African Journal Of eCommerce, Logistics and Transportation Studies (AJELTS)
E-ISSN 3050-2330 (Online); ISSN 3050-2322 (Print)

Indexed by SABINET

Volume 1, Number 2, December 2024

Pp 111-128

Third Party Logistics and Service Provision in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Kenya

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31920/3050-2330/2024/v1n2a6

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Abstract

The study evaluated the impact of third-party logistics on service delivery in Kenyan manufacturing companies. Particular goals centered on the ways that modes of transportation and customs clearance regulations impact the services offered by particular Kenyan manufacturing companies. It is anticipated that the results would benefit future scholars, policymakers, and corporate management. The Resource-based View (RBV) theory served as the foundation for the investigation. In this study, a descriptive research design was adopted. From a target demographic of 200 employees, a sample size of 60 responders was selected using a stratified random selection technique. Questionnaires with closed ended questions were used as the primary data collection tool to collect quantitative data. Prior to being presented in tables, the collected data was analysed using Microsoft Excel. The study's findings included the following: Kenyan manufacturing companies' service delivery efficiency is significantly impacted by customs clearance procedures. Similarly, as various modes of transportation, such as air, rail, and road, have diverse effects on cost, speed, and dependability in the logistics process, they have a big impact on how efficiently services are provided. In order to increase productivity and decrease service delivery delays, the study advised manufacturing companies' management to examine and simplify their custom clearance procedures. Manufacturing companies can reduce bottlenecks that impact the timely delivery of items and enhance supply chain performance by using more adaptable and responsive clearance procedures. The management should also

fund staff training and development initiatives to make sure they are knowledgeable on the most recent customs laws and industry best practices.

Keyterms: *Custom Clearance Policies; Mode of Transport, Service Provision, Third Party Logistics*

1.0 Introduction and Research Objectives

For manufacturing firms to increase supply chain efficiency and operational flexibility, third-party logistics (3PL) services are crucial. By outsourcing logistics services like transportation, warehousing, inventory management, and order fulfillment, manufacturers can focus on their core production responsibilities while utilizing the expertise, state-of-the-art technology, and scalable solutions offered by specialized 3PL providers. Manufacturers may improve delivery times, save expenses, optimize their supply chain processes, and respond faster to market shifts thanks to this partnership. Additionally, value-added services like assembly, packaging, and reverse logistics are commonly offered by 3PL vendors, which boost productivity and further simplify operations (Adegbola and Ogunleye 2016).

Custom Clearance Policies

The rules, guidelines, and processes that a nation's customs authority has put in place to control the import and export of products are known as custom clearance policies. Because custom clearance policies affect the performance and cost-effectiveness of global supply chains, they have a substantial impact on the services that manufacturing companies provide. Tight and complicated customs laws might hinder 3PL companies' ability to provide timely and economical services by causing delays, adding to their administrative workload, and raising their expenses. On the other hand, efficient and open customs processes can improve 3PL services' responsiveness and agility, enabling quicker goods clearance, shorter transit times, and cheaper overall logistics expenses.

Furthermore, 3PL providers must invest in specialist knowledge and technologies and stay current on regulatory changes in order to comply with customs laws. These requirements may have an impact on their operational strategies and service offerings (Diop and Ndiaye 2018).

Mode of Transport

The term "mode of transport" describes the several ways that people or things are transported from one location to another. By affecting the effectiveness, affordability, and dependability of supply chain activities, the method of transportation has a substantial impact on the services that manufacturing companies provide. varied modes of transportation, including air, sea, rail, and road, have varied advantages and disadvantages in terms of speed, capacity, and cost. For instance, air transport is swift but expensive, and only suitable for urgent or important commodities. In contrast, sea shipping is slower but more cost-effective for large cargoes. The mode of transportation used affects the 3PL provider's capacity to control logistical expenses, adhere to delivery schedules, and adjust to the particular needs of the manufacturing company.

Furthermore, the service levels that 3PL providers may give are strongly impacted by the dependability and availability of transportation infrastructure. 3PL providers can improve manufacturing companies' logistics operations' overall efficiency, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness by choosing the best combination of transport modes, allowing them to better satisfy operational objectives and market needs (Smith and Jones 2015).

