

THE IMPACT OF SUPPLY CHAIN PRACTICES IN THE PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE HEALTH CARE SECTOR IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Effective supply chain management (SCM) provides an impending system currently to augment performance through coordinative SCM practices and economic advantages in the aggressive global arena. Activities in supply chain, Logistics networks, and inventory management were, established as a matter of subsistence and viable benefit for organization/s. Studies carried out SCM practices' sphere revealed that indecorous management might have been instigated by various bases such as the management level of commitment, incurred costs and the workforce skills' level. Supply Chain Management processes amidst the supply chain is an immense challenge for cultivating dexterity within the value chains in the organization/s. Scheming and controlling the processes in each supply chain is an epoch necessity, as it articulates the business prospects with regards of its

success and/or failure, since intense competition is, propagating gradually. This exploration study, conceptualizes besides developing, the role of supply-chain-management (SCM) practices in fostering supply-chain-management (SCM) performance. The intuition from the proposed framework herein will alleviate the corresponding stakeholders in the Kenyan private hospitals and supply chain managers in other public and private institutions in implementing apt systems of SCM practices thereby enhancing the overall supply-chain-management performance.

INTRODUCTION

Supply Chain Management (SCM) practices was, previously not thought to be necessary on a global scale, which is necessary to improve the accomplishment of various project goals. Globalization has enabled organizations to have more, efficient SCM practices (Susan & Michael, 2012). Managers need trustworthy and efficient techniques now more than ever before in order to cut costs and maintain competitiveness (Mahyadin, et al., 2015). The SCM is essential to an organization's performance in the competitive and dynamic market of today; this concept is closely, related to how well a company operates. According to more recent literature (Maroofi, Ardalan, & Tabarzadi, 2017), corporate organizations can reap a number of benefits through SCM (Maldonado-Guzman et al., 2018).

The high degree of complexity in the supply chain function, constant evolved technology, fierce rivalry, and recent economic reforms, calls for businesses to develop and adopt strategies in the organization to improve performance. It is important for businesses to manage supply chains well because it directly affects how efficiently and effectively operations are, carried

out within the organization, which in turn affects the sustainability and performance of the business. SCM should not be undervalued because it is an essential and critical resource for the performance of organizations (Carbonell et al, 2012). An organization's supply-chain can be managed efficiently and effectively, giving a business a long-term competitive advantage by maintaining ideal stock levels that lower operating costs while satisfying and developing a lasting competitive advantage and cultivate customer values (Devaraj et al, 2007).

The sector of healthcare in Kenya is, encompassed of public, private, missionary/faith based and Non-Governmental organization (NGO) managed hospitals. About 48% are run by government by the government, while 41% are own privately, and 11% are owned by NGOs and faith affiliated institutions. In Kenya the hospitals according to the Kenyan Master Facility List (MFL) are, segmented into six levels, these tiers are according to hierarchy based on the level of services offered, thus level six hospitals are in the highest tier, which includes National hospital and large private hospitals (GOK, 2021). This study focused on private hospitals in Kenya.

Problem Statement

According to the 2017 IMF Global Financial Stability Report, multinational corporations are seeing a minor loss in operational performance at an alarming rate, which might cause the global GDP to decline by as much as 4.7%. Mahajan (2016) claim that there is an increasing amount of demand on multinational organizations to find new, creative ways to produce and offer extra value to their customers by enhancing their operational performance. Most businesses have acknowledged the need of efficient service delivery due to the demand for high-quality services and impending competition (Patrucco, Luzzini & Rochi, 2017). Due to subpar supply chain performance, previous studies done in this field identified the poor state of the healthcare services in Kenya's health institutions. An efficient Health Care SCM guarantees effective inventory management, warehousing, procurement thus the necessary medicines, equipment, and foodstuffs are efficiently sourced and are accessible in the right quantities at the right times for the right people at affordable rates and in accordance with recognized standards of quality and due diligence. Studies undertaken in Kenya indicate a vital need of building and sustaining strong reliable supplier relationships (Ochieng, 2018, Kivite, 2015).

SCM practices have a number of advantages that allow businesses to focus their key resources and capabilities on developing and enhancing their core competencies. These advantages include customer relationship, information sharing, sourcing flexibility, supplier evaluation, inventory, and contract management (Sindiga, Paul & Mbura, 2019). Moreover, higher performance will result from an overall decrease in organizational costs due to effective supply chain management. In Kenya, similar studies has been carried out in public hospitals, and other economic sectors but not in private hospitals, thus conclusively it is imperative to expound in a comprehensive research and address the gaps by assessing, "The Impact of Supply Chain Management practices in the context of Private Health Care performance in Kenya."

Aim and Objectives

The principal aim of this research project is to explore the “Impact of Supply Chain Management operations on Private Health Care sector Performance” per a precise accent on the Kenya’s private hospitals and healthcare providers. In edict to acquiring profitability, value for money, guarantee high-quality timely supplies, establish tremendous procurement processes and practices; the private hospitals must follow best SCM practices and techniques (Lorden, Coustasse & Singh, 2008). This research is conducted in-light of the implications of private Hospitals in Kenya adopting effective SCM practices. Value for money is a fundamental factor of the contemporary health care, expended to assess the supply chain efficiency (Kumar, Ozdamar & Zhang, 2008).

The specific study objectives are:

- i. To investigate existence of any relationship between supply chain practices and supply-chain-management (SCM) performance in the private hospitals.
- ii. To investigate the ‘impact of strategic supplier partnership on supply chain management performance’ in private hospitals.
- iii. To investigate the ‘most influential supply chain practices that may impact the supply chain management performance.’

Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between supply practices and supply-chain-management (SCM) performance in private hospitals in Kenya?
- ii. What is the impact of strategic supplier partnership on supply-chain-management (SCM) performance in the private hospitals in Kenya?
- iii. What are the most influential supply-chain practices that may impact the SCM (supply chain management) performance in private hospitals in Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This segment focuses on a variety of literature reviews applicable to this dissertation. It involves a systematic discovery, classification and documents’ analysis encompassing related research data. The researcher discovered a substantial number of literatures in supply chain management considering the literature review results.

