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The Effectiveness of Service Delivery in Fast Moving Consumer Goods Supply Value Chain: A Case Study of Brands Africa Zambia Limited Company

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Abstract

The study focused on analysing the effectiveness of service delivery in fast moving goods supply chains taking Brands Africa as a case study. Some observed supply chain related challenges of Brands Africa that included lower sales volume, high volume of product returns, sale of some expired products out of stock of some product lines and high prices of some merchandise made the study to be mandatory. A pragmatic research paradigm was used in collecting data from a cross-sectional survey sample of 87 respondents and a case study sample of 5 research participants using a survey questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide as research instruments, respectively. The study concluded that supplier contact was strongest on communication with suppliers, importing goods to Zambia and good relationships with suppliers. The study showed Brands Africa had good advertising and merchandising services, and effective marketing research activities in its supply chains The study established that quality of merchandise high, and market image and reputation of Brands Africa was high, and that inventory management, price of merchandise and efficiency of supply chains needed improvement. The study also concluded that there is a significant relationship between supplier contact and marketing contact activities of Brands Africa with the overall satisfaction of its stakeholders. The research recommends Brands Africa to upgrade its product, financial, information and social with its suppliers, transporters, wholesalers and retailers. The study will also guide managers on cost cutting ways, quality management, ensuring efficient operations and maintaining positive image of Brands Africa. The study recommended Brands Africa's on policy issues like quality of merchandise, quantity of merchandise, price range of merchandise, delivery schedules and communication systems will be improved. The researcher recommends another research to be carried out at national level covering supply chain of other fast-moving consumer goods companies and also considering more independent variables.

Keywords: Fast moving consumer goods; effectiveness; monitoring, evaluation, value chain; service delivery; Brands Africa, Zambia

INTRODUCTION

The day to day usage of fast moving consumer goods and their continual demand by all households provides some possible challenges to the firms and individuals responsible for production, delivery, warehousing, wholesaling and retailing the products in the route to final consumers. Brands Africa's operations are threatened by supply chain challenges as they work to meet the needs of final consumers in the fast-moving consumer goods market, hence the need for integration of channel activities by channel partners [1] The study aims at assessing the effectiveness of Brands Africa Zambia supply chain activities and service delivery systems.

STUDY BACKGROUND

Brands Africa is an established Sales and Distribution business registered in Zambia but operates in several countries mainly in the SADC region and trades in the FMCG industry. The operations of Brands Africa Zambia are found within the supply chain of FMCG and its work was fitted well in the scope and objectives of this research. Among others, the company trades in many national and international FMCG big brands such as Twinsaver, Camisa 100% Fruit Juices, Grey Goose, Fat Bastard, Robertson, Willards Cornflakes, Sun Jam, Zambezi Gold Honey, Lindt and Fererro Chocolates, Mentos and Manhattan sweets.

Brands Africa's major Principals are in Europe and Africa. Key competitors of Brands Africa's supply chain in Zambia are Inscor Distribution, L & A Distribution, Horizon Distributors, Cold Chain Distributors and Gatbro International. These competitors are all refining their supply chains to manage the price levels, product quality, service delivery, logistics, relationships with retailers and customer satisfaction. [2] asserted that in modern retailing and distribution systems, competition is not at firm level but among supply chains represented by local firms in each industry. This then pressurises Brands Africa to examine the perceptions of its stakeholders on the supply chain services it offers to its upstream and downstream supply chain partners.

Over the years, Brands Africa was importing the goods into Zambia for onward sales and distribution to the wholesalers and retailers in Zambia. They have experienced many opportunities and challenges in the supply of goods, and they have continued to improve to meet demands of the ever-changing FMCG business environment. This study has been able to identify areas of improvement in the supply value chain. There are issues and some imbalances to do with operational effectiveness and operational innovation strategies to balance the deficit that tends to occur between service levels and cost of operation and these need to be critically considered [3, 21-23].

[4] refers to FMCGs as being those goods which are needed for society's day-to-day needs and their availability and supply is demanded on a continuous and timely manner. For others, FMCGs would refer to products of everyday use and whenever they were in short supply or whether they were of poor quality, some discontent was created in the market [5]. Based on the description of FMCG products, it is imperative to ensure proper integration of supply value chain activities [1, 9,12].

The FMCG industry is highly competitive due to branding and advertising among distributors and manufacturers who belong to various supply chain systems. Supply chain partners of Brands Africa Zambia are faced with challenges such as currency instability, ever-increasing

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transport costs, supply of goods inconsistencies, stringent immigration regulations and counterfeiting amongst many other challenges. These challenges bring about inefficiencies within the value supply chain, thus ultimately affecting the consumer. Brands Africa have experienced exchange losses due to currency movements; they have experienced delivery delays due to bureaucratic processes by immigration at the entry borders and they have also experienced low sales due to influx of counterfeit products on market. It is therefore imperative to carry out an analysis of the development and trends of supply value chain management practices in FMCG in Zambia, ultimately to come up with ways of improvement to remain a competitive market.

To ensure that such goods are made available to the market to meet the demands of consumers, several supply chain factors such as staff training, stakeholder collaboration, proper forecasting, effective communication and effectiveness of purchasing processes, these need to be improved and implemented. Therefore, due to the fast pace at which these FMCG products are purchased, the requirement for effective and efficient service delivery is imperative if the business is to be competitive and profitable in the short and long term. This make Brands Africa's having to focus on the process of achieving the expected service delivery effectiveness from the basic supply level through to the final delivery of the fast- moving consumer goods to the consumers. The other feature of the Brands Africa Zambia's supply chain is its involvement in foreign based suppliers, manufacturers, and principals.

There are also noticeable bureaucratic challenges and red tapes that affect Brands Africa's commodities as they are delivered across borders to the Zambian market. The FMCGs also have short shelf lives which make them further expire before reaching the end users if there are supply chain inefficiencies. Despite many efforts by Brands Africa Zambia to engage various governments, retailers, principals, manufacturers, transporters, supply chain consultants, other service firms, consumers and other stakeholders, the need to improve both the supply side and demand side of the trade in its FMCG still exist.

Given the above presentation, it became imperative that Brands Africa and other firms involved in the business of FMCGs fully appreciate the entire supply chain and particularly factors that could impede efficiency and effectiveness of the business itself. As the chain progresses from the producers of fast-moving consumer goods onto the transporters through to the final consumers, the supply side variables and consumer side dimension of Brands Africa's supply chain system need to be analysed on how they influence market satisfaction of the fast moving consumer goods retailers, consumers and other stakeholders.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Brands Africa Zambia has been facing lower sales performance in relation to other companies operating in FMCG supply chains. Lack of effectiveness in the whole supply chain process resulted in Brands Africa failing to achieve the revenue budgets, they experienced high volumes of product returns from customers due to expiry because of low shelf off-take as they were uncompetitive. Sometimes product would expire in the warehouse as they would have received it with short dates from the supplier.

Brands Africa experienced lots of out of stock situation due delayed deliveries from suppliers and that raised lots of customer complaints and the company was making loses year after year.

