SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AMONG KENYAN TEXTILE FIRMS: A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL UNCERTAINTY

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ABSTRACT

The study tested whether supply chain management had a significant effect on the performance of textile firms in Kenya, and whether this relationship was mediated by government support. The study also examined whether the indirect relationship between supply chain management and performance of textile firms by government support was moderated by environmental uncertainty. A sample of 309 employees of textile and apparel firms located in Nairobi City County was used to test the model. The study confirmed that supply chain management was a positive and significant predictor of performance of textile firms and that this relationship was mediated by government support. In addition, the study established that environmental uncertainty moderated the indirect relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance via government support. Findings from the study opened a new frontier through which performance of textile firms in Kenya can be approached, by highlighting factors that need to be brought on board.

KEYWORDS

Supply chain management, organizational performance, government support, environmental uncertainty

1. INTRODUCTION

The manufacturing sector that encompasses manufacture of furniture fabricated metal products, plastic products, wearing apparels and textiles among others; remains a critical driver to the sustenance of economic growth and development and, in creating jobs and alleviating poverty in Kenya. A substantial body of knowledge has documented the importance of the manufacturing sector in national economies across the world (Salazar – Xirinachs, Nubler & Kozul-wright, 2014; Signe, 2018; United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2017). The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM, 2018) observes that, the contribution of the manufacturing sector to the economy in Kenya has reportedly stagnated at 10% of the gross domestic product (GDP). The Big4 Agenda which, aims at increasing the manufacturing sector’s GDP contribution to 15% by the year 2022 has raised renewed interest in the sector. One area that has been viewed with renewed optimism is the textile and apparel sector. It is argued that the textile and apparel sector holds the potential of alleviating unemployment among the youth (KAM, 2018). It has indeed been documented that manufacturers under the export processing zone (EPZ) banner employ 21,000 people formally and 30,000 people informally (KAM, 2018).
Despite the importance of the textile and apparel industry to Kenya’s economic growth, the industry has continued to face challenges which border on lack of government support and environmental uncertainty (Ngulu, 2014). A report on the Kenyan Textile and Fashion Industry by the Africa Cotton and Textile Industry Federation (ACTIF, 2017) identifies lack of policy coherence and institutional alignment, weak business environment, lack of market readiness, illicit imports and negative impact of second hand clothing, and lack of a clear national policy on textile and apparel as among the major challenges that the textile and apparel industry in Kenya has to contend with. Such challenges no doubt call upon the need to examine the textile value chain and its supply chain management approach.

Indeed, a number of studies have been conducted to explore the diverse supply chain practices that can be employed in the manufacturing value chain. In this regard, practices such as use of informational technology (Han, Wang & Naim, 2017; Jin et al., 2014; Setia & Patel, 2013; Queseda, Gazo & Sanchez, 2012); information sharing (Ali et al., 2017; Courtin, 2013); use of information systems (Mulwa, 2015); and customer supplier relations (Kumar, Singh & Shankar, 2015; Queseda et al., 2012; Zekic & Samarzija, 2017) have been identified.

2. Concept of Supply Chain Management and Organizational Performance

Competitive advantage remains a key focus among organizations yearning to enhance their performance relative to their competitors. A plethora of studies point to the desire to understand how to sustain competitive advantage among competing organizations (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Liao & Hu, 2007). It is argued that this desire among organizations informs strategic management decisions (Flint & Van Fleet, 2005; King, 2007). In such a scenario of sustaining competitive advantage, Jain, Dangayach, Agarwal and Banerjee (2010) contend that supply chain management takes on a more central role that requires keen interest. In essence, the argument then is that processes under the supply chain possess the key to unlock organization’s competitive ability.

