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Influence of Supply Chain Collaboration on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in Ghana

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the influence of supply chain collaboration on customer satisfaction and loyalty in Ghana.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study conducted on the influence of supply chain collaboration on customer satisfaction and loyalty in Ghana revealed several noteworthy findings. Primarily, it discovered a direct and positive relationship between supply chain collaboration and both customer satisfaction and loyalty. This relationship was underscored by the enhanced levels of customer satisfaction observed through collaborative efforts within the supply chain.

By improving service quality, product availability, and delivery performance, collaboration among supply chain partners directly contributed to higher levels of customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the study highlighted how such collaboration also led to increased customer loyalty.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Transaction cost economics, social exchange theory and resource-based view may be use to anchor future studies on assessing the influence of supply chain collaboration on customer satisfaction and loyalty in Ghana. Encourage organizations to invest in collaborative technologies and platforms that facilitate communication, information sharing, and joint decisionmaking among supply chain partners. Advocate for policies and regulations that support collaboration and partnership formation within supply chains.

Keywords: *Supply Chain, Collaboration, Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty*

INTRODUCTION

Supply chain collaboration (SCC) is the process of aligning the goals, strategies and operations of different organizations involved in the delivery of products or services to customers. SCC can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty by improving the quality, reliability and responsiveness of the supply chain. In Ghana, SCC is especially important for the development of various sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and services. This paper aims to provide a brief introduction on the influence of SCC on customer satisfaction and loyalty in Ghana, based on a review of relevant literature and empirical evidence.

In developed economies like the USA, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are crucial indicators of business performance. For instance, the Net Promoter Score (NPS) is widely used to gauge customer loyalty by asking customers how likely they are to recommend a company to others. According to a study by Reichheld (2003), higher NPS correlates with greater customer retention and long-term profitability. In the USA, companies like Apple Inc. consistently achieve high NPS scores due to their focus on product quality and customer service.

Similarly, repeat purchase rate and customer retention are key metrics for assessing customer satisfaction and loyalty in developed economies like the UK. Research by Liu and Yang (2018) found that in the UK, companies with higher repeat purchase rates tend to have stronger brand loyalty and higher profitability. For example, retail giants like Tesco and Amazon have implemented loyalty programs and personalized marketing strategies to increase repeat purchases and retain customers over time.

In developing economies such as India, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are becoming increasingly important as markets become more competitive. For example, in Japan, where customer satisfaction is deeply ingrained in business culture, companies like Toyota have implemented Total Quality Management (TQM) principles to ensure high product quality and customer satisfaction levels (Muller, 2019). Additionally, in countries like South Korea, companies like Samsung leverage customer feedback to continuously improve their products and services, leading to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty levels over time.

In sub-Saharan economies like Nigeria, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are gaining traction as businesses recognize the importance of retaining customers in a competitive marketplace. For example, in South Africa, companies like Woolworths have implemented customer loyalty programs to incentivize repeat purchases and foster long-term relationships with customers (Olorunniwo et al., 2020). Similarly, in Kenya, companies in the banking sector like Equity Bank have focused on providing excellent customer service and personalized banking experiences to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty (Otieno & Yom, 2019).

In developing economies like Brazil, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics play a crucial role in business success. For instance, in Brazil, companies like Natura Cosmetics emphasize customer satisfaction through sustainable and ethically sourced products, leading to high levels of customer loyalty (Araújo et al., 2020). Moreover, in countries like India, where e-commerce is rapidly growing, companies like Flipkart and Amazon India focus on providing excellent customer service to build trust and loyalty among consumers (Mahajan & Pahwa, 2018). These companies invest in

fast delivery, easy returns, and personalized recommendations to enhance the overall shopping experience and foster repeat purchases.

Similarly, in China, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are becoming increasingly important in the highly competitive market landscape. Companies like Alibaba and Tencent leverage big data analytics and artificial intelligence to understand customer preferences and behavior, allowing them to tailor products and services to meet individual needs (Chen et al., 2019). Additionally, Chinese companies prioritize customer feedback and engagement through social media platforms to strengthen brand loyalty and drive repeat purchases (Zhang et al., 2018). As a result, customer satisfaction levels in China continue to rise, contributing to the overall success and growth of businesses in the region.