Theoretical Framework

There is existence of four theories concerned with management of the supply chains, as conferred by Halldorsson, Kotzab, Mikkola & Skjtt-Larsen (2007). These include the Principal Agent Theory, Transaction Cost Analysis (TCA), the Network Theory, and lastly the Resource Based View (RBV). The focus of the Principal Agent Theory or ‘Agency Theory’ is preventing potential agency issues in organizations, and the TCA is concerned with the conveying priviledges of disposal in inter-organizational agreements. The Resource-Based View is involved with the coordination of relational assets within the organization, whereas Network Theory concentrates on reciprocating interactions between institutions. According to Halldorsson, et al. (2007), there exists not a single comprehensive SCM theory, one theory

might be selected as the domineering explanatory theory and then add one or more of the other theoretical viewpoints to it, depending on the circumstances.

The RBV is one of the major economic theories and emphasizes gaining a competitive advantage owing to internal resources as argued by Bohnenkamp (2013). Pfeffer and Salancik established this theory in 1978 averring that exterior resources affects the accomplishments of organizations. The requisite element of every establishment's strategic and tactical management is the acquisition of external supplies. Further, the RBV theory alludes that: to access resources needed for their subsistence, firms should transform and negotiate with their exterior publics; denoting that organizations' capacity to compete is reliant on management of their exterior reserves. Van Weele (2018) seems to agree that these exterior resources are essentially crucial more than the internal ones.

Supply chain Models/ Practices

According to Hassan's (2006) definition, 'the hospital supply chain is the collection of design activities, planning, procurement management, manufacturing (goods and services), delivery, and return management from the provider to the beneficiary (patients), taking into account all patient trajectories in the hospital (pharmaceutical).' These activities that result in money flows are, driven by the information exchange and SCM practices among the various supply chain partners. The goal is to offer the best service possible for patient care quality and safety (Hassan, 2006).

The Supply Chain Operations Reference Model (The SCOR Model)

The SCOR model deliberates the absolute supply-chain incorporating strategic decision-making; having been developed by the SCC (Supply Chain Council) a not-for-profit organization established in the year 1996 with a global membership of over 650 organizations. It is a 'process reference model' serving as a framework for associating the supply chain activities with the corporation goals thereby standardizing the industry. It comprises management practices that are superlative, aligning typical software features and functionalities. A prime management framework depicting relationships structure amid the standard procedures, homogenous metrics to censor performance process (Huang, Sheoran & Keshar, 2005). The SCOR model matches the objective of the research seamlessly for three prime motives: Firstly the Model has hitherto been utilized as a diagnostic tool in the healthcare trade, explicitly in hospital's downstream supply-chain (Baboli et al, 2005). Subsequently, standardization in communication within the healthcare industry is needed. The progression of the healthcare network should enable delivery of superb treatment at slash costs. SCOR offers standardized procedures and metrics thereby, the European governments favors the approach as it facilitates justification of the care provision. Willpower of the best operating practices, benchmarking and comparison with other businesses, is feasible since the KPIs (Key Performance Metrics) are designed in accordance with SOPs (standard operating procedures). Finally, as a way of optimizing the medical supply chain, whereas some processes must be rearranged, the model's description bestows a framework model allowing this in accordance with the strategic goals.

The Kraljic Matrix

In supply chain management, it is vital to use effective supplier- relationship management strategies. In this research, the Kraljic Matrix was, recommended as an effective method of supplier segmentation. Peter Kraljic in 1983 developed this matrix, where he argued that the items in supply should be mapped against risk and profitability components. This argument is relevant in the current trends in market analysis, corporate purchasing and managing the suppliers in a strategic manner.

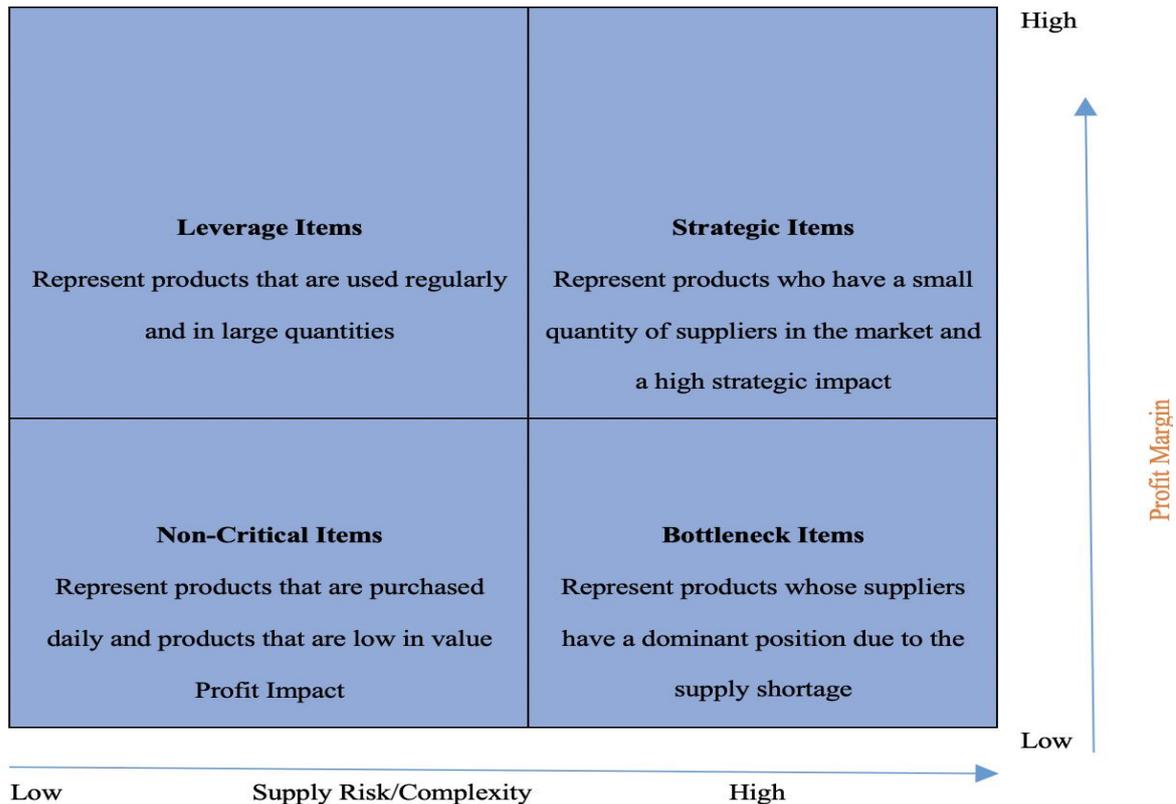


Figure 1: ‘The Four Quadrants of the Matrix’

Empirical Evidence

Sahay and Mogan (2003) examined the India’s industries supply chain practices. They used 156 companies as their sample size, and survey questionnaires to ascertain the eminence of the Supply-chain in the Indian industries, with focus on their study objectives: ‘Integration of Supply-chain, Inventory Management, Information Technology and Supply-chain Strategy.’ They verified the need to affiliate the Supply Chain Management strategy with the enterprise’s strategy, to adept the customer satisfaction achievement, costs reduction via enhanced ICT. Subsequently, the results established as well, a resilient correlation of organization’s performance with SCM. The research was engrossed on India’s Industry merely.

