

The Importance of Supply Chain Management Practices in Increasing Customer Satisfaction and Customer Retention: Evidence from Saudi Arabia.

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Abstract:

This study sought to determine the effects of supply chain management practices on customer satisfaction and retention in major retail food companies located in Southern Region of Saudi Arabia. Data collection was done by survey using questionnaire. The number of samples is 208 employees, with the method of convenient sampling. The method of analysis in this study is the multiple linear regression analysis, with SPSS testing reliability and normality, correlation, hypothesis testing, simultaneous effect and the coefficient of determination. The results find a statistically significant and positive relationship between strategic supplier partnership (SSP), customer relationship (CR), Level of information sharing (LIS), level of information quality (LIQ) postponement practice (PP) and customer satisfaction (CS). However, the relationship between Customer Relationship (CR) and customer satisfaction (CS) is considered statistically non-significant and negative. Furthermore, customer satisfaction (CS) is a good predictor of customer retention (CR). This finding can be used implementatively for management to improve the elements supporting the strengthening of supply chain management practices and increasing customer satisfaction and retention in the retail food companies. Nonetheless, the findings of the study help companies to improve the quality of their services, products, and treat customers as their first priority in order to be retained them. Therefore, these guide customers to recommend the firms to others. The results identify the influence of supply chain management practices on the customer satisfaction and retention according to the food retail sector in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Supply Chain Management Practices, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Retention, Saudi Arabia.

1. Introduction

The change of the market from locally to universal led to increase customer demands on the products and services that have lower prices, with high quality, and speed delivery, and increase the variety of items (Braunscheidel, 2005). As stated by Christopher and Towill (2001) getting the suitable product, at the suitable price, at the suitable time to the suitable customer is not only reached to competitive success but also the gate to survival. Depend on that, providing excellent customer service is constantly increasing, and the ability of companies to understand their customers' needs and reach to high level of their satisfaction is becoming

more significant. Most scientists in their work, such as: Francis, and Waiganjo, (2014) ; Lagat, Koech, and Kemboi (2016); Yu, Jacobs, Salisbury, & Enns (2013) note that, the customer satisfaction is the most important part of any supply chain business or logistic business like service sector, manufacturing sector, and supermarket sector

According to previous studies, supply chain management (SCM) plays an integrates roles in business processes beginning from raw material suppliers ending to end users for the product, service, and information (Lambert and Cooper, 2000). SCM is a collaborative way for business

operations through the planning and control of materials and information of suppliers to end consumers (Golroudbary and Zahraee, 2015). At first, SCM was assumed as the logistics of manufacturing and distribution, which extended from consumers and suppliers. However, new SCM model comprises additional business functions, such as comprehensive traders and end customers (Yusuf, Gunasekaran, Musa, Dauda, El-Berishy, Cang). The development of supply chain aims to increase profitability, customer response and ability to add value to the customers; improve the relationship and interdependence among companies (Sukati, Abdul Hamid, Baharun, Tat, & Said, 2011).

Supply chain management (SCM) practices have turned into as a substantial requirement for staying competitive in a universal race and for increasing profitably (Childhouse, & Towill, 2003; Moberg, Cutler, Gross, Speh, 2002; Power, Sohal, Rahman, 2001; Tan, Lyman, Wisner, 2002). Therefore, SCM practices involves the series of activities interested by an organization to enhance effective management of its supply chain as (Koh Demirbag, Bayraktar, Tatoglu, Zaim, 2007). Li, Rao, Ragu-Nathan, Ragu-Nathan, & Rao (2006) identify five concepts of SCM practice during factor analysis: strategic supplier partnership, postponement, customer relationship, level of Information sharing and quality of information sharing.

In Middle East, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is the largest consumer market in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. The analysts forecast the retail market in Saudi Arabia to grow at an annual growth rate of 7.45% during the period 2017-2020 (Santander trade, 2020). The Saudi food retail sector is divided into two categories: modern and traditional grocery retailers. According to Euromonitor International (2020), there were 43,987 food retailers in Saudi Arabia in 2016. Traditional retailers accounted for approximately 87 percent of the outlets, while modern retailers accounted for 13 percent. In terms of total food sales, traditional and modern retailers accounted for 57 percent and 43 percent market share, respectively last year. In 2016, the total number supermarkets and hypermarkets in Saudi Arabia was estimated at 1,255 stores (Euromonitor International, 2020). This is a relatively small number, and accounts for only 2.9 percent of the retail outlets. However, that 2.9 percent of outlets accounted for approximately 37

percent of total grocery sales in Saudi Arabia in 2016 (Euromonitor International, 2020).

