

Personal Credibility and Supply Chain Integration in Pharmaceutical Firms in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study evaluated the role of personal credibility on supply chain integration in the pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria. the purpose of the study was to determine the effect of personal credibility on interpersonal relationship and supply chain in the pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria. The study adopted the cross sectional research design the population for the study comprised the ten quoted pharmaceutical firms listed on the floor of the Nigerian stock exchange as at December 2019.50 respondents participated in the survey these were drawn from knowledgeable personality in the pharmaceutical firms. The study found that personal credibility has positive and significant relationships supply chain integration.

Introduction

The importance of the Nigerian pharmaceutical firms to the provision of harmless, unadulterated, quality, and effective products to satisfy the healthcare challenges and needs of the public cannot be over-stressed. Successful production and distribution of vital pharmaceutical products and services by firms in the pharmaceutical sector would curtail penetration of the market with bogus, substandard products, reduce peoples' dependence on untrustworthy local herbal concoctions and enhance the economy (Ikoni, Olaniyi, Alawode & Iranloye, 2014). In the business context, no organization can succeed without credibility Herbig & Milewicz (1995) submitted that credibility must first be acknowledged before an organization's message and intent will have any effect on its end users. Credibility is the "believability of a firm's intents at a particular moment in time". Barnes *et al.* (2015) opined that personal credibility is dependent on durable performances, achiever archives, responsibility, and loyalty to customers. This study seeks to examine the effect of firm's personal credibility on its ability to integrate its supply chain functions effectively.

Statement of the problem

Previous studies on personal credibility and supply chain integration show insufficient solutions to the difficulties encountered by customers and firms in the pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria. Most authors in recent scientific journals dealt with personal credibility and supply chain integration problems related to other industries and environment. Ali *et al.* (2010) examined "supply chain integration: an empirical study on manufacturing firms in Malaysia", Gligor & Holcomb (2013) studied "the role of personal relationships in supply chains: An exploration of buyers and suppliers of logistics services", Kemunto (2014) studied "supply chain integration practices and organizational performance of multinational firms in Kenya", Njagi and Ogutu (2014) examined "the role of supply chain integration on supply chain performance in Kenyan state corporations", Bill *et al.* (2016) studied "enablers of supply chain integration Interpersonal and inter-organizational relationship perspectives", Barnes *et al.*(2015) studied "Interpersonal factors as drivers of quality and

performance in western-Hong Kong inter-organizational business relationships”, Ugbam and Okoro (2017) did “a strategic study of the Nigerian pharmaceutical sector: organizational leadership, market-share, and competitive performance”,

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between personal credibility relationship and supply chain integration in the pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria.

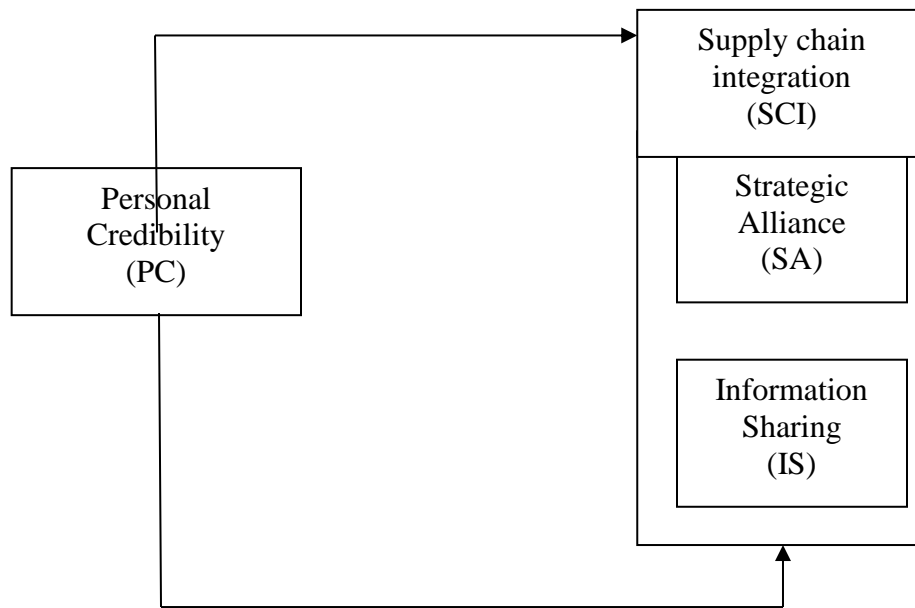


Fig 1 Conceptual framework on Personal credibility and supply chain integration
Source: Bill, Paul, Yuanfei, Baofeng & Sanjay (2016). Measures of Supply Chain Integration were adapted from the work of Zhao, Huo, Selend & Yeunga (2011).

Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the following pertinent research questions are raised.

1. Does personal credibility relate to strategic alliance?
2. Does personal communication relate to information sharing?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide the study.

Ho1: Personal credibility has no significant relationship with strategic alliance in the pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria

Ho2: Personal credibility has no significant relationship with information sharing in the pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

This study is domiciled in the Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Scholars of interpersonal relationship utilize several theories to help explain and predict human interaction. One such theory, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, attempts to explain how human beings utilize communicative strategies to reduce uncertainty regarding other human beings. The theory suggests that human beings are uncomfortable with uncertainty and seek the means to predict the trajectory of social interactions. In attempting to reduce that uncertainty, people tend to utilize passive, active, and interactive strategies to help predict and explain someone's behavior during an interaction (Floyd, 2017).

The Concept of Personal Credibility

Personal credibility is determined by the attitude of the recipient which references the extent to which the basis/source is perceived to be believable (McCroskey, 1998). He identified three indicators of personal credibility, namely; competence, character, and caring. According to Teven and McCroskey (1997) competence which is a derivative of credibility focuses on a person's or group of person's expertise or knowledge in a particular phenomenon. Character represents "goodness" (i.e., trustworthiness, reliability) of a person or a group of person Frymier and Thompson (1992) indicated that caring focuses on whether a person or group of persons exhibit empathy for the welfare of others. The concepts of credibility and decent character/reputation are interconnected. Herbig and Milewicz (1995) submitted that a decent character/reputation produces credibility. This is because the more reliable and trustworthy a person, the more likely it is to influence others. Swift (2001) considered reputation as a consequence of trustworthiness, which is said to be an indicator of the concept of personal credibility. Gulati (1995) as cited in Wang (2018) classified personal credibility into; character-based personal credibility and reliability-based personal credibility. Character-based personal credibility refers to a discernment of responsibility and loyalty based on social connection in the business environment, while reliability-based personal credibility refers to

an individual’s actual behavior, conduct and performance. Bill *et al.* (2016) submitted that personal credibility is the ability to gain confidence, reliability, and trust from other individuals over time; it is built gradually. Personal credibility is acknowledged as a basis for the development of business relationship (Mavondo & Rodrigo, 2001).

The Concept of Supply Chain Integration (SCI)

Integration refers to the degree to which different undertakings and processes work together in as unified a manner. Academic scholars and business practitioners consider supply chain integration as a collaborative process connecting various functions and supply chain networks in terms of supply chain flows (Frolich & Westbrook, 2001). The supply chain is an interwoven set of interactions which connects customers to suppliers. It includes a sequence of intermediate stages such as production, warehousing and distribution (Agarwal & Shankar, 2002). Supply chain management (SCM) refers to the control and coordination of products, information and financial flow from the point of origin to the final consumer as well as after sales service and the product returns (Lee, 2000). Supply Chain Management (SCM) is a series of interconnected activities related to the transformation and movement of raw material to finished goods till it reaches the end users. It is shown in the diagram below.

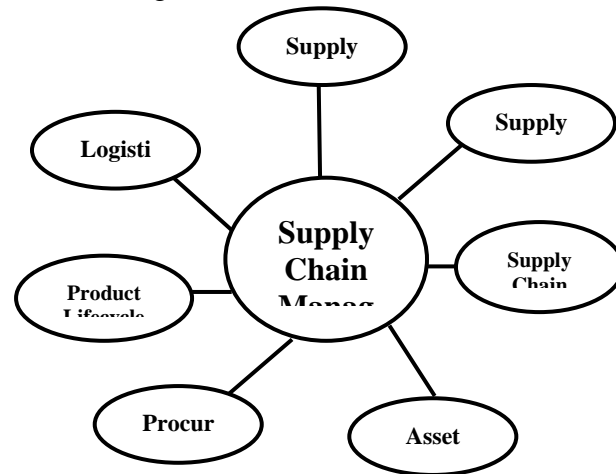


Fig 2: Activities of Supply Chain Management

Source: Dewan, Fabian, Paulus, Thomas & Giuseppe (2012)

Njagi and Ogutu (2014) opined that supply chain integration is the use of technology to reinforce the control of various business functions with a platform to connect the different systems at each business and the transactional workflow needed to move raw materials to

finished products and the data interchange between various stakeholders in the process. Supply chain integration has been recognized as a prerequisite of competitive capability by both business practitioners and scholars (Tarn, David & Beaumont, 2002). The growth in information and communication technologies, electronic supply chain management has made it possible for firms to utilize their supply chain networks as a competitive arsenal (Barlow & Feng, 2007). Products and services are delivered reliably 24hrs daily, faster and without impairment and it constitute the competitive advantage competitors. With this, tighter coordination with suppliers and distributors is now encouraged (Mentzer *et al.* 2001) as cited in (Kemunto, 2014). It is a vital paradigm shift that helps firms competes as supply chains instead of stand-alone firms.