A study by Truong et al in 2017, with the objective of researching on “Supply Chain Management practices and firms’ Operational Performance.” Stipulated the existence of correlation of Supply-Chain-Management and the firms’ operational performance. The

research using a validation methodology of conceptual method, collected data from 456 respondents as the sample size. The research gathered that SCM is an operational performance indicator that is paramount. Auxiliary study with use of other methodologies and analyses of more researches is recommended , for clear SCM Performance and practices analysis.

Krishnan and Pertheban (2017) examined “the effects of supply chain resilience measures on supply chain (SC) ambidexterity as a dynamic skill.” Their study precisely aspired to review ‘how firms' supply-chain ambidexterity’ was advanced via a dynamic capability-building process and “how ambidexterity might reduce the negative effects of SC disruptions and enhance business performance.” A sample of 164 medium-sized manufacturing SMEs operating in Malaysia were used in the study to gather data. The study discovered that a dynamic process for developing SC resilience capabilities is a predicate of Supply chain performance. Inventory control, visibility, predetermined decision plans, and diversity were recognized by the study as dynamic SC resilience qualities.

Wasike (2014) looked at the connection between supply chain flexibility and information systems in the service sector. 96 employees in the top, middle, and lower levels at TUK (Technical University of Kenya) provided data for the study, which used a case study methodology. The study revealed that improving the supply chain's agility and resilience required a strong information system. In order to increase supply chain resilience, the study advised that resources (people, machines, and the required application software) must be accessible. The agility of the university supply chain will also be considerably increased through investments in personnel training and development as well as the adoption of contemporary IT techniques like cloud computing.

This study sought to address the gaps by assessing and analyzing the “Impact of Supply Chain Management practices in the context of Private Health Care performance in Kenya.”

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study chapter presents the research methodology. It comprises the research approach/design, research sampling, and description of the secondary data sources, ethical measures, data analysis, validity and reliability. The section further circumscribes the methods of data collection used in the study and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

Research Approach and Design

The design of the research used, put in place a plan program from the beginning to ensure that the results of the research will provide a clear riposte to the research questions for a given amount of resources (Gorard, 2013). In order to find solutions to research questions or issues, a plan, method, and framework of investigation is put in place (Kumar, 2011).

This research paper tries to identify “The Impact of Supply Chain Management in the Private Hospitals in Kenya.” So as to respond to the research questions, literature review method was implemented systematically. The systematic literature review technique is, systematically,

explicitly and comprehensively used to ‘identify, appraise, and synthesize all available research relevant to the research question, topic area, and the phenomenon of the research interest, to represent the best available evidence of the subject’ (Durach, Kembro and Wieland, 2017).

The study used a mixed method approach where both qualitative and quantitative data is analyzed.

The following research literature review approach process is adopted:

- i. Identification of Areas: On the research questions basis, identification of the precise areas in which to find literature was done.
- ii. Searches in Various Databases: various databases such as UEL ProQuest library, Google Scholar, Sage Journals, Science Direct, Zandy, etc., were, utilized to obtain the research papers that are relevant.
- iii. Sorting the Literature for Review: the relevant literature with respect to the research questions were sorted out.
- iv. Performing Review: Review of sorted papers seeking to resolve the research questions was done.

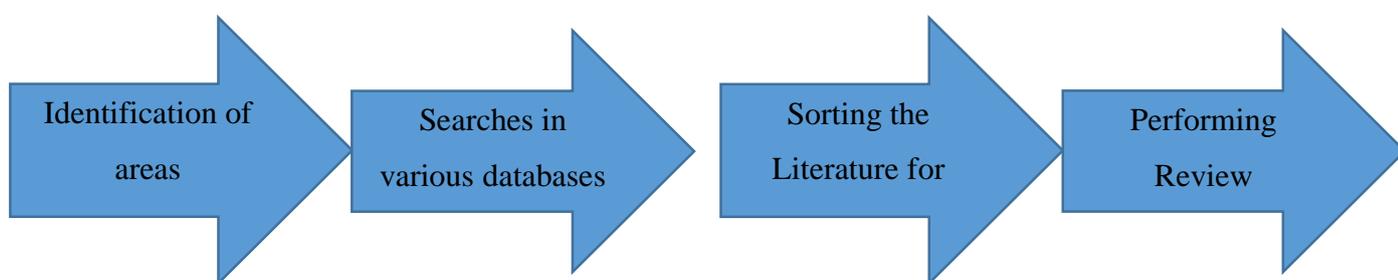


Figure 2: The literature review process' visual depiction.

Research sampling & Description and sources of secondary data selected

This study is a descriptive one that uses secondary data and a research design providing data collection and the analysis framework. Because a large sample size is not realistic, this study uses the hospital industry, which would permit intensive, micro-level data analysis. The research subject at the center of this study can be explored in this investigation, which is appropriate. The Kenyan private hospital industry was chosen for this study because it offers unique and in-depth insights into the industry supply chain, although not being fully representative of the healthcare sector as a whole. This research used a convenient sampling method, thereby it considered the major Kenyan private health facilities that have accessible information, websites and availability of primary research on the facilities. Secondary data was, gathered by a thorough review of the literature and analyzing books, journals, public records and websites etc. Excel statistical program, will be utilized for data analyses. The entity of observation conversely will be the procurement and supply chain units in private hospitals in Kenya inclusively.

The research retrieved over 300 literatures from a variety of databases using keyword variations to endeavor to study the diverse literatures on this topic, however only 35 papers were reviewed further. Since the study uses the secondary research method, quantitative and qualitative data was sourced from the Kenya’s private hospitals annual reports, office manuals circulars, Universities data bases/libraries, pamphlets, policy papers, business plans and also from survey reports from MoH (Ministry of health), KNBS (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics), and other stakeholders in the sector.