Third Party Logistics Service Provision

Third-party logistics service provision is the practice of contracting with outside service providers to handle logistics and supply chain management duties (Wang and Li 2017). Regulatory restrictions, technological advancements, supply chain disruptions, and changes in consumer demand are some of the factors that may affect manufacturing firms' utilization of third-party logistics (3PL) services. Logistics requirements may change as a result of fluctuations in consumer preferences, industry developments, and economic conditions, calling for 3PL suppliers to offer flexible and responsive services. Changes in trade agreements and customs laws could have an effect on how cost-effective and efficient logistics operations are. Furthermore, automation and information and communication technology (ICT) developments can affect the capacity to supply services, necessitating constant system and knowledge upgrades from 3PL providers. Furthermore, supply chain interruptions, such natural catastrophes or geopolitical conflicts, can

cause delays or interruptions in service delivery by upsetting transportation networks. 3PL providers must continue to be flexible, creative, and committed to providing value-added solutions that satisfy the changing demands of manufacturing companies in order to prosper in this dynamic environment (Bouzidi and Khaled 2019).

Statement of the Problem

A number of obstacles negatively affect the efficiency and efficacy of service delivery in Kenyan manufacturing companies (Martinez and Gomez 2017). Custom clearance laws' intricacy and irregularities pose a significant obstacle, sometimes resulting in delays, higher expenses, and administrative strains for 3PL suppliers. Further complicating logistical issues are restrictions in transportation infrastructure and the availability of various means of transportation, which can impede the prompt and economical transfer of goods.

Researchers have looked into the elements influencing logistics operations in the manufacturing industry in an effort to address these issues and gain a better understanding of how they affect the supply of 3PL services in Kenya. For example, a study by Ochieng (2018) found that transportation restrictions, technical limits, and regulatory barriers posed serious problems, underscoring the necessity of deliberate interventions to increase logistics efficiency. Similarly, Kamau and Muturi (2020) investigated how ICT adoption affected Kenyan 3PL providers' competitiveness, highlighting the significance of digitization in removing logistical obstacles and enhancing supply chain efficiency.

However, in the context of 3PL service delivery in Kenya, the study indicated a need for additional research to evaluate the interaction of ICT infrastructure, human competences, and operational outcomes. By concentrating on the impact of third-party logistics on service delivery in Kenyan manufacturing companies, the study aimed to close the gaps.

General Objective

The study's general objective was to establish the effect of third-party logistics on service provision in manufacturing firms in Kenya.

Specific Objectives of the Study

i. To determine the effect of custom clearance policies on service provision in manufacturing firms in Kenya, and
ii. To assess the effect of mode of transport on service provision in manufacturing firms in Kenya.

Significance of the Study

The study's conclusions will help management of manufacturing companies identify key areas for improving and optimizing supply chain operations. Implementing new technology, optimizing procedures, or providing staff with opportunities for competency-building training and development could all be part of this. The study's conclusions will ultimately enable these businesses to make informed decisions and take proactive measures to address logistical problems, improve service delivery, and maintain a competitive edge in the market. Kenyan policymakers, who are in charge of establishing regulatory frameworks and infrastructure development projects, will also be very interested in the research's findings.
. Policymakers can customize interventions and regulations to solve major bottlenecks and improve the overall competitiveness of the logistics sector by having a thorough grasp of the unique difficulties faced by 3PL providers in the manufacturing sector. Last but not least, the survey will provide a starting point for upcoming studies meant to expand our comprehension of the dynamics and complexity of logistics operations in Kenya's manufacturing industry.

Scope of the Study

The study sought to determine the impact of third-party logistics on the services offered by Kenyan manufacturing enterprises using a sample of those organizations. The study's target population was 2000 employees from 5 selected manufacturing firms in Kenya. From these, a sample population of 60 employees were selected as respondents using stratified random sampling method. The study was conducted between April and November of 2024.