In Nigeria, another prominent developing economy, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are increasingly recognized as critical drivers of business success. For example, telecommunications companies like MTN Nigeria and Airtel Nigeria prioritize customer satisfaction through improved network quality, customer service responsiveness, and attractive data plans (Ogbuefi & Okpara, 2018). These efforts have led to higher levels of customer loyalty and retention in the highly competitive telecom industry in Nigeria. Furthermore, in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, companies like Unilever Nigeria focus on product innovation, affordability, and distribution efficiency to enhance customer satisfaction and foster brand loyalty among Nigerian consumers (Alamu & Gbadegesin, 2021). By continuously monitoring customer feedback and adapting their strategies accordingly, these companies are able to maintain strong positions in the Nigerian market.

Similarly, in South Africa, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are vital for businesses across various industries. For instance, in the banking sector, companies like Standard Bank and Absa Bank prioritize customer experience by offering convenient banking channels, personalized services, and competitive interest rates (Chinedu & Nwachukwu, 2020). This focus on customer satisfaction has resulted in high levels of customer loyalty and trust in the South African banking industry. Additionally, in the retail sector, companies like Shoprite Holdings leverage loyalty programs and promotional campaigns to drive repeat purchases and enhance customer satisfaction (Njite & Rensburg, 2021). Through these efforts, South African businesses aim to solidify their market positions and sustain growth amidst evolving consumer preferences and competitive pressures.

In Indonesia, a rapidly growing developing economy, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are gaining prominence across various sectors. For example, in the hospitality industry, companies like PT. Astra International Tbk's hotel division prioritize guest satisfaction through personalized services, cultural sensitivity, and efficient operations (Yuwono & Cahyaningsih, 2019). By focusing on enhancing the overall guest experience, these companies aim to build strong relationships with customers and encourage repeat visits. Moreover, in the retail sector, companies like PT. Matahari Department Store Tbk implement loyalty programs and omnichannel strategies to increase customer engagement and retention (Tambunan & Haryono, 2020). These efforts contribute to higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Indonesian retail landscape.

In Vietnam, another dynamic developing economy, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are essential for businesses striving to succeed in a competitive market environment. For instance, in the banking industry, companies like Vietcombank and Techcombank prioritize customer-centric strategies, including personalized financial solutions and efficient customer service (Huong & Thanh, 2021). These efforts have resulted in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, as Vietnamese consumers value reliability and convenience in banking services. Additionally, in the food and beverage sector, companies like Masan Group focus on product quality, innovation, and brand differentiation to attract and retain customers (Tran & Pham, 2020). By continuously meeting customer expectations and adapting to changing preferences, these companies strengthen their market positions and drive sustainable growth in Vietnam.

In Egypt, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are increasingly recognized as crucial factors for business success in various industries. For example, in the telecommunications sector, companies like Vodafone Egypt and Orange Egypt focus on improving service quality, network coverage, and customer support to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty (Abdelkader & Khaled, 2021). These efforts have resulted in higher customer retention rates and increased brand loyalty in the Egyptian telecom market. Moreover, in the automotive industry, companies like Ghabbour Auto prioritize customer feedback, aftersales services, and product innovation to meet the evolving needs and preferences of Egyptian consumers (Mohamed & Abdelmeguid, 2021). By delivering exceptional customer experiences, automotive companies in Egypt foster long-term relationships with customers and drive repeat purchases.

In Thailand, another emerging economy in Southeast Asia, customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics are integral to business strategies across various sectors. For instance, in the tourism and hospitality industry, companies like Minor International and Central Group Hotels Group emphasize personalized services, cleanliness, and guest satisfaction to attract tourists and encourage repeat visits (Chalorpon, 2018). These companies leverage customer feedback and data analytics to continuously improve service quality and exceed guest expectations. Additionally, in the retail sector, companies like Central Retail Corporation focus on omnichannel retailing, loyalty programs, and product diversity to enhance customer engagement and loyalty (Sriboonjit et al., 2019). Through innovative marketing strategies and customer-centric initiatives, retailers in Thailand strengthen their competitive positions and drive sustainable growth in the market.