The large food retail companies in Saudi Arabia are: Panda Retail, Abdullah Al Othaim Markets, Bin Dawood Holding, Lulu Saudi Hypermarkets LLC, and Saudi Marketing Co. (Argaam, 2020). However it added that, Panda Retail, Bin Dawood, Al Raya Markets, and Farm Superstores accounted for biggest market share in the Southern Region of Saudi Arabia which will be considered in current research (Argaam, 2020).

Previous studies on Saudi Arabia have addressed State of Food Retail Supply Chain in Saudi Arabia conceptual framework (Abunar, Ali, Fazlurabbi & Ismail, 2016). They invited to a precise and factual evaluation of the state of the retail food supply chain in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Improving the performance in all areas of the supply chain is done by working among all its members, including suppliers, manufacturers, distributors and customers as one unit within the company (Copacino, 1996). Hence, reaching to high levels of performance leads to improved customer satisfaction.

The main problems of much research in supply chain management stand out to the lack of empirical evidence supporting the supply chain, and the dynamic nature of the strategic relationships (Lagat, Koech, & Kemboi, 2016). These research just describe how the firms can improve their relationships, but it rarely involves an actual supply chain.

Likewise, most of the research concerning supply networks is operational nature and have been based on case examples of focal companies such as Benetton, Toyota and Nissan (Stock, Stefanie, Boyer, & Harmon, 2010). Lamming, Johnsen, Zheng, & Harland, (2000) [36] indicated that a problem is that these studies emphasized on a particular industry, in most cases is an automotive industry Hence, the managers in other sectors lack the theoretical background to running various types of business since it has several kinds of supply networks. This study was designed to determine the effect of supply chain management (SCM) practices on customer satisfaction and customer retention in the retail food companies in southern region of Saudi Arabia.

2. Theoretical Review

System thinking theory has been used to illustrate the impact of supply chain practices on customer satisfaction. System thinking is an administrative method that enables leadership to view a company as one unit. Senge (1990) mentioned the system thinking theory deals with all the different parts of the system as a whole. Accordingly, Capra (1996) argues that the only way to understand the cause and occurrence of a problem or component is to understand the relationships of parts to the whole.

According to Senge (1990) when the whole system divided into different parts, the interrelationships will be missing. This theory is thus tailored toward systematically explicating the dynamics that characterize the SCM practices. Thus, this theory is designed towards explaining the dynamics that systematically characterize SCM practices. For instance, Strategic supplier partnership, Customer relationship, information sharing (IS), ordering postponement within and across the supply chain must be taken into consideration to properly understand these practices. Hence, Thus, systems thinking theory highlights the effectiveness of various SCM enablers on organizational outcomes, such as customer satisfaction.

3. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

3.1 Customer Retention

Customer retention is one of the most important indicators of the customer satisfaction. From the literature review, it is discovered that customer satisfaction has traditionally been regarded as a fundamental determinant of long-term customer behavior (Oliver, 1980; Yi, 1990). The more satisfied customers are, the greater is their customer retention (Anderson and Sullivam, 1993; Fornell, 1992; Lee, Lee, & Feick, 2001; Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003).

Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Patterson, Johnson, and Spreng, (1997). found that customer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on repurchase intention in a range of services. In the same line, Day, Denton, and Hickner. (1988) stated that client customer satisfaction is unquestionably the key determinant in retaining current clients in professional services. In addition, Kotler (1994) indicated that the key to customer retention is customer satisfaction.

Customer retention is defined as the future propensity of a customer to stay with the service provider (Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003). While some scholars have used the term “future behavioral intentions” to describe the Concept of customer retention (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). In the past, the key to understand the power of a corporation to retain customers was thought to lie in the measurement of customer satisfaction. However, customer satisfaction is not the only required factor to retain customer with the firms and cannot insure customer support for long time (Jones & Sasser, 1995).

3.2 Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction defined as the skill of making customer joyful, by attending to them and responding to their desires (Zhang, Vonderembse, Su Lim, (2003). Attending to the customer’s needs is a specific aspect of a business where it leads to satisfying the customer where it will further contribute towards loyalty and long-term strategic relationship with the manufacturer. Furthermore, Keiningham, Aksoy, Andreassen, Cooil and Wahren (2006) stated that the customer satisfaction is strongly determined by capability of organization to meet customer’s expectations.