Measures of Supply Chain Integration

Supply chain integration (SCI) is achieved through a mishmash between indicators of interpersonal relationship and inter-organizational criteria. Therefore, we discourse supply chain integration (SCI) through the three dimensions of strategic alliances, information sharing, and process coordination. Adopting the views of Zhao *et al.* (2011), the measures of supply chain integration include strategic alliance, information sharing and process coordination.

Strategic Alliance

The term “alliance” is a pact between two or more entities to choose a set of goals and objectives. In most scientific studies, authors have used the term alliances and strategic alliances interchangeably because the difference between both concepts has not been examined. Contractor and Ra (2000) defined an alliance as a contractual exploit between two or more parties related to some risk management. Alliances are a mutual dependence among entities bonded by common goals and objectives. For instance, to achieve customer satisfaction, loyalty, competitive advantage, exchanging information and resources (Standifer & Bluedorn, 2006; Jeffrey *et al.* 2008; Gomes-Casseres, 2008) as cited in (Remigijus & Giedrius, 2013). According to Barringer & Harrison, (2000) an alliance is a covenant between two or more entities established on exchange. Seppälä (2004) on his part; underlined some specific characteristics that differentiate alliances from strategic alliances. Alliances can be considered cooperation between two or more parties in their activity level and quite often in business management. He examined strategic alliances as a higher level of cooperation among some entities. This cooperation blossoms and changes into a partnership and achievement of strategic goals and objectives. Porter (1990) considered strategic alliances as long-term contracts or short-term associations among enterprises, which are more imperative than market transactions. Kale and Singh (2009) indicated that they could be in the form of traditional agreements, sale –purchase agreements, franchise, and licensing.

Information Sharing

The value of information is jeopardized if it is not shared amongst relevant parties. Information flow is an integral aspect of supply chain management; it is one of the major supply chain flows (Lambert, Cooper & Pagh, 1998). But the degree of interpersonal relationship

determines the success of relevant information sharing. According to Monczka *et al.* (1998) information sharing is the degree of information that is being transferred to the supply chain members or partners which is important and exclusive in nature. Information sharing also relates to activities of dispensing valuable information among people, systems, or organizational components in an open environment (Roaimah, Ramayah, May-Chuin, Tan & Rusinah, 2010). Information sharing is the process of passing relevant information from one person/group of persons to another. Information sharing could be achieved manually or electronically via certain systems, especially with the help of information and communications technologies (ICTs) (Hajli, & Lin, 2016). Sun and Yen (2005) submitted that information sharing mechanisms should be able to identify ‘what to share’, ‘whom to share’, ‘how to share’, and ‘when to share’ of which if appropriately addressed would curtail the cost of sharing, information shortages, information overload and improve supply chain responsiveness. Singh (1996) indicated that information is delicate to firms’ success, hence must be managed at three diverse stages: before sales, during sales and after sales. Huo *et al.* (2014) emphasized that information should be shared within and across supply chain members to enhance adequate supply chain integration. The quality of information shared could break or make a firm, as high-quality information can assist organizations to improve information exchange among supply chain partners (Moberg, Cutler, Gross & Speh, 2002). However, low quality of information can distort the information flow in the supply chain. Ramayah and Omar (2010) opined that information sharing is vital because it offers a tool for harmonization and integration of various processes and activities along the chain supply. The effective and efficient flow of products and services is a function of adequate information sharing among supply chain members (Lee, Padmanabhan & Whang, 1997). Information sharing influences the supply chain members’ attitudes, performances and decision-making process.

