

## **Impacts of Supply Chain Management Practices on Competitive Advantage: A Case of Addis Dallas Food complex**

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### **ABSTRACTS**

*This study sought to assess the impacts of supply chain management practices on competitive advantage in the Addis Dallas food complex. A descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. The population of interest comprised of all suppliers, employees, customers, retailers were involved and multistage sampling was employed and 126sample size was used. A semi-structured questionnaire and interview was used to collect primary data where the respondents were accessed through an interview. Data was collected and analyzed using SPSS package, Descriptive statics, inferential statics and correlation to describe and analyze the extent of supply chain management practice and its impacts on competitive advantage. The study revealed supply chain management practice (strategic partnership, supply chain information, customer relationships) positively affects the company's competitive advantage. The study also indicates that the company's strategic partnership with the suppliers was poor in improving company's competitive advantage. The study recommends that the management of the Addis Dallas food complex should strength habits of managing their supply chains and actors better as this has a direct influence on competitive advantage.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Supply chain management, competitive advantage, Addis-Dallas food complex*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Supply chain management has become an important focus of competitive advantage and best strategies to enhance performance for business organization. The understanding and practicing of supply chain management (SCM) has become an indispensable prerequisite for staying competitive in the global rivalry and for enhancing organizational performance. The management of supply chain study emphasizes how to maximize the overall value of the firm by better using and deployment of resources across the whole of the firm. A supply chain is the set of values adding activities connecting the enterprise's suppliers and its customers. The principle of supply chain activity is receiving input from firm's suppliers – add value – deliver to customers (Levi at al (2004). Effective supply chain management is important to build and sustain competitive advantage in product and services of the firms. Gunasekaran and Ngai, (2004); Sufian (2010) stated that the performance of supply chain was influenced by managing and integrating key element of information into their supply chain. According to Sufian (2010) to achieve a competitive advantage and better performance, supply chain management strategy need support the business strategy.

Sahay and Mohan (2003) proposed that Supply chain management practices be measured in four dimensions, and they are; alignment between supply chain strategies with business strategies, supply chain integration, partnerships, and information technologies. Supply chain management practices as a greed vision and goals, information sharing, risks and awards sharing, cooperation, integration of process, long term relationship, and agreed supply chain leadership. Burgess *et al* (2006) stated that supply chain management practices should include leadership, intra-organizational relationships, inter-organizational relationship, logistics, process improvement orientation, business result s and outcome and IT. Chong *et al* (2009) studied IT collaboration tools and supplier relationships in their study on supply chain practices.

As Hoover et al (2001) stated having competitive products and the right supply chain for the average customer is not enough in the current business environment. The supply chain has to be right for the customer as well. Customer relationships combining with a firm's operation and customers' operation, makes up a demand – supply chain. Supply chain relationships play an important role in achieving the firm's goals. The coordination

and integration of activities with suppliers and understanding of customer's needs results in greater benefits for companies.

According to Fraza (2000), supply chain management is directly related to relationship management, which includes suppliers and customers. Strategic supplier partnerships and customer relationships are main components in the supply chain management practices.

One of the primary challenges to successful to integration of the SC is securing a reliable internal operation capability. An organization's internal operation is the critical cornerstone in creating superior supply chain performance before embarking on external coordination. To gain competitive advantage over rapid change, internal processes must be flexible in responding to market changes. With SCM a product is pulled through the plant based on customer needs. This requires the flexibility of frequent changes to accommodate mass customization and thus improve customer responsiveness (Lambert and Cooper, 2002). So, this research conceptualizes and develops three dimensions of SCM practice (strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship, level of information sharing, and competitive advantage of Addis Dallas food complex company.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Supply Chain Management Practices of agro-processing industries**