Thus, when customers receive services or products according to their perceived expectations, this tend to increase their satisfaction and loyalty. It is crucial to maintain the customers with the highest profit margin. The strong emphasis on customer retention is influenced by the heightened competition between the overseas and local industries, and that is assuming that customers’ retention will definitely achieve cost efficiency (Al-Saa'da, Abu Taleb, Abdallat, Al-Mahasneh, Awni Nimer, & Al-Weshah, 2013).

Nowadays the effect of customer satisfaction on customer retention plays more complex role than any time before (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Oliver, 1999). The literature review recognized customer satisfaction has traditionally been regarded as a most important characteristic of long-term customer behavior (Oliver, 1980; Yi, 1990). Previous research found that the increase level of customer satisfaction has positive and direct related with their customer retention (Anderson and

Sullivam, 1993; Fornell, 1992 [18]; Lee et al., 2001; Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003).

In a study by Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Patterson et al. (1997) it is recognized that, customer satisfaction has a meaningful and positive effect on the repurchasing of a customer in a special classification of services. It is expressed by a team of researchers that customer satisfaction is an indisputable manner in determining the degree of customer retention for the current buyers in the professional services (Day et al., 1988). It is also reiterated by Day et al. (1988) and Kotler (1994) that the customer satisfaction is a significant factor to customer retention

Therefore, this research would like to evaluate the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer retention via the following hypothesis:

H1: Customer satisfaction has a direct positive effect on customer retention.

3.3 Supply Chain Management Practices:

Supply chain practices have been defined as activities that can be done in an effective management way of an organization's supply chain (Li, Lin, Wang & Yan, 2006). For a long time, researchers have defined supply chain management practices (SCMP) through various methods such as that information sharing, materials flow, information flow and postponement strategy, supply chain characteristics, supply chain integration, customer service management, geography proximity, and just in time (Tan, Lyman, & Wisner, 2020).

The SCMP model developed by Tan et al. (2002) presented a basic practice leading to improved organizational performance, financial performance and customer satisfaction. Li, Subba Rao, Ragu-Nathan, & Ragu-Nathan (2005) founded another model of SCMP which includes six practices: strategic supplier partnership, customer relationships, information sharing, information quality, internal lean practices and postponement founded similar model.

A recent study done by Li, Ragu-Nathanb, Ragu-Nathanb, and Subba Raob (2006) include five dimensions of SCM practice (strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship, level of information sharing, quality of information sharing,

and postponement), that have been used as underpinning concept for this study. For that reason, SCMP for current study includes strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship, and level of information sharing, quality of information sharing, and postponing practices.

3.3.1 Strategic supplier partnership

Strategic supplier partnership is defined as the long-term relationship between the organization and its suppliers. The effectiveness of the strategic partnership relationship with suppliers makes an essential contribution toward SCM (Wisner & Tan, 2003). Sharing risks and rewards, and maintaining long-term relationships is an inevitable result of this close relationship (Cooper & Ellram, 1993; Thatte, 2007). Long-term relationship between the buyer and supplier leads to have more power of firm-supplier integration

Customer relations depend on the company's ability to deliver products and provide services to local or international customers at the right time, and place, in a suitable quantity and quality. Customer link points are represented by sharing product information with customers, receiving customer orders, interact with customers to manage demand, after placing the order system, share the status of orders with customers on scheduling orders, and product delivery stage (Lee, So, & Tang, 2000). Qu, Jiao, Zhao, Ren, Smits, Kere, and Nister (2010) emphasized that long-term relationship with supplier facilitates in getting positive results in an arrangement of activities become clear in: preferable product quality, reduced lead-time, and graceful in customer service that leading to customer satisfaction.

H2: strategic supplier partnership leads to increased customer satisfaction.

3.3.2 Customer Relationship

Customer relationship practices play a major role in raising the level of performance and organizational success within the supply chain management (Ellram, 1991). The integration in supply chain goes in two directions once in downstream with customer and upstream with supplier, which makes every entity supplier and customer in the same time. (Thatte, 2007). Therefore, the success of competitive business directly depends on the strength of the relationship between the customer and the supplier, and this in turn increases the

effectiveness of the supply chain management practiced by organizations. The customer relationship component is an internal component of an organizations' marketing strategy that increases their sales and profits. Differentiate production from competitors, maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty increase the value provided to customers, all these factors and others depend on the close relationship with customers. (Thatte, 2007).

