

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-59141

Title: THIRD-PARTY LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN NIGERIAN SUPERSTORES

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity		✓		
Significance		✓		

Reviewer's ID: JPR-002

Detailed Reviewer's Report

- Originality and relevance:**

The manuscript addresses a relevant and contemporary issue by examining the role of third-party logistics (3PL) in improving operational efficiency in Nigerian superstores, using Shoprite Ilorin as the case context. The focus on supplier relationship management, ERP optimization, and customer relationship management provides a useful structure for examining logistics performance. The study also identifies a contextual research gap concerning 3PL applications in Nigerian retail environments.

- Alignment of objectives, questions and hypotheses:**

The research questions, objectives, and hypotheses are generally aligned around SRM, ERP optimization, and CRM. However, the manuscript uses both “operational efficiency” and “supply chain performance” as outcome concepts. The authors should clearly define these constructs and explain whether they are being treated as equivalent, related, or distinct variables. This clarification would improve the internal consistency of the study.

- Conceptual framework:**

The conceptual framework identifies supplier relationship management, ERP optimization, and CRM as major components associated with supply chain performance. However, the framework requires clearer presentation of the direction and nature of relationships among the variables. In particular, the labels such as “increase revenue” and “increase cost savings” should be conceptually connected to

REVIEWER'S REPORT

measurable dimensions of operational efficiency. A revised and more clearly structured framework would strengthen the theoretical presentation.

- **Theoretical foundation:**

The discussion of Resource-Based View, Core Competency Theory, and Transaction Cost Economics provides a reasonable theoretical background. The eventual selection of Transaction Cost Economics is explained in relation to outsourcing and cost considerations. Nevertheless, the manuscript should establish a stronger explicit connection between TCE constructs and the three independent variables used in the empirical analysis. This would make the theoretical foundation more directly relevant to the hypotheses.

- **Methodological clarity:**

The study uses a descriptive research design with a case-study approach and a population of 200, from which 163 respondents were purposively selected. The inclusion of store employees, logistics personnel, finance/procurement staff, customer-service personnel, and customers provides multiple perspectives. However, the manuscript should provide greater detail regarding the questionnaire structure, measurement scales, number of items for each construct, and criteria used to establish reliability.

- **Sample and response information:**

The manuscript states that 163 questionnaires were distributed and 161 were returned, while two were incomplete. This should be reported consistently throughout the methodology and findings sections. The authors should also provide the final valid response rate and explain whether the 161 returned questionnaires or a smaller valid sample was used for the statistical analysis.

- **Statistical analysis requires strengthening:**

The study states that t-tests were used to test relationships between the 3PL variables and supply chain performance. However, the presentation of the statistical analysis needs greater methodological justification. The reported degrees of freedom of **298** do not appear to correspond directly to the stated sample of 161 respondents, and the manuscript reports different critical t-values in the tables and interpretations. The authors should carefully recheck the calculations, degrees of freedom, critical values, and decision rules and provide the exact statistical procedure used.

- **Interpretation of results:**

The results report statistically significant relationships for SRM, ERP optimization, and CRM. However, the analysis would be more informative if the authors reported complete statistical information, including the test statistic, degrees of freedom, p-value, effect size where appropriate,

REVIEWER'S REPORT

and confidence interval. This would allow readers to assess not only statistical significance but also the magnitude and practical relevance of the findings.

- **Literature and references:**

The literature review covers relevant areas including 3PL, supplier relationships, CRM, ERP, operational efficiency, and outsourcing. However, the empirical review would benefit from stronger synthesis rather than primarily presenting individual studies sequentially. The authors should explicitly compare previous findings, identify areas of agreement or disagreement, and explain more precisely how the present study advances existing knowledge. The reference list and in-text citations should also be carefully checked for consistency and completeness.

- **Overall presentation and contribution:**

The manuscript addresses a practically relevant logistics issue and provides useful case-based evidence concerning 3PL practices in the Nigerian retail sector. The conclusion and recommendations are broadly consistent with the reported findings. However, before publication, the manuscript would benefit from substantial revision of the statistical methodology, clarification of the dependent-variable terminology, strengthening of the conceptual/theoretical linkage, improvement of measurement and reliability reporting, and careful language/editing throughout the manuscript. The study has potential to contribute to research on retail logistics and 3PL integration after these issues are addressed.