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Institutional Pressure Effects on Coffee Supply Chain Performance Mediated by Downstream Stakeholders in Tanzania: Case of Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies

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Abstract

The effect of institutional pressure on coffee supply chain performance in Tanzania, mediated by downstream stakeholders, was analyzed in this study. The study aimed to examine the effect of institutional pressure on supply chain performance, the effect of downstream stakeholders on supply chain performance, and the mediating effect of downstream stakeholders on the relationship between institutional pressure and supply chain performance. Methodologically, the research applied an explanatory design and used simple random sampling to select 225 respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through structural equation modeling. The results show that institutional pressure has a positive and significant effect on supply chain performance. Downstream stakeholders were also found to have a positive and significant effect on supply chain performance. Furthermore, the findings revealed a full mediation effect of downstream stakeholders on the relationship between institutional pressure and supply chain performance. The study concluded that supply chain performance can be strongly explained by institutional pressure and downstream stakeholders. The stakeholders were also shown to have a full mediation effect on the relationship between institutional pressure and supply chain performance. This mediation effect is an additional insight contributed by this research to the body of knowledge for supply chain scholars. The study recommends that leveraging downstream stakeholders is essential for enhancing Tanzania's coffee supply chain performance.

Keywords: Supply chain performance, Institutional pressure, Downstream stakeholders

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1. Introduction

Supply chain performance (SCP) has recently been recognized as a critical factor in streaming bottom–line performances both by researchers and practitioners (Frederico *et al.,* 2021). It is an integral part of supply chain management which is concerned with extending supply chain activities in order to meet end consumer needs in a timely manner. The performance of an organization's supply chain depends on how well internal departments are coordinated and connected to external stakeholders (Lehyani *et al.,* 2021). It affects both short and long-run organization goals (Lee *et al.,* 2022). That means; the level of the current organization's supply chain performance predicts how well/poor will perform in the future (Lee *et al.,* 2022).

Various institutions in Tanzania including Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS) have a great role to play in ensuring good supply chain performance of coffee produce. However, despite the application of different institutional pressures (IP) still the supply chain performance is not well performing (Bargawi & Newman, 2017). This is revealed in research by (Manning *et al.,* 2012) whereas the supply of the produce in the global market is reported to decrease yearly and nearly collapse in the year 1998 (Winter-Nelson & Temu, 2002; Parrish *et al*., 2005;). Among the suspected reasons for the poor performance is the underutilization of supply chain stakeholders both internally and externally of which downstream stakeholders (DS) received much attention (Civera *et al.,* 2019).

The approach of institutional theory scholars in the analysis of SCP underscores institutional pressure which might enhance or destroy the performance of an organization's product supply chain (Tukamuhabwa *et al.,* 2023). They categorized these pressures as coercive, mimetic, and normative (Ahmed *et al*., 2020). Coercive pressure is useful to organizations that depend on another institution to perform their daily activities while mimetic pressure is practical when an organization copies from the efficacious organization in the same industry. Normative pressure is practical when an organization adopts the greatest practices to run its activities (Tukamuhabwa *et al.,* 2023).

Government institutions have a responsibility to regulate the supply chain of various organizations' products in order to create shared value (Jen *et al.,* 2020). Value creation in the supply chain is achieved through collaboration with various stakeholders (Giacomarra *et al.,* 2020). Among others, downstream stakeholders have been suspected to potentially contribute to supply chain performance (Svensson *et al.,* 2018). Although there is no research that proved the suspected relationships as per the author's best knowledge, the mere suspicion opened the ground for this study to be conducted.

The application of institutional and stakeholder theories in explaining the subject matter of the study was considered prudent due to their intertwined nature (Sancha *et al.,* 2015). While institutional theory tries to put forward institutional pressure that organizations must comply in performing their daily activities (Ahmed *et al.,* 2020), stakeholder theory proposes the involvement of various stakeholders in enhancing organizations' performance for value creation (Svensson et al., 2016). Therefore, organization supply chain cannot operate in isolation without observing rules and regulations from regulating institutions and taking into account interest

of stakeholders. Doing so, might affect the performance of the entire firm supply chain in one way or another. Based on this foundation, the study borrowed one construct from institutional theory in explaining the relationship between institutional pressure and supply chain performance when mediated by downstream stakeholders a construct from stakeholder theory. The essence is to extend understanding of institutional theory and contribute to the body of knowledge. By examining the relationship among these variables, this study offers insights into how policymakers and firms can collaboratively enhance supply chain performance in emerging markets like Tanzania.