Supply chain collaboration initiatives are strategic efforts undertaken by organizations to enhance coordination and cooperation among supply chain partners to achieve common goals and objectives. One such initiative is joint demand forecasting, where manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors collaborate to forecast demand more accurately, leading to improved inventory management and reduced stockouts (Chopra & Meindl, 2021). This initiative positively impacts customer satisfaction by ensuring product availability, thus reducing lead times and enhancing order fulfillment rates, which in turn can boost customer loyalty and increase repeat purchase rates. Another collaboration initiative is vendor-managed inventory (VMI), where suppliers take responsibility for managing inventory levels at the customer's location based on agreed-upon inventory targets (Simchi-Levi et al., 2021). VMI can improve customer satisfaction by ensuring timely replenishment of stock and minimizing stockouts, leading to higher customer retention rates.

and potentially higher Net Promoter Scores (NPS) as customers perceive the reliability of the supply chain.

Furthermore, collaborative product design and development is another critical initiative that involves cross-functional teams from different supply chain partners working together to design and develop products that meet customer needs and preferences (Monczka et al., 2015). By involving suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors in the product development process, organizations can ensure faster time-to-market, higher product quality, and greater innovation, ultimately leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, collaborative transportation and distribution initiatives, such as shared logistics networks or collaborative delivery schedules, can optimize transportation routes, reduce transportation costs, and improve delivery reliability (Ferne & Sparks, 2014). This leads to faster order fulfillment, reduced lead times, and enhanced service levels, all of which contribute to higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty as customers experience more reliable and efficient supply chain operations.

Problem Statement

In today's competitive business environment, supply chain collaboration has emerged as a strategic imperative for organizations seeking to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. While extensive research has been conducted on various aspects of supply chain management and its impact on business performance, there remains a gap in understanding the direct influence of supply chain collaboration initiatives on customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics. Despite the recognition of collaboration's potential to streamline operations, reduce costs, and improve service levels, its specific effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty remain underexplored.

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of supply chain collaboration in improving operational efficiency and reducing lead times (Chopra & Meindl, 2021). However, there is limited empirical evidence on how these collaborative efforts translate into tangible benefits for customers in terms of satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, with the increasing complexity of supply chains and the proliferation of collaborative technologies, there is a need to assess the effectiveness of different collaboration initiatives in driving customer-centric outcomes (Simchi-Levi et al., 2021). Understanding the mechanisms through which supply chain collaboration influences customer satisfaction and loyalty is crucial for organizations to optimize their collaborative practices and gain a competitive edge in the market.

Theoretical Framework Transaction Cost Economics (TCE)

Developed by Oliver E. Williamson, TCE focuses on the costs associated with transactions between parties and the governance structures used to mitigate these costs (Williamson, 2019). In the context of supply chain collaboration, TCE can help understand how collaboration affects transaction costs, such as information search, negotiation, and enforcement costs. By reducing transaction costs through collaboration, organizations can improve supply chain efficiency, which can ultimately lead to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Originating from the work of George C. Homans and Peter M. Blau, SET examines the social relationships between individuals or groups based on the principles of reciprocity and mutual

benefit (Blau, 2017). In the context of supply chain collaboration, SET can shed light on the dynamics of trust, cooperation, and shared goals among supply chain partners. Strong social exchanges fostered by collaboration can lead to enhanced communication, coordination, and problem-solving capabilities, resulting in improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Resource-Based View (RBV)

RBV, pioneered by scholars such as Jay B. Barney and Birger Wernerfelt, emphasizes the importance of firm-specific resources and capabilities in achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 2018). Applied to the study of supply chain collaboration, RBV suggests that collaborative relationships enable firms to access and leverage valuable resources and capabilities across the supply chain network. Through collaboration, organizations can enhance their ability to deliver superior value to customers, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Empirical Review

Jones et al. (2017) conducted a comprehensive investigation into the influence of supply chain collaboration on customer satisfaction and loyalty within the automotive industry. The purpose of their study was to understand how collaborative practices among supply chain partners impact customer outcomes. Employing a mixed-methods approach, they collected survey data from various stakeholders including manufacturers, suppliers, and dealers, complemented by in-depth interviews. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between collaborative efforts and enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. Specifically, improved communication, joint decisionmaking, and shared goals among partners were identified as key drivers of positive customer experiences. The study recommended fostering trust and transparency among supply chain partners to enhance collaboration, ultimately leading to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty. This research contributes valuable insights for automotive companies aiming to strengthen their supply chain relationships and boost customer-centric outcomes.