Table 1: Literature Distribution

Literature Retrieved	No. of articles
BMC Health Service Research	17
International Journal of Quality in Healthcare	16
International Journal of Production Economics	13
Health Care Policy	15
International Journal of Production Economics	11
Agency for Healthcare Research Quality	12
International Journal of Production Management	10
International Journal of Globalization and Small Business	10
Measuring Business Excellence	10
Health Research Policy and Systems	10
Quality Safety Health Care	9
Journal of Health Management	7
Frontiers E-Business Research	9
Journal of Health Management	8
International Journal Of Hospital Research	8
European Journal of Operations Research	6
Journal of Management and Strategy	8
Industrial Marketing Management	5
Health Culture and Society	7

Harvard Business Review	5
Journal of Purchasing & Supply Management	5
International Journal of supply Chain Management	7
International journal of Engineering Science & Technology	6
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	4
International Journal of Integrated Care	6
International Journal of Business Management & Social Sciences	4
17 Journals having less than 5 articles each	40
Articles in conference proceedings	21
Reports/Thesis/Others	15
	304

Quality of secondary data

To ensure quality of the secondary data, the researcher considered collecting the suitable data for this research from reliable sources that includes:

- i. The public authorized sources, publications by government, public archives, administrative data sources, and census data.
- ii. Literature and literature review (including releases from academic publishers like ProQuest, sage Journals, Academia, Science Direct and Zandy).
- iii. Private hospital reports and other published Kenyan hospital research.
- iv. Professional providers of data.
- v. The ‘International organizations.’

Secondary Data Ethical measures

The researcher carried out the following tasks to guarantee and confirm the ethical conduct of the study when using the secondary data (Saunders et al, 2012). The researcher has adopted a category of codes in this research as recommended by Bhattacharjee (2012).

- i. Avoid plagiarism and use of plagiarized material.
- ii. Submitted data, research procedures, or data analysis is not fabricated or falsified.
- iii. Regard rights of the research subjects, predominantly the rights to privacy of information, by seeking consent and authorization where applicable.
- iv. Declaration of conflict of interest of any material that might inhibit the researcher’s capability to be empirical and unprejudiced when examining submissions from sources.
- v. Acknowledgement of published data of others used and seek permission and acknowledgement of unpublished data.

- vi. Use and retrieval of archival material in accordance with the rules of the archival source.
- vii. Use of consented confidential and protected data is to be used for this academic research purposes only.

The targeted population for the study is the health care providers indicated as accredited Kenya’s private hospital. The research used a stratified-random sampling technique which selected a sample of private hospitals in Kenya. The private hospitals in Kenya offering both inpatient and outpatient services as listed by the NHIF (National Hospital Insurance Fund) formed the population target and are the study’s unit of analysis.

REPORTING OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter starts by presenting the general descriptive statistics from the literature. Review of literatures, providing a synopsis of the field of inquiry (Randolph, 2009) is, implemented to expound the prevailing phenomenon. It exhibits the academic interest of underpinning previous literature to survey the emergent topic. The 304 literatures analyzed are, classified into five categories. In the next three subsections, this research constructs and analyzes the literature information shown in Table 2. First, it presents a visual illustration of the percentage of the different categories of literatures explored on a pie chart, followed by a graphical analysis literature based on the quantity of each category. Finally, the chapter presents all the literature categories according to the year of publication and or presentation.

Category	Count
1. Supply chain Healthcare Journals	115
2. Supply chain operations Journals	113
3. Conference Articles	21
4. Report/Thesis/Case studies	15
5. Other Journals	40

Table 2. Number of Papers That Discusses Each category

Analysis of the literature category

Figure 3 below illuminates an elevated tendency towards qualitative physiognomies of selected literature, most reviewed literature applied qualitative data collection analysis and techniques. Supply chain healthcare journals are the dominant research literature analyzed, at 38%, closely followed by supply chain journals at 37%. The lowest percentage of literature analyzed is from reports thesis and case studies, however the topics covered had closer relation to the topic of research. All of the texts were scrutinizing limited number of topics of Supply Chain management and operations, probing the impact and magnitudes relating to health care.

