International journal of management and organizational research

Strengthening retail confectionery supply chain management: The interaction of channel capability and real-time information sharing

Nsikan John [1*], Ekanem Unyime Ezekiel [2], Mbaa Bariate [3], Ine Briggs [4]
[1] Covenant University, Ota- Ogun State-Nigeria
[2] Ph.D., Basic Studies Center, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa, Orukanam, Nigeria
[3-4] Garden City Premier Business School, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

* Corresponding Author: **Nsikan John**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2583-6641
Volume: 02
Issue: 03
May-June 2023
Received: 01-06-2023;
Accepted: 17-06-2023
Page No: 36-43

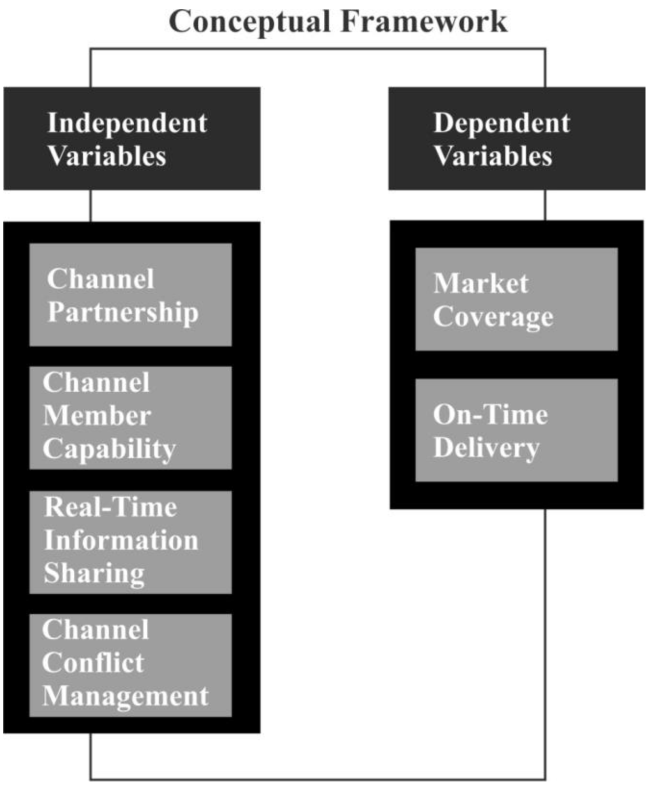
Abstract
This study investigated the relationship between channel capability, real-time information sharing, and performance of retail confectionary supply chain firms. The study was anchored on contingency and social exchange theories. Using the cross-sectional survey design, primary data were collected through the structured questionnaire from 260 randomly sampled sales marketing and distribution representatives in major confectionery supply management companies in Nigeria. Data collected addresses issues including channel partnership, channel member capability, real-time information sharing, channel conflict management, market coverage, and on time delivery. Regression analysis was conducted on the model to estimate the relationship among variables. From the results, except channel capability, which yielded moderate estimation result, real-time information sharing and channel conflict management, and partnership correlated positively with confectionary supply chain performance. The study recommends increased top management commitment to channel relationship management in order to strengthen supply chain performance and ensure increased market coverage, and timely product delivery.

Keywords: management, confectionery, supply chain, capability

1. Introduction
Today's economic realities requires enterprises to collaborate with channel partners in order to enhance wide market coverage and ensure stable growth. Effective management of distribution channel relationship has been recommended as a contemporary business practice that organization can employ to achieve optimal performance. The ability to nurture channel relations, building synergies, and partnering with trading partners is essential to achieving higher organizational performance. Fiala (2004) argues that such strategic alliance promotes efficiency, lower operational cost, and enhance product and services visibility which is crucial in mitigating supply chain risk that may impede the performance of any given organization.
Channel relationship management is a process that companies or enterprise uses in order to improve business relationship with customers. Organizations such as confectionery, Dairy and Textile do this by using technologies to manage and analyze channel member's interactions as well as data throughout the distribution life cycle (Rouse, 2004). Their aims are to acquire, and increase customers. However, the main goal is to in turn improve business performance.
Many organizations invest heavily in Information Technology (IT) to better manage their interactions with channel members during and after transactions (Bohling 2006). It follows that the greater the knowledge about how firm successfully combine their technology and organizational capacities, the greater their understanding of how channel relationship management influence performance (Swift, 2001; Bharadhaj, 2000; Piccoli & Ives, 2005).
Kotter & Armstrong (2010) has defined channel relationship management as the overall process of building and maintaining profitable relationship by delivering superior value and satisfaction. Channel relationship management is a widely implemented strategy for managing a company interaction with customers.

