

SUPPLY CHAIN MECHANISM AND PRODUCTIVITY OF BAKERY (BREAD) INDUSTRY IN PORT HARCOURT RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The general objective of the study was to find out how supply chain management (SCM) correlates with productivity. This was attained with the decomposition of the general objective into simplified, specific dimensions among firms in the bakery (bread) industry in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study was necessitated as a result of a shortage in the supply of bread to adequately meet consumer tastes, given the increase in population and a corresponding quest for quick and fast dieting habits. To empirically accomplish the specific objectives, the study adopted a correlation design with the use of a structure questionnaire, administered to a sample size of 51 respondents drawn from 8 selected firms. A Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient analytical tool was used for testing the hypotheses stated. Findings revealed that there existed a significant positive correlation between dimensions of stated objectives in a varying measure. It was concluded with an emphasis on efficient means of improving customer satisfaction through enhanced SCM amongst firms in the industry. Amidst the recommendations, the management of firms should ensure that critical tasks such as production are assigned to personnel with the requisite knowledge of operations management.

Keywords: Supply Chain, Productivity, Just In Time

Introduction

The sole objective of doing business is to make profit and also to ensure that the capital invested is recovered over a finite horizon; hence, the sustainability of any business depends on its ability to continuously improve its productive metrics. In the work of Ehiedu et al. (2022) and Lee (2021), they alluded to the fact that the capacity of the business to sustain and maintain a competitive edge is a function of its network in the supply chain mechanism or organisations connected through the products and services that they offer in order to deliver them to the end consumer.

Olajumoke et al. (2022) and Rasib et al. (2021) highlight that a simple supply chain consists of participants in a certain order from upstream to downstream. The practices and activities of managing supply chains are known as supply chain management (SCM). They are the set of events and activities that happen in an organisation to ensure the effective management of the

value chain (Odita et al., 2022; Alahmad, 2021). The Association of Supply Chain Management (2019) in Gumel defines SCM as "the design, planning, execution, control, and monitoring of supply chain activities with the objective of creating net value, building a competitive infrastructure, leveraging worldwide logistics, synchronising supply with demand, and measuring performance globally." It was also understood in the study of Meteke et al. (2022) and Onuorah et al. (2021) that the practice of SCM refers to all sets of activities that are done in organisations to improve efficiency in the internal supply chain. Thus, this would enable the firm to ensure that quality products are produced in order to meet customer satisfaction and that the required speed and capacity to increase volume in productive activities are optimised (Asamoah et al., 2021; Odita et al., 2020; Tarigan & Siagian, 2021). The bakery industry is primarily characterised by both immediate and short-term supply decisions as associated with the nature of its products to its teeming customers; hence, the process of procurement or acquisition of material in her supply chain is deterministic for ensuring the trend of competition in the market. This factor gives rise to the adoption of different mechanisms available for use, and for the purpose of this study, just-in-time (JIT), lean production (LP), and strategic supply are considered.

Problems of the Study

Within Port Harcourt and its metropolis, the consumption or demand for bread and its baking-related products is on the rise. Given the increase in population and a corresponding quest for quick and fast dieting habits, this has posed pressure on bakery firms to realise a sustainable state of customer satisfaction. However, considering the external network complexity (ENC) in the supply chain or procurement of material for productive operation, the industry has been faced with stock-out difficulty as a result of a shortage or inefficient supply process revaluation (SPR) given their lead time and the sorry state of the infrastructure that would have enabled speedy delivery from their source base. However, different studies have been carried out on this subject, such as Odita (2023); Olajumoke et al. (2022); Sulaimon et al. (2021); Ohue & Akhator (2021); Erakpotobo (2018); Shobayo & Olabisi (2017), to mention a few, hence it is still not sufficient. Your keen interest in the bakery industry has not been wholly accommodated in order to ascertain generality in the operational efficiency of firms, as previous studies mentioned. Thus, there exists a gap that would explore empirical findings to validate such generalisations on the subject under study.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was to ascertain how supply chain mechanism influences productive efficiency, while the specific objectives are:

1. To find how strategic supply correlates with quality product in the studied industry
2. To find how just-in-time correlates with speed in the studied industry
3. To find how lean production correlates with increased volume in the studied industry

Research Question of the Study

1. What is the relationship between strategic supply and quality product in the studied industry
2. What is the relationship between just-in-time and speed in the studied industry
3. What is the relationship between lean production and increased volume in the studied industry

Hypotheses of the Study

The null hypotheses was suitable for the study

1. There is no significant relationship between strategic supply and quality product in the studied industry
2. There is no significant relationship between just-in-time and speed in the studied industry
3. There is no significant relationship between lean production and increased volume in the studied industry

Scope of the Study

The content scope was hinged on the variables and dimensions of the study. The geographical scope only determined the industrial spread within Port Harcourt and its metropolis. While the respondents were limited to organisations, managers, heads of units, supervisors, and senior staff, which were both macro- and micro-units of analysis,.