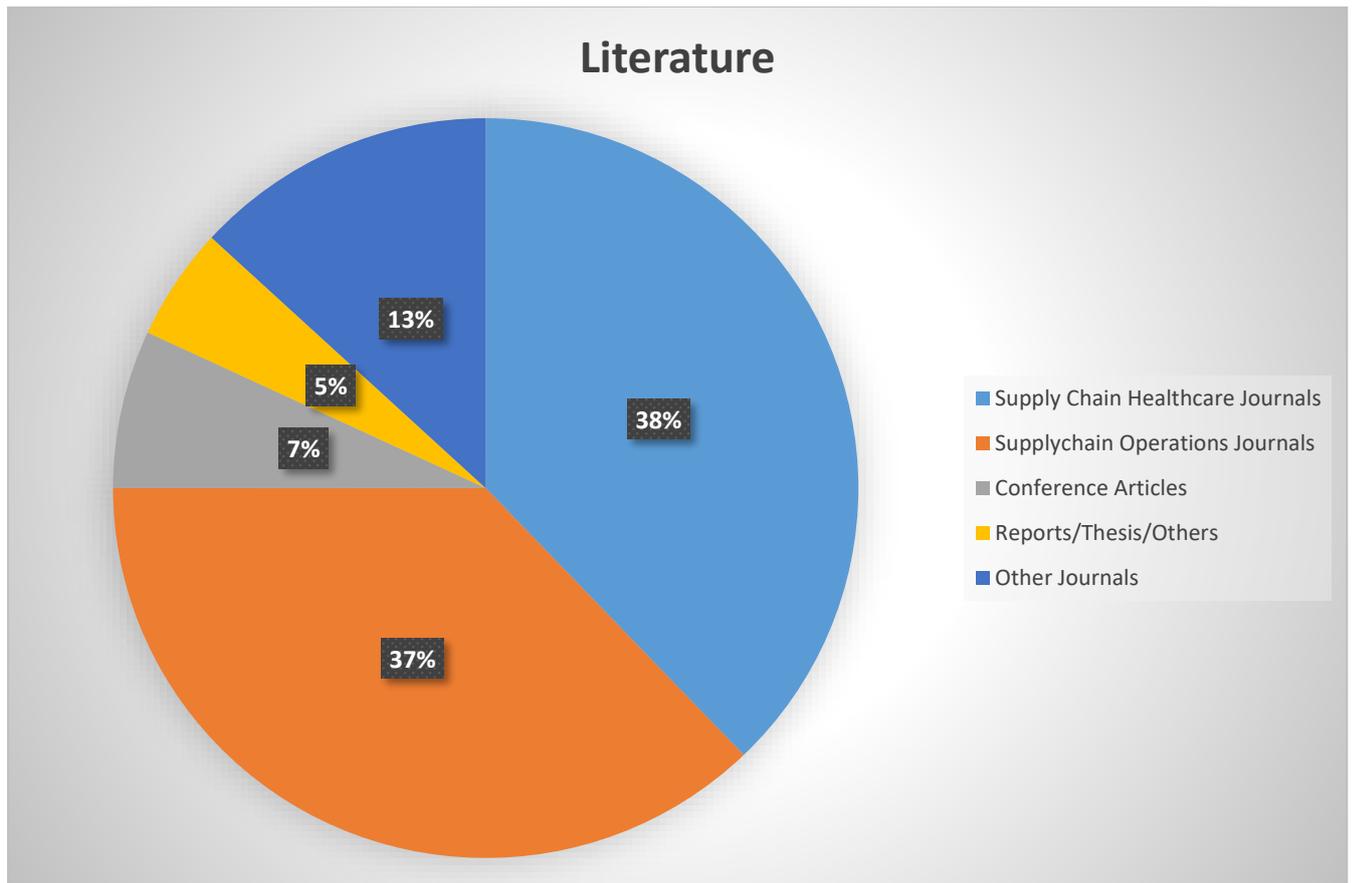


Figure 3: Percentile representation of the literature categories

Research categories and articles analysis.

In Figure 4, Research articles are, categorized by subject and literature type. The literature observed include supply chain operations, Healthcare supply chain, and other literatures aligning to the subject of interest such as; conference papers, reports, thesis, case studies and supplementary journals . Supply chain operations and supply chain in healthcare are the most popular subjects. In the the full sample analysis, the most discussed subject was the importance of supply chain management in healthcare and the secondary subject was operational impact. Further analysis of the articles reveals they are a combination of; technology to enhance the supply chain operations in healthcare sector, medical supply chain, and tools that allow supply chain workers to perform effectively.

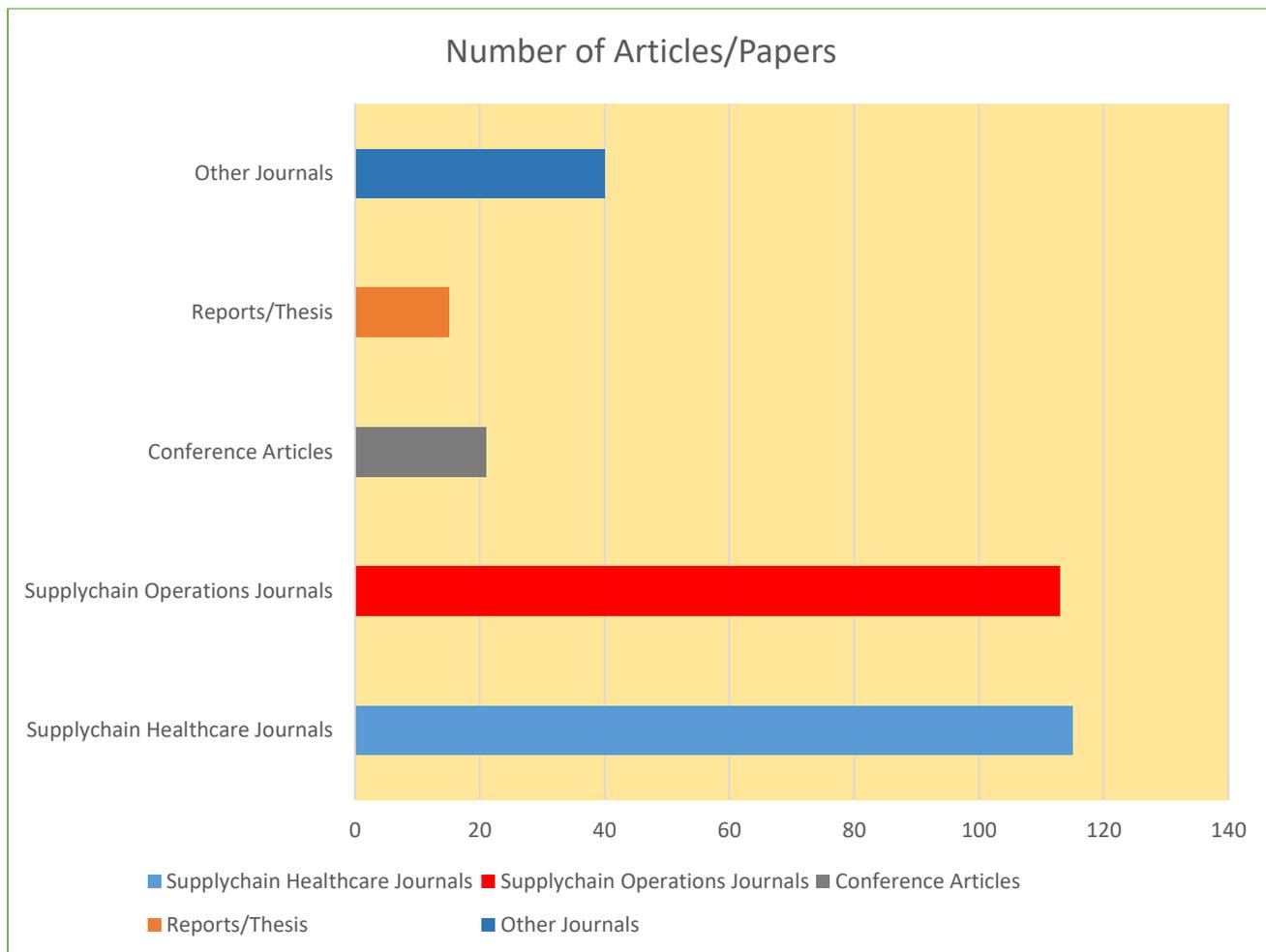


Figure 4: Analysis of quantity of research papers per category

Histogram analysis

A bar graph and linear graph are used to represent the data of the 304 literatures analyzed, in this subsection (Fig 3 and Fig 4). The illustrations provides a histogram of the research subjects showing a clear emergence of a huge number of literature related to the topic of supply chain management since 2015, and a steep increase thereof. A surge of literature is seen in the year 2020, ; according to Swanson and Santamari (2021) up until 2020, there had been no research that addressed supply chain management challenges during pandemics, despite the fact that scholars have periodically forecasted the economic problems that could arise from pandemics. In the first ten months of 2020, following Covid-19, 84% of all pandemic supply-chain research articles were published.