SCM practices are viewed from a variety of different perspectives and multi-dimensional concept. Li *et al* (2005) defined SCM practices as the set of activities undertaken in an organization to promote effective management of its supply chain. Kotzab and Schnedlit (1999) defined SCM practices as a special form of strategic partnership between retailers and suppliers. Tan (2002) also recommended that SCM practices include the flow of materials and information and postponement strategy and mass customization. Another concept which has gained attention and extended the supply chain management practices mentioned above is demand chain management (DCM). DCM is defined by Selen and Soliman (2002) as a " set of practices aimed at managing and coordinating the whole demand chain, starting from the end customer needs and links customer and suppliers together into a tightly integrated networks ( Frohlick and Westbrook, 2002). In reviewing and consolidating the literature mentioned, six dimension of supply chain practices emerge, namely strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship, information sharing, Information technology, training and internal operations (Petrovic-Lazarevic, 2007, Kohet *et al* 2007, Li *et al* 2005, Perry and Sohal, 2002) . Although the dimensions included in this capture the major aspects of SCM practices, they cannot be considered as complete. Other factors identified in the literature (supply chain leadership, geographical proximity and supply chain benchmarking) are not included in this research due to the length of survey, and concerns regarding the parsimony of measurement instrument (Li *et al*, 2006). A strategic supplier partnership is defined as a long – term relationship between the organization and its supplier (Li *et al*, 2005). Through strategic supplier partnerships, organizations can work closely with suppliers who can share responsibility for the success of the products (Li *et al*, 2005). Such strategic supplier partnerships should enable successful SCM. Customer relationship management (CRM) is an important component of SCM (Tan *et al*, 1999) and involves building and maintaining long term relationships with customers (Li *et al*, 2005). Stalk and Hout (1990) stated that maintaining a good customer relationship will enable organizations to be more responsive to customer's needs, thus creating greater customer loyalty, repeat purchase, and willingness to pay premium prices for higher quality products. Customer loyalty and customer satisfaction are the main goal of SCM. A successful sharing of useful information between the supply chain partners can result in a reduction of inventory and manufacturing cost, better understanding of customer needs and faster response to market changes (Petrovic-Lazarevic., 2007) .The primary goal of IT in the supply chain is to link the point of production seamlessly with the point of delivery or purchase. Clear communications and quick responses to those communications, are key elements of successful SCM. Competitive advantage is the extent to which an organization is able to create a defensible position over its competitors. It comprises capabilities that allow an organization to differentiate itself from its competitors and is an outcome of critical management decisions. The empirical literature has been quite consistent in identifying cost, quality, delivery, and flexibility as important competitive capabilities (Lalonde 1998).

2.2 Conceptual Frameworks

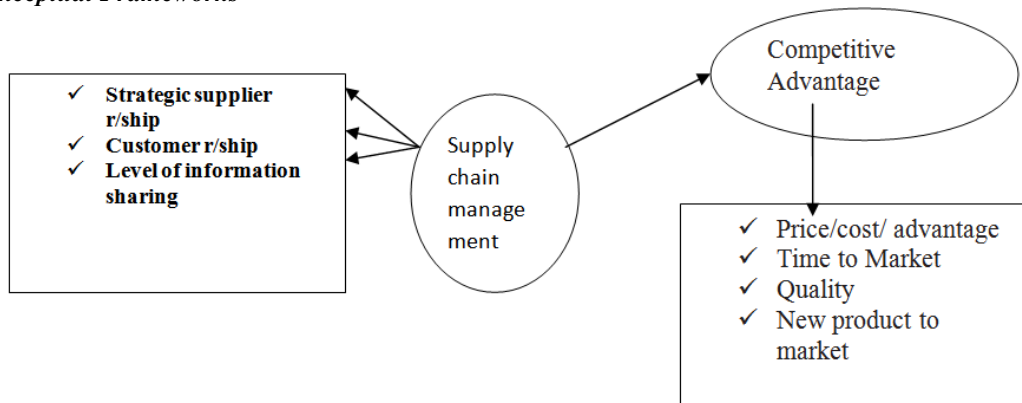


Fig1: conceptual framework from literature review

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study was to assess the impact of supply chain management practice on competitive position of Addis Dallas food complex.

3.1 Specific objectives

- To see the practices of Supply Chain Management practice of Addis Dallas food complex organization
- To test the impact of supply chain management practice on competitive position of the organization

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this research descriptive survey research method was used as the researchers wants to identify and explore the correlation among the identified variables with the firms’ competitive position. In this methodology, the researcher’s poses questions to willing participants, summarized and analyzed them and finally inference is made for the population form the drawn samples (Leedy and Ormarod, 2010). In order to generate relevant data for the study, the researcher used both primary and secondary data sources. These data were collected through written questionnaire and semi-structure interview from the targeted respondents of this study.