The overall goals are to find, attract and win new client, mature and retain those the company already has, entice former clients back into the fold, and reduce cost of marketing and thereby increase overall performance.
The confectionery firms expect their members to be proactive and show initiatives, collaborate smoothly with others, take responsibility for their own professional development and to be committed to high quality performance standards (Armstrong, 2009). Thompson (2008) illustrate that channel relationship management is an effective tool for achieving positive organisational performance which reflects an increase in profit, good will, better products and service delivery.
In recent times, questions have been raised as regards the interaction between organisation and their channel members. But the result is that many enterprises have poor relationship with their channel members and this may lead to loss of good will and low performance that will in turn lead to low profitability in the organisation. As such channel relationship variable dimensions include channel partnership, channel member capability, real time information sharing and distribution channel structure on performance dimension which include market coverage, market growth and on time delivery. The main aim of this study is to examine the effect of channel relationship management on performance of confectionery enterprises. The study considered the following specific objectives, To:

1. Examine the relationship between channel partnership and enterprise performance.
2. Determine the relationship between channel member capability and confectionery enterprise performance.
3. Investigate the relationship between real-time information sharing and enterprise performance.
4. Estimate the relationship between channel conflict management and performance.



Source: Author's conceptualisation from various sources

Fig 1

2. Literature Review

Channel relationship management practices is all about managing the relationship between a vendor and the third parties it uses to get its products into customers' hands while ensuring quality post-sales service and support (Dilshad, 2014) [3]. Viewing it in another way, channel relationship has also been seen as the nature of the exchange relationship between parties in between parties, which manifest as relationships that have long-term orientation and high degree of interdependence which could either be discrete or relational exchanges (Stern, El-Ansary, & Anderson, 2016). Mehta (2009) [20] opined that, in a relational exchange relationship, channel members are attached to each other to achieve a common goal and the level of commitment is always high. In discrete exchanges on the other hand, parties do not have any commitment to each other and there is no concept of channel leader (Mehta, 2009) [20]. According to them, channel relationship that tend towards the discrete end of the continuum can be described as 'market structure' while channel relationship that tend towards the relational end of the continuum can be described as 'relational structure. Mulky (2013) [24] defined distribution channels as pathways along which products travel from producers and manufacturers to ultimate consumers. The definitions by Ostrow (2009) [27] and Mulky (2013) [24] represented the perspective from which the researcher is viewing distribution channels while the practices are marketing decisions and actions taken in moving goods along the pathway to the consumers. It is clear that certain practices are involved in the channel – such as the engagement of marketing intermediaries, which will definitely trigger the need for mutual relationship as mentioned by Ostrow (2009) [27]. The final users need and location will trigger the need to embrace appropriate strategies for reaching them and the number of intermediary levels required to meet the market demand. Mulky (2013) [24] posited that, distribution channels are designed to consist of dealers to address a specific market, product and competitive context of a producer.
Previous researches with respect to trade relationships have focused on two aspects: neoclassical economics focused on profit margins, prices and market share while behavioral economics focused on trust, satisfaction and commitment (Gyau, Spiller, & Wocken, 2011) [5]. However, Interdependence shows the extent of dependence between manufacturers and intermediaries in the channel system, while uncertainty shows the problem of making accurate predictions about the future in the channel system. It has also been raised in literature that the perspectives of both the manufacturer and distributor cannot be ignored with regards to business culture which is a function of where channel member's companies are located (Cannon, Doney, Mullen, & Petersen, 2010; Runyan, Sternquist, & Chung, 2010), the market structure (Brennan, Canning, & McDowell, 2011;), and the level of dependence between the channel members (Chung, Huang, Jin, & Sternquist, 2011; Yang, Jia, & Cai, 2014) [39].
A modern research trend in exchange relationship is also focusing on cooperation between a retailer and supplier to achieve common goals as well as the two entities acting as competitors to gain individual benefits (Kim, Kim, Pae, & Yip, 2013). The importance attached to channel relationship management as an area of research in marketing spanned over three decades and empirical investigations have focused on constructs such as power use, conflict, satisfaction, opportunism, trust and commitment (Lernas & Rister, 2015;

Mendoca *et al*., 2014; Wu & Lee, 2012) [21].