2.0 Theoretical Background and Informing Literature Review

The Resource-based View (RBV) Theory, created by Jay Barney in the 1980s, serves as the foundation for this investigation. According to RBV, a company's competitive advantage comes from its unique combination of assets and competencies. According to this thesis, companies that own valuable, uncommon, and difficult-to-copy resources are better positioned to stay ahead of the competition. Utilizing unique resources and capabilities, such as sophisticated technology infrastructure,

specialized knowledge of logistics management, and strong relationships with suppliers and partners, can give businesses a competitive edge when it comes to third-party logistics service provision in manufacturing firms, according to RBV (Barney, 1986).

RBV provides a helpful framework for understanding how competitive advantage arises and guiding strategic decisions. RBV urges businesses to cultivate and capitalize on their distinct strengths in order to surpass rivals by emphasizing internal resources and competencies. RBV is criticized for ignoring how crucial market dynamics and outside influences are in determining competitive advantage. The approach has also drawn criticism for lacking specific recommendations on how businesses should methodically find and develop important resources (Barney, 1986).
RBV theory is pertinent to the study since it explains how manufacturing firms might use their own resources to enhance the caliber of third-party logistics services.

internal assets and competencies. Businesses can increase their competitiveness and performance in the logistics industry by recognizing and utilizing distinctive logistical assets, such as knowledge, technology, and connections.

Empirical evidence

Christopher and Towill (2020) investigated the effects of 3PL services on supply chain performance and efficiency in the UK. They concluded that the integration of 3PL services enables manufacturing enterprises in the UK to better fulfill market needs and enhance operational efficiency because their findings showed notable improvements in delivery times, cost reductions, and overall supply chain flexibility. Similar findings were made by Lieb and Randall (2021) in their investigation of the impact of third-party logistics services on the UK manufacturing industry, which revealed that companies utilizing 3PL services benefited greatly from lower logistical costs, more dependable deliveries, and a greater emphasis on core capabilities.

Adebayo (2022) investigated the impact of third-party logistics service providers on manufacturing companies' operational performance in Nigeria. Third-party logistics services are crucial for improving the operational capabilities and competitive edge of manufacturing firms in Nigeria, according to their findings, which showed that companies outsourcing logistics functions to 3PL providers reported notable

improvements in delivery accuracy, inventory management, and cost savings.

Using a mixed-method approach that included surveys and in-depth interviews, Botes and Von Leipzig (2022) discovered that 3PL services enhanced supply chain coordination, decreased operating costs, and raised customer satisfaction in South Africa. But there were drawbacks as well, like reliance on 3PL suppliers and problems with integration. The study came to the conclusion that although third-party logistics services greatly improve supply chain efficiency, South African manufacturing companies must carefully manage their 3PL relationship.

Namagembe (2022) looked on how third-party logistics affected manufacturing companies' operations in Uganda. and concluded that companies using 3PL services saw cost savings, faster deliveries, and better inventory management. Last but not least, Wambui (2018) investigated the efficiency of third-party logistics service delivery in Kenya's industrial sector and discovered that 3PL services helped lower logistics costs, increase delivery dependability, and improve inventory control. But her research revealed that issues like losing control and relying on 3PL suppliers needed to be managed well.

Summary and Research Gaps

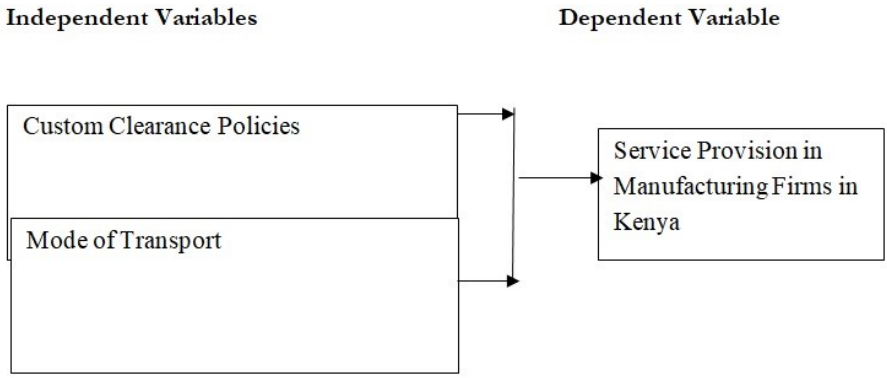
Smith (2018) emphasizes the importance of third-party logistics (3PL) providers for industrial firms looking to increase supply chain efficiency, cut costs, and enhance delivery timelines. These providers typically offer extra services including packing, assembly, and reverse logistics to improve overall efficiency and expedite procedures. Additionally, 3PL businesses enhance supply chain coordination, visibility, and decision-making by utilizing cutting-edge technologies like information and communication technology (ICT) platforms. Studies by Wang and Li (2017) and Ndlovu and Mbohwa (2019) emphasize the value of ICT in raising the competitiveness of manufacturing firms through increased operational effectiveness and better customer service standards.