It is not feasible to collect data for the entire statistical population, a sample, which is a representative of the population, was drawn from the registered suppliers, customers, wholesalers, retailers, and permanent employees of Addis Dallas food complex. These participants was proportionally selected, ranging from related department employees to senior management. Accordingly, from the target population, this study was target to registered suppliers (45), customers (72) factory employees (42), registered distributors (10) and registered retailers (14). The researchers were used multistage sapling techniques. 1<sup>st</sup> purposive sampling to select premium suppliers and customers, 2<sup>nd</sup> strata (supplier, customer, employee and distributors/retailers) and 3<sup>rd</sup> simple random sampling techniques to undertake this study and to participate all actors equally. Sample size was statistically drawn:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

N= Size of total population ----182, n= is the desired Sample size =?

e= is the estimated standard error which is 5% for 95% confidence level (the limit of tolerable error 5%), n= 182/1+182(0.05)<sup>2</sup> = 126, proportionally this was:

Table 2.1: strata

Sn.	Strata	Total size	Proportion
1	Supplier	54	35
2	Customer	61	41
3	Employee	42	32
4	Distributor and retailers	27	18
	Total	182	126

**IV. ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**4.1 Descriptive Analysis**

Table 4.1 Response of Respondents

	Description	Respondents
1	Sample	126
2	Questionnaire Distributed	124
3	Questionnaire Returned	122
4	Response rate	96.8%
5	Usable response	122

Source: Field Survey, 2019/20

Response rate is the total number of respondents who participated in the study and out of the total questionnaires distributed i.e.124, out of which 122 were participated in the survey. The percentage of response rate was 96.8%. According to Saunders et al., (2009) a response rate above 60% is good, and above 70% is very good.

**Table 4.2:** Supplier partnership, customer relationship, level of information sharing and competitive advantage

Suppliers partnership	Mean	Std. Deviation
The level of supply chain management practices are poor	3.92	0.311
There are no well-established trust, problem sharing solving mechanism and skills transfer among partners	3.76	0.344
Critical item suppliers are not considered as strong strategic partners and key team member of the whole supply chain.	3.85	0.097
Key suppliers are not aligned with planning issues of the organization.	4.03	0.377
No Clear guidelines and procedures used for monitoring alliances	3.82	0.443
Doesn't Fills customer orders as accurately and promptly as required	3.91	0.303
More and better products information are not provided to customers	3.49	0.328
Technical assistance and trainings are not offered to various users of the products.	3.63	0.458
<b>Customers relationship</b>		
The factory is not Starts customer relationships from the requirement of the customer needs and accordingly plan, design and develop products and services.	3.85	0.097
Not Obtains feedback from customers and modify products and services to meet the requirement	3.92	0.311
Not Strives and launches new products and services to the customers	2.03	0.077
Fills customer orders as accurately and promptly as required	3.91	0.3103
More and better products information are provided to customers	3.49	0.480
<b>level of Information sharing</b>		
No Invests in IT to connect the people both within the company as well as across the supply chain.	4.05	0.937
People are not willing to use and share information within and across the supply chain.	4.24	0.967
Online connections (EDI, internets etc.) are not widely used within as well as across supply chain members	4.20	0.965
Information regarding monitoring of orders, materials, schedules, inventories are not electronic	4.25	0.979
Online information about customers are not tracked	4.26	0.098
Not Uses online systems to achieve operating efficiency	3.88	0.410
<b>Competitive advantage</b>		

An organization is capable of competing against major competitors based on low price.	3.51	.418
An organization able is not compete based on quality.	4.51	.502
An organization offer products that are not highly reliable.	3.50	.502
An organization is not capable of providing on time, the type and volume of product required by customer(s).	4.50	.502
An organization is capable of introducing new products faster than major competitors.	3.72	.502

Source: own survey 2019/20

Results of the finding suggests that most of the respondent’s reported that their respective company has poor supply chain management practice as an integral part of suppliers partnership to a very large extent as shown by a mean score of 3.92, respondents also reported that there is no well-established trust, problem solving mechanism and skills transfer among partners, Critical item suppliers are not considered as strong strategic partners and key team member of the whole supply chain, Key suppliers are not aligned with planning issues of the organization, No Clear guidelines and procedures used for monitoring alliances, Doesn’t Fills customer orders as accurately and promptly as required, More and better products information are not provided to customers, Technical assistance and trainings are not offered to various users of the products, that strategic partnership were not strong to the expected level in their respective companies as shown by a mean score of 3.76, 3.85,4.03,3.82,3.91,3.49,and 3.63 respectively. This indicates that strategic partnership with the suppliers was poor in improving company’s competitive advantage.