Organizational performance is viewed from financial perspective outcome and operational efficiency of a firm. The performance of the entire upstream and downstream plays a significant role in decision making in regard to the value chain. (Kumar & Kushwaha, 2018) Most previous studies relating supply chain practices to organizational performance have concentrated mainly on individual practices such as supply chain information systems and organizational performance (Arende, 2015; Gilaninia et al., 2011; Kashani & Baharmast, 2017; Kibera & Orwa, 2016; Mbaka, 2017; Modgil & Sharma, 2017; Mundia, Langat & Lelegwe, 2015); inventory management and organizational performance (Elsayed & Wahba, 2016; Kwadwo, 2015; Mogere, Oloko & Okibo, 2013; Mugarura, 2013; Onchoke & Wanyoike, 2016); Buyer-Supplier relationship and organizational performance (Azeem & Ahmed, 2015; Gumboh & Gichira, 2015; Ideet & Wanyoike, 2014; Ullah & Inayat, 2012; Vieira et al., 2013; Wachiuri, Waiganjo & Oballah, 2015); transport management and organizational performance (Akdogana & Durak, 2016; Gitahi & Ogollah, 2014; Liberatore & Miller, 2016; Muchori, 2015; Mukolwe & Wanyoike, 2015; Mwangangi, 2016; Ndubi, Iravo & Ochiri, 2016) and warehouse management and organizational performance (Karimi & Namusonge, 2014; Mukolwe & Wanyoike 2015; Saifudin, 2013; Wambua et al., 2015).

The direct link between supply chain management as a single construct measured through the various practices, and organizational performance might particularly be important to examine since the cumulative effect of each practice is expected to complement the effects of others and improve organizational performance (D’Amours, Ronnqvist & Weintraub, 2008). Kenya has a
rich textile and apparel value chain with inputs such as cotton fibre locally sourced or imported; yarn spinning; wearing and knitting; dyeing and finishing; and design and sewing (ACTIF, 2013). This then made it necessary to consider the supply chain practices under one construct known as supply chain management.

2.1 Government Support as a mediator

Quesada et al. (2012) identify government support, as an important facet that a company can enjoy when sourcing for raw materials or products and, when using domestic materials aimed at improved organizational performance. Elzarka et al. (2011) contend that the government is well positioned to encourage logistic competency by making a series of reforms targeting the sector. In this way, the sector becomes competitive in the international market. We posit that government support measured through crafting of regulations, norms, policies and provision of sector advice is a variable that has the potential to mediate the relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance in the context of textile firms.

2.2 Environmental Uncertainty as a Moderator

Although supply chain management has the capability to predict organizational performance through government support, not all textile and apparel firms are likely to enjoy improved performance on this basis. Various factors within the firm’s context may influence the indirect relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance via government support. One variable that could potentially moderate such a relationship is environmental uncertainty. According to Dwivedi and Butcher (2009), the product chain occasionally experiences environmental issues which amount to unexpected changes in suppliers, customers, technology and competitors. In the event that this does happen, Paulraj and Chen (2007a) argue that, the realization of strategic supply management plans may be curtailed. We therefore postulate that environmental uncertainty, measured in terms of changes exhibited in customers, suppliers, competitors and technology moderates the indirect relationship between supply chain management and the performance of textile firms in Kenya.

3. THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study sought to (1) establish the direct relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance; (2) Investigate whether government support mediates the relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance; and (3) explore whether environmental uncertainty moderates the indirect relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance via government support. Consequently, the following hypotheses were postulated.

**Hypothesis 1:** Organizational performance is independent of supply chain management.

**Hypothesis 2:** Government support does not mediate the relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance.

**Hypothesis 3:** Environmental uncertainty does not moderate the indirect relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance via government support.

4. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Supply chain management is approached from two dominant schools of thought, the microeconomics and the strategic management schools. Insight into the rather novel field of
supply chain management is therefore believed to benefit greatly from the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory and the Transactions Cost Economics (TCE) theory (Abushaikha, 2014). It is important to note here that RBV is mainly used in strategic management. However, on the basis of assertions by Barralt et al. (2011) that application of theories used in other disciplines is necessary for innovative insights into emerging fields, there is no denying its potential role as the lens to examine the concept of supply chain management. Moreover, it is important to consider the complementary role of the TCE in explaining decisions such as those taken in opting to outsource.