As companies compete to reduce the cost of products and improve their quality, this allows customers to search for the products that have high quality, best service and faster delivery. Relationship with customers has become one of the most important strategic issues that companies seek to achieve. The empirical study findings confirmed that relational benefits such as core service, supplementary service, and after sale service for customers has a positive effect on organizational outcomes (Ismail, 2009). The strenuous efforts made by companies to strengthen the relationships in the supply chain is reflected in the raising of the level of customer satisfaction.

H3: customer relationship leads to increased customer satisfaction.

3.3.3 Level of Information sharing

Information sharing carries two concepts: the first refers to quantity, while the other refers to quality. Both aspects are important SCM practices and have been treated as independent variables in previous SCM studies (Moberg, Cutler, Gross, Speh, 2002; Monczka, Petersen, Handfield, Ragatz, 1998). The quantitative aspect (level of information sharing) refers to the scope in which critical and an appropriate information is communicated to the supply chain partners (Monczka, Petersen, Handfield, Ragatz, 1998). Monitoring the progress of products and orders as they pass through their progress in the various processes of the supply chain depends mainly on sharing information and accessing private data between business partners (Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002).

Accordingly, making the best decisions and taking appropriate procedure based on a clear vision depends entirely on sharing information with business partners (Davenport, Harris, De Long, & Jacobson, 2001[8]; Thatte, 2007). Landeros, and Monczka, (1989) has pointed out that one of the most essential elements in building a strong supply

chain is sharing information. According to Stein & Sweat (1998) [73], Working as a single unit is the result of regularly exchanging information between supply chain partners. In addition to that, sharing information leads to understanding customers' needs and responding to market change. Previous studies showed that the exchange information contribute suppliers and buyers reaching to the best alternatives in terms of reducing the cost of storage, manufacturing alternatives and transportation methods.

In addition, the researchers' findings Narasimhan and Nair (2005) indicated that the operational synergies between the supply chain partners clearly increase according to the extent of information sharing. Sharing information on SCM is based on the content of the information that will be shared, the quality on shared information, and companies' ability in transforming the information into supply chain strategy that increases the operational activities performance (Lee & Whang, 2001[41]; Moberg et al., 2002) [53]. Placing information as a strategic asset fast-flowing and without imperfection increases customer satisfaction (Suhong, Subba Rao, Ragu-Nathan, & Ragu-Nathan, 2009[76]).

H4: Level of Information sharing leads to increased customer satisfaction.

3.3.4 Quality of information sharing

Previous studies are replete with of the results impact of ineffective, inaccurate and late information on the performance of supply chain (Lee, and Whang, 2001 ; Metters, 1997). Variation of objectives, exploitation of supply chain partners' behavior and heterogeneity of information across the supply chain lead to reduce the quality of information sharing (Feldmann, & Müller, 2003). It appears that some organizations distort information, which not only reflect on their competitors, but also into organization's suppliers and customers (Mason-Jones, Towill 1997).

It is noted that there is concealment of more than the minimum information, as it is believed that the disclosure of this information will lose managers their authority (Berry, Towill, Wadsley 1994). Based on these trends, it is evident that the quality of the shared information has become a sensitive and influential position on the SCM (Feldmann, 2003).

Among the dimensions of the quality of information exchange are its accuracy, timeliness, adequacy and

reliability (Moberg, Cutler, Gross, Speh, 2002; Monczka et al. 1998). In other hand, sharing information is very significant, especially its effect on SCM is highlighted in terms of what information was shared, when it was shared, how it was shared, and with whom it was shared (Chizzo, 1998; Holmberg, 2000). The dimensions of quality information would give satisfaction to customer, especially to those with time constraints and to the impulsive buyers (Khristianto., Kertahadi, and Suyadi, 2012).

Furthermore, information that is provided must match the customers' needs in order to increase its effectiveness. The quality of information sharing also leads to better purchasing decision, which nurtures the purchasing habit, subsequently increases customer's satisfaction (Szymanski & Hise, 2000).

H5: Quality of information sharing leads to increased customer satisfaction.

3.3.5 Postponement practice

Supplier practice is defined as practice starting from the manufacturing activity and then sourcing and ending with the last point in supply chain which is delivery (Van Hoek, 1998; Beamon, 1998; Johnson & Davis, 1998; Naylor, Willimon, and Osterberg, 1996; Van & Voss, 1999). Postponement provides high flexibility for organizations in terms of developing different versions of products based on changing customer needs, to differentiate a product or to modify a demand function. The postponement strategy depends on two steps: the first one is to determining these steps, and the amount of these steps that will be postponed (Beamon, 1998). Postponement focus on match the kinds of manufactured goods or services demands to all potential customers needs for a specific product of a company, and focusing into the internal structure of the logistical support system (Fisher, 1997; Pagoh Copper, 1998; Fisher, 1997; Pagh & Copper, 1998).