The table 4.2 shows that how Customer relationship affects the competitive advantage of the firms by communicating with, development and implementation of different programs to secure the best level of satisfaction of the customers. As it was shown the company Strives and launches new products and services to the customers as suggested by the respondents who agreed to this, this was shown by the mean score of 2.03, but the factory is not Starts customer relationships from the requirement of the customer needs and accordingly plan, design and develop products and services, not Obtains feedback from customers and modify products and services to meet the requirement, no fill customer orders as accurately and promptly as required, and no more and better products information are provided to customers to manage customers were strategic partner to their business as it was shown by the mean score of 3.85, 3.92, 3.91, and 3.49 respectively.

This indicates the company strives only to launch new products to the customers but there were poor customer relationship management.

The results of the table 4.2 indicates that to what extent the company uses technology to exchange information with business actors at least cost. As it was shown online information about customers were not tracked at point of sale as shown by mean score of 4.26, low Investments in IT to connect the people both within the company as well as across the supply chain, some actors are not willing to use and share information within and across the supply chain, Online connections (EDI, internets etc.) are not widely used within as well as across supply chain members, Information regarding monitoring of orders, materials, schedules, inventories are not electronic, Not Uses online systems to achieve operating efficiency to enable people, functions, and organizations to work together as a team along the supply chain as it was shown by the mean score of 4.05, 4.24, 4.20, 4.25, and 3.88 respectively.

This implies that there were poor technology adoption to secure competitive advantage in coordination within and across organization activities, but usage of appropriate information technology would improve supply chain responsiveness, save ordering time, and enable to achieve efficiency.

The table 4.2 reals that how an organization is able to create a defensible position over its competitors, as it was shown above an organization is not able to compete based on quality and cannot provide products on time, needed volume, type of products needed by the customers, provides products not highly reliable as shown by mean score of 4.51 4.5, and 3.5 respectively, but an organization competes against major competitors by low price and capable of introducing new products faster than new competitors as it was shown by mean score of 3.51 and 3.72 respectively. This indicates that poor level of supply chain management practice affects competitive advantage of the organizations in terms of product quality, on time delivery, needed volume of products and products reliability. As today’s competition is moving from “among organizations” to “between supply chains”, more and more organizations are increasingly adopting SCM practice in the hope of reducing supply chain costs and securing competitive advantage. The findings of this research supportthe view that SCM practices can have discernibleimpact on competitive advantage.

**4.2 Correlation Analysis**

Table 4.4 shows the correlation between independent variables (supplier strategic partnership, customer relationship, and level of information sharing) and dependent variables (competitive advantage of the firm) were



positive. Strategic supplier partnership had a correlation of .747 \*\*, p<0.01 with Competitive advantage, customer relationship had a correlation of .806 \*\*, p<0.01 with competitive advantage, level of information sharing average had a correlation of .480 \*\*, p<0.01 with a competitive advantage. Which mean that the respondents are more likely to evaluate strategic supplier partnership, Customer relationship and level of information sharing were positively affects the competitive advantage of the firm.

From this strategic partnership factors has strongest correlation with competitive advantage as shown by statics results of 0.743. customer relationship factors has medium correlation with competitive advantage as it was shown by statically result of 0.606 and level of information sharing has a weak correlation with competitive advantage as it was shown by statics result of 0.480.

**Table 4.3: The correlation between independent and dependent variables**

		Competitive advantage	Strategic Partnership average	customer relationship average	level of information sharing average
Competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	1	.747**	.606**	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	122	122	122	122
Strategic Partnership average	Pearson Correlation	.747**	1	.822**	.660**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	122	122	122	122
customer relationship average	Pearson Correlation	.906**	.822**	1	.653**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	122	122	122	122
level of information sharing average	Pearson Correlation	.480**	.660**	.653**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	122	122	122	122

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 4.3 Inferential Statistics

In this study a multiple linear regression model was implemented to identify the relationship between the three independent variables (level of information sharing average, customer relationship average, Strategic supplier Partnership average) and the dependent variable which is the competitive advantage of the firm. The researchers applied the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions for the study.