Failure by supply chain partners to collaborate and communicate effectively has a ripple effect in the supply chain process. The balancing of supply side and demand side supply chain sides of a distributor like Brands Africa can enable improving supply chain effectiveness and efficiency challenges. The study aims at analysing the effectiveness of service delivery in the operations of the fast-moving consumer goods supply chain taking Brands Africa as a case study.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH

This analysis and assessment on the effectiveness of the value supply chain was executed to discern significant issues such as emerging trends and to highlight matters related to supply chain partners, Zambian policy makers and other stakeholders with the aim to improve policy making pertaining the effectiveness of service delivery in the FMCG market in Zambia. Given the importance of the FMCG sub-sector, this study provides insights for success not only for the Zambian market, but to similar environments across the region and beyond. The research also adds to the existing literature on the subject matter of FMCG supply value chain. The researcher used Brands Africa Ltd as a case study since the organisation is an active participant in FMCG service delivery, dealing directly with Principals and all other supply chain stakeholders through to the consumer. It is strategically positioned to enable a comphrehensive study on FMCG market in Zambia.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To undertake an analysis of the effectiveness of service delivery in the fast-moving cosumer goods (FMCG) supply chain of the Zambian market using Brands Africa Zambia Ltd as a case study.

Specific Objectives

1. To analyse Brands Africa's performance on FMCG sector in Zambia through the supply side supply chain processes.
2. To determine Brands Africa's performance on market side supply chain activities in Zambia.
3. To assess the overall market satisfaction with Brands Africa's FMCG products in Lusaka, Zambia.
4. To determine the relationship between effectiveness of Brands Africa's supply chain activities and market satisfaction

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: Brands Africa had a significant positive performance on its supplier contact supply chain activities marketing side supply chain activities in the Zambian fast moving consumer goods market.

H2: Brands Africa had a significant positive performance on its marketing side supply chain activities in the Zambian fast moving consumer goods market.

H3: Brands Africa had a significant positive performance on its overall satisfaction of stakeholders and customers with its supply chain activities in the Zambian fast moving consumer goods market.

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H4: There are overall significant relationships between supply chain activities of Brands Africa and overall satisfaction of its supply chain stakeholders in Zambia.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Introduction

The study focusses on assessing the supply chain effectiveness of the fast-moving consumer goods taking Brands Africa's supply chain system as a case study. Research methodology is the presentation and examination of the chosen methods and techniques for data collection, analysis, interpretation and discussion with some comments given on the alternative approaches which were not used [6]. It is broader than mere presentation of research methods. In this chapter the researcher will present the research philosophy and design, research strategy, population, sampling methods and sample size, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis tools and processes, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations. Chapter summary is also presented at the end.

Research Philosophy and Design

Research philosophy refers to the mindset, worldview, belief system and basic epistemological assumptions adopted by the researcher in formulating the study, defining the research problem, collecting data, analysing data, interpreting data and presenting those findings [7]. The most common paradigms include the positivism, pragmatism, realism, postmodernism, contructivism and interpretivism [8]. The researcher adopted a pragmatism research paradigm which used both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

Research Design

A research design is a series of interlinked methodological frameworks that connects the research philosophy to research methods for co-ordinating data collection, analysis, presentation and interpretation. In this study the researcher adopted a mixed methodology research design that combined both qualititative research methods and quantitative research methods [9, 13, 15]. The cross-sectional survey and case study strategies were used in implementing the mixed methodology research design. The onion approach allows us to even go into specifics of the survey and case study strategies.

According to [10 & 36] a mixed methodology design employs both quantitative and qualitative research methods, techniques and instruments that together work to bring about comprehensive data and information from a chosen topic investigated within an area of interest. When applied well, the researcher benefits from the wealth of information and enriches discussion and analysis for a given study [11, 6, 18, 34, 39].

Qualitative primary data was collected through the means of conducting interviews with selected senior management staff members of respective channel partners, employees of Brands Africa and consumers in Lusaka, Zambia [12, 17, 18]. This was necessary as these were the people with direct influence in decision making in determining service levels within the channel. Quantitative data was collected by means of survey questionnaires which were designed and channelled through the survey monkey online based platform [13, 30, 32]. Secondary data was also used from various government and institutional reports, policy documents, journal articles, and books to mainly inform the literature review presentation of

the study. The research design naturally led to the research strategies, time horizons, sampling frames, sampling methods, data collection methods and data analysis tools.

Research Strategy and Techniques

The research strategies discuss about the deductive-inductive choices, time horizons used and their relationship to research design frameworks.

Inductive Approach

Inductive strategy is where the researcher will allow the participation in the in-depth interviews to explain their real-life feelings and observations about Brands Africa's supply chain operations. This allows formulation of new theories from qualitative data using techiniques like grounded theory [12, 30, 32, 35]. The researcher held brief discussions with key people in each level of the supply chain partnership and obtaining more insight on relationship that Brands Africa has with its stakeholders. The insights from the in-depth interviews to be carried in the study will be used for thoery formation and refinement. A new theory that links third party logistic firmsto Brands Africa's suppliers, distrubutors, wholesalers and retailers will be designed from the qualitative data narratives and contents.

Deductive Approach

In deductive reasoning, on the other hand, the existing theoretical framework is used to state hypotheses and propositions about Brands Africa's supply chain effectiveness and then test the acceptability of the theory. Some dimensions of extisting theories were tested and evaluted in this study. Using quantitative method, the researcher had to gather existing data on the state of the affairs between Brands Africa and its stakeholders to come with a conclusion.

Since the study was investigatory and descriptive, the abductive approach was useful in engaging different subjects who shared their experiences across the supply value chain [14, 24-26]. It should be noted that a unique theory and model for Brands Africa can be developed from testing current theories and from insights of new theories [13, 8, 39].

Time Horizon

The study on Brands Africa's supply chain effectiveness was a once off research phase taking both a cross-sectional survey and a cross-sectional case study. This differs from longitudinal studies that have two or more research cycles or phases [15, 27, 37]. The cross-sectional nature was preferred as it allowed submission of the dissertation in the University's prescribed dates and also being less expensive. The surveys and case studies were scheduled to be done from early July to end of October 2020.

Population and Sampling Frame

A population represents the total set of possible respondents in a study [15, 41, 25]. This means having every principal, distributor, wholesaler, retailer, transporter, Brands Africa employees and Brands Africa consumers will be counted in the total population. It was impractical to have a complete list of the population involved from across the supply value chain. The sampling frame is part of the population that can easily be defined and manipulated during sampling process. Estimates of sampling frame could be made basing on the key supply chain stakeholders used by Brands Africa in Zambia.

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In coming up with the frame, the researcher considered the stakeholders that Brands Africa has a direct relationship with and are currently in contact with and have been actively involved in the last six months. The estimated numbers of Brands Africa's sampling frame in the supply chain research include the following: Principals (N=50); Transporetrs (N=50); Distributors (N=20); Wholesalers Employees (N=200); Retailer Employees (N=300); Brands Africa Employees (N=200) and Brands Africa Consumers (N=300 000). The number of organisational partners was based on the internal documents available to the company's stakeholder database. The population estimate of customers are dependent on the weekly statistics of customers who purchase Brands Africa's products. Principals were included as they provide the products and initial services to the whole Brands Africa supply chain. They are interested in seeing Brands Africa succeed in its operations. Transporters were included in the study as they move products from the suppliers to the retailers. Their perceptions determine the efficiency and effectiveness of Brands Africa' supply chain. The wholesale and retail employees understands overall complaints of the consumers and other stakeholders with the behaviour of Brands Africa's distribution, co-ordination and delivery of its key services. Brands Africa's employees and consumers were considered as they were central in handling and using the product.

It was for that reason that both purposive and convinience sampling techniques were adopted to select the respondents for the study [16, 17, 34]. The research subjects were selected from several FMCG stakeholders namely Manufacturers (Principals), Logistics, Distributors, wholesalers, retailers and consumers.

Sample Techniques and Sample Size

The study used both quota sampling and judgmental sampling in establishing the specific research subjects and participants that formed the final sample. Quota sampling was used for establishing represntative elements of the various supply chain stakeholders of Brands Africa and was applied for collection of quantitative data. Quota sampling was ideal as it is a fast method, less expensive and allows willing respondents to be interviewed. Quotas ensures that principals, distributors, transporters, wholesalers, retailers, Brands Africa employees and consumers were represented.