2. Literature review

Supply chain performance being a hot issue in most of producing firms globally, creates attention towards maximizing firm's profitability (Kalyar *et al.,* 2020). The great attention is focusing on balancing between regulatory pressure compliance and profit maximization (Zhang *et al.,* 2020). Dai *et al.,* (2021) contended that, when government institutions enforce proper pressure on the supply chain of products dealt with, there is a possibility that the particular product supply chain to perform better or otherwise.

Perception of firms over the institutions under their control might have a positive or negative effect on their product's supply chain performance (Yang, 2018). If the exerted pressure is clear and easy to follow will enhance performance (Zeng *et al.,* 2017). Difficult and rigid institutional pressure in most cases leads to resistance and hence jeopardizes supply chain performance (Dubey *et al.,* 2015). Government institutions dealing with the coffee supply chain in Tanzania have gone through various reforms since independence (Kessy,2020). All these reforms were geared towards enhancing their cohesive pressure in improving the produce supply chain performance. Although the effect of those pressure as a result of reforms in enhancing performance is not yet documented, this paper predicts that;

H1 Institutional pressure has a positive and significant effect on supply chain performance

While institutional pressure is suspected to play a key role in supply chain performance, the actions of downstream stakeholders also might have a substantial contribution. These stakeholders take a countless deal in good performance of any product supply chain (Kamble *et al.,* 2023). That means, neglecting them might seriously affect the supply chain performance. Graham et al., 2018 argued that, bypassing downstream stakeholders and dealing with final consumers is one source of organizations' supply chain poor performance. Stakeholder theory recognizes the position of downstream stakeholders in the good performance of any business supply chain (Svensson *et al.,* 2018). Involving downstream stakeholders in the organizations' product supply chain by receiving various inputs from them and working on them could improve performance (Alkhatib, 2017). Therefore, this study hypothesizes that;

H2: Downstream stakeholders have a positive and significant effect on supply chain performance

Institutional pressures are applied by authoritatively recognized establishments to the firms under their jurisdiction for compliance which in turn enhances their performance (Tian *et al.,* 2022). Noncompliance with coercive, mimetic, and normative pressure by any firm can jeopardize its legitimacy in front of authoritative institutions and other business stakeholders at large (Habib *et al.,* 2022). This is due to the fact that

stakeholders in modern business play a great role in firms' activities and performance (Svensson *et al.,* 2018). Downstream stakeholders have been mentioned to play a remarkable role in firms' supply chain performance (Kamble *et al.,* 2023). Scholars of institutional theory emphasize the need for the application of various institutional pressures as a way of enhancing firms' performance (Ahmed *et al.,* 2020).

On the other hand, stakeholder theorist contends that value creation is a result of firms' good performance in their supply chain (Shah *et al.,* 2022). The theory explains the contribution of each stakeholder in supply chain performance towards value creation (Kayikci *et al.,* 2022). Among others, downstream stakeholders are mentioned to have a vital role due to their position along the supply chain (Sultan *et al*., 2021). Subsequently, this research claims that;

H 3: Downstream stakeholders have a mediating effect on the relationship between institutional pressure and supply chain performance

3. Methodology

Positivism philosophy backed by the deductive approach which employs empirical data was utilized in this research (Saunders *et al.,* 2015). It was employed because, tested hypothesizes were theory based. Likewise, explanatory plan coupled with a survey strategy was in use (Hakim, 2012). Major reason being that the objectives were designed to establish causal effect relationship. The population of interest was 570 registered AMCOS from 16 regions of Kagera, Mwanza, Geita, Kigoma, Katavi, Rukwa, Songwe, Mbeya, Njombe, Iringa, Ruvuma, Morogoro, Tanga, Kilimanjaro, Manyara and Mara in Tanzania as per Tanzania Cooperative Development Commission (TCDC) figures of 2024. The motive behind selection of these regions was that it amounts for almost 99% of coffee from Tanzania (Kangile *et al.,*2021).