**Table 4.4: Modell summary and coefficients of variables**

Model summary	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate		Durban-Witson
		.920	.846	.842	.1111	
Coefficients	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	Variables	B	Std. Error	B(Beta)		
	Constant	1.048	0.54		19.401	000
	Strategic partnership factors (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.730	0.023	0.087	1.315	000
	Customer relationship factors (X <sub>2</sub> )	.615	0.021	0.975	14.824	0.000
Level of information sharing (X <sub>3</sub> )	0.704	0.017	0.214	-4.297	0.000	

The R column represents the value of R, the multiple correlation coefficient. R is considered to be one measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable; competitive advantage. A value of 0.920, in this case, indicates a good level of prediction. The 'R square' column represents the R<sup>2</sup> (also called the coefficient of determination), which is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables (technically, it is the proportion of variation accounted for by the regression model above and beyond the mean model). In this case a value 0.842 means that the model independent variables explain 84.2 % of the variability of the dependent variable, competitive advantage while the remaining 15.8% of the variation of the dependent variable was explained by other factors which were not included in the model.

In Table 4.4 above values under B column indicates that the value of constant term and the estimated coefficients of independent variables in the multiple regression model that used as a measurement of competitive advantage.

There were two hypothesis in this research study. The null-hypothesis was stated as the Supply chain management practice do not affect the competitive advantage of Addis Dallas food complex and it was tested at a 5% level of significance. Accordingly, the result revealed that Supply chain management practice do play a significant role in fostering the competitive advantage as the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis which stated the Supply chain management practice do affect the competitive advantage was accepted as illustrated in Table 4.4 . The unstandardized coefficients B column, indicated that the estimate of coefficients of the independent variables in the multiple regression equation as indicated below in the following form.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

$$\text{Competitive advantage (Y)} = 1.048 + .0730 (\text{strategic partnership-}X_1) + 0.615 (\text{customer relationship-}X_2) + 0.704 (\text{level of information sharing-}X_3)$$

The multiple regression equation in this study could be summarized in the following equation form.

$$Y = 1.048 + 0.730X_1 + 0.615X_2 + 0.704X_3$$

Table 4.4 above further shows that, all the explanatory variables included in the above regression equation in this study can significantly explain at 95% confidence level to the variation on the dependent variable. The standardized beta coefficient column shows the contribution that an individual variable makes to the model. In this study the first and second highest influence on the competitive advantage were by strategic partnership and level of information sharing factors, with *Beta* value of 0.730, and 0.704, respectively. On the contrary, customer relationship factors with beta value of 0.615 was the lowest predictor of the competitive advantage.

#### 4.3.1 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The F-ratio in the ANOVA table 4.5 tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable.

**Table 4.3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.997	3	2.666	215.736	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1.458	118	.012		
	Total	9.455	121			

As illustrated in Table 4.5, there regression model shows all the independent variables explains the variability in the dependent variables significantly at  $\alpha = 0.01$  as p-value was 0.000. The regression analysis also yields an F-statistic where if the calculated F-value is less than the critical or tabled F-value, the prediction will be accepted. In this study, the significance value is .0001 which is less than 0.5 thus the model is statistically significant in predicting supplier strategic partnership, customer relationship, supply chain collaborations and coordination mechanisms, level of information sharing and competitive advantage.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicates that supply chain management practice (strategic partnership, supply chain information, customer relationships) affects the companies' competitive advantage. The standardized beta coefficient shows the contribution that an individual variable makes to the model. In this study the first and second highest influence on the competitive advantage were by strategic partnership and level of information sharing factors. There were poor technology adoption to secure competitive advantage in coordination within and across organization activities, but usage of appropriate information technology would improve supply chain responsiveness, save ordering time, and enable to achieve efficiency. The results of this study also conclude that poor level of supply chain management practice affects competitive advantage of the organizations in terms of product quality, on time delivery, needed volume of products and products reliability.

#### 5.1 Recommendations of the Study

From the results of this study the researchers recommends that the management of the Addis Dallas food complex should keep up establishing ways to manage their supply chains better as this has a direct influence on competitive advantage. The study recommends that information communication technology should be fully developed and utilized by the firms. Firms should formulate policy framework and guidelines, which will facilitate the linkages of the joint SCM variables to ensure efficient and effective utilization of resources within supply chain. The company should create an electronic system to receive suggestions and complaints from customers and improve the quality of products and services and increase reliability.

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**Conflict of interest:** None

**Author's contribution:** The researchers devotes all their effort to come with this result.

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