In judgmental sampling the researcher chose items to be sampled based on their knowledge, competencies, skills, and industry type [18] and in this case this was applied on research participants who answered the in-depth interview guide questions. Apart from being cost effective and time saving, judgemental sampling is a reliable method for pre-testing validity of the research instruments.

Sample Size

From the population, sampling frame and sampling method discussed above, the final sample structure are presented in this section. These were established through quota sampling and judgmental sampling. The total respondents were 93 though the actual responses on each objective varies like on supplier contact (87), marketing contact (82) and overall satisfaction (79).

For the size of the sample, Table 3.1 below indicates the number of respondents and literature that were consulted.

Table 3.1: Respondents and Document Review Used

F/o	Respondent/document	Population	Target Sample %/Number	Actual Sample
A	Research respondents			
	Manucturers (Principals)	50	20.00%(10)	5
	Logistics	50	20.00%(10)	2
	Distributors	20	25%(5)	2
	Brands Africa employees	200	20%(40)	31
	Wholesalers	300	3.33%(10)	4
	Retailers(employees)	200	25%(50)	6
	Consumers	300000	0.0002(50)	43
	Total	300790	0.0532%(165)	93
B	Documents Reviewed			
	FMCG policy (Zambia)			
	Assorted journal articles			
	Books			

Source: Researcher's Own Construction 2020

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Survey Questionnaires:

The researcher used the survey questionnaire to collect data from the 155 supply chain stakeholders established through quota sampling. A survey questionnaire is a data collection tool that have structured questions which mainly require putting an X or ticking some chosen responses [19]. The research questionnaire used in the current study had closed- ended questions that allowed both rating predetermined supply chain effectiveness issues and provision of opinions with a Likert scale as follows,5-Strongly Agree; 4-Agree; 3-Not Sure; 2-DisAgree; 1-Strongly Dis-Agree. The key objectives covered by the questionnaire were on supply side factors, market side factors and overall supply chain effectiveness performance of Brands Africa.

A questionnaire is a quick, consistent, and convenient way of collecting data from supply chain partners who could be busy during the study period. It enables convenient collection, processing and analysis of data from bigger samples and needs no highly trained research assistants to administer [15]. It provides data which can be easily measured, and questionnaires were kept for future use. The key challenge was that it was time consuming to create, implement and generate meaning on the questionnaire items as the effort of increasing validity and reliability was directed to all items. The high structure nature of scales used in questionnaires may make it difficult to interpret the points in each question. Use of

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questionnaires make it difficult to get quick feedback as analysis is done after all questionnaires are collected.

Administration of Questionnaire Based Surveys:
The questionnaire was administered through online meetings and a few face-to-face surveys where some retail employees and other supply chain participants would answer the questionaire on spot. This allows non-verbal and subjective cues to be captured by the researcher [20]. The drop and pick approach were also used where questionnaires were left in the offices and work units of respondents for them to complete later at their convenience. The majority of questionnaires was distributed through e-mails and through the survey monkey. This assist to deal with COVID-19 social and physical distancing norms. The use of a variety of methods allows rich data to be collected from key supply chain stakeholders of Brands Africa.

The study used a mixed methods approach and so, data collection and analysis techniques employed were equally mixed and triangulated to a meaningful extent. To collect quantitative data, simplified survey questionnaires were designed and administered to the respondents using survey monkey online system. Therefore, various graphical representations of the findings were obtained and these included bar charts, pie charts and tables. For qualitative information, appropriated interview guides were used for data collection [21, 37]. Analysis of qualitative information was undertaken with the use of text and discourse analysis skills, theme and synthesis analysis as well as Nvivo software.

In-depth Interview Guide and In-depth Interviews:
Qualitative data was collected using in-depth interview guides from key informants representing key groups from each component of Brands Africa's supply chain. An in-depth interview guide is a data collection instrument that contain loosely organised questions seeking open answers and free opinions [22]. The guide used in this study asked research participants to present narratives along the themes guided by research objectives. Key objectives covered were assessing the effectiveness of supply side variables, market side variables and overall stakeholder satisfaction levels with Brands Africa's supply chain system.

The strengths of the depth interview guide are its simplicity to construct and its ability to generate new insights and views from a set of respondents. The researcher made appointments with the participants, present the various questions and their meaning, carry out some probing sessions, and recording of the responses on voice and even video tools. The major strengths of these interviews are their ability to probe respondents for more data. The strengths of these interviews are that of allowing more thorough questions to be responded to, hence vague areas could be explained.

These interviews also provided realistic responses and fast results. The weakness of these interviews is that of using too much of researcher's time and use of small sample sizes. The interaction can also be marred by subjectivity from interviewer and interviewee biases. The recording of responses by the researcher may disturb the free interaction between the interviewer and the key informants and some cases ethical issues such as confidentiality can affect the quality of discussions [23, 7].

Data Processing and Analysis Techniques

Quantitative and qualitative data processing and analysis techniques.

Quantitative data analysis techniques: The researcher used the SPSS to capture, verify, clean and run the data processing phase. The expected statistical output to be produced will have mean values, basic percentages, correlations, inter-item correlations, ANOVA tests, Chi-Square tests, factor analysis and regression analysis [20, 24] In this study the researcher will mainly use develop some relationships between Supply Side variables, and Market Side variables with overall Stakeholder Satisfaction with Brands Africa's supply chain. The analysis will be full of hypotheses testing and generalisations research results to the case study context and other supply chains.

Qualitative data analysis techniques will employ N-VIVO to assist in carrying out content analysis, narrative analysis, conversation analysis, discourse analysis and grounded theory. In this study the researcher mainly used manual analysis of qualitative data to make meaning of the qualitative data using content analysis and narrative analysis [10]. These approaches enabled theory generation and solving the contextual challenges facing the Brands Africa supply chain system. Data will be produced in form of summarised sentences and quotations that relate to the existing and emerging themes.

Reliability of Research Findings

Reliability of research instruments is where they can measure and produce the same results of the same phenomena on the same population over time. The measurement tools have to be stable, dependable and consistent over time [12]. Internal consistency was measured by the Cronbach's Alpha values targeting on each objective and thematic area. A value of around 0.80 was more acceptable as it related the various items to each other. A pilot study of the questionnaires and entering them into the SPSS for calculating the Cronbach Alpha values were done. In-depth interviews were made to be consistent by involving both the researcher and research paricipants using an in-depth interview guide. Reliability was improved through testing and retesting the research instruments to enable clarity and specificity of phrases and words.

Validity of Research Findings

When survey questionnaires, interview guides, observation guides and focus group guides measure the problem area under study, the validity is achieved [25]. This is mainly to do with content validity which relate the research instrument items to the topic under study. Internal validity was built by the researcher by relating supply side variables to market side variables, and also with overall supply chain effectiveness performance of Brands Africa [12]. External validity is where the research results generated from the current study are applied to Brands Africa's competitors, non-fmcg supply chains and to other countries outside Zambia [26]. Construct validity of the current research was enhanced by visiting theories and models to do with supply chain operations of fast-moving consumer goods. Creterion referenced validity was added by considering questionnaires and rating scales popularly used for assessing effectiveness of supply chains. Validity is generally improved through carrying out a thorugh literature review touching key theories, policy frameworks and empirical literature.

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Generalisability of Research Findings

While it is possible for other aspects of the findings and recommendations for improvement to apply in other similar environments, the results of this study are not meant for areas not covered in the research. The scope of this study was confined to FMCG business interactions in Lusaka, Zambia using Brands Africa (Z) Limited as a case study. Thus, as much as possible, the findings are applicable to the Zambian experinces and to a few selected chain players outside Zambia but within the study scope.