On the other hand, simple random procedure was utilized to choose 225 research respondents. The technique was applied in order to give each AMCOS general manager in the respective region equal chance of being selected. According to Arruda and Bentler, (2017), N: q is a general rule once Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is in use, the researcher suggested that perfect sample size to an item is 20:1 or at least 10: 1. N represents quantity of respondents for each item while q represents total items in the whole research. The sum of items in this research was fifteen (15), consequently, grounded from N: q rule, the ideal study sample size was established based 15:1 ratio. The sample size therefore was established as 225 AMCOS. SEM was applied as an analytical tool in this research because of its power of giving clear approximations of dimension error in the constraint. It also, measures observed as well as unobservable concepts equally. All these could not be achieved by other multivariate analysis tool.

Danish *et al.* (2017) suggested proportionate allocations which permits the sample to be reserved balanced to the recognized study area to safeguard representativeness. Computations which assisted to establish proportion of questionnaires to be circulated in each region are shown in the table below. The essence of this computation was to ensure full representation of participants from each region.

Table 1: Sample Proportional per Region

REGION	NUMBER OF AMCOS	SAMPLE PROPORTION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Kagera	45	45/570x225	18
Mwanza	20	20/570x225	8
Geita	27	27/570x225	11
Kigoma	33	33/570x225	13
Katavi	46	46/570x225	18
Rukwa	42	42/570x225	17
Songwe	48	48/570x225	19
Mbeya	55	55/570x225	22
Njombe	38	38/570x225	15
Iringa	46	46/570x225	18
Morogoro	32	32/570x225	13
Ruvuma	25	25/570x225	10
Tanga	23	23/570x225	9
Kilimanjaro	47	47/570x225	18
Manyara	19	19/570x225	7
Mara	24	24/570x225	9
Total	**570**		**225**

Six parameters were adapted to measure SCP (Gawankar *et al*., 2016 & 2017; Maestrini *et al.,* 2018). IP was measured by five indicators as per (Juárez-Luis *et al.,* 2018) while DS measured using four parameters (Svensson *et al.,* 2016). All these indicators were validated in supply chain context. Five-point Likert-like scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) were used in ranking participants response. The unit of analysis was AMCOS general manager. Additionally, determination of validity and reliability of the study constructs together with evaluation of SEM assumptions was facilitated by SPSS software version 25. The same version was applied in accomplishment of descriptive analysis as well as assessing exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Measurement and structural models to attain confirmatory factor analysis (EFA) was achieved using IBM AMOS software version 23. Associations amid independent and dependent variables was established to be significant at 5% level. Moreover, goodness of fit indices with their tolerable limit levels were also taken care. These indices include CMIN/DF(X^2/df) ≤3, RMR ≤ .08, GFI ≥ .90, CFI ≥ .90, NFI ≥ .90, TLI ≥ .90, RFI ≥ .90, PCFI ≥ .50, and RMSEA ≤ .08 (Hair *et al.,* 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

Before engaging in further analysis, SEM assumptions including the linearity were verified. Linearity was checked to assess association between indicators forming one variable and indicators across all variables. Moreover, absence of multicollinearity was established. The reason of performing multicollinearity test was to confirm whether items which is claimed to measure a variable really measures it correctly. Multivariate normality was established using skewness and kurtosis with cut – off points of -3 and 3 as well as -2 and 2 respectively (Prasojo *et al.,* 2020). The essence of this test was to enable the researcher to draw conclusion on the ideal distribution of the collected data. Further description of multivariate normality is presented in

Table 2: Normality Test

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
IP2	1.000	5.000	-.766	-5.360	.095	.334
IP3	1.000	5.000	-.766	-5.359	.544	1.906
IP4	1.000	5.000	-.832	-5.821	.355	1.242
IP5	1.000	5.000	-.982	-6.874	.815	2.854
DS4	1.000	5.000	-.760	-5.321	.164	.574
DS3	1.000	5.000	-.722	-5.056	.276	.965
DS2	1.000	5.000	-.913	-6.390	.557	1.950
DS1	1.000	5.000	-.973	-6.808	.728	2.546
SCP6	1.000	5.000	-.807	-5.649	.807	2.824
SCP5	1.000	5.000	-.415	-2.905	.128	.447
SCP4	1.000	5.000	-.599	-4.190	.649	2.271
SCP2	1.000	5.000	-.832	-5.826	.601	2.102
SCP1	1.000	5.000	-.636	-4.450	-.041	-.144
Multivariate					**8.741**	**3.795**