The desire to underpin supply chain management on transaction cost economics theory is often informed by the key function the supply chain management plays to reduce operational costs and hence achieve competitive ability. The argument then as it is now was to cut down costs associated with transactions, by adopting hierarchical governance. Geyskens et al. (2006) argue that Hierarchical governance which involves intra-firm transactions has the edge over market governance that uses the traditional supply and demand approaches. Uncertainty in terms of business environment and supply chain behaviour gives credence to the need to underpin SCM on the TCE theoretical framework. The turbulent nature of the business environment in contemporary society is such that it becomes difficult to anticipate the direction the supply chain may take (Cousins, 2005; Wong et al, 2011). Williamson (1979 as cited in Abushaikha, 2014) argues that uncertainty in the case of supply chain management which may be in terms of technology and volume can lead to increased costs due to re-organizing the supply chain.

5. Methodology

The study targeted 1900 employees drawn from textile and apparel firms located in Nairobi City County (ACTIF, 2017). From a stratified sample of 320 employees (Stratified across the finance, transport and logistics, production / operations; and procurement/stores departments), 309 employees who were largely male (61.2%), in possession of either a bachelors degree (46.9%) or diploma (33%) and; most of who had an experience of 1-5 years working in the textile industry (54.0%), participated in the study.

Data were initially cleaned for missing values and outliers. The PROCESS Macro (Model 4) in SPSS (Hayes, 2013) was employed to examine whether government support mediated the relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance. The PROCESS Macro (Model 58 see Fig 1) was used to examine the moderated mediation in which environmental uncertainty was conceptualized as the moderating variable to the indirect relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance.

Fig. 1: Conceptualized Moderated Mediation Model
6. RESULTS

6.1 Preliminary Analyses

Missing values were assessed using the MCAR technique. Cases having missing values in the excess of 5% were deemed serious and deleted from further analyses. Otherwise they were replaced using mean substitution (Baraldi & Enders, 2010). The percentage of missing data was small (<5%). Outliers were examined using Box plots which have been identified as suitable in boxing observations that lie around the median and isolating outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). None of the four variables used in the study had outliers.

Correlation results in Table 1 show that supply chain management was positively associated with government support, environmental uncertainty, and organizational performance; government support was positively associated with environmental uncertainty and organizational performance. Similarly, environmental uncertainty was positively correlated with organizational performance.

Table 1: Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Supply Chain Management</th>
<th>Government Support</th>
<th>Environmental Uncertainty</th>
<th>Organizational Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supply Chain Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Support</td>
<td>.599**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Uncertainty</td>
<td>.623**</td>
<td>.528**</td>
<td>.528**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Performance</td>
<td>.461**</td>
<td>.540**</td>
<td>.508**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

6.2 Testing the Effect of Supply Chain Management on Organizational Performance

A linear regression was run to test the effect of supply chain management on organizational performance. The regression results indicated that supply chain management positively and significantly predicts organizational performance (b=0.401, p<0.005). The model relating supply chain management to organizational performance was significant, F (1, 307) = 82.928 (Table 2), explained 21.3% of the variation in organizational performance, and represented a medium effect (Adjusted R2 = 21.0%).

Table 2: Regression Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>95.0% Confidence Interval for B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply Chain Management</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational performance (R²=.213; Adj.R²=.210; F (1, 307) = 82.928)
6.3 Testing for Mediation Effects

A simple mediation using the PROCESS Macro (Model 4) was conducted (Hayes, 2013). Results displayed in Fig 2 indicated that supply chain management impacted positively on government support (a= 0.615, p<0.005), and government support was subsequently related to organizational performance (b=0.349, p<0.005).

Fig 2: Simple Mediation Path Diagram

The 95% confidence interval created by a 10,000 bootstrap samples (see Table3) revealed that the indirect effect (ab= 0.215) was above zero (0.139 to 0.299), an indication that government support mediated the relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance.