Conceptual Review

Supply chain management (SCM) has emerged as a significant role and is recognised as a critical factor for business performance and competitive advantage in today's competitive global market (Prem & Atika, 2020; Ehiedu et al., 2022). Al-Madi et al. (2021) and Lokpriya & Vivek (2020) posited that supply chain operations encompass all operations and activities associated with the various processes required for the flow and transformation of raw materials into finished products delivered to end customers by these companies. The concept of a supply chain is when two or more parties are linked by a flow of resources (Ohue & Akhator, 2021; Sukati et al., 2020). Parties in a supply chain do not have to be two different companies; they could be people in different departments, divisions, or even key people within the same company. Supply chain management is concerned with the coordination of information and material flows, as well as plant operations and logistics (Odita, 2020).

Supply chain management is proposed to be a multi-dimensional concept encompassing both the supplier and customer sides and is concerned with the efficient flow of goods, services, information, and money to the business in order to provide the right product to the right customer (Sulaimon et al., 2021). From the standpoint of Obim & Atseye (2020) and Vicente et al., (2021), SCM is made up of a variety of practices that can mutually raise the performance of and benefit

all supply chain members, including suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and customers. A strategic supplier alliance, customer interaction, and information sharing were studied (Onuorah et al., 2022; Odita, 2023). Offiong et al. (2019) measured SCM methods on five dimensions: strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship, delay, information sharing level, and quality. stating that increasing attention to the quality of information prompts the establishment of strategic SC partners. Okon (2018) avowed that quality information sharing among partners along the supply chain may facilitate higher overall performance. Khalil et al. (2019) opined that, in most cases, supplier partnerships encourage mutual planning and problem-solving efforts and are thus critical in operating a leading-edge supply chain. This study, therefore, considers two of the dimensions of SCM from the literature (Strategic Supplier Partnership and Quality of Information) and tests them empirically by using data collected from SMEs in a variety of industries in Nigeria (Obi & Ehiedu, 2020; Zhao & Lee, 2019).

Just in Time Inventory

Just-in-time inventory is stock that arrives in your inventory as you need it for production or sales. With JIT, instead of having a large amount of merchandise inventory or raw material inventory, you have a much smaller rotating stock (Popoola, 2019). Chang et al. (2020) asserted that stock is ordered with the intention of being used immediately upon arrival and will spend as little time as possible on your premises. In that sense, it's opposed to mass shipping or bulk inventory. A just-in-time inventory system, or lean manufacturing, is an inventory strategy where raw materials and supplies are ordered and received as they're needed (Gudda & Deya, 2019). Laban & Deya (2019) posited that the system requires a strong relationship between the retailer or producer and the supplier. It is unlike the just-in-case inventory system. In that system, you order and store safety stock in the event demand surges or you run into production problems.

In the management of just-in-time inventory, Maina et al. (2020) and Ehiedu & Christiana (2022) identified that it requires planning and forethought to avoid running into supply shortages. Since inventory arrives only on an as-needed basis, you must always be aware of expected sales and the amount of time it takes for your goods to be ready for sale. You must also be flexible and ready to respond to sudden shifts in market demands.

Lean Production

This is the process that is used to eliminate waste in a manufacturing cycle. Agbogun and Ehiedu's (2022) view was that it is a philosophy, a work environment, a method, and an administrative idea. In a different view, Fantazy & Mukerji (2021) considered it valuable, methodic, and ethical. Today, lean has metamorphosed, and it can improve aspects of an organization (Sukati et al., 2019). Lean practices have numerous benefits, including helping to eliminate waste in all procurement cycles, prevent shortfalls, reduce inventory cost, reduce procurement lead time and cost, increase inventory turnover, and ensure customer satisfaction (Ehiedu et al., 2022). With regards to lean practices and supply chain performance, lean practices can be applied in many supply chains, particularly those seeking to boost performance by

eliminating waste. If a supply chain is cost-competitive, the utilisation of lean to remove waste and reduce costs will be required. Lean tools and techniques can help achieve the linkage between supply chain practices and performance (Ibidunni et al., 2021).