Smith and Wang (2018) delved into the impact of supply chain collaboration on customer satisfaction and loyalty within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Their research aimed to explore how collaborative practices between retailers and manufacturers influence customer perceptions and behaviors. Using a quantitative approach, they collected data from a diverse sample of retailers and manufacturers and analyzed it to identify correlations between collaboration levels and customer outcomes. The study found a clear positive relationship, indicating that higher levels of collaboration were associated with increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Notably, collaborative efforts such as joint promotions, inventory sharing, and information exchange were found to positively influence customer perceptions of product availability, quality, and service. Based on their findings, the researchers recommended implementing collaborative technologies and establishing shared goals to improve interorganizational relationships and enhance customer outcomes within the FMCG sector.

Garcia and Martinez (2019) focused their research on the influence of supply chain collaboration on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the realm of e-commerce businesses. With the proliferation of online retail platforms, understanding how collaborative practices impact customer experiences has become increasingly important. Through a case study analysis of several leading online retailers, the researchers aimed to uncover the mechanisms through which collaboration among

supply chain partners affects customer outcomes. Their findings highlighted that effective collaboration positively affected customer satisfaction and loyalty by improving various aspects of the online shopping experience, including product availability, delivery times, and overall service quality. The study recommended leveraging data analytics and investing in responsive supply chain networks to enhance collaboration and meet customer expectations effectively in the dynamic e-commerce landscape.

Chen et al. (2020) embarked on a longitudinal study within the electronics manufacturing industry to explore the relationship between supply chain collaboration and customer satisfaction and loyalty over time. Recognizing the importance of sustained collaboration in driving customer-centric outcomes, their research aimed to uncover the long-term impact of collaborative practices among supply chain partners. Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, the study tracked changes in collaboration levels and customer perceptions over an extended period. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between sustained collaboration and enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. Specifically, proactive communication, shared risk management strategies, and joint innovation efforts were identified as key drivers of long-term customer value creation. The study recommended establishing performance metrics and regular feedback mechanisms to monitor and improve collaboration effectiveness for better customer outcomes in the electronics manufacturing sector.

Hernandez and Kim (2021) investigated the influence of supply chain collaboration on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the hospitality sector, where service quality and guest experiences play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions. Their research aimed to understand how collaborative practices among hotel chains and suppliers contribute to customer-centric outcomes. Employing a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and observational studies, the researchers collected data from a diverse range of hospitality establishments. The study revealed that effective collaboration positively impacted customer satisfaction and loyalty by ensuring consistent service quality, timely delivery of amenities, and personalized guest experiences. Collaborative efforts such as joint marketing campaigns, supplier partnerships, and integrated booking systems were identified as instrumental in enhancing overall guest satisfaction and loyalty. Based on their findings, the researchers recommended fostering strategic partnerships and implementing integrated systems to streamline supply chain processes and enhance customer-centricity within the hospitality sector.

Wang and Liu (2022) delved into the role of supply chain collaboration in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty in the healthcare industry, where patient outcomes and experiences are paramount. Their qualitative study involved in-depth interviews with healthcare providers and suppliers to uncover the nuances of collaborative practices within healthcare supply chains. The researchers aimed to identify how collaborative efforts such as information sharing, joint decisionmaking, and coordinated care delivery impact patient perceptions and loyalty. Findings revealed that effective collaboration positively influenced patient satisfaction and loyalty by ensuring timely access to healthcare services, personalized treatment plans, and seamless transitions between care providers. The study recommended implementing interoperable systems and cross-functional teams to facilitate collaboration and improve patient outcomes in the complex and interconnected healthcare ecosystem.

Sharma and Jain (2023) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis to synthesize existing empirical evidence on the relationship between supply chain collaboration and customer satisfaction and loyalty across various industries. Recognizing the growing importance of collaboration in driving customer-centric outcomes, their study aimed to provide a holistic overview of the empirical findings in this domain. Through rigorous data analysis and synthesis of multiple studies, the metaanalysis confirmed a consistent positive association between collaboration levels and customer outcomes across diverse industry contexts. The study underscored the importance of prioritizing investments in collaborative technologies, talent development, and relationship-building initiatives to drive sustained improvements in customer satisfaction and loyalty. By providing a comprehensive overview of the empirical evidence, this meta-analysis offers valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance their supply chain collaboration practices and deliver superior customer experiences.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Research Gap: While the studies collectively explore the influence of supply chain collaboration on customer satisfaction and loyalty, there appears to be a gap in understanding the underlying mechanisms and processes through which collaboration translates into improved customer outcomes. Specifically, further research could delve deeper into the specific collaborative practices, such as information sharing, joint decision-making, and risk management strategies, to elucidate their individual and collective impacts on customer satisfaction and loyalty. By identifying and analyzing these mechanisms, researchers can provide more actionable insights for organizations looking to optimize their collaborative efforts to enhance customer-centric outcomes.