The graph below shows the majority of supply chain research was published in 2020. The first three years considered for data on the topic of interest seems to have had a lower number of literature covered. The line graph depicts a consistent and significant increasing trend of publications and literatures within the 10-year period considered for this research. There is also a trifling decrease in the curve in the next two years after the year 2020.

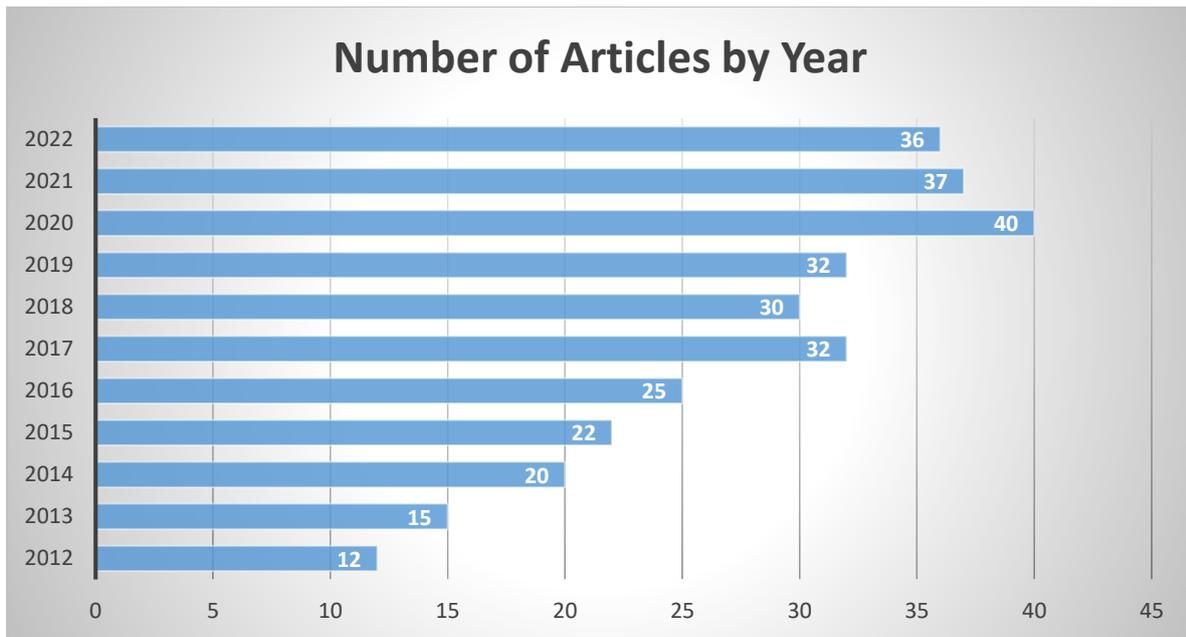


Figure 5: Illustration of articles in a period of 10 years (2012 to 2022)

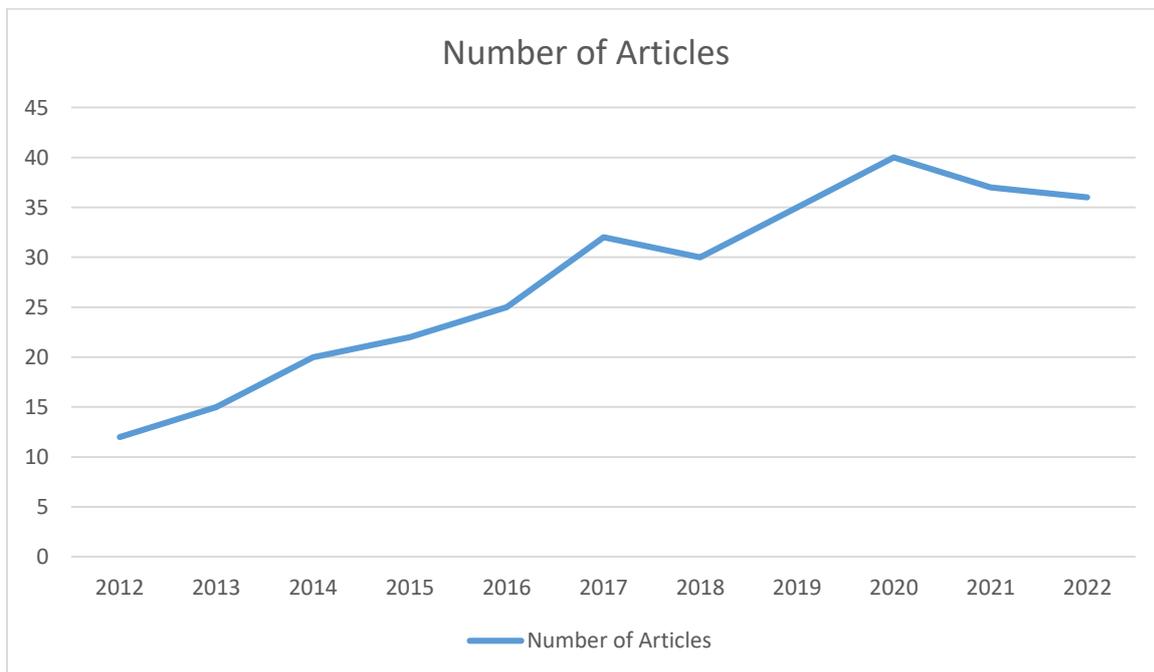


Figure 6: Number of Articles per year

Once the data have been located, they should be organized and summarized in accordance with the systematic review's research focus (Staples & Niazi, 2008). Kitchenham and Charters (2007) considers possibilities in favor of combining data gleaned from various study forms and combining various data types. The analysis indicate evidently, that the subject of interest has a wider range of literature in form of journals. Supply chain operations is the mostly discussed

topic with 115 journals out of the total reviewed journals, followed by Healthcare supply chain discussed in 113 journals, the rest of the literature reviewed is spread between, thesis, research papers and case studies on the subject matter.