Cronbach's Alpha and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were applied to verify reliability and validity of the study constructs. Results suggested all study constructs to be reliable as their Cronbach's Alpha was above 0.7 (Orscelik *et al.,* 2021). Also, the AVE values of all constructs were above 0.5 which is the suggested cut–off point (Fornell & Larcker 1981, Prasojo *et al.,* 2020). These results provide enough evidence that the constructs were reliable and valid.

Table 3: Reliability and Validity Test

Variable	Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
SCP	6	.872	.859	.550
IP	5	.793	.877	.554
DS	4	.866	.848	.584

Key: CR means Composite Reliability

Assessment of number and set of indicators which make a specific variable was accomplished by exploratory factor analysis. Results suggested that all three variables under consideration, were fitted for EFA. This was voiced by KMO above 0.7 which infers sampling adequacy (Mia *et al.,* 2019). Batlet's test results were

sufficient to reject the null hypothesis. This was demonstrated by the smallest p-values below .001 for each variable (Zou *et al.,* 2020).

Table 3: KMO and Batlet's Test

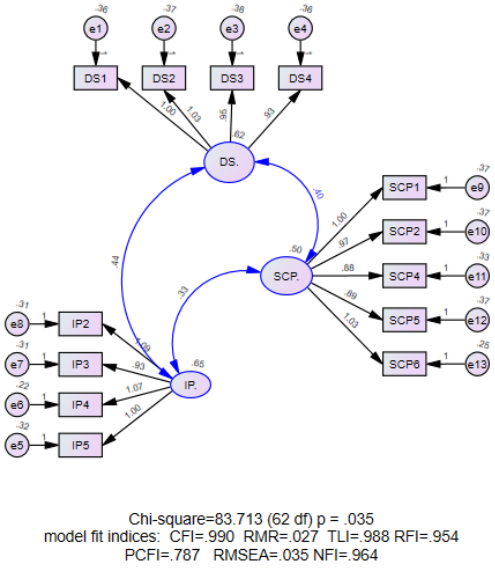
Variables	Indicators	KMO	Bartlett's Test
SCP	6	.897	771.48 (p<.001)
IP	5	.843	757.64 (p<.001)
DS	4	.829	538.44 (p<.001)

Articulation of factor loadings was also executed. Indicators making a specific variable had factor loadings above 0.5 except IP1 which was dropped for further analysis (Shi *et al.,* 2022). Its removal did not affect the variable representation because the remaining items were more than three which is the minimum number of items per variable in SEM. Also, SCP3 was dropped as it cross-loaded to the DS variable. Although this cross – loading was not theoretically articulated but it's possible when SEM is used given the context under scrutiny.

Table 4: Factor Loading

	Component		
	1	2	3
DS4	.798		
DS1	.760		
DS2	.753		
DS3	.743		
SCP3	.562		
SCP4		.786	
SCP6		.750	
SCP2		.743	
SCP5		.737	
SCP1		.689	
IP5			.816
IP3			.806
IP4			.787
IP2			.770
IP1			.380

The fit indices with their cut-off points as shown here under were applied to verify modal fitness; CMIN/DF(X^2/df) ≤3, RMR ≤ .08, GFI ≥ .90, CFI ≥ .90, NFI ≥ .90, TLI ≥ .90, RFI ≥ .90, PCFI ≥ .50, RMSEA ≤ .08. Measurement and structural models with their fit indices are shown in Figure 1(a) and 1(b).