Ethical Issues and Consideration

In terms of ethical considerations any social science research is bound to affect the esteem and ego of respondents and leaders of institutions involved. The common ethical concerns in completing this dissertation were around informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, access and acceptance, protection from harm and academic integrity [15].

Informed consent demanded that research participants and subjects confirmed their willingness to participate in the fast-moving consumer goods supply chain by signing or writing a letter of agreement to prticipate. This ensured that no employee, customer, supplier, transporter, principal or their representatives could be coerced to participate in the research [12]. Acceptance and access to respondents' premises was sought in advance and was facilitated by university letter of researcher introduction bearing logos, purpose of study and the topic under study.

Some members of the supply chain showed unwillingness to say out their perceptions on the effectiveness of their key supplier for fear of losing some existing business benefits but they were assured on the issue of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality central in the assessment of Brands Africa's supply chain system [12]. Confidentiality issues to do with discloure of operational information from players in the FMCG and Brands Africa supply chain were also encountered by the researcher. Research participants needed to be protected from physical, emotional, social and psychological harm resulting from involving and associated the respondents to the research results [27, 40].

Ethicality of dissertations are also associated with the way the researcher followed the guidelines of the faculty in the areas of plagiarism, falsification and cheating. In dealing with all ethical issues above, the researcher disclosed himself and his research intentions to all supply chain participants relevant to this study and the key University academic and administrative staff responsible for the MBA programme. Being honesty, respectful and transparent made this research ethically acceptable as supported by the university letter of introduction given to the researcher. By gaining respondents' informed consents and dealing with other ethical hindrances, it became possible to access as much information as was needed for the study.

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSES OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This Chapter presents the findings and discussion of those results in relation to supply chain effectiveness of Brands Africa in Zambia. The study results were generated from the key supply chain stakeholders of Brands Africa that included manufacturers, transporters, wholesalers, retailers and consumers. The Chapter presents the findings and their interpretation on demographic characteristics of respondents, supplier contact supply chain activities, marketing

contact supply chain activities and the overall satisfaction of stakeholders with supply chain activities of brands Africa in Zambia.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In This section of the Chapter, respondents' responses to questions seeking to know their profile in form of gender, age, FMCG Supply Chain Stakeholder Type, years of experience and qualification variables are presented and explained in terms of their relevance to the supply chain studies. These are presented under Figures 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4 and 4.5.

Gender of Respondents:

Figure 4.1 below presents the gender of the respondents. As depicted below, 53.76% (n=50) were male and 46.24% (n=43) female. This means that most of the respondents were male. Brands Africa's products appeal to males and females in a different way. Most of the products are bought and used by women in house cleaning, personal health and body adornments. The inclusion of both males and females in the study became mandatory as some are gendered in their perceptions, attitudes, motivation, usage and purchasing. Males and females could differ on how they perceive some inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of supply chain processes?

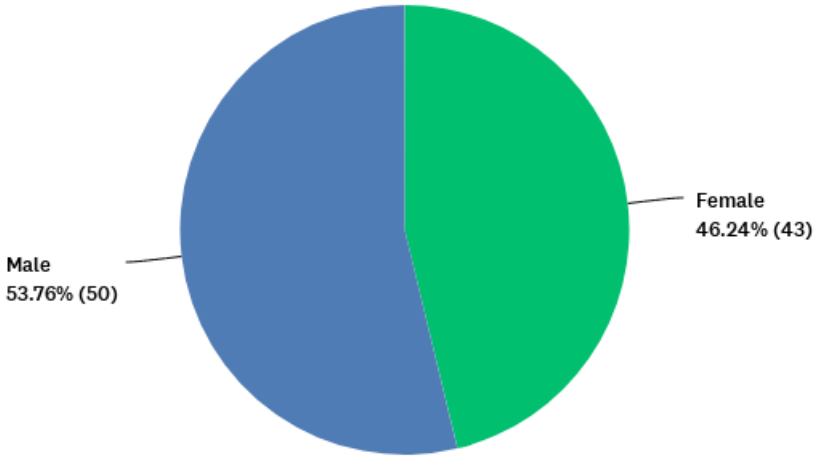


Figure 4.1: Percent Distribution of respondents by gender

Age of Respondents:

The findings in figure 4.2 shows that, 32.28 percent (n=30) of the respondents fell in the age bracket of 30 years and below, 61.29 percent (n=57) were 31-50 years old whereas 6.45 percent (n=6) were in age 51 and above years old. Majority of respondents were in the 31 to 50 years group and could possibly be having more exposure to Brands Africa's products, operational system and the Zambian FMCG market environment. This is a highly active population that aim at improving their personal and organisational productivity and hence possibly had more serious ratings and comments.

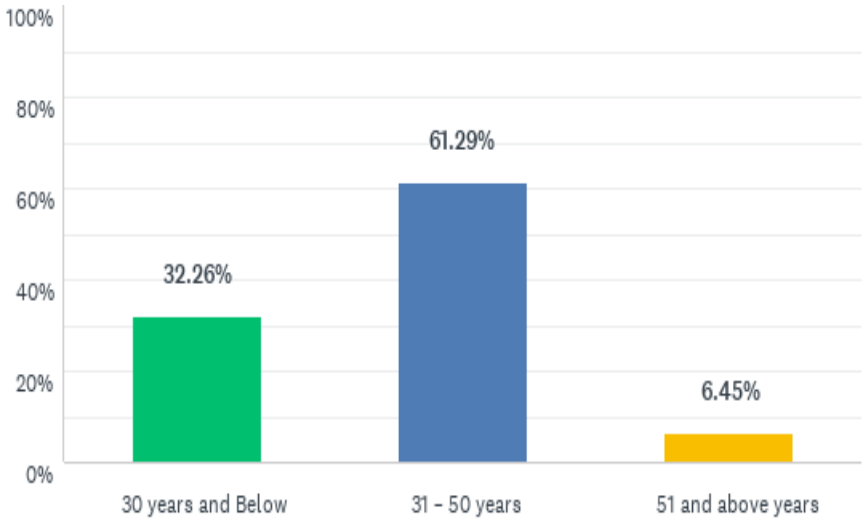


Figure 4. 1: Distribution of respondents by age

FMCG Supply Chain Stakeholder Type:

The findings in figure 4.3 shows that majority (46.24 %percent, n=43) of the FMCG Supply Chain Stakeholders were the consumers, followed by 33.33% percent (n=31) who were managers/employees, 12.90% percent (n=12) were wholesalers/retailers, 5. 38% percent (n=5) were manufacturers while the least (2.15% percent, n=2) were the transporters. The consumers were the key respondents who are usually negatively affected by inefficiencies in supply chains and value chain systems of a company hence their high representation assist to provide a valid picture of Brands Africa's operations. The managers and employees of Brands Africa were also well represented in the study and this shows the critical aspects of how the supply chain effectiveness was performing. Ratings of other partners were also relevant in this study.