H6: Postponement practice leads to increased customer satisfaction.

3.4 Conceptual Framework

The present study adopted Lagat, Koech, and Kemboi (2016) framework and focused on five dimensions of supply chain management practices: strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship,

and level of information sharing, quality of information sharing, and postponing practices. The overall objective of the study was to assess the effect of supply chain management on customer satisfaction, and effect of customer satisfaction on retention. The conceptual framework below depicts the relationships of the variables.

4. Research Methodology

Research Design: The purpose of this research design is to guarantee the researcher to answer the initial research questions in clarity. This study is a quantitative research. According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2000) quantitative research is defined as a method used to rationalize the phenomena through numerical data collection and analyzing using mathematical or statistical techniques. . Regarding to Aliaga and Gunderson (2000) quantitative research is defined as a method used to rationalize the phenomena through numerical data collection and analyzing using mathematical or statistical techniques.

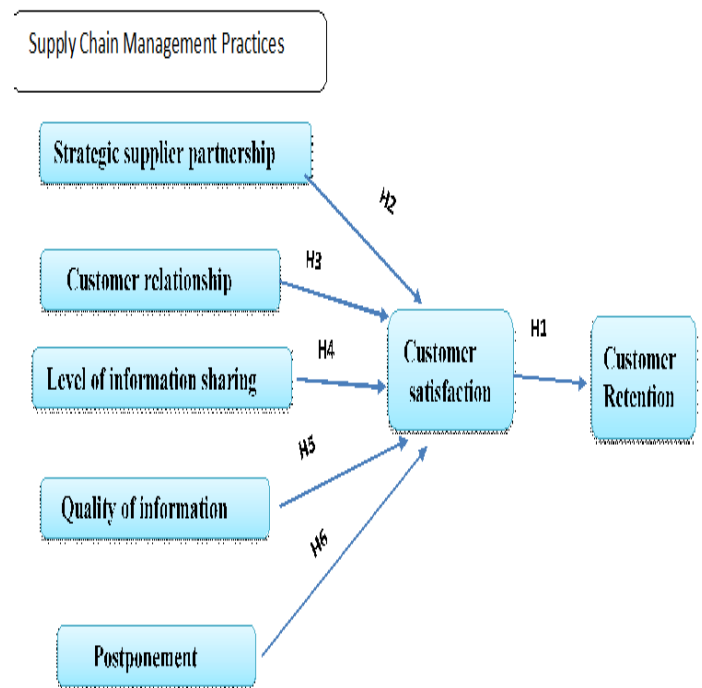


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The study intends to examine the relationship between supply chain management practices and customer satisfaction from one hand, and the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer intention on other hand. Hence, regression analysis research design is most suitable in this research.

Furthermore, this study uses survey questionnaires as research design. The design is preferred as it is convenient to measure and analyze the data obtained from the survey. According to Kelley, Clark, Brown and Sitzia (2003), survey questionnaires should be carefully designed, and questions should be easily analyzable and not vague. Taking this into contemplations, the questions was designed in direct and concise manner in simple language. The research focusses on food retail companies in the Southern Region of Saudi Arabia.

	Bachelor	81	38.6 %
	Master	20	9.5%
	Ph.D.	2	1.0%
Income SR	1000 <	18	8.6 %
	>1000 <3000	102	48.6 %
	>3000 < 6000	73	34.8 %
	7000 SR and above	15	7.1 %

4.1 Sampling Method

Sampling plan for this research is decided as it accords with the objective of this research. For this study, the proposed sampling method for this study is non-probability sampling technique. Convenient sampling is a technique of non- probability sampling technique which comprises of selecting random those who are relevant and easiest to obtain the sample (Saunders et al, 2016). Convenient sampling is also referred as accidental sampling as respondents may be selected purely as they happened to be located at the particular place where the researcher is conducting data collection (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2015). The respondents of this study are the employees of food retail companies in the Southern Region. Convenient sampling is easy and affordable, as well as the subjects are accessible. According to Wilson, Vanvoorhis and Morgan (2007), in order to test correlation and regression of a data, the sample size should be at least 50. Hence for this study, the sample size will be 208 samples.

4.2 Demographic Information

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the respondents which comprises of gender, age, education level, and the monthly income. Overall 250 questionnaires were distributed, and a total of 208 questionnaires were collected which has an 83.2 % return rate.