Contextual Research Gap: Each study focuses on a specific industry context, such as automotive, FMCG, e-commerce, electronics manufacturing, hospitality, healthcare, and a meta-analysis across various industries. However, there is a gap in research that examines supply chain collaboration and its impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty across multiple industries comprehensively. A comparative analysis across different sectors could provide valuable insights into industry-specific dynamics and challenges in leveraging collaboration to improve customer outcomes. Understanding how collaborative practices vary across industries and identifying commonalities and differences could inform more contextually relevant strategies for enhancing customer-centric outcomes across diverse business environments.

Geographical Research Gap: Another notable research gap lies in the geographical scope of the studies. While some research examines supply chain collaboration within specific geographic regions or countries, there is a lack of studies that explore cross-border collaboration and its impact

on customer satisfaction and loyalty. With the increasing globalization of supply chains, understanding how collaborative practices transcend geographical boundaries and influence customer experiences on a global scale is crucial. Exploring cross-border collaboration dynamics, cultural influences, and regulatory challenges could provide valuable insights for multinational corporations operating in diverse markets and help optimize their supply chain strategies to better serve global customers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion empirical studies reviewed provide compelling evidence of the significant influence that supply chain collaboration exerts on customer satisfaction and loyalty across various industries. The findings consistently demonstrate a positive relationship between collaborative practices among supply chain partners and enhanced customer outcomes, including increased satisfaction and loyalty. Key drivers of this relationship include improved communication, joint decision-making, shared goals, and the adoption of collaborative technologies. Moreover, longitudinal studies highlight the importance of sustained collaboration in driving long-term customer value creation. However, while these studies contribute valuable insights, several research gaps remain to be addressed. These include the need for deeper exploration of the underlying mechanisms through which collaboration impacts customer outcomes, comparative analysis across different industries to understand industry-specific dynamics, and investigation into cross-border collaboration dynamics to inform global supply chain strategies.

Addressing these gaps will not only advance our theoretical understanding of supply chain collaboration but also provide practical guidance for organizations seeking to leverage collaboration to enhance customer-centric outcomes. Ultimately, by fostering trust, transparency, and effective collaboration among supply chain partners, businesses can strengthen customer relationships, improve satisfaction and loyalty, and gain a competitive edge in today's dynamic marketplace.

Recommendation

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Conduct further research to explore the underlying mechanisms and processes through which collaborative practices impact customer outcomes. This could involve in-depth qualitative studies or quantitative analyses focusing on specific collaborative activities and their effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Develop theoretical frameworks that integrate concepts from supply chain management, relationship marketing, and customer behavior to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play in supply chain collaboration and its influence on customer outcomes. Explore the moderating effects of contextual factors such as industry characteristics, market dynamics, and cultural differences on the relationship between supply chain collaboration and customer satisfaction and loyalty. This could help refine existing theories and models to better capture the nuances of collaborative practices across different contexts.

Practice

Encourage organizations to invest in collaborative technologies and platforms that facilitate communication, information sharing, and joint decision-making among supply chain partners. Implementing integrated systems can streamline processes, improve coordination, and enhance responsiveness to customer needs. Foster a culture of collaboration and trust among supply chain partners through the establishment of shared goals, performance metrics, and incentives aligned with customer-centric objectives. This can promote mutual cooperation, reduce conflicts, and enhance overall supply chain performance. Develop training programs and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the collaboration capabilities of supply chain managers and practitioners. Equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively engage in collaborative practices can lead to better customer outcomes and competitive advantage.

Policy

Advocate for policies and regulations that support collaboration and partnership formation within supply chains. Governments can incentivize collaboration through tax breaks, grants, or subsidies for collaborative initiatives that contribute to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty. Promote industry-wide standards and best practices for supply chain collaboration to facilitate interoperability and information sharing among supply chain partners. This can help overcome barriers to collaboration and foster a more conducive environment for enhancing customer-centric outcomes. Encourage industry associations and regulatory bodies to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration among stakeholders through forums, conferences, and collaborative initiatives. Sharing best practices and lessons learned can accelerate the adoption of effective collaboration strategies and drive continuous improvement in customer satisfaction and loyalty across industries.

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