

## THIRD-PARTY LOGISTICS AND MARKETING PERFORMANCE OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT

D. C. Igani (Ph.D), Ruth Eke & Binaebi Bello

*Email: igani22@gamil.com*

Department of Marketing, Ignatius Ajuru university of Education, Port Harcourt,  
Rivers State, Nigeria

### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the relationship between Third-Party Logistics and Marketing Performance of Food and Beverage Firms in Port Harcourt. The objectives of the study were to determine how transportation management and order fulfillment relate with market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. The correlational research design was adopted. The population for this study comprised of all thirty-five (35) registered food and beverage firms in Rivers State. 175 respondents were drawn from the population through census approach in a frame of five (5) managers per firm. However, only 135 managers provided data for the study through questionnaire that was designed in the Likert 5-point scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test two null hypotheses. From results of the analysis it was revealed that transportation management and order fulfillment which are the dimensions of third-party logistics positively and significantly relate with market share growth (i.e. measure of marketing performance) of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Based on these findings, it was concluded that while effective transportation management is beneficial, optimizing order fulfillment processes is more critical to achieving market expansion. Therefore, the study recommended amongst others that food and beverage firms should invest in advanced inventory management systems and staff training to minimize errors, reduce delivery times, and ensure customer satisfaction, which can boost market share growth.*

**Keyword(s): Third-Party Logistics; Marketing Performance; Transportation Management; Order Fulfillment; Market Share Growth**

### INTRODUCTION

The integration of third-party logistics (3PL) in supply chain management has increasingly become a significant determinant of marketing performance for businesses, particularly in the food and beverage sector. As competition intensifies and consumer expectations shift, food and beverage companies face the challenge of optimizing logistics functions to enhance their marketing strategies and operational efficiency. Third-party logistics providers offer a range of services, including transportation, warehousing, inventory management, and distribution, which can reduce operational costs and improve service quality (Adebayo & Aworemi, 2021). In Nigeria, especially in commercial hubs like Port Harcourt, the reliance on 3PL has grown substantially as companies seek to leverage the logistics expertise of third-party providers to maintain competitive advantages and boost their marketing performance (Nwokinaka & Poi, 2024). By outsourcing logistics operations, food and beverage firms can concentrate on their core competencies such as product innovation and market expansion while benefiting from improved logistics capabilities.

Empirical studies have explored the correlation between logistics outsourcing and marketing performance within the Nigerian food and beverage sector. Nkamnebe and Oko (2013) argued that efficient reverse logistics management positively influences marketing performance by reducing wastage, enhancing brand reputation, and promoting sustainability. Similarly, Imeokparia (2013) found that inventory management through third-party logistics providers could streamline product availability, thus reducing stockouts and improving customer satisfaction. These logistical efficiencies contribute to better market performance by ensuring timely product availability, optimizing inventory levels, and reducing costs associated with excess inventory or stock shortages (Osoro, 2024).

However, there are challenges associated with the adoption of 3PL in Nigeria, including infrastructure inadequacies, regulatory issues, and coordination problems between businesses and logistics providers (Ugwu & Dieke, 2024). Addressing these challenges can significantly enhance the synergistic relationship between logistics providers and food and beverage firms, leading to improved marketing outcomes.