Despite these advancements, there are still research gaps in the areas of evaluating environmental sustainability practices in 3PL service delivery, integrating cutting-edge technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence in logistics operations, and the scalability of 3PL services across different manufacturing sectors. It may be possible to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of 3PL service delivery in

manufacturing organizations by conducting additional research to close these gaps.

Conceptual Framework

A theoretical framework forms the basis of the research. The conceptual framework outlines and specifies the ideas that seek to explain theresearch problem, with a focus on the variables that were studied.



3.0 Research methodology

The study used a descriptive research methodology since the data it aimed to gather necessitated the distribution of questionnaires. The design's primary goal was to systematically give an accurate and truthful depiction of the circumstance or area of interest. The study's target population was 2000 employees from 5 selected manufacturing firms in Kenya. From these, a sample population of 60 employees were selected as respondents using stratified random sampling method. Strata for this purpose was formed using the company's 'number of employees and carder of employees in each company so as to ensure an illustrative selection of participants from various subgroups within the target population. By making sure that every subgroup is proportionately represented, this method reduces sampling bias and improves the findings' generalizability (Taherdoost, 2016 A pilot study was conducted to assess the questionnaire's reliability, and a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was calculated. The quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel, and a multiple linear regression model was used in the manner described below:

$$Y=B0+B1X1+B2X2+e$$

Where,
Y – is the dependent variable (service provision in manufacturing firms in Kenya)

X1- Custom clearance policies
X2- Mode of transport
$\beta 0$ – is the constant, e is the error of prediction.

$\beta 1\text{-}n$ = the regression coefficient or change included in Y by each χ_n

ϵ = error term

Finally, AI was extensively used to reframe sentences and edit the work so as to improve on the reporting. Among the challenges faced by the study were respondents reluctant to give necessary information, short time period used too carry out the study and scope of area coverage where only five manufacturing companies were used to represent the rest. These limitations were delimited by the researcher assuring respondents that all information was to be kept confidential, and the scientific use of stratified random sampling method to select the 60 respondents to represent the rest

4.0 Research Findings and Discussions

Response Rate

Ninety percent of the sample population responded to the 60 questionnaires that the researcher sent. Kombo and Tromp (2019) highlight the questionnaire's exceptional validity during the data processing stage by stating that a response rate of above 10% is considered unusual by criteria. According to the responses, women made up 48% of the total, while males made up the majority of participants (52% of all responses).

Participants' Age category

Table 1 Participants' Age category

Category	Frequency	Percentage
21-30 years	11	20
31-40 years	17	31
41-50 years	22	41
Above 51 years	4	8
Total	**54**	**100**

According to the results shown in Table 5, 20% of the participants are between the ages of 21 and 30, 31% are between the ages of 31 and 40, 41% are between the ages of 41 and 50, and 8% are older than 51. Kombo and Tromp (2019) assert that one of the most important factors in determining respondents' opinions on particular topics is their age.

Participants' educational level

Table 2 Participants' educational level

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Master's Degree	2	4
Bachelor's Degree	25	46
Diploma	22	41
Certificate	5	9
Total	**54**	**100**

Table 6, which displays the educational backgrounds of the participants, reveals that 46% of them hold a bachelor's degree, 41% a diploma, 9% a certificate, and 4% a master's degree. These statistics indicate that professional skill is necessary for the work done inside the organization, as the majority of association members have completed at least a diploma program. Kothari (2016) asserts that as a person's answers are probably impacted by their educational background, it is critical to comprehend the participants' educational backgrounds.