RESEARCH FINDINGS' DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings and analysis; first, it presents the summary of the evaluation of the research findings, followed by a reassessment of the findings on the literature organized as per research objectives and research questions.

Evaluation of Findings

This study was guided by the three research objectives and three research questions:

The main aim of the study was to scrutinize the “Impact of Supply Chain Management operations on performance in the Private Health Care sector” with a precise prominence on the private healthcare providers in Kenya. The research objectives that formed the research hypothesis are:

- i. To investigate if any relationship exists between supply chain practices and supply chain management (SCM) performance.
- ii. To investigate the impact of strategic supplier partnership on supply chain management performance.
- iii. To investigate the most influential supply chain practices that may impact the supply chain management performance.

Relationship between supply chain practices and supply chain management performance

Implementation of SCM practices is vital for any organization (Ho, 2011; Hussain et al., 2014; Muthia and Rotich, 2014;), some of the practices of supply chain include: Customer relationship, inventory management, lean practices, information sharing, strategic supplier relationship, quality information, outsourcing and information system/technology. Supply chain partners can enhance supply chain management when they routinely implement appropriate supply chain practices, according to Stein and Sweat (1998). Together, they can comprehend fully end-user constraints and, as an outcome, can react to the market variations more quickly. Moreover, (Tompkins and Ang, 1999) view the efficient utilization of timely and appropriate information by all functional supply chain segments as a major competitive advantage. According to empirical research by Childhouse and Towill (2003), the enigma to a flawless and efficient supply chain is to restructure and effect highly visible all rounded SCM practices along the chain (Jie et al., 2007).

The impact of strategic supplier partnership on supply-chain management performance

A study on the impact of supply chain collaborating on performance was, conducted internationally (Wagner, et al., 2002; Bordonaba & Cambra, 2009). They discovered that this partnership is crucial in demonstrating how strategic collaboration throughout the whole supply chain improves organizational performance. In addition, coordination and strategic connections amongst supply chain partners help the firm work better.

The partnership is, intended to manage each participating; organization's strategic, tactical, and operational skills to enable them realize significant, long-term mutual benefits (Jie et al., 2007). A strategic partnership places an emphasis on direct, ongoing collaboration and promotes joint planning and problem-solving activities (Gunasekaran, 2001). These types of strategic alliances are formed to encourage mutual gain for all parties involved and ongoing involvement in one or more important strategic fields, such as technology, goods, and markets. With a select group of significant suppliers who are prepared to share in the success of the products, organizations can operate more productively by forming strategic relationships with them. Suppliers who become involved early in the product design process might recommend more affordable design options, assist in choosing the best components and technologies, and aid in design evaluation (Tan et al., 2002). Organizations that are strategically aligned can collaborate closely while cutting down on unnecessary time and effort. As to Noble (1997), a successful supplier alliance might be an essential part of a cutting-edge supply chain (Brati, 2011; Karimi and Rafiee, 2014; Mbutia and Rotich, 2014).

The most influential supply chain practices that may impact the supply chain management performance

Customer relationship is, mentioned in various literatures as a highly influential SCM practice. This is because businesses are now compelled to establish positive relationships with their clients in order to survive in the world's current period of rapid increase in mass customization and personalized service (Jie et al., 2007). Strong client relationships help businesses stand out from the competition and keep customers coming back (Bratic, 2011). Consequently, sharing of knowledge is one of the five components identified by Lalonde (1998) as constituting a strong supply chain relationship. Further it has been argued that in order to streamline their value chains as the competition heats up, many businesses are investigating the idea of outsourcing their logistics (Franceschini et al., 2003). In contrast to today, when outsourcing relationships are based on logistics tasks requiring more strategic knowledge and expertise, such as information systems, inventory management, and customer order fulfillment, Boyson et al. (1999) noted that historically, outsourcing relationships are based on routine tasks, like warehousing operations and freight payment (Koh et al., 2007). Effective communication is crucial to efficiently manage change and performance in the organization. (Pfeiffer, 1998).

Re-assessment of research questions

This section will analyze the information obtained from 15 research/thesis papers to reassess the research questions that the research findings sought to answer.

What is ‘the relationship between supply practices and supply chain management performance in the private hospitals in Kenya?’

A study conducted by Kiiru (2014) on Aga Khan hospital which is a large private hospital in Kenya, indicated that Information systems and technology has had an influence on the strategic management of the hospital's SCM. The research further indicated that customer service and communication have been instrumental practices in ensuring that the hospital environment is enabled and the hospital revenue is increased. Further a survey carried out by Origa (2018) shows that there was a significant constructive relationship connecting certain supply-chain

practices e.g. outsourcing of services, and the SCM performance in the Kenyan private hospitals. The study indicated that supply chain practices “improves supply chain performance of private hospitals in terms of the increased level of productivity, improved productivity of staff, reduction in the cost of operation, savings on costs of hiring employees, timeliness, improved quality, and improved financial performance.”

A study by Okello in 2017 indicated, “That supply chain management practices to a moderate extent have effect on performance in the private hospitals in Nairobi, Kenya. The results of the study, ascertained a positive correlation between the various supply chain management practices and performance of private hospitals in Nairobi” .The findings of another research by Sheikh (2014), indicated that MP Shah Hospital apparently responded to the challenges posed by changing environment by implementing various supply chain practices in order to remain competitive in the market: “for instance by paying great attention to the needs of the customer, restructuring, introducing new products in the market and constantly updating with technological developments.”

What is ‘the impact of strategic supplier partnership on supply-chain management performance in the private hospitals in Kenya?’

According to a 2016 Schneller and Smeltzer's research, the healthcare sector rarely has equal supply-chain member collaboration. There are growing tensions between suppliers and distributors, despite the fact that manufacturers and distributors frequently exert their authority by giving hospitals a unified front (Rem associate 2001). Hospitals and distributors both have the ability to inspire the healthcare’s supply-chain, though the power dynamics vary depending on the circumstance. Other studies on private hospitals in Kenya have shown differences in the degree of collaboration with suppliers and between partnerships like external organizations and other hospitals. Realizing the best supply chain network designs by considering strategic supplier partnership in terms of lead times, quality, efficiency and cost-reduction may have a big competitive edge in giving a hospital’s consumers the items and services they want as seen in a study by Hossein, et al (2011).