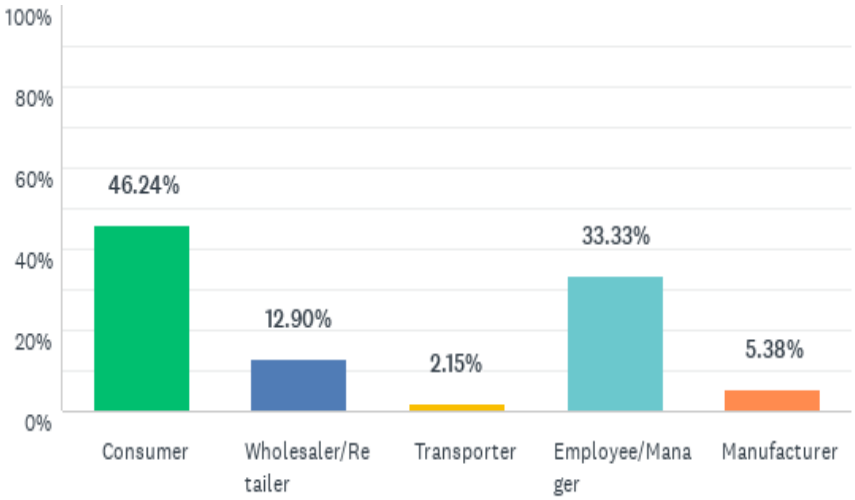


Figure 4.2: Distribution of respondents by type

Education Level of Respondents:

The education level of a respondents may provide a measure for determining people's engagement in activities. The findings shows that, the least 29.03%, (n=27) of the respondent

had post graduate and above qualifications, while 35.48% percent, (n=33) of the respondents had first degree qualifications and the remaining 35.48% (n=33) of respondents had Diplomas and below. The consumers and Brands Africa employees who had higher academic qualifications were included in the study and demonstrated high skills and motivation in responding to the supply chain-based questionnaire items. The same reflection that over 50% of the in-depth interviewees had qualifications of first degree and above also shows that the people in decision making positions and those that directly interact with Brands Africa were all above average in education levels. [28] used this analysis their report on supply chain success factors in the retailing industry.

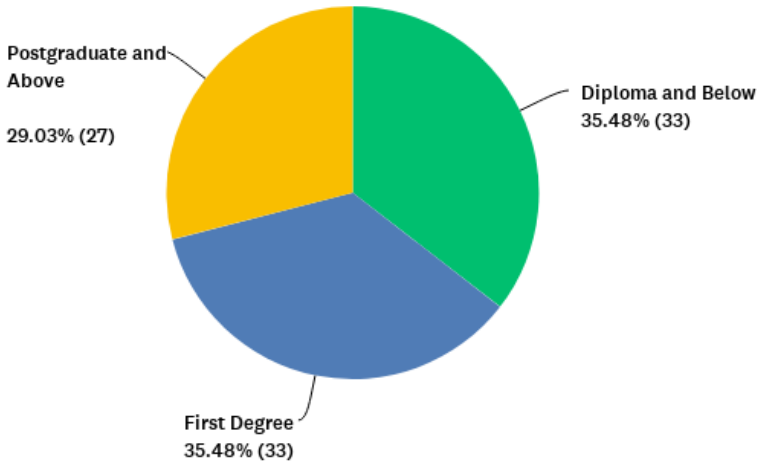


Figure 3.4: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Length of Service (Years of Experience):

The respondents were asked to indicate their years of experience of either working in, referring, networking, collaborating and, or being served by the Brands Africa supply chain in Zambia. The results in figure 4.5 below shows that majority 75.04 % percent (n=67) of the respondents had experience of below 6 years, while 21.51% percent (n=20) of the respondents had between 15-16 years of experience. Additionally, 6.45 percent (n=6) had more than 16 years of experience. The years of experience trends and patterns indicates that many stakeholders in the study were generally new in the system and could easily critique the system as they were not immersed and used to the traditions of the Brands Africa supply chain. Views and perceptions of those in the 6 years and above were also captured in the study. Based on the in-depth interviews, it was established that many had fairly new interactions with Brands Africa most of them they were new managers and supervisors, it came to conclude that there was high manpower turnover in this industry, same reflection of having 75% in the 6 years and below as per diagram below. [29] used industry demographics in analysing the effectiveness of supply chains collaboration and innovation in China.

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/assrj.102.14177

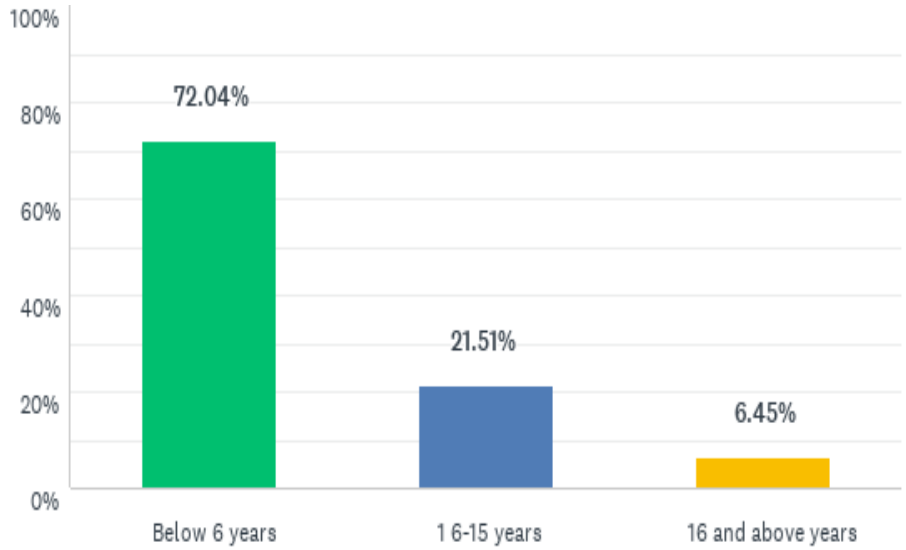


Figure 4.4 : Percent distribution of respondents by years of experience
Source: Survey Results 2020

Supplier Contact Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa
Descriptive Discussion of Results on Supplier Contact Activities of Brands Africa:
The respondents were provided with statements and asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with those statements on whether they strongly agreed, agreed, had no opinion, disagreed or strongly disagreed with what they were asked. The scoring system used with respect to respondents' responses was as follows: strongly agree scored 5, agree 4, not sure 3, disagree 2, strongly disagree 1.

The results in table 1 shows that out of the 87 respondents that answered this question, majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed (92. percent, n=80) while 8 percent (n=7) of the respondents were not sure. Seventy-nine percent (n=69) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Brands Africa has a good relationship with wholesalers and retailers whereas 19.54 percent (n=17) were not sure while 1.15 percent (n=1) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed. The importance of having good relationship with retailers and other supply chain partners was supported by [30].

The results further shows that, the respondents strongly agreed or agreed (82.76 percent, n=72) that coordinating of wholesalers and suppliers was good, 13.79 percent (n=12) were not sure and 3.25 percent (n=3). Additionally, the respondents strongly agreed or agree (71.26 percent, n=62) that dealer or retailer consultancy services by Brand Africa is good, 25.29 percent (n=22) were not sure, while 3.45 percent (n=2) disagree that that dealer or retailer consultancy services by Brand Africa is good. Dealer consultancy support the management of inventory as presented by [31].

The respondents were asked that Brand Africa gives support to the logistics companies during the process of moving their consignments to Zambia, 77.01 percent (n=67) strongly agreed or agreed, 17.54 percent were not sure while 3.45 percent (n=3) disagreed.

Similar questions were asked during the in-depth interviews and the general response was positive in that there was positive interaction between Brands Africa and its stakeholders, however, a few other customers were unhappy with some out of stock situation in some cases.