Other components of relationship marketing in literature which are found to be relevant to building and sustenance of channel relationships are values, trust and commitment (Kim *et al*., 2011). Socio-psychological factors of individuals such as trust, commitment, interpersonal relationship and organizational variables such as adaptation in inter-firm relationship, investment in a relationship and contractual terms were the views of Rojsek and Matajic (2002).

Communication among channel actors has also been argued as a relationship construct that strengthens relationships among channel member (Lages, Lages, & Lages, 2005) [13]. Communication as a relationship construct has been considered as one of the factors for building long-term relationship and a way of establishing and maintaining a sound relationship in marketing channel practices (Lages *et al*., 2005; Lusch & Brown, 2005) [13]. There are various channel relationship challenges that business is faced with. Proper management of channels interaction is a major challenge for some companies, especially with the high competition that is now witnessed. It is expected that confectionery enterprise is supposed to improve on their channel relationship management but their performance is below expectation.

Previous studies have empirically investigated different constructs to measure the basis upon which relationships are built and sustained in a distribution channel partnership such as: commitment, trust, and communication (Wu & Lee, 2012); commitment, communication, trust and cooperation, behaviour monitoring, service quality, conflict resolution and use of legitimate power (Mendoca *et al*., 2014) [21]; trust (Claro & Claro, 2008); trust and commitment (Lernas & Rister, 2015). There is a level of convergence in the scope of the constructs considered by these authors to measure relationship strength within a distribution channel context. empirical analysis of the financial performance of some breweries in Nigeria (Okowo & Marire, 2012); relationship between working capital management and profitability as component for measuring financial performance of firms using loan safety ratios, management efficiency ratios and profitability ratios (Bagchi & Khamriu, 2013); impact of corporate governance practices on firms' profitability using market valuation and profitability of firms (Goel & Ramseh, 2016). Hardesty, & Leff, (2010). Determining Marketing Costs and Returns in Alternative Marketing Channels. Findings showed that the size of the farm largely determines the suitable choice of marketing channel as well as the marketing cost and profitability.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample selection and Data collection

Survey research design was adopted for the study. Thirty-four (34) registered firms in Rivers State that engages actively in distribution of different categories of confectionery goods constituted the population of this study. Some were identified from the websites of confectionery distribution channel members and others were found on Vconnect as operating in Rivers State, Nigeria which was the domain for the study (Vconnect, 2010-2017). Out of these 34 confectionery distribution enterprises, the researcher focused on eleven (11) that expressed their willingness to allow the staff in their sales and marketing departments to participate as respondents in this study. In total, 592 sales and marketing personnel in confectionery stores were randomly selected as study participants. Those selected were suitable as potential respondents for this study because they were thought to be competent to provide information about the subject matter of the study. Primary data was collected first hand to realize the objective of the study and promotes originality in research (Belaya &Hanf, 2014). The structured questionnaire with close-ended questions was used for this purpose. The close-ended questionnaire aided proper coordination of responses and easy collection of data (Ladipo*et al*., 2013; Sarka&Pareek, 2012).

3.2. Measurement and Validation

Constructs for the development of the survey questionnaire were identified and adapted from literature after extensive reviews of the concepts of distribution channel relationship and performance. Five constructs measured channel relationship management: Channel partnership; Channel member capability; Information sharing; and channel conflict management. Supply chain performance was measured indicator viz; Market coverage; and on time delivery. A 5-point Likert type scale was used to provide response options for all measured items.

The survey instrument was subjected to content and construct validity. The essence of this was to ensure that the research instrument measures what it was intended to measure. The initial questionnaire was examined by two professionals in the field of sales and marketing, in the process, certain aspects of the questionnaire which require corrections were modified. In addition, the data collected during the pilot study was subjected to further validation using exploratory factor analysis (Duodu and Amankwah, 2011; Ogunrin & Inegbenebor, 2015; Vinhas & Gibbs, 2012).