Table 1: Respondent's Profile

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	208	100%
	Female	0	0%
Age	< 25 years	52	24.8%
	25 - 36	84	40.0%
	37 - 45	51	24.3%
	46 and above	21	10%
Education level	Secondary School	105	50.0%

4.2 Research instrument

The research instrument of this study is using questionnaire that has been developed and used in the previous studies. This is mainly to ensure that the questionnaire design is affiliating with the research objectives and research questions. The questionnaire is separated into 4 parts, part A on demographic profile of the respondents, part B on supply chain management practices which includes strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship, level of information sharing, quality of information sharing, and postponing practices, part C on customer satisfaction, and lastly part D on customer retention.

The study adapted 5 point Likert scale which allows the researcher to analyze the data clearly through comparisons and through reporting how negatively or positively a respondent was inclined to the element in the questionnaire (Johns, 2010). Likert scales in this research consists of five response alternatives: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not sure, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Furthermore, Table 2 explains the classification of questions in the questionnaire used and where it was adapted.

Table 2: Questions' sources

5. Findings

5.1 Validity and Reliability

To test the validity of variables and indicators, the authors use the value of *r*. The value of *r* is calculated and compared with the *r*-table; the results obtained from the calculation of the variables and indicators in this study show that these are valid. When the validity test is done, we move to the next test which is the reliability test.

As a purpose to perform reliability test for supply chain management practices customer satisfaction and, Customer retention. Cronbach's Alpha was selected as preferred method as it was used in a study conducted by Hague and Islam (2013). Cronbach's Alpha is designed to measure the reliability of the variables or items through its consistency in the test (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004). Burns and Burns (2013) stated that Cronbach's Alpha range between 0.7 to 0.9 is considered to be very good and that the research is reliable. Based on the table.3 it was observed that all variables exceeded 0.8, which is in preferable range.

Table 3. Reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Strategic supplier partnership	5	0.882
Customer relationship	5	0.883
Level of information sharing	5	0.890
Quality of information sharing	5	0.886
Postponement practice	7	0.894
Customer satisfaction	5	0.883
Customer retention	5	0.898

5.2 Normality Analysis

A research study with large samples require normality test before doing another analysis (Arabmazar & Schmidt, 1982). According to Kline (2011), the assumption of multivariate normal distribution becomes a major concern when the skewness and kurtosis statistics are greater than ± 3 and ± 10 , respectively. Table 4, all data falls between ± 3 to ± 10 hence all variables are normally distributed.

Table 4. Normality Analysis

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
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Source	Variables						
	SSP	CR	LIS	LIQ	PP	CS	CR _e
	Questions Number						
	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-31	32-36	37-41
Tan, Kannan, Handfield (1998);		√					
Vonderembse, Tracey (1999)	√						
Stuart (1997)	√						
Shin , Collier, Wilson (2000)	√	√					
Monczka, Petersen , Handfield, Ragatz (1998)	√		√	√			
Claycomb, Droge , Germain (1999),		√					
Lee, Kim(1999), Walton (1996)			√	√			
Saghiri, Barnes (2016)					√		
Chen and Paulraj (2004)						√	
Jessica, (2009) ; Wang, (2013)							√

Strategic supplier partnership	-0.951	.468
Customer relationship	-1.086	.475
Level of information sharing	-1.010	.311
Quality of information sharing	-1.518	2.048
Postponement practice	-.767	-.138
Customer satisfaction	-.861	.939
Customer retention	-.678	-.073

5.3 Correlation Test

The descriptive and Pearson correlation results are shown in Table 5. From the results, customer retention (CR_e) has positive and significant correlated with all of the independent variables which are strategic supplier partnership (SSP) ($r = 0.582$, $p < 0.01$), customer relationship (CR) ($r = 0.555$, $p < 0.01$), Level of Information sharing (LIS) ($r = 0.525$, $p < 0.01$), Level of Information Quality (LIQ) ($r = 0.553$, $p < 0.01$), Postponement practice(PP), customer satisfaction (CS) ($r = 0.478$, $p < 0.01$).

Similarly, customer satisfaction (CS) is significantly and positively correlated with both strategic supplier partnership (SSP) ($r = 0.681$, $p < 0.01$), customer relationship (CR) ($r = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$), Level of Information sharing (LIS) ($r = 0.595$, $p < 0.01$), Level of Information Quality (LIQ) ($r = 0.662$, $p <$

0.01), and Postponement practice(PP) ($r = 0.606$, $p < 0.01$), Following that, Postponement practice(PP), is significantly and positively correlated with strategic supplier partnership (SSP) ($r = 0.607$, $p < 0.01$), customer relationship (CR) ($r = 0.617$, $p < 0.01$), Level of Information sharing (LIS) ($r = 0.548$, $p < 0.01$), and Level of Information Quality (LIQ) ($r = 0.504$, $p < 0.01$).