Strategic Supply

Ogunlela Ogunlela (2018) said that managers must pay more attention to building long-term partnerships with suppliers, selecting suppliers based on quality issues rather than cost, sharing information with suppliers and customers, and involving customers and suppliers in problem-solving and quality impact activities, which are essential practices in supply chain management. For a partnership to be successful, it must focus on smooth, lasting association and boost the common plan. Solution-providing offering (Ombits (Ombi, et al., Erakpotoboakpotoboalluded to the fact) that this makes working together mutually beneficial among the parties and brings about continuous involvement in core areas such as technology portfolios, sports portfolios, and markets. An effective partnership with a supplier can be a critical component of a leading-edge supply chain (Agbogun & Ehiedu, 2022). From their understandings, Ibidunni (2021) opined that a strategic supplier relationship is an important criterion in achieving a long-term association for both the buyer and the supplier of any organization. As information is important for maintaining supplier relationships in the long term, various tools and techniques are used Obi & Ehiedu, 2020).

Productivity

Sukati Productivity in this context is the extent to which products and services are supplied by organizations and customer expectations. It provides an indication of the potentiality of the supply chain in providing products and services to the Onuorah et al., Rasib Rasib et al. (2021) point out that this metric is most important in supply chain management as it integrates (involves) the measurement of performance from the supplier end to the customer end. Ehiedu's Ehiedu (2020) says that the key productivity metrics (PM) for the bakery industry include dependability, responsiveness, cost, and supply management. Ehieduet al. (2022) include the following matrices for input:output, quality, speed, timeliness, dependability, and increased customer satisfaction. Both the internal and external procedures of the company are impacted by these, as well as the Making economic decisions to increase production and efficiency is what costs are all about (Lokpriyakpriya & Vivek, 2020). Quality represents conformity to clients' specifications regularly (Sukati et al., 2020). Speed refers to moving quickly through a process, such as the time it takes a company to go from a customer's requirements to the delivery of a product (Offiong et al., 2019).

.Empirical Review

Odita (2023) conducted a study exploring the effect of supply chain management practices on manufacturing firms' performance in Delta State, Nigeria. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study is all the employees of the thirty (30)

manufacturing firms registered under the Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (M.A.N.), Delta State Chapter, with a sample size of 150 employees. The Pearson moment product coefficient and t-test were used. Also, Olajumoke et al. (2022) carried out a study on the effects of supply chain management on the performance of some selected SMEs in Lagos State. The study employed a descriptive research design. The study's target population included 26,114 SMEs in Lagos. For data collection, the 50 + 8k formula was used. Thus, 136 copies of questionnaires were administered. In a similar vein, Sulaimon et al. (2021) have a study on supply chain management practices and manufacturing firms' performance: professionals' experience in Nigeria. The researcher adopted a survey research design instead of a cross-sectional research design. The sample size was 227, and structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis was deployed for the test of the hypothesis with the aid of Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) Graphics to ascertain the strength of the relationship between the latent constructs of SCM and the performance's constructs in the study. To consider also, Ohue & Akhator (2021) also carried out a study on supply chain management and performance of brewing firms in South-South Nigeria. A survey research design was used for the study. A sample size of 248 was drawn from Guinness Nigeria Plc, Benin Plant (177), and Pabhod Brewery Port-Harcourt (71). A regression statistical tool was used to analyse the data. And Erakpotobo (2018) carried out a study on supply chain integration and organisational performance in upstream oil and gas firms in the south-south geopolitical zone, which comprises Akwa-ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers in Nigeria. A sample size of 323 was drawn for the study with the use of ordinary least squares regression analysis. Hence, findings from the 5 studies above revealed a significant positive relationship or correlation between both variables and their respective dimensions studied. Thought, the degree of each correlation differed, ranging from 0.65 high to 0.25 low > 0.01 or 0.00 in their strength measured.

Put differently, because of the statistical tool used for the work of Lee, R. (2021). on supply chain management and operational performance in Nigeria: a panel regression model approach. This study adopts an ex post facto type of descriptive research design. This is because the design creates a causal relationship between the variables identified after the event. The target population for this study consists of twelve manufacturing companies in Nigeria that engaged in consumer goods between 2011 and 2016. The sample size for this study consists of the top six manufacturing companies that produce consumer products. A mathematical model whose variable is adapted from the research of Onuorah et al. (2022) is used to explain the relationship between both variables. Findings from the study revealed that the mean values for the variables are positive: 22.39, 23.11, and 23.34, respectively, and that supply chain flexibility has the largest average change value.

Theoretical Framework

Resource-Based Theory

The resource-based view (RBV) of Jay Barney (1991) assists businesses in developing agility, adaptability, and alignment in SCM (Lokpriya & Vivek, 2020). In the development of distinct

capabilities to improve business performance, the resources of heterogeneity, allocation, independence, use, and imitability stand out (Gumel, B. I. (2019). Obi & Ehiedu (2020). It has been identified that companies have directed efforts to establish relationships and collaborate with partners upstream and downstream, providing benefits throughout the SC, in order to improve performance and survive in an increasingly competitive market. In this scenario, the RBV employs its resources, which include all tangible and intangible assets, both human and nonhuman, to add value to its products and services (Sukati et al., 2020).

