et al. (2022) discuss the effects of uncertainty, supplier involvement, supplier performance, and partnership quality on buyer-supplier relationships. While the study did not find a significant link between supplier relationships and purchase commitment, their insights contribute to the broader understanding of factors influencing buyer-supplier dynamics.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study examined the impact of price, quality, trade credit, and supplier relationships on purchase commitment in the pest management industry. Our findings indicate a positive relationship between all the factors and purchase commitment except the supplier relationship. Notably, price and quality emerge as significant drivers, with trade credit also playing a substantial role in influencing commitment. Recognizing the impactful roles of price, quality, and trade credit on commitment, coupled with the relatively smaller impact of supplier relationships, provides valuable strategic guidance. Urban pest



management managers are encouraged to allocate resources strategically based on these insights. A strategic focus on pricing is recommended, leveraging the substantial impact of price on purchase commitment. Industry stakeholders should evaluate and optimize pricing strategies to offer competitive and transparent structures, thereby enhancing commitment among professionals. Simultaneously, a strong emphasis on product quality is crucial, with continuous efforts to improve efficacy, safety, and overall performance contributing to heightened commitment. Optimizing trade credit terms is another strategic avenue, acknowledging the notable impact of trade credit on commitment. Suppliers should consider flexible payment periods, credit limits, and tailored financial arrangements to meet the specific needs of urban pest management professionals. While the supplier relationship exhibits a comparatively smaller impact, fostering positive associations remains essential. Prioritizing effective communication, reliability, and collaboration with customers can contribute to maintaining a healthy and supportive supplier-customer relationship. Further research could explore additional variables and their interplay within the urban pest management industry. This might involve investigating regional variations, industry trends, or the influence of emerging technologies. By implementing these recommendations and embracing a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping commitment, stakeholders in the urban pest management sector can foster sustainable, committed relationships, contributing to growth and success in the industry. In subsequent studies, researchers should replicate the study for improved evaluation and generalization. Conducting localized research to grasp the details of the Philippine pest management industry and incorporating parametric methods for a more profound understanding are also recommended.

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