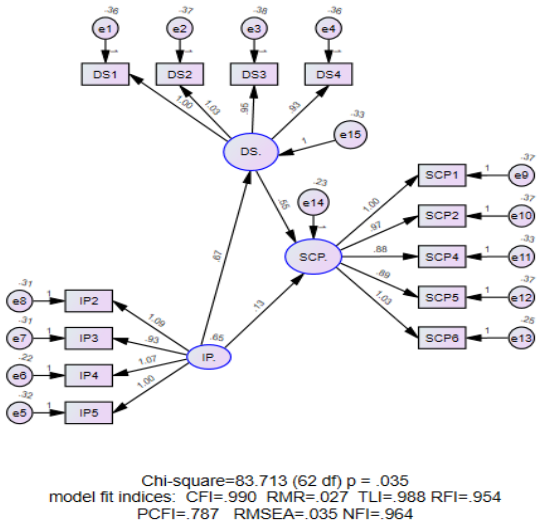


Figure 1(a): Measurement model *Figure: 1(b): Structural model*

More results exposed that every score rise in IP, caused SCP to rise by 0.499. The rise considered to be substantial at a 1% level (p<.001) as shown in Table 5. Controlling for DS for every score rise in IP caused SCP to rise by .129 as per Table 6 below. Consequently, the researcher had statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis and suggest that; - IP had an optimistic and substantial outcome on SCP. The result implies that, pressure from regulatory institutions contributes to the firm's good supply chain performance.

Table 5: Influence of IP on SCP in absence of a Mediator

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
SCP.	<---	IP.	.499	.058	8.530	***	par_7

Mediation analysis requirements were carried out as shown in Table 6. Direct effect between all study variables were optimistic and statistically substantial at 1% level (p < .001). Controlling for IP in every score rise of DS caused SCP to rise by 0.55, the rise was statistically substantial at the 1% level. Similarly, every score rise in IP made DS to rise substantially by .672. Then after, controlling for DS made the effect of IP on SCP to diminish and it was no longer substantial. This implies a full mediation effect. The results suggest the importance of considering roles played by downstream stakeholders in attaining firm's good supply chain performance.

Table 6: Mediating Effect of DS on the Relationship between SCP and IP

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
DS.	<---	IP.	.672	.064	10.453	***	par_11
SCP.	<---	IP.	.129	.068	1.906	.057	par_10
SCP.	<---	DS.	.554	.079	7.012	***	par_12

Outcomes supported H1 of the research in which institutional pressure was expected to have a positive and substantial effect on supply chain performance. The result suggests to the coffee regulatory institutions in Tanzania to formulate appropriate pressure which can enhance performance of the produce supply chain. Results of this research is consistent with those reported by Ahmed *et al.* (2020), Yang (2018) and, Vanalle *et al.* (2017) but contrary to results reported by Kalyar *et al.* (2020) and Zhang *et al.* (2020) who found the positive but insignificant effect of institutional pressure on supply chain performance.

The effect of downstream stakeholders on supply chain performance was positive and statistically significant at 1% level ($p<.001$) as it was theorized in H2 at the beginning. The results suggest the need of considering contribution of downstream stakeholders if at all the firm needs to enhance its supply chain performance. The result is consistent with the once reported by Kamble *et al.* (2023) Ahmed *et al.* (2020) and Graham *et al.* (2018) but contrary to the results by Gu *et al.* (2022) Sultan *et al.* (2021) who found the insignificant effect of DS on SCP. The research finally comprehended those downstream stakeholders had a full mediation effect on the association among institutional pressure and supply chain performance. These results corresponded with the H3 made at the commencement. This outcome implies that; - for the business firms to improve their supply chain performance, downstream stakeholders should be given sufficient attention instead of relying solely on compliance with institutional pressure.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The research analyzed the effect of institutional pressure on coffee supply chain performance in Tanzania with the mediation role of downstream stakeholders. The study found that both institutional pressure and downstream stakeholders significantly improve supply chain performance, with downstream stakeholders fully mediating this relationship. This suggests that leveraging downstream stakeholders is essential for enhancing Tanzania's coffee supply chain. Given its strong mediating role, downstream stakeholders should be a key focus for improving coffee supply chain performance in Tanzania. These findings highlight the need for policymakers and supply chain managers to engage downstream stakeholders more effectively to translate institutional pressures into performance gains. Further research could examine additional mediating factors or compare these dynamics across different agricultural sectors.

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