Reliability of the survey instrument was conducted using the piloted data. For this purpose, the Cronbach's alpha was employed to verify the internal consistency of each variable. In line with Bhatnager, Kim and Many, (2004) reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as acceptable (Bhatnagar, Kim, & Many, 2014) as shown in Table1.

Table 1: Result of Reliability Test

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Channel Partnership	5	0.704
Channel Member Capability	5	0.920
Real Time Information Sharing	5	0.812
Channel Conflict Management	5	0.862
Market coverage	5	0.721
On Time Delivery	5	0.782

3.3. Method of Data Analysis

Frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, and standard multiple regression analysis were used to analyze primary data in order to answer the research questions and test the stated hypotheses. Frequency distribution was useful for analyzing responses relating to the biographic characteristics of the respondents in simple percentages. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) helped to provide quantitative summary of responses and the perceptions of respondents on each item in the questionnaire (Godwin, 2004). This is because, mean and standard deviation as a measure of dispersion helps to show how closely the individual observation clusters around the mean to determine the variation in the set of values used and also to determine the consistency of the variables (Adekunle *et al*., 2013) [1].

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to carry out hypothesis testing which helped the researcher to show the effects of distribution channel relationship management and performance of the selected confectionary enterprise. It also helped to show the number of variations caused by multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable (Kunal, 2016). This also helped to provide regression model equations which could be useful to forecast the effects of distribution channel relationship management on the performance of the selected confectionery enterprises.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 2: Survey Response Rate

Number of Questionnaire Distributed	310	100%
Number of Questionnaire Retrieved	286	92%
Number of Usable Questionnaire	260	84%

Table 2 shows that 310 copies of questionnaire were administered on respondents. Out of which 286 copies, representing 92%, were filled and returned on time schedule. However, only 260 copies were properly filled and used for the study. Thus, the study achieved 90% return rate which was considered satisfactory for the study.

4.1. Demographic Analysis

The sample characteristics are described in this section and depicted in Table 3. As indicated, 46.9% of the respondents were male while 53.1% were female; indicating that the female respondent constituted the majority for this study. The results of respondent's age show that majority of the responses (40%) came from those between 36-50 years, followed by those between 20-35 years (26.5%), 51 years and above (23.5%), in that order respectively. Correspondingly, for the years of experience, 13.9% of the respondents have less than 5 years of experience, 11.9% have years of experience between 6 to 10, 74.2% of the respondents have 11 years and above experience. Given the years of working experience, it can be inferred that most respondents were experienced professional and knowledgeable enough to make reliable opinions on the subject matter. Furthermore, respondents were generally well educated as majority (41.2%) holds bachelor degree, and the least (26.5%) had Master degree. In terms of job position occupied by respondents, findings showed that all participants were mostly in the sales, marketing and logistics units with majority (48.5%) as sales and distribution officers. These analyses imply that the socio-demographic characteristics was widespread and typical of confectionary industry.

Table 3: Respondent’s Demographic Profile (N= 260)

Sample characteristics	Components	Frequency	Per cent %
Gender	Male	122	46.9
	Female	138	53.1
Age	20-35yrs	95	36.5
	36-50 yrs	104	40.0
	51yrs and above	61	23.5
Highest Qualification	Waec/SSCE Degree	84	32.2
	Bachelor Degree	107	41.2
	Master’s Degree	69	26.5
Work Experience	0-5yrs	121	46.5
	6-10yrs	101	38.8
	11yrs and above	38	14.6
Job position	Sales and Distribution Officer	87	48.5
	Digital Communication Manager	12	5.0
	Chief Marketing Officer	20	8.9
	Logistics Officer	64	23.8
	Marketing Stores Supervisor	36	12.4
	Others	7	2.8

4.2. Descriptive analysis and results

Mean scores and standard deviation are used to summarise participants' opinion regarding the the variables of study. A base mean of x = 2.0 was used in making decision. Thus, a mean (x) ≥ 2.0) signifies agreement with the variable of focus, while (x ≤ 2.0) signifies non-agreement.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation for Channel Partnership (N= 260)