In terms on mean value analysis the top five(5) variables that made Brands Africa effective in its supply chain were communication with suppliers is good (m=4.40), Brands Africa has good relationships with wholesalers and retailers (4.11), Brands Africa has good relationships with its suppliers (m=4.18), Co-ordination of suppliers and wholesalers is good(m=4.02), Brands Africa gives support to the logistics companies during the process of moving their consignment to Zambia(m=4.00). The relatively weak areas where Brands Africa's supply chain activities needs some boost is on items like Brands Africa has a good system of importing goods into Zambia(m=3.89), dealer or retailer consultancy services by Brands Africa is good (m=3.86), Brands Africa make forecasts to enable Principals to plan production accordingly(m=3.90), Brands Africa has a strong inventory financing capacity(m=3.89) and warehousing systems used by Brands Africa is good(m=3.93). These are shown on table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Supplier Contact Supply Chain Activities Performance of Brands Africa in Zambia.

Items on manufacturer contact/supplier side supply chain activities	Mean Values	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
Communication with suppliers is good	4.40	48.28	43.68	8.05	0.00	0.00
Brands Africa has good relationships with its suppliers	4.18	41.38	37.93	19.54	0.00	1.15
Warehousing systems used by Brands Africa is good	3.93	26.44	44.83	25.29	2.30	1.15
Brands Africa has good relationships with wholesalers and retailers	4.11	34.48	44.83	19.54	0.00	1.15
Brands Africa has a good system of importing goods into Zambia	4.10	35.63	41.38	21.84	0.00	1.15
Brands Africa has a strong inventory financing capacity	3.89	24.14	43.68	29.89	1.15	1.15
Co-ordination of suppliers and wholesalers is good	4.02	22.99	59.77	13.79	3.45	0.00
Dealer or retailer consultancy services by Brands Africa is good	3.86	18.39	52.87	25.29	3.45	0.00
Brands Africa make forecasts to enable Principals to plan production accordingly.	3.90	26.44	40.23	31.03	1.15	1.15
Brands Africa gives support to the logistics companies during the process of moving their consignment to Zambia	4.00	26.44	50.57	19.54	3.45	0.00
Overall Mean Value	4.04	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Survey Results 2020

Hypothesis Testing on Supplier Contact Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa:

H1: Brands Africa had a significant positive performance on its supplier contact supply chain activities marketing side supply chain activities in the Zambian fast moving consumer goods market.

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/assrj.102.14177

A One Sample Mean T-test was used in hypothesis testing. The study tested whether there was any significant evidence to conclude that Brands Africa's supplier contact supply chain activities had a positive significant performance. A t-test was carried with the benchmark average test value of 3.00 at 5% level of significance. The analysis established a t-calculated value of +19.862 fell far above the lower limit of (+0.9207) and the upper limit (+1.1573) at a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value of 0.000 was far below the test value of 0.05, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis and concluded that Brands Africa's supplier contact supply chain activities were effective and efficient. Brands Africa's supply side activities were well done in communication and relationships with suppliers [32], relationships with wholesalers and retailers, and good system of importing goods into Zambia.

Table 4.2 One-Sample Test of Supplier Contact Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa

	Test Value = 3.00					
				Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)		Lower	Upper
Supplier Contact	19.862	9	0.000	1.03900	.9207	1.1573

Note: Mean=4.04; Std Dev=0.165; Std Error =0.052; n=10.
Source: Survey Results 2020

Marketing Contact and Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa

Descriptive Discussion of Results on Marketing Contact Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa:

The respondents were provided with statements that asked them to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on the way Brands Africa was marketing its brands to retailers and final consumers [33]. The results in form of percentages and mean values are given in Table 4.3 below.

The findings in table 2 below shows or indicates that the respondents strongly agreed or agreed (91.46 percent, n=75) that marketing planning and forecasting is good- to assist the market, 6.10 percent (n=5) were not sure while 2.44 percent (n=2) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed. Majority (90.24 percent, n=74) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that merchandising services offered by Brands Africa were good, 7.32 percent (n=6) were not sure while only 2.44 percent (n=2) strongly disagreed or disagreed.

The results further shows that 65.85 percent (n=54) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that deliveries to the market retailers/wholesalers are consistent and on time, 18.41 percent (n=15) were not sure, while 15.85 percent (n=13) strongly disagreed or disagreed that deliveries by the Brands Africa to the market retailers/wholesalers were consistent and on time [34]. The results shows that 71.95 percent (n=59) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Brands Africa provided a good product returns policy, 24.39 percent (n=20) were not sure while 3.66 percent (n=1) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed.

There was also evidence to show that Brands Africa had developed very sound relationship with their trade especially in the areas of consistent supply and communication should there be any challenges and many of the retailers acknowledged that the sharing of information

enabled them to make plan B for their consumers. The in-depth discussions enabled the researcher to get more information in the quality of relationship that existed between Brands Africa and its stakeholders [30].

In the analysis on marketing contact supply chain variables of Brands Africa, the major positive areas of performance were recorded on marketing research and information system is good (m=4.23),marketing planning and forecasting is good to assist the market(m=4.35), merchandising services offered are good (m=4.37), sales promotion activities are good (m=4.11) and advertising services by Brands Africa are good(m=4.69). The six areas which needed some greater improvements, though already positive, were on product support services by Brands Africa are good(m=4.01),consumer complaints handling by Brands Africa is good(m=3.99retailing support services are good (m=3.95) ,provides a good returns policy (m=3.90),deliveries to the market retailers are consistent and on time (m=3.74) and electronic commerce and marketing services are good(m=3.60). The study encourage Brands Africa to invest its efforts on changing its operational structure to meet the changing needs of its stakeholders. These are shown on Table 4.3 below.

Table4.3: Marketing Contact Supply Chain Activities Performance of Brands Africa in Zambia

Items on Marketing Side Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa	Mean Values	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
Marketing planning and forecasting is good-to assist the market	4.35	47.56	43.90	6.10	1.22	1.22
Marketing research and information system is good	4.23	31.71	62.20	3.66	0.00	2.44
Merchandising services offered are good	4.37	48.78	41.46	7.32	2.44	0.00
Sales promotion activities are good	4.11	35.37	46.34	12.20	6.10	0.00
Advertising services by Brands Africa are good	4.67	10.98	57.32	20.73	9.76	1.22
Retailing support services are good	3.95	19.51	57.32	20.73	1.22	1.22
Consumer complaints handling by Brands Africa is good	3.99	24.39	50.00	25.61	0.00	0.00
Electronic commerce and marketing services are good	3.60	8.54	51.22	32.93	6.10	1.22
Product support services by Brands Africa are good	4.01	28.05	48.78	19.51	3.66	0.00
Deliveries to the market retailers are consistent and on time	3.74	26.83	39.02	18.29	13.41	2.44
Provides a good returns policy	3.90	23.17	48.78	24.39	2.44	1.22
Overall Mean Value	4.08	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Survey Results 2020

Hypothesis Testing on Marketing Contact Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa:

H2: Brands Africa had a significant positive performance on its marketing side supply chain activities in the Zambian fast moving consumer goods market.

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/assrj.102.14177

A One Sample Mean T-test was used in hypothesis testing. The study tested whether there was any significant evidence to conclude that Brands Africa's market side supply chain activities had a positive significant performance. A t-test was carried with the benchmark average test value of 3.00 at 5% level of significance. The analysis established a t-calculated value of +11.743 fell above the lower limit of (+0.878) and the upper limit (+1.289) at a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value of 0.000 was far below the test value of 0.05, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis and concluded that Brands Africa's marketing side supply chain activities were effective and efficient. The major elements where Brands Africa excelled were on advertising, merchandising activities, marketing research and market forecasting [35].

Table 4.4 One-Sample Mean Test of Marketing Contact Supply Chain Activities Performance of Brands Africa.

	Test Value = 3.00					
				Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)		Lower	Upper
Marketing Side	11.743	10	0.000	1.08364	0.8780	1.2892

Note: Mean=4.08; Std Dev=0.306; Std Error =0.923; n=11.
Source: Survey Results 2020

Overall Stakeholder Satisfaction Levels with Brands Africa's Supply Chain Activities in Zambia.