Personal Credibility and Supply Chain Integration

Personal credibility ensues when an individual/organization can be relied on to do what it promised it will do. It can inspire supply chain members to gain trust over time and develop interactions that will generate the strong will sustain an interpersonal relationship and inter-organizational relationship (Luo, 2007), so it can give supply chain members the confidence to make dedicated efforts within supply chain integration. Compared with subjective personal affection, personal credibility is more objective as it is based more on facts and records (Wang, 2018). Personal credibility can replicate the approach and behavior accrued from historical interactions. With the confidence and trust obtained through good personal credibility, firms can be timely and reduce costs when organizing processes, such as transaction, order, and delivery, hence promoting smooth supply chain integration. Personal credibility has to do with a person’s reliability in a business (Barnes *et al.* 2015). It can be essential character based and reliability based. Character-based personal credibility is a vital requirement of for sustainable supply chain integration (Aitken *et al.* 2016; Selviaridis & Norrman, 2014). However, reliability-based personal credibility can impart strong confidence in clients that the firm can deliver as promised.

Therefore, personal credibility is an indispensable component in successful supply chain integration because without it business partners would have difficulty developing trust and confidence (Luo, 2007) during the supply chain integration process. Personal credibility affects supply chain integration in two ways, namely; 1. It can enhance the opportunity for further interactions. 2. With regards to strategic alliances, personal credibility enhances the willingness to form profitable partnerships; align strategies to achieve firms' objectives and fulfill customers' needs and wants. On this premise, the following hypotheses are developed.

Ho1: Personal credibility has no significant relationship with strategic alliance.

Ho2: Personal credibility has no significant relationship with information sharing.

Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design because it is an empirical examination. Self-structured copies of the questionnaire will be distributed to retrieve important and relevant data on the parameters of interpersonal relationship and supply chain integration in the Nigerian pharmaceutical firms. Ikoni *et al.* (2014) studied "pharmaceutical firm's capacity utilization in Nigeria" and adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. To solve the research problems, some academic scholars, propose that the researcher must indicate clearly the following modalities: the study population, sample if any, data collection technique, and methods of data analysis (Okwandu, 2002). The target population of this study includes all the ten (10) quoted pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria registered in the Nigeria stock exchange which include; GlaxoSmithKline Nigeria, May & Baker Nigeria PLC, Fidson Healthcare PLC, Nigerian-German Chemicals PLC, Evans Medical PLC, Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals PLC, Pharma-Deko PLC, Morison Industries PLC, Uniondac PLC, Ekocorp PLC. Due to the small size of the population, there was no need for sampling. But to guarantee proper coverage, five copies of the questionnaire were given to five respondents in each of the ten pharmaceutical firms under review. Thus fifty (50) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to key respondents who are involved in the production and distribution of the pharmaceutical products and services, comprising of Pharmacists, Chemist, Macro biologists, Sales managers, and Supply chain managers. Linear Regression analysis was used to examine the study objectives to establish the degree of relationship that exist between the variables.

Discussion of Findings

This section we are interested in discussion the result of the finding from our analysis.

The effect of personal credibility on strategic alliance in the pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria.

Table 1a linear regression for showing result on personal credibility and strategic Alliance in the Pharmaceutical Firms in Nigeria. (n=50)

Variable (Model)	Beta Coefficient	P-Value
Constant (Strategic Alliance)	-2.120	0.00
personal credibility	0.173	0.00
R- 0.642 ^a	Adjusted R-square 0.374	Std. Error of the Estimate (F-Statistics) 0.694
R-Square 0.413		

Source: SPSS version 22 outputs

the statistical evidence of the regression of the relationship between personal credibility, and strategic alliance of pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria is shown. The R value is 0.642^a which indicates a moderate degree of correlation. The adjusted R² value indicates that 37.4% of personal credibility can be explained by strategic alliance.

Table 1b Anova of the multiple regression

model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	15.550	3	5.183	10.774	0.000 ^b
Residual	22.130	46	0.481		
Total	21394.666	386			

Source: SPSS version 22 outputs

a. Dependent Variable: Strategic Alliance.

b. Predictors: (Constant), personal credibility

Table 1a shows that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. It shows that $p < 0.0005$, which is less than 0.05, and indicates that, overall, regression model personal credibility statistically significantly predicts the strategic alliance, meaning that the linear regressions is a good fit for the data.

Hypothesis 1

H_{01} Personal credibility has no significant relationship with strategic alliance.