	Channel Partnership Management	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	We trust our distribution channel partners to handle in confidence the information we share with them	1.00	5.00	3.0808	1.52369
2	We are confident of our partner’s ability to fulfil our product distribution agreement	1.00	5.00	3.1654	1.27326
3	Partnership amongst channel members reduces the costs of product work-downs	1.00	5.00	3.1269	1.29271
4	Channel partnership reduces cost of moving goods to final consumers	1.00	5.00	3.4154	1.49534
5	We frequently exchange information with our channel partners	1.00	5.00	3.2923	1.15445

Statistical evidence in Table 4 shows that respondent expresses positive opinion about the role that partnership plays in the management of distribution channel relationship. All items of the survey in this regard were agreed upon by the respondents. The highest positive opinion came from the statement “Channel partnership reduces cost of moving goods to final consumers (Mean= 3.42, SD=1.49). Therefore, it is possible to state that fostering effective partnership amongst members is an important source of effective distribution channel relationship management.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation for Channel Capability (N= 260)

Channel Capability Management		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Our key channel members are included early in our goal-setting activities	1.00	5.00	3.6038	.98286
2	We assist our channel members to improve on their distribution capabilities	1.00	5.00	3.1654	1.15963
3	We mentor channel member employees to enhance their distribution efficiency	1.00	5.00	3.3962	1.36163
4	We help channel members to improve on their storage and buffer capacity	1.00	5.00	2.3692	1.22798
5	We provide technical information that boost route- navigational abilities of channel members	1.00	5.00	3.4885	1.30778

The result in Table 5 shows that most of the respondents agreed with the opinion that building channel capability is a vital aspect of managing channel relationship for product distribution. Among the strategies for enhancing channel capability such as early inclusion in goal-setting activities, capacity improvement assistance, channel mentorship, and provision of technical information for route navigation, the need to aid with improved storage capacity (Mean 2.37, SD= 1.22) was lowly rated by respondents. Hence, there is evidence to state that channel capability is an important element in managing the relationship between distribution channel and the buying organization.

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation for Real-Time Information Sharing (N= 260)

Channel Real-Time Information Sharing		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	We provide easy channel for information sharing with our channel partners	1.00	5.00	3.3538	1.09658
2	We share order-tracking information with channel partners	1.00	5.00	3.5192	1.30177
3	We adopt modern information technology tools to enhance real-time information sharing	1.00	5.00	3.4385	1.23027
4	We share online product processing information with our channel partners	1.00	5.00	3.8038	1.34852
5	We provide real-time logistics route information to channel partners	1.00	5.00	3.2423	1.32650

Again, there is overwhelming statistical support in Table 6 that real-time information sharing is an important element of channel relationship management as all construct variables exceeded the 2.0 mean score threshold. Among the strategies for sharing real-time information as used in this study, sharing online product processing information with channel partners (Mean= 3.80, SD= 1.35) got the highest ratings from respondents.

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation for Organisational Performance (N= 260)

Organisational Performance		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Our firm's operating cost has reduced	1.00	5.00	3.1885	1.39741
2	Our firm's competitive advantage has increased	1.00	5.00	3.2077	1.41801
3	Our retail outlet performance is enhanced	1.00	5.00	3.2654	1.41515
4	Our firm's productivity level has increased	1.00	5.00	2.9962	1.31078
5	There is even distribution of our products in the market	1.00	5.00	3.3308	1.42449
6	Vital information about our products are now available to consumers	1.00	5.00	2.9346	1.34980
7	Our products are now available in remote areas	1.00	5.00	3.1269	1.35682

In Table 7 respondents gave their opinion on the performance effects of efficient management of distribution channel relationship. As shown in the Table 7 most of the operational performance measures were above the acceptable mean score; an indication of the likelihood of increased performance as the management of channel relationship improves. For instance, most respondents attest to reduced operating cost (Mean= 3.189, SD= 1.397), increased competitive edge (Mean= 3.207, SD= 1.418), enhanced retail outlet performance (Mean= 3.265, SD= 1.415), even distribution of products (Mean= 3.331, SD= 1.424), and product availability in remote areas (Mean= 3.127, SD= 1.357). All these results lend credence to the benefit realizable by firms on the account of effective management of channel relationship.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

The Pearson's product moment correlation analysis was carried out. Results is reported at a significance value of 0.05. Thus, relations between the variables are significant at the probability value of less than 0.005 ($p < 0.05$).