Descriptive Discussion of Results on Overall Satisfaction of Stakeholders with Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa:

The respondents were provided with statements that asked them to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on the way Brands Africa was offering overall satisfaction to its supply chain partners and stakeholders in Zambia. The results in form of percentages and mean values are given in Table 4.3 below.

The findings in table 3 below reveals that 93.68 percent (n=74) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that quality of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa is high, 5.06 percent (n=4) were not sure while 1.27 percent (n=1) strongly agreed or disagreed. Seventy-nine percent (n=63) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that prices of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa are affordable, 8.86 percent (n=7) were not sure, while 11.4 percent (n=9) of the respondents strong disagreed or disagreed that that prices of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa are affordable. Issues to do with quality of merchandise and affordability of products in a supply chain were commended on by [36] and [37].

Furthermore, results shows that majority (88.61 percent, n=70) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed the market image and reputation of Brands Africa is good, 8.86 percent (n=7) were not sure while 2.53 percent (n=2) of the respondent strongly disagreed or disagreed. The results shows that 70.88 percent (n=56) of the respondents indicated that Brands Africa's supply chain activities are efficient, 24.05 percent (n=19) of the respondents were not sure while the least strongly disagreed or disagreed that Brands Africa's supply chain activities are

efficient. [38] and [39] said supply chain activities become efficient when distribution costs are reduced, proper products are delivered and customer service is offered.

Lastly, majority (91.14 percent, n=72) of the respondents indicated that it was a pleasure dealing with Brands Africa as an FMCG distributor in Zambia, 7.59 percent (n=6) of them were not sure while only 1.27 percent (n=1) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed.

The results were matching as similar kind of questions were asked during the in-depth interviews to try and establish the overall feeling of customers and suppliers in their dealing with Brands Africa, 90% expressed great satisfaction during interviews.

The mean value results showed that Brads Africa performed above average on quality of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa is high (m=4.39),market image and reputation of Brands Africa is good(m=4.28),Brands Africa is well co-ordinated with its supply chain stakeholders(m=4.09) and having pleasure dealing with Brands Africa as an FMCG distributor in Zambia(m=4.35). The relatively weak performance areas are on prices of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa are affordable (m=3.81), inventory levels of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa are adequate(m=3.70) and Brands Africa's supply chain activities are efficient(m=3.86). These last parts of the comments require Brands Africa to upgrade its system of service delivery and other supply chain stakeholder satisfaction efforts. The mean values are shown on Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Overall Satisfaction of Stakeholders with Brands Africa's Supply Chain Activities.

Items on overall satisfaction variable	**Mean Values**	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
Quality of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa is high	**4.39**	46.84	46.84	5.06	1.27	0.00
Prices of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa are affordable	**3.81**	13.92	65.82	8.86	10.13	1.27
Inventory levels of merchandise supplied by Brands Africa are adequate	**3.70**	15.19	51.90	21.52	10.13	1.27
Market image and reputation of Brands Africa is good	**4.28**	41.77	46.84	8.86	2.53	0.00
Brands Africa is well co-ordinated with its supply chain stakeholders	**4.09**	32.91	44.30	21.52	1.27	0.00
Brands Africa's supply chain activities are efficient	**3.86**	20.25	50.63	24.05	5.06	0.00
It is a pleasure dealing with Brands Africa as an FMCG distributor in Zambia	**4.35**	45.57	45.57	7.59	1.27	0.00
Overall Mean Value	**4.07**	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Survey Results 2020

Hypothesis Testing on Overall Satisfaction with Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa:
H_3: Brands Africa had a significant positive performance on its overall satisfaction of stakeholders and customers with its supply chain activities in the Zambian fast moving consumer goods market.

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/assrj.102.14177

A One Sample Mean T-test was used in hypothesis testing. The study tested whether there was any significant evidence to conclude that Brands Africa's overall satisfaction of stakeholders with its supply chain activities had a positive significant performance in the Zambian fast moving consumer goods market. A t-test was carried with the benchmark average test value of 3.00 at 5% level of significance. The analysis established a t-calculated value of +10.060 fell far above the lower limit of (+0.809) and the upper limit (+1.329) at a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value of 0.000 was far below the test value of 0.05, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis and concluded that Brands Africa's overall satisfaction of stakeholders with its supply chain activities were effective and efficient [40]. Brands Africa's overall satisfaction with stakeholders was contributed to the area of quality of merchandise, market image and reputation, co-ordination with supply chain stakeholders and offering pleasurable shopping experience.

Table 4.6 One-Sample Test Performance on Overall Satisfaction with Brands Africa Supply Chain

	Test Value = 3.00					
				Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	Df	Sig. (2-taled)		Lower	Upper
Overall Satisfaction	10.060	6	0.000	1.06857	0.8087	1.3285

Note: Mean=4.07; Std Dev=0.281; Std Error =0.106; n=7.
Source: Survey Results 2020

The Regression Relationship Between Brands Africa's Supply Chain Activities and Overall Satisfaction of Stakeholders.

The study carried out a regression analysis for estimating how supply chain activities of Brands Africa influences the overall satisfaction of its supply chain stakeholders. Independent variables were the supplier contact activities and marketing activities, and the dependent variable was the overall satisfaction.

H_4: There are overall significant relationships between supply chain activities of Brands Africa and overall satisfaction of its supply chain stakeholders in Zambia.

The study concluded that supply chain activities of Brands Africa had significant impact on the overall satisfaction of its stakeholders as given by the details in Table 4.7 and associated discussions below. The conclusion was based on the p-value of 0.000 (below the 0.05 benchmark), R-square value of 0.408 and an F-test value of 1.380. The results are shown by Tables 4.7

The model summary provides an R-value of 0.639, and an R-Square value of 0.408. The Durbin Watson value of 1.680 in the table indicate that model fitting can be done using equations without recourse to graphical work. The analysis produced an F-test value of 1.380 and a p-value of 0.000 as shown on the table of results. The table 4.18 above also shows Beta values, t-values, standard errors and significance coefficients. The overall standard error was +0.265 at p-value of 1.000 as it represents the dependent variable of Brands Africa's supply chain overall

satisfaction in Zambia. The independent variables which influence performance of Brands Africa's supply chain were supplier contact activities (p-value=0.005; Beta=+1.110) and marketing contact activities (p-value=0.000; Beta=-0,364). Since all variables had significant p-values which were below 0.05, the researcher established the regression equation as follows: *Overall Satisfaction of Supply Chain Activities= +2.771 +1.110 (Supplier contact activities) -0,364 (Marketing contact activities) + 0.265 (standard error of the estimate).*

The relationship presented by the analysis was supported by the concepts of supplier communication, supplier relationships, inventory management, distributions costs, relationship marketing, product quality and customer service delivery given by [41,30,38]

Table 4.7 Regression Analysis of Supply Chain Activities and Overall Satisfaction with Brands Africa

	R	R^2	Beta	Std Error	t-Value	F	Sig	Durban Watson
Constant	_	_	1.074	2.771	+0.388	1.380	1.000	1.680
Supplier Contact Activities			1.110	0.68	+1.645	1.380	0.005	1.680
Marketing Contact Activities			-0.364	0.46	-0.793	1.380	0.000	1.680
Model Fit Statistics	***R= 0.639***	***R^2= 0.408***	*N/A*	*0.265*	*0.000*	1.380	*0.000*	1.680

Source: SPSS Regression Analysis 2020

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Chapter presents a summarised and abstracted version of the of the research processes and research results and attempt to provide the recommendations for improving the operations of Brands Africa's supply chain activities. Major sections covered in the Chapter include summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and direction for future research.