Consequently, Level of Information Quality (LIQ) is significantly and positively correlated with strategic supplier partnership (SSP) ($r = 0.702$, $p < 0.01$), customer relationship (CR) ($r = 0.566$, $p < 0.01$), and Level of Information sharing (LIS) ($r = 0.582$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, Level of Information sharing (LIS) is significantly and positively correlated with strategic supplier partnership (SSP) ($r = 0.535$, $p < 0.01$), and customer relationship (CR) ($r = 0.695$, $p < 0.01$). Finally, with customer relationship (CR) is significantly and positively association with strategic supplier partnership (SSP) ($r = 0.650$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 5. Correlation test

	SS P	CR	LIS	LI Q	PP	CS	CR e
SSP	1	.650**	.535**	.702**	.607**	.681**	.582**
CR		1	.695**	.566**	.617**	.552**	.555**
LIS			1	.582**	.458**	.595**	.525**
LIQ				1	.504**	.662**	.553**
PP					1	.606**	.478**
CS						1	.566**
CRe							1

5.4 Hypotheses Testing

5.4.1 The Relationship between Supply Chain Management Practices and Customer Satisfaction

In this research, regression will be used to analyze both research objectives. According to Table 6, the result showed that strategic supplier partnership, Level of information sharing, Level of Information Quality, and Ordering Postponement have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction. The results also showed that Customer Relationship ($\beta = -0.113$, $p > 0.05$) does not have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction. In addition, ordering postponement contributes the most to customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.260$, $p < 0.05$).

The R-square value represents the total percentage of supply chain management practices contribute on customer satisfaction. The value of r-square is 60.6%, hence all variables under supply chain management practices are good predictors of customer satisfaction.

Table 6: Regression Analysis between supply chain practices and customer satisfaction.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.778(a)	.606	.596	.40062

Coefficients (a)

Model	Unstandardize d Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1					
(Constant)	.291	.230		1.262	.208
strategic supplier partnership	.305	.076	.287	4.031	.000
Customer Relationship	-.105	.068	-.113	-1.547	.123
Level of information sharing	.254	.063	.259	4.001	.000
Level Of Information Quality	.253	.069	.243	3.664	.000
Postponement practice	.224	.052	.260	4.330	.000

a Dependent Variable: Mean Customer Satisfaction

5.5 The Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and customer orientation

More over in table 7. The R-square value represents the percentage of customer satisfaction contribute on customer retention. The value of r-square is 32 %, Therefore customer satisfaction is a good predictors of customer retention.

Table 7. Regression Analysis between customer satisfaction and customer retention.

Model Summary (b)

Model	R	R Squar e	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.566(a)	.320	.317	.69824

6. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

The results of the study indicate that the strategic supplier partnership presence increases customer satisfaction. Accordingly, the companies must take into account the quality of the suppliers selected. Moreover, in many cases problems are solved in cooperation with suppliers by continuously improving the quality of services and products

provided. Likewise, Improvement programs in jointly with major suppliers play a vital role in increasing customer satisfaction.

Consistent with findings, Qu, Jiao, Zhao, Ren, Smits, Kere, and Nister, (2010) recurs that The long-term relationship with suppliers leads to high quality production, reduced lead time, and agile customer service whom increases customer satisfaction. It was concluded from findings that improving the supplier's quality products is outcomes of solving their problems in cooperation with retail food companies. Simultaneously, share risks and reward, and maintain the relationship on long term highly dependent on close relationship supply chain partner (Landeros & Monczka, 1989; Cooper & Ellram, 1993; Thatte, 2007). Therefore, the close relationship between SCM partners leads to improve customer satisfaction by managing their demands in the right way.

It is evident from the findings that customer relationship has negatively significantly affected customer satisfaction Thus, leads to low level of interaction with the customers and weakens response and reliability standards that affects negatively the relationship with customers. Likewise, it is very critical to evaluate and measure customer satisfaction regularly, define their future expectations, facilitate their ability to request assistance, and evaluate the relationship with customers periodically. Previous research by Tan, Kannan, and Handfield, (1999), and Thatte, (2007) indicate that the Integration between suppliers and customers in upstream and downstream leads to the success of the supply chain management. Therefore, every customer is supplier and vice versa in the supply chain which will promote customer satisfaction.