Table 8: Correlation between channel partnership and enterprise performance

		Channel Partnership	Enterprise Performance
Channel Partnership	Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.699**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	260	260
Enterprise Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.699**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	260	260
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 8 is the results of Pearson correlation analysis between channel partnership and enterprise performance with correlation coefficient ($r = 0.699^{**}$; $p < 0.05$). This means that the relationship between channel partnership and enterprise performance is positive and significant at 0.00 level. The positive direction and high correlation coefficient imply that the more the confectionary firms demonstrates trust in their partnership relationship with channel members, the more improved their operational performance. From the result, it is vital to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative proposition that there is a significant relationship between channel partnership and confectionery enterprise performance.

Table 9: Relationship between channel member capability and enterprise performance

		Channel Capability	Enterprise Performance
Channel Capability	Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.594^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	260	260
Enterprise Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.594^{**}	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	260	260
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 9 showed the relationship between channel member capability and enterprise performance. The result reveals that a moderately strong positive relationship exist between the two variables ($r= 0.594$, $p= 0.000$) leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is upheld that there is a positive and significant relationship between channel member capability and enterprise performance.

Table 10: Correlation analysis between real-time information sharing and enterprise performance

		Real-time Information Sharing	Enterprise Performance
Real-time Information Sharing	Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.760^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	260	260
Enterprise Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.760^{**}	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	260	260
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 10 showed a significant relationship between the sharing of real-time information and the performance of enterprise. The result reveals that a strong positive relationship exist between the two variables at ($r= 0.760$, $p= 0.001$) leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive and significant relationship between real-time information sharing and enterprise performance is upheld.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

The main aim of this research was to evaluate the distribution channel relationship and operational performance of confectionary enterprises. Results showed a significant positive relationship between channel partnership and confectionery enterprise performance. This finding implies that channel partnership which is built on trust and confidence, and the willingness to exchange timely, relevant, and accurate information is capable of enhancing the performance of confectionary enterprises in terms of reduced operating costs of product work-downs, increased competitiveness, productivity boosts, increased retail outlets, and the even spread of confectionary products in the market. This finding is consistent with works such as Danese & Romano, (2011); Cheng & Carrillo, (2012); and Hana & Zuzana, (2014) which all found and emphasized the importance of partnerships in channel relationships and serving business customers. Findings also reveal a significant positive relationship between channel member capability and confectionery enterprise performance. This finding tends to suggest that member capability is an important source of effective channel relationship management.

The results also mean that strengthening the capability of each distribution channel member may lead to enhance performance in terms of reduction in distribution cost, enhanced product availability, and reduced channel conflicts. In this study, it is clear that channel capability enhancement strategy includes aspects such as early inclusion in goal-setting activities, providing capacity improvement assistance, channel mentorship, and provision of technical information for route navigation, and improved storage capacity. This finding is in consonance with Trihatmoko, Mulyani, & Intan, (2020) which found that channel capability aspects (warehouse space, shelf space and customer coverage) are the essence of buyers' responses; effectiveness of new product innovation; and channel capabilities of selling products.

Result shows a that sharing real time information amongst partners is could increase productivity and lessens operational costs of distribution. This is in line with the study of Oh, Teo, & Sambamurthy, (2012). Which, reported positive and significant effects on firm performance of retail channel integration through the use of real-time information technologies. Other studies such as Guangdong, Qingshan, Jian-gang, Hamid, & Wei, (2014), Esther, Geylani, & Dukes, (2008) and also confirmed positive relationship between information sharing in relationship and organizational performance. In particular, Esther *et al*., (2008) reported that vertical information sharing benefits the manufacturer by eliminating the distortion caused by the inference effect, which is more profound in a distribution channel whose retailer has a conflicting signal.