Respondents Work Experience

Table 3 Participants' work experience

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	5	9
5-7 years	10	19
8-10 years	20	37
11-13 years	13	24
Above 14 years	6	11
Total	**54**	**100**

Nine percent of respondents had less than five years of work experience, 11% had more than fourteen years, 37% had eight to ten years, 24% had eleven to thirteen years, and 19% had five to seven years, as shown in Table 7. These findings suggest that the participants have been with the company for a considerable amount of time, which puts them in an excellent position to provide thoughtful responses to the surveys. According to Zikmund (2011), long-term workers are better able to understand the dynamics of an organization and are more prepared to provide authoritative answers to research

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

Table 4 Custom clearance policies and service provision in manufacturing firms in Kenya

S/N	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Custom clearance policies have helped in optimizing the overall cost of logistics for our company	4.32	.487
2	Custom clearance policies contribute to the cost efficiency of our logistics operations	4.32	.724
3	Our third-party logistics providers provide transparent and predictable custom clearance costs	4.76	.147
4	We have experienced a significant improvement in delivery times due to streamlined custom clearance procedures	4.31	.295

Table 8 displays the participants' perspectives on the relationship between custom clearance laws and service providers in Kenyan manufacturing firms. According to the participants, customs clearance procedures have improved our company's overall logistics costs (M=4.32, SD=.487). Regarding the claim that customs clearance procedures help our logistics operations be more cost-effective (M=4.32, SD=.147). Regarding the claim that our outside logistics suppliers offer clear and consistent customs clearance prices (M=4.32, SD=.296). Regarding the claim that expedited customs clearance processes have resulted in a notable improvement in delivery times (M=4.31, SD=.295). 4.34 was the overall average.

Smith and Jones (2015) support the findings, which showed that complicated and irregular customs procedures caused delays and higher expenses for 3PL providers, which in turn affected their capacity to provide timely and economical services. The study found that by lowering logistical costs and increasing supply chain efficiency, simplified customs procedures are crucial for raising the competitiveness of Australian manufacturing companies.

Mode of transport and service provision in manufacturing firms in Kenya

Table 5 Mode of transport and service provision in manufacturing firms in Kenya

S/N	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Road transport is the most efficient mode of transport for our manufacturing firm's logistics operations in Kenya.	4.32	.487
2	The mode of transport selected by our third-party logistics providers ensures timely delivery of our products	4.32	.430
3	The mode of transport used by our logistics providers is cost-effective	4.35	.368
4	Cost savings are achieved through the strategic selection of transport modes by our logistics partners	4.38	.371

Table 9 displays the participants' perspectives on the relationship between service providers and transportation methods in Kenyan manufacturing firms. Road transport is the most effective means of transportation for our manufacturing firm's logistical activities in Kenya, according to respondents (M=4.32, SD=.847). Regarding the claim that our products would be delivered on time thanks to the mode of transportation our third-party logistics providers have chosen (M=4.32, SD=.430). Regarding the claim that our logistics providers' manner of transportation is economical (M=4.35, SD=.368). Regarding the claim that our logistics partners' smart choice of transportation methods results in cost savings (M=4.38, SD=.371). 4.33 was the overall average.
. Research supports this. Hernandez and Rodriguez (2018) found that the cost, speed, and dependability of logistics services offered by 3PL providers were all greatly impacted by the mode of transportation selected. Sea travel provided cost savings but longer transit times, whilst air transport was determined to be quicker but more costly. The study came to the conclusion that choosing the best kind of transportation is essential to raising Mexico's industrial sector's competitiveness and boosting supply chain effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher used a questionnaire-based technique to data gathering since organizational workers were time-constrained. By guaranteeing data collecting efficiency and causing the least amount of inconvenience to work schedules, this approach promoted participation. Because some responders thought the study required an unwanted time commitment, the researcher had trouble recruiting. In order to close this gap, the researcher ensured that responses would remain anonymous and underlined the importance of the study. Furthermore, stressing the study's solely academic goal helped allay worries and increase involvement.