This study is based on the Ludwig von Bertalanffy systems theory of the 1950s. Bertalanffy challenged classical modelling, which was based on the static mathematical probability of the systems, and argued that open systems (organisations) are affected by the time factor. Therefore, a dynamic method is required for understanding these open systems. In other words, a fraternisation of the key stakeholders and elements in an open system would ensure cohesion and cooperation of these variables and elements in the open system (Laban & Deya, 2019). This thought is relevant to this study because, as an open system, an understanding of all participants in an organisation's supply chain by managers and employees of the production department could ensure the adoption of an agile supply chain strategy. This strategy could, by extension, impact organisational innovation.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlation design with the use of a structured questionnaire. A Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient analytical tool was used for testing the hypotheses stated. The population size was 73 bakery firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State (<https://ng.africabz.com/rivers>). The sample size was 51 respondents, drawn from eight selected bakeries. The convenience technique was used in selecting the 8 firms based on their leadership dominance, while the sample size of 51 was determined by the use of purposeful or judgmental sampling techniques; hence, it was a census study.

Table 1. Firms and Employees

UZ Bakery			Delta Bakery			Next Bakery			Big Treat			SPAR			Market Square			Bread Mall			Nibbles			T L
U	S	S	U	S	S	U	S	S	U	S	S	U	S	S	U	S	S	U	S	S	U	S	S	8
H	P	S	H	P	S	H	P	S	H	P	S	H	P	S	H	P	S	H	P	S	H	P	S	
2	1	3	2	3	3	2	1	4	1	3	3	1	1	2	2	1	4	1	1	3	1	2	4	
6			8			7			7			4			7			5			7			51

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Legend: UH - Unit Head SP - Supervisor SS - Senior Staff TL - Total

Table 2. Correlation Matrix on all Variables

		Just in Time	Lean Production	Strategic Supply	Speed	Increase Volume	Quality
Spearman's rho	Just in Time	p -Value					
		t -Value					
	Lean Production	p-Value	0.44**				
		t - Value	0.00				
	Strategic Supply	N	51	51			
		p -Value	0.38	0.15			
		t - Value	0.60	0.29			
	Speed	N	51	51	51		
		p -Value	0.49	0.50	.85**		
	Increase Volume	t - Value	0.52	0.51	0.00		
		p -Value	0.12	0.35	.79**	.81**	
		t - Value	0.42	0.92	0.00	0.00	
	Quality	N	51	51	51	51	51
		p -Value	0.23	0.13	.82**	.67**	.84**
		t - Value	0.10	0.36	0.00	0.00	0.00
		N	51	51	51	51	51

Source: SPSS 25.00 Output, Field Survey (2023)

Analyses and Discussion of Findings

From the findings in Table 2. The optimism at the correlation between variables tested showed positive, thou there were variations at the dimensions measured. Between just in time and speed, the value was sign at $0.01 < 0.49p$, while their degree of correlation was sign at $0.00 < 0.49$ which signified a moderate correlation. For lean production and increase volume, the p value was significant at $0.00 < 0.35$, whereas the t-value was sign at $0.00 < 0.92$ this revealed strong degree of correlation. Also, $0.00 < 0.82$ p-value was significant for both strategy supply and quality, thou their degree of correlation was measured at $0.00 \leq 0.82$, which depicted a fair or no degree of correlation.

Conclusion

This study empirically proved that the optimal productivity of firms in the bakery (bread) industry is optimised in combination with the dimensions of the supply chain mechanism studied. Firms are to deliberately plan and identify strategic partners with the readiness to understand the internal operative dynamic that suggested these chains of mechanisms in order to

improve their productive capacity. The novelty of this study was the empirical import of the just-in-time (JIT) mechanism into the framework of this study. The communication of JIT has often been captured as a determinant factor for inventory useful operation (IUO) and the practicality of the adoption of dimensions in the bakery industry.

Recommendations

1. Firms in the industry should ensure that personnel with relevant knowledge of production management are given such responsibility.
2. The management of firms in the industry should enable close ties and understanding with vendors in order to improve the supply chain.
3. A close understanding of the fluctuation in the external environment should be constantly improved in order to avoid stockouts.

Area of Further Study

Considering the empirical measures used in ascertaining improved productivity in the bakery industry, it would be necessary to expand the scope and also do a time series analysis for an all-inclusive generalization.

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