5. Conclusion and Contribution to Knowledge

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the relationship between distributional channel relationship and the operational performance of confectionary enterprises gets stronger with the implementation of proper channel partnership which is built on trust and confidence, and the willingness to exchange timely, relevant, and accurate information is capable of enhancing the performance of confectionary enterprises. The findings likewise demonstrate that a firm's efficiency relies on channel member capability efficiency. This finding is in consonance with Trihatmoko, Mulyani, & and Intan, (2020) who found that channel capability aspects (warehouse space, shelf space, and customer coverage) are the essence of buyers' responses; effectiveness of new product innovation; and channel capabilities of selling products. Furthermore, findings demonstrate that sharing real-time information amongst partners could increase productivity and lessen operational costs of distribution. This is in line with the study of Oh, Teo, & Sambamurthy, (2012).

The outcomes show that channel partnership, channel member capability, sharing real-time information, and channel conflict, are inter-correlated, which is very visible, as these are essentials of the overall performance of confectionary enterprises. This is supported by the results from Pearson's correlation analysis conducted that indicated that there is a positive and significant relationship between both variables. Therefore, it is opined that confectionary firms adopt the practices of distributional channel relationship management and operational performance, mainly by effectively building trust in their partners, ensuring terms and conditions of the relationship are kept; strategically collaborating with their suppliers at an early stage of projects for proper channeling, making available continuous improvement which will drastically lessen the hiccups, consequently, boost the efficiency of suppliers, supply chain life cycle and also meet firm's goal. This study considered distribution channel relationship dimensions of channel partnership, channel member capability, sharing real-time information, and channel conflict, matched against enterprise performance variables of market coverage and on-time delivery therefore giving the research the credit of a robust study in the area of distribution channel relationship management. The findings of this study demonstrated clearly, the effect of each dimension of distribution channel relationship management on the various keys of enterprise performance, thus firming up the literature in the area of enterprise performance.

6. Limitations and Further Research

Findings of this study and application are limited to construction confectionery enterprises in specific location which usually is the limitation of case study research; therefore, may not be relevant directly to other firms operating outside the study location. Future research on the same topic not only on the overall confectionary enterprises in Nigeria, but also on firms other than confectionary enterprises, both within the country and outside the country. This process will help determine whether similar findings and effects will ensue. This will support in providing tangible proofs on which dependable assumptions can be made.

7. References

1. Adekunle YA, Adio AK, Efuwape BT, Maitanmi SO, Okunlola JT, Toyinbo RO. Basic university statistics. Ibadan: Oyo State Government Printing Press, 2013.
2. Biorck D, Thomasson T. Factors that affect the strategic choice of sales channels: A study of the Swedish clothing retail industry, 2014. Retrieved on 12/6/2020 from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7d91/9bb625158b7899f66fbf8c572777039c05d2.pdf
3. Dilshad U. Channel management practices and research, 2014. Retrieved on 25/5/2020 from https://prezi.com/i3j1nmhgfyzt/channel-relationship-and-research.
4. Gabrielsson M, Kirpalani VH, Luostarinen R. Multiple channel strategies in the European personal computer industry. Journal of International Marketing. 2002; 10(3):73-95.
5. Gyau A, Spiller A, Wocken C. Price or relational behaviours? Supplier relationship management in the German dairy industry. British Food Journal. 2011; 113(7):838-852.
6. Homburg C, Grozdanovic M, Klarmann M. Responsiveness to customers and competitors: The role of affective and cognitive organisational systems. Journal of Marketing. 2007; 71(3):18-38.
7. Irani HR, Shahanaghi K, Jandaghi G. Develop a framework for selection of intermediary in marketing channel. Iranian Journal of Management Science. 2011; 4(1):25-42.
8. Kim MN. Social exchange theory, 2016. Retrieved on 29/3/2018 from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect115
9. Kotler P, Armstrong G. Principles of marketing (11th Edition). New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited, 2006.
10. Kotler P, Keller KL. Marketing management (12th Edition). Prijevod, MATE, Zagreb: Prentice-Hall, 2008.
11. Kotler P, Keller KL. Marketing management (13th Edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2009.
12. Kotler P, Wong V, Saunders J, Armstrong G. Principles of marketing, Prijevod, MATE, Zagreb: Prentice-Hall, 2006.
13. Lages C, Lages CR, Lages LF. The RELQUAL scale: A measure of relationship quality in export market ventures. Journal of Business Research. 2005; 58(8):1040-1048.
14. Lagos Business School. Industry report, 2016. Retrieved from www.lbs.edu.ng/sites/faculty_research/.../Industry%20Report_MBA%2013.pdf. (22/7/2020.)
15. Lambe CJ, Wittmann CM, Spekman RE. Social exchange theory on business-to-business relational exchanges. Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing. 2001; 8(3):1-37.
16. Kotler P, Armstrong Y. Principles of marketing. India: Prentice-Hall, 2004.
17. Lee JWC, Mohamad O, Ramayah T. Outsourcing: Is the social exchange theory still relevant in developing countries? Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing. 2010; 4(4):316-345.
18. Lehmann DR. Metrics for making marketing matter. Journal of Marketing. 2004; 68:73-75.