What are ‘the most influential supply chain practices that may impact the supply chain management performance in private hospitals in Kenya?’

An academic research performed by Nguli (2013), found that Mater hospital ensures quality customer service to improve performance. The hospital according to this study was seen to succeed in this practice through adopting distribution strategies that ensure quick service delivery to customer demand and enabling the staff to be able to satisfy patients/customers’ needs effectively. Consequently another study by Okello (2017) with a regression analysis of 69.8% on the study’s independent variable, indicated that the most influential supply chain practices implemented by private hospitals are information sharing, information computer technology (ICT), information sharing, lean management, outsourcing, inventory management, supplier relationship management and contract management practices. Sheikh (2014) study on M.P Shah Private Hospital, Kenya concluded that effective implementation and execution of strategic plans are, related to the performance, development and implementations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Conclusions established from the research and recommendations for applications into business are the topics that constructs this chapter. The chapter further advances to deliberate on the variety limitations of the research and implications thereof. The objectives of the study was to: establish the impact to which the SCM (supply-chain management) performance has on operations in the private hospital sector in Kenya; to ascertain the relationship between SCM (Supply Chain Management) practices and private hospitals' performance in Kenya; establish the impact of strategic supplier-partnership on supply chain performance in the private hospital sector in Kenya and, lastly to ascertain the most influential supply chain practices that may impact the supply chain management performance.

Conclusion

This paper through a systematic review of literature provides an insight in the health-care SCM (Supply- Chain Management) including supply chain operations and practices. The healthcare is among the supreme industries in the cotemporary world. The review enables the researcher to tersely attempt to address the research objectives and the specific research questions. The researcher classifies the studies existence in the literature in accordance to three distinct perspectives: supply-chain practices, strategic supplier relationship and the most influential supply-chain (SC) practices in supply chain operation and management. Within each category, various studies are, further analyzed. In each topic, the researcher reviews and analyses the related studies. Based on the study, it can be seen that there were heightened studies of healthcare SCM during pandemics and the supply chain practices additionally. With the implementations of customer service, strategic supplier relationship and advancement in information technologies, enhances the SCM (Supply-Chain Management) and the healthcare sector performance becomes feasible.

Implementation of supply chain techniques in the SCM procedures is, closely correlated with a company's operational effectiveness. The basis for the success of hospital operations seems to be highly influenced by the optimal supply chain management. Because they possess superior equipment and specialized amenities and have the ability to provide patients with advanced and more effective medical services than their public sector counterparts, private hospitals in Kenya have grown to be an extremely important part of the daily lives of the Kenyan population. The largest and most important private hospitals in Kenya are mostly located in Nairobi and other developed towns, this fact sparked interest in learning more about the concept behind private hospitals in Kenya, their effectiveness in providing services promptly, with a high degree of flexibility, and enhancing high levels of customer satisfaction, thereby motivating this study. In summary, the study sought to determine the degree to which SCM practices was adopted in the private hospitals in Kenya and the effect that they had on those hospitals' performance. The findings indicated that largely, all the SCM practices should be, instigated in the Kenya's private hospitals, to enhance the SCM performance.

The analysis of findings of various studies implies that SCM practices to a temperate magnitude have effect on performance in the Kenya's private hospitals' sector. The research results established a affirmative correlation between the various SCM practices and Kenyan private hospitals' performance. Additionally, studies showed indications that innumerable SCM practices implemented at Kenyan private hospitals are statistically momentous constructed on the most studies' confidence level.

Recommendations for Business Applications

The majority of Kenya's private hospitals had adopted supply chain management procedures, according to the study's findings. Despite the fact that some companies haven't adopted diverse SCM (Supply Chain Management) best practices, managers must do so in order to increase performance and competitiveness. The need to invest on information system for the supply chain processes is, recommended for the healthcare sector to enhance the supply chain management and manage vital supply chain practices such as information sharing, customer demands, and tracking of medical inventory. Organizations should consider outsourcing services such as transportation, cleaning and security services then put more emphasis and focus on other supply chain practices such as customer service, supplier relationship management, inventory, contract management to enhance the supply-chain management performance. Furthermore, for their supply chain to perform better, public hospitals must also use these procedures. Due to the fact that a significant number of SCM techniques have a nearly impeccable positive impact on organizational performance, businesses across all industries not just those in the Kenya's construction sector have increased their investment in supply chain management and improvement efforts. This has helped these businesses strengthen their core competencies.

Limitations and Implications for future research

The aim of the research was to inaugurate the impact of SCM (Supply Chain Management) operations in the SCM performance of the private healthcare-sector in Kenya using secondary data. Moreover the study aimed at verifying the relationship between strategic suppliers' relationship, SCM practices and performance of the Kenyan private hospital sector. The study periodicity was, slightly constricted for a research of this cadre. The researcher faced great defies in collecting secondary data for related studies since most of the research studies found was, seen to have focused on specific hospitals and most topics researched were engrossed on topics outside the topic of interest. Furthermore, the study was intently engrossed on private hospitals in Kenya, thus the outcomes could not be indiscriminate for a wider population area like: continentally, regionally and/or globally, and also other supply chain firms. Besides some of the researchers did not respond to the requests to access their literatures occasioning a challenge of effectively carrying out the study. The subsistence of limited academic research concerned with the significant subjects of healthcare supply-chain management encourages the requisite of future study exploration (Ketchen, 2013).

Consequently, the implications of the study for organizations seeking to advance supply chain practices are, indicated. The recent pandemics (Covid-19) and global economic crises has not demeaned the interest in supply chain management, on the contrary it has provoked research

in means of tackling associated risks and barriers, whilst efficiently managing the supply chain. The researcher expects farther quantitative paradigms and case studies to emerge in this theme, incorporating operational management at discrete localities and the dexterity laterally in supply chains. Moreover, the study envisaged to expedite the trailing of literatures and published studies in pertinent fields of relevance and aid readers discover impending areas for future research. Supply chain management is a realistic premise, thus requires auxiliary research advancement in a rigorous approach that is more holistic (Ashby, Leat & Hudson-Smith, 2012).

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