In line with finding Moberg et al., (2002) and, Thatee, (2007) the better the relationship with customers, the more positive the company's success, and the enhanced customer satisfaction. However, changes in the course of time in the relationship established through customer relationship management may affect customer satisfaction. Thus, information gathered from the various interactions with the organization may positively or negatively affect customer's satisfaction levels (Mazursky & Geva 1989; Mittal, Kumar, and Tsiros, 1999).

Therefore, the lack of multiple options, the low level of services and the quality of production all lead to low levels of customer satisfaction.

Research demonstrates that level of information sharing have contributes significantly to customer satisfaction. The effort in providing information and making it visible to other parties in the supply chain allows for faster and accurate business decisions that translates as a source of competitive advantage (Moberg et al., 2002). Therefore, achieving customer satisfaction requires viewing information as a strategic asset and ensuring regular flow and availability the information to supply chain members.

Findings similarly proved that, information sharing has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Relative to outcomes, Simatupang & Sridharan (2002) mention that sharing KPI and processes data increases the visibility of the supply chain, which in turn reflected in increasing customer satisfaction. By the same token, sharing available information with supply chain members increases customer satisfaction, and is a source of competitive advantage (Monczka et al., 1998). Additionally, sharing information regularly between members of the supply chain helps them understand customer needs and be able to satisfy them (Stein & Sweat, 1998). Simultaneously, immediate feedback among supply chain members plays a prominent role in improving supply chain performance by meeting customer needs and increasing competitive advantage (Allmendinger, 2005).

The study shows that, level of information quality contributes the plat a key role in enhancing customer satisfaction. This is consistent with the finding of Lagat et al. (2016) that information quality not only contributed the most towards customer satisfaction, but also should be reliable, accurate and adequate to have higher customer satisfaction.

Sharing relevant and crucial information with supply chain partners allows the manufacturers to make better decisions on ordering, production, planning, distribution, and so on (Pereira, 2009). This will antecedently enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the supply chain in meeting customer needs and desires along with responding to

demands fluctuating and reducing uncertainty in the market (Li & Lin, 2006). Nonetheless, the impact of information sharing on SCM largely depends on the kind of information shared, quality of shared information and the organizations' capability in using and translating the information into a supply chain strategy and operational activities (Lee & Whang, 2000; Moberg et al., 2002).

The findings showed that postponement practice has significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Accordingly, there is a need to design products depend on standard assembly, delaying product and assembly activities to the last location close to customers in the supply chain. In consonance with findings, Wallin, Johnny Rungtusanatham, and Rabinovich, (2006) reported that postponement allows an organization to be flexible in developing different versions of the product and in this way, the organization is able to meet changing customer needs, and to differentiate a product or to modify a demand function hence enhancing customer satisfaction. In contrast, Li et al. (2006) stated that display postponement depends on market characteristics, product type, and not applicable in all situations. Therefore, display postponement may not be a strong a strong indication of SCM practice.

Based on the findings that customer satisfaction enhances customer retention, there is need for firms to embrace and adopt the marketing concept that allows for being more effective than competitors in creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value to their chosen target markets (Ibojo, 2015). He has also recommended that organizations should take cross-functional decisions on marketing and non-marketing activities in order to satisfy their customers for more effective customer retention.

Study findings affirmed that customer satisfaction has a significant effect on customer retention. Subsequently, customer satisfaction leads to customer retention, which in turn generates a loyal customer base that is an added advantage to a firm (Lagat, Koech, and Kemboi, 2016). In the same way Gustafsson, Johnson, and Roos, (2005), have affirmed that the complexity of customer loyalty can be explained through focusing on three prominent drivers of retention: overall customer satisfaction, affective commitment, and calculative commitment.

Further, Copacino, (2000) was of the opinion that dissatisfied customers are likely to tell nine other people while satisfied customers are likely to tell five other people about the good service and treatment that they have revealed. As long as, when customer satisfaction is enhanced, customers are more likely to be retained.

From the study findings, it was that supply chain management practices enhances customer satisfaction and customer retention. Therefore there is need for retail food companies to consider developing strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship, level of information sharing, quality of information sharing, and postponement practice, There is a need for companies to improve the quality of their services and products and treat customers as their first priority in order to be retained and also recommend the firm's products/services to others. This study addressed the effect of supply chain management practices on customer satisfaction and customer retention in Najran region of Saudi Arabia. This study recommends that another study be done in another setting as there are differences purchasing behavior of the consumers.

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