Summary of the Study

The study focused on analysing the effectiveness of service delivery in fast moving goods supply chains taking Brands Africa as a case study. Some observed supply chain related challenges of Brands Africa that included lower sales volume, high volume of product returns, sale of some expired products, out of stock of some product lines and high prices of some merchandise. The major objectives of the study were based on assessing the performance of Brands Africa on supplier contact supply chain activities, marketing contact supply chain activities, overall market satisfaction with Brands Africa's supply chain, and the relationship between supply chain activities and overall market satisfaction. A pragmatic research paradigm was used in collecting data from a cross-sectional survey sample of 87 respondents and a case study sample of 5 research participants. The mixed methodology approach used a survey questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide to collect data from the respondents. Quota sampling and judgmental sampling techniques were used to establish the research participants. The major challenges faced in carrying the study were the limited time, lower response rate, poor access to respondents' e-mails and use of one approach of administering the survey questionnaire.

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The key findings of the study on supplier contact were that communication with suppliers (mean=4.40), good relationships with suppliers (mean=4.18), good relationship with wholesalers and retailers (mean=4.11) and excellent system of importing goods into Zambia (mean=4.10) showed positive performance of Brands Africa's supply chain. The supplier contact activities were also rated as acceptably positive to Brands Africa through hypothesis testing. On the marketing contact activities the study found that marketing planning and forecasting (mean=4.35), marketing research and information system (mean=4.23), merchandising services (mean =4.37), advertising services (mean =4.67) and sales promotion activities (mean =4.11) were well done by Brands Africa's supply chain. The overall one sample mean test showed the general acceptability of the marketing contact activities of Brands Africa's supply chain. On the overall satisfaction of stakeholders with Brands Africa's supply chain activities the key findings are that more positive results were on high quality of merchandise (mean=4.39), good market image and reputation (mean=4.28), good co-ordination with supply chain stakeholders 9mean=4.09) and having pleasure in dealing with Brands Africa (mean=4.35). The overall satisfaction one sample mean test showed the positive performance of brands Africa to supply chain stakeholders. A significant relationship of r=0.639 at p-value of 0.000 was established between the supply chain independent variables of Brands Africa and overall satisfaction of stakeholders. These key findings led to the conclusions given in the next section.

CONCLUSION

i. Supplier Contact Supply Chain Activities Performance of Brands Africa in Zambia

The study concluded that supplier contact was strongest on communication with suppliers, having a good system of importing goods to Zambia and good relationships with suppliers. Relatively weaker supplier contact performance was on dealer consultancy services and on inventory financing capacity. Supplier contact performance was positive and above average. The study concludes that having good supplier relationship could be behind most positive performance scores in the study. This was supported by [41] in their analysis of supplier relationship in the supply chain system of a company.

ii. Marketing Contact Supply Chain Activities Performance of Brands Africa in Zambia

The study concluded that good advertising services, good merchandising services, effective marketing research activities and market planning by Brands Africa were mainly behind the success of its marketing contact supply chain activities. Some relatively weak marketing contact activities were on retailing support services, consumer complaints handling systems and electronic marketing services. The study concludes that marketing contact activities were significantly above average level of supply chain performance.

iii. Overall Satisfaction of Stakeholders with Brands Africa's Supply Chain Activities

The study concluded that fast moving goods supply chains are satisfactory to stakeholders if quality of merchandise is high, market image and reputation is high and when partners have pleasure in doing business with a focal company. Some relatively weak areas of Brands Africa are concluded to be on inadequacy of inventory levels, some inefficient supply chain activities and some merchandise prices not being affordable. The study concludes that overall satisfaction of stakeholders was generally above the average levels of acceptability. These

conclusions are in line with [29] on their presentation of key elements in supply chain effectiveness and stakeholder satisfaction.

iv. Regression Relationship Between Supply Chain Activities of Brands Africa and Overall market satisfaction

The study concluded that 40.8% overall satisfaction of stakeholders was influenced by supplier contact activities and marketing contact activities of the fast-moving consumer goods supply chains. The study also concluded that there is a significant relationship between supplier contact and marketing contact activities of Brands Africa with the overall satisfaction of its stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Practical Implications of the Study

The research encourages Brands Africa to upgrade its product exchange, financial exchange, information exchange and social exchange with its suppliers, transporters, wholesalers and retailers. This will maintain and even improve the image of Brands Africa, its relationship with supply chain partners, stocking of quality merchandise and maintain affordable prices for its products. The marketing activities of Brands Africa should support sales promotions, advertising programmes, merchandising processes and stocking of adequate products in retailing shelves. This all ensures that the supply chain activities of Brands Africa are effective and efficient.

Managerial Implications of the Study

Managers of Brands Africa will use the study results in understanding stakeholder interests, expectations and needs pertaining to the company's supply chain operations. Specific operational areas like forecasting, strategic planning, resource allocation and budgeting, consultancy services to partners, warehousing arrangements and importation of merchandise will be carried out smoothly. Negotiation of contracts with logistics firms, managing customer complaints, co-ordination with distributors and contracting marketing research firms will done effectively by managers from the insights generated from this study's findings. The study will also guide managers on cost cutting ways, quality management, ensuring efficient operations and maintaining positive image of Brands Africa.

Academic Implications of the Study

The study that linked supply chain activities to overall stakeholder satisfaction has greater relevance in developing new models and theories in marketing and supply chain management. Issues to do with supply chain infrastructure, inventory management, product quality, transport and logistics, collaboration of supply chain partners, relationship management in supply chains, customer service and marketing activities could be reviewed and used to generate a new theory from in-depth interviews results using grounded theory data analysis skills. The testing of hypotheses and comments made on the mean values of the research results can be incorporated to the conceptual framework and theoretical framework to create a more comprehensive model for guiding policy makers and managers in the fast moving consumer goods market. The theories that will guide the academic contribution of this study include the network theory, relationship marketing theory and the supply chain operations reference model.

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Policy Implications of the Study

The Brands Africa company policy on product management, communication systems, transportation and logistics, human resource compensation and training, accounting and financial management, international purchasing and marketing, and strategic planning will be upgraded by incorporating key results of the study on supplier contact activities, marketing contact activities and overall satisfaction of stakeholders with Brands Africa supply chain processes. The Brands Africa policy on interacting with consumers, retailers, wholesalers, distributors, manufacturers, competitors, logistics firms and principals will be upgraded in light of recommendations and findings from this study. Such policies will articulate issues like quality of merchandise, quantity of merchandise, price range of merchandise, delivery schedules and communication systems. Government policy on competition and consumer protection, importation of basic goods, taxation, exchange rates, quality standards and support of companies could be influenced by some findings of this study. A policy position will assist the government to ensure efficient and effective operations of the related industries and the whole economy. Based on the results of the analysis and recommendations, the Zambian policy makers will be able to formulate and improve policies from an informed position that create a condusive environment for effective service delivery in the FMCG industry as the industry practices scales of economy which in turn increases their marginal growth. When commercial operations improve, the economy's revenue collection also improves.

Replication of the Study and Direction for Future Research

The current study was based in Lusaka city and focused Brands Africa's supply chain partners and processes. Two independent variables were used in analysing the performance of Brands Africa's supply chain and how it could be linked to overall satisfaction of the company's stakeholders. The conclusions were based on 87 respondents of the cross-sectional survey and 5 research participants of the in-depth interviews. The researcher recommends another research to be carried out at national level covering supply chain of other fast-moving consumer goods companies. More variables need to be included in the study so as to establish the relationship between supply chain activities and effectiveness of industry-based supply chains

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