19. Lusch RF, Brown JR. Interdependency, contracting, and relational behaviour in marketing channels. Journal of Marketing. 1996; 60:19-38.
20. Mehta J. Channel relationship, 2009. Retrieved on 23/5/2017 from https://www.slideshare.net/j4g2r/channel-relationship-presentation.
21. Mendoca PSM, Moreira LGG, De Camargo JA, El-Faro O. Relationship analysis of B2B channels: A case study on channel relationship in Brazilian agribusiness companies. African Journal of Business Management. 2014; 8(21):1029-1042.
22. Mohr JJ, Fisher RJ, Nevin JR. Collaborative communication in inter-firm relationships: Moderating effects of integration and control. Journal of Marketing. 1996; 60:103-115.
23. Morant O. Distribution channel, 2011. Retrieved on 27/7/2020 from https://oscarmorant2011.wordpress.com/2011/06/02/distribution-channel/
24. Mulky AG. Distribution challenges and workable solutions. IIMB Management Review. 2013; 25:179-195.
25. Omoluabi ET. Contingency approach in Nigeria management system. Information and Knowledge Management. 2016; 6(7):1-7
26. Organ DW. The Motivational basis of organisational citizenship behaviour. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), Research in organizational behaviour. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1990; 12:43-72.
27. Ostrow R. The fair child dictionary of retailing (2nd Edition). New York: Fairchild Books, Inc., 2009.
28. Petersen T. The economics of organisation: The principal-agent relationship. Acta Sociologica. 1993; 36:277-293
29. Rosenbloom B. Multi-channel strategy in business-to-business markets: Prospects and problems. Industrial Marketing Management. 2007; 36:4-9.
30. Russo I. Understanding the value drivers for intermediaries: An exploratory study in the heating industry. Contemporary Management Research. 2013; 9(1):67-72.
31. Saremi H, Zadeh SMM. Management of distribution channels. Indian Journal of Science and Research. 2014; 5(3):452-456.
32. Tepper BJ, Taylor EC. Relationships among supervisors' and subordinates procedural justice perceptions and organisational citizenship behaviours. Academy of Management Journal. 2003; 46:97-105.
33. Terpend R, Krause DR. Competition or cooperation? Promoting supplier performance with incentives under varying conditions of dependence. Journal of Supply Chain Management, 51(4), 29-53.
34. Tian Y. Building a new distribution channel for the highland beef from vihantamaki eco-far. Savonia University of Applied Sciences, 2011, 1-54.
35. Tolba AH. The impact of distribution intensity on brand preference and brand loyalty. International Journal of Marketing Studies. 2011; 3(3):56-66.
36. Unilever Nigeria. Annual Reports and Accounts, 2010-2015.
37. Williamson O. The theory of the firm as governance structure: From choice of contract. Journal of Economic Perspectives. 2002; 16(3):171-195.
38. Wilson DT. An integrated model of buyer– seller relationships. Journal of Academy of Marketing Science. 1995; 23(4):335-345
39. Yang Z, Jia F, Cai S. The performance implications of perceptual differences of dependence in marketing channels. Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics. 2014; 26(3):344-364.
40. Zhang Y, Epley N. Self-centered social exchange: Differential use of costs versus benefits in prosocial reciprocity. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 2009; 97:796-810.