Chapter Summary

Out of a sample of 60 respondents, 54 completed the survey, yielding a high response rate of 90%. For presentation, information about the participants' demographic and study-related traits was collected and then arranged in tabular form. The data was analyzed by the researchers using a two-pronged statistical method. This required using inferential

techniques to derive conclusions and maybe generalize about a broader population, in addition to descriptive techniques to summarize and describe the data.

5.0 Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Custom clearance policies

The purpose of the study was to investigate how Kenyan manufacturing enterprises' use of third-party logistics services was impacted by customs clearance procedures. The findings demonstrated that custom clearance regulations had a favourable effect on the provision of third-party logistics services in Kenyan manufacturing companies. The findings were supported by Smith and Jones (2015), who demonstrated that complex and erratic customs procedures led to delays and increased costs for 3PL providers, hence compromising their ability to deliver timely and cost-effective services. According to the study, streamlined customs processes are essential for boosting the competitiveness of Australian manufacturing firms since they reduce logistical costs and improve supply chain efficiency.

Mode of transport

The purpose of the study was to determine how the use of third-party logistics services by Kenyan industrial enterprises was impacted by various forms of transportation. The results showed that third-party logistics services provided by Kenyan manufacturing enterprises were positively impacted by the mode of transportation. This is in line with a study by Hernandez and Rodriguez (2018) that discovered that the mode of transportation chosen had a significant impact on the cost, speed, and dependability of logistics services provided by 3PL providers. Air transport was found to be speedier but more expensive than sea travel, which offered cost savings but longer transit times. According to the study's findings, improving supply chain efficiency and the competitiveness of Mexico's industrial sector depend on selecting the appropriate mode of transportation.

Conclusions

According to the study's findings, customs clearance regulations significantly affect how effectively third-party logistics services are

provided by Kenyan manufacturing firms. In order to improve the overall performance of logistics services, delays and operational bottlenecks must be minimized through efficient and streamlined customs procedures. On the other hand, strict or badly administered customs laws may result in longer transit times, greater expenses, and supply chain interruptions. The results emphasize that in order to guarantee quicker and more reliable clearance procedures, industrial companies must promote more effective customs procedures and work closely with customs officials and logistical partners.

The study comes to the conclusion that the mode of transportation has a major impact on the efficacy and efficiency of third-party logistics services provided by Kenyan manufacturing companies. In the logistics process, various means of transportation—such as air, train, and road—have different effects on reliability, speed, and cost. Better delivery performance, lower operating costs, and increased supply chain efficiency can result from the wise choice and administration of transportation modes. On the other hand, poor transportation decisions may lead to delays, higher costs, and logistical difficulties. In order to improve logistics results, the survey highlights how important it is to assess and match transportation modes with the unique requirements of manufacturing activities.

Recommendations

According to the poll, manufacturing companies' management should analyse and simplify their custom clearance procedures in order to increase productivity and decrease delays in the delivery of third-party logistics services. Manufacturing companies can reduce bottlenecks that affect the timely delivery of items and enhance supply chain performance by using more adaptable and responsive clearance procedures. The management should also fund staff training and development initiatives to make sure they are knowledgeable on the most recent customs laws and industry best practices. To further improve operations and support the company's production objectives, logistics partners might collaborate to develop a more integrated approach to customs procedures.

According to the research, in order to improve the effectiveness of third-party logistics service providing, manufacturing businesses' management should assess and optimize their mode of transportation. Manufacturing companies can choose the most dependable and economical solutions for their supply chain requirements by evaluating

the effectiveness and compatibility of different transportation modes, such as air, rail, and road. To enhance route planning and delivery scheduling, the management should also make investments in cutting-edge logistics technologies and data analytics. Closer cooperation with logistics companies can also assist customize transport options to better suit the unique needs of manufacturing processes, which will cut down on delays and total transportation expenses.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The impact of emerging technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence on the efficiency and transparency of logistics should be the subject of future studies on the factors impacting service delivery in Kenyan manufacturing firms.

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