Table 3: Indirect Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>BootSE</th>
<th>BootLLCI</th>
<th>BootULCI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.2145</td>
<td>.0405</td>
<td>.1394</td>
<td>.2986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Testing for Moderated Mediation

To test whether environmental uncertainty moderates the indirect relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance via government support, the PROCESS Macro (Model 58) was used. Under this model, the moderating effect of environmental uncertainty on the relationship between supply chain management and government support was first estimated. This was then followed with an estimation of the moderating effect of environmental uncertainty on the relationship between government support and organizational performance.

As illustrated in Table 4, the interaction between supply chain management and environmental uncertainty on government support was found to be non-significant (b=0.09, p=0.85). The relationship between supply chain management and government support was therefore not moderated by environmental uncertainty.
Similarly, the illustration in Table 5 indicates that the interaction between government support and environmental uncertainty on organizational performance was also non-significant, b=-0.28, p=0.45. The relationship between government support and organizational performance was also not moderated by environmental uncertainty.

The moderation plot in Fig 3 confirmed that environmental uncertainty did not moderate the relationship between government support and organizational performance. The slopes of the lines depicting lower levels of environmental uncertainty (1 SD below mean) and that depicting higher levels of environmental uncertainty (1 SD above mean) were relatively the same.
The bootstrap results (Table 6) indicated that the conditional indirect effects of supply chain management on organizational performance via government support was moderated by environmental uncertainty. For low levels of environmental uncertainty, the indirect effect of supply chain management on organizational performance was significant, $b=0.14$, SE=0.04, 95% CI = (0.07, 0.22). Similarly, the indirect effect for higher levels of environmental uncertainty was also significant, $b=0.12$, SE=0.04, 95% CI = (0.05, 0.22).

Table 6: Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Leader member exchange</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>BootSE</th>
<th>BootLLCI</th>
<th>BootULCI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. DISCUSSION

The direct relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance has attracted extensive support empirically (Al-Shboul et al., 2017; Gandhi, Shaikh & Sheorey, 2017; Karimi & Rafiee, 2014). These findings then add to this extensive empirical evidence by affirming that supply chain management is indeed a sure way of ascertaining improved performance of textile firms in Kenya. The study also finds that government support can heighten the relationship between supply chain management and the performance of textile firms through mediation. This finding is quite significant considering that previous studies have failed to examine the role of the government in mediating relationships aimed at organizational performance.

While some studies have attempted to examine the role of administrative capacity (Andrews & Boyne, 2010); the impact of political leadership on organizational performance (Francesca et al., 2009) and the impact of e-government on organizational performance (Kareem & Haseeni, 2015). The particular role the government plays in the performance of manufacturing firms has hitherto remained unknown. This study therefore establishes that textile firms in Kenya would thrive better if the government is supportive in terms of the requisite norms, policies, regulations, and advice.

Perhaps a major contribution that this study makes and which, has not been hitherto explored is the fact that the indirect relationship between supply chain management and organization performance via government support can be moderated by environmental uncertainty. It has been pointed out that environmental uncertainty impacts negatively on firm performance (Ambrose, Marshall & Lynch, 2010). This can however be reduced when other factors such as government support are brought into the value chain.

8. CONCLUSION

The study confirms that it is not enough to manage the textile supply chain in order to achieve improved performance of the firms but, rather the government ought to take the initiative of providing the necessary support in form of reforms and policy guidelines. This has potential to have an indirect influence on the relationship between supply chain management and the performance of the textile industry. In addition, while it may be important to harness government
support, textile players should take cognizance of environmental uncertainty which may render
government support and supply chain management null and void by, moderating the indirect
relationship between supply chain management and the performance of the textile firms under the
support of the government. This study therefore contributes to existing knowledge by showing
that performance of textile firms could be a function of several factors that interact in diverse
ways. However, the challenge associated with the study is the sample design and thus replicating
the results to other study settings is not justifiable. Therefore it is advisable scholars to pursue the
same study in a wider context.

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