Table 1a also referred to the Coefficient Table provides the necessary information to strategic alliance from personal alliance, as well as determine whether personal alliance contributes statistically to the model by looking at the significant column. To represent the regression equation, the regression equation is shown as:

+ 0.607 (Personal credibility)

From Table 4.12a the F-statistic, which tests the joint significance of all the included regressors, has a probability that is well below 5% (p -value = 0.000), suggesting that the estimated pooled regression and hypothesis one for strategic alliance is statistically significant. The Adjusted R-squared of 0.374 indicates that about 37.4% of the changes in strategic alliance of the selected firms are accounted for

by the influence of the personal credibility. While the remaining 62.6% changes that occur in strategic alliance are explained by other variables beyond personal affection. The coefficients of 0.607 signify that Personal credibility has positive effects on Strategic Alliance with a highly significant coefficient (p -value = 0.00).

Decision Rule:

Reject H_{01} if the p -value is less than 0.05. Otherwise, do not reject H_{01} .

From table 4 the associated p -value of the t-statistic corresponding to Personal Credibility is 0.000 which is substantially lower than the stated 0.05. Therefore, we strongly reject the stated null hypothesis, implying that the personal credibility has highly significant and positive effects on strategic alliance of the Pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria.

This finding is also consistent with resource-based theory and several previous findings including those of Nwokah and Briggs (2017) and Nguyen and Du (2011). The resource-based theory has it that the more employers develop the human resources of the firm in an effective reward system, the more likely the employees devote more efforts in the growth and profit of the firm.

Table 2a Linear Regression results showing the effect of Personal Credibility on Information Sharing (n=50)

Variable (Model)		Beta Coefficient	P-Value
Constant (Information Sharing)		0.869	0.00
Personal Credibility		0.904	0.00
R- 999a	R-Square 0.999	Adjusted R-square 0.999	Std. Error of the Estimate (F-Statistics) 0.327

Source: SPSS version 22 outputs

As can be seen in seen in Table 2a, the statistical evidence of the linear regression of the relationship between personal credibility and information sharing of the pharmaceutical Firms in Nigeria is shown. As can be seen in Table 2a the R value is 0.999^a which indicates

a high degree of correlation. The adjusted R² value indicates that 99.9% of personal credibility can be explained by information sharing of the pharmaceutical Firms in Nigeria. Table 2a is used to Test Ho 2

In table 4.13b the Anova statistics of the linear regressions showing the regression fit of the predictor variables and the criterion variable is described.

Table 2b Anova of the multiple regression

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	34229.060	3	11409.687	17820.816	0.000 ^b
Residual	40.722	382	0.107		
Total	34269.782	386			

Source: SPSS version 22 outputs

a. Dependent Variable: Information Sharing.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Personal credibility

Table 2b shows that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. It shows that $p = 0.000$, which is less than 0.05, and indicates that, overall, regression model (personal credibility statistically significantly predicts the Information Sharing, meaning that the multiple regressions is a good fit for the data.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02} Personal credibility has no significant relationship with information sharing in Pharmaceutical Firms in Nigeria.

Table 2a also referred to the Coefficient Table provides the necessary information to Information Sharing from Personal credibility, as well as determine whether Information Sharing contributes statistically to the model by looking at the significant column. To represent the regression equation on the prediction of Personal credibility on Information Sharing as can be seen in Table 2, the regression equation is shown as:

Personal credibility = $0.869 + 0.135(\text{Information Sharing})$

From table 2a the F-statistic, which tests the joint significance of all the included regressors, has a probability that is well below 5% (p -value = 0.000), suggesting that the estimated pooled regression and hypothesis two for information sharing is statistically significant. The Adjusted R-squared of 0.999 indicates that about 99.9% of the changes in Information Sharing of the selected firms are accounted for by the influence of the Personal credibility. The coefficients of 0.135 signify that personal credibility has a positive relationship with information sharing with a highly significant coefficient (p -value = 0.00)

Decision Rule:

Reject H_{02} if the p -value is less than 0.05. Otherwise, do not reject H_{02} .

From table 2a, the associated p -value of the t-statistic corresponding to IC (personal credibility) is 0.000 which is substantially lower than the stated 0.05. Therefore, we strongly reject the stated null hypothesis, implying that the Personal credibility has a highly significant and positive effect on Information Sharing of the Pharmaceutical Firms in Nigeria. This result is also consistent with the findings of Luo (2007) who found that during the supply chain integration process, personal credibility affects supply chain integration in two ways, namely; 1. It can enhance the opportunity for further interactions. 2. With regards to strategic alliances, personal credibility enhances the willingness to form profitable partnerships; align strategies to achieve firms' objectives and fulfil customers' needs and wants.

Conclusion

The study concludes by stating that personal credibility has a positive and significant relationship with supply chain integration. Credibility is dependent on durable performances, achiever archives, responsibility, and loyalty to customers.

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