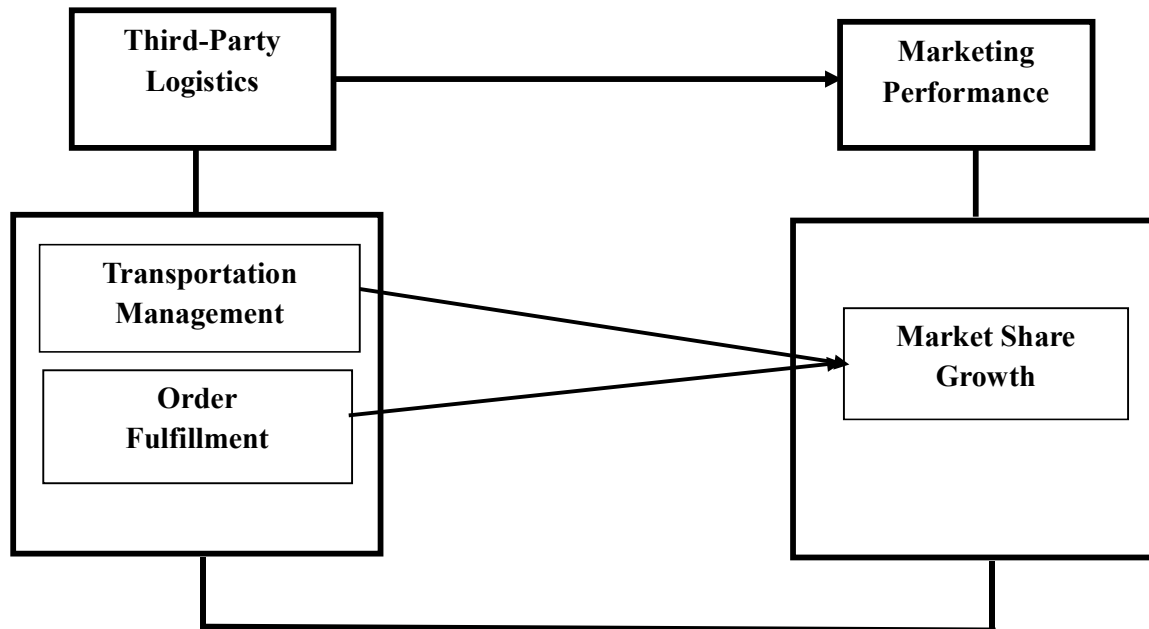
In Port Harcourt, a bustling economic center with a growing food and beverage market, the implementation of third-party logistics is crucial for firms seeking to enhance their marketing performance. The city's strategic location as a commercial gateway and its proximity to the nation's major ports make it a critical hub for logistics activities (Andow, Dabo & Ejeh, 2018). Effective collaboration with 3PLs allows businesses to optimize their distribution networks, expand market reach, and enhance customer service quality factors that collectively contribute to stronger marketing performance (Adesunkanmi et al., 2022). As competition intensifies in the sector, the ability to leverage logistics expertise to achieve timely deliveries, cost efficiency, and flexibility becomes essential for sustaining competitive advantages. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of third-party logistics and their impact on marketing performance is imperative for stakeholders aiming to enhance operational efficiency and achieve business growth in the food and beverage industry of Port Harcourt.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The increasing complexity of logistics management in the food and beverage industry has intensified the need for firms to adopt efficient third-party logistics (3PL) services. In Port Harcourt, a key commercial hub in Nigeria, food and beverage companies face significant logistical challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent regulatory policies, and high transportation costs. These challenges often result in delays, stockouts, and compromised product quality, which negatively impact marketing performance and customer satisfaction. Despite the potential of third-party logistics to optimize distribution processes and enhance marketing effectiveness, many firms struggle to integrate these services effectively. There is a growing concern about whether the benefits of 3PL such as cost reduction, timely deliveries, and increased market reach are being fully harnessed by food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. This disconnect raises critical questions about the relationship between third-party logistics and the marketing performance of these firms, necessitating a more profound investigation to understand the underlying factors and potential solutions.

Furthermore, existing studies on the impact of third-party logistics on marketing performance have predominantly focused on developed economies, with limited research addressing the peculiarities of Nigeria's business environment. The few studies conducted in Nigeria often adopt a broad perspective, overlooking the unique operational dynamics of the food and beverage sector in Port Harcourt. Consequently, there is inadequate empirical evidence to guide decision-making by stakeholders seeking to optimize logistics processes for enhanced marketing performance. The absence of localized research limits the ability of food and beverage firms to develop tailored strategies that align with their logistical needs and market conditions. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by exploring the specific ways in which third-party logistics influence marketing performance, providing more information that could enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

### Conceptual Operational Framework



*Figure 1:1: Conceptual framework of the relationship between third-party logistics and marketing performance of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.*

*Source: Imeokparia (2013); Osoro (2024)*

### Objective of the Study

This paper is to determine the relationship between third-party logistics and marketing performance of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt, the objectives are to:

1. examine the relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.
2. ascertain the relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided this paper:

1. What is the relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt?

### Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms.

## **Conceptual Reviews**

### **Third-Party Logistics**

Third-party logistics (3PL) refers to the outsourcing of logistics and supply chain management activities to specialized external service providers. These services often include inventory management, warehousing, transportation, order fulfillment, and distribution. According to Wassenaar (2024), the adoption of 3PL enables businesses to focus on their core competencies while leveraging the logistics expertise of 3PL providers. By integrating advanced technologies such as warehouse management systems and real-time tracking, 3PLs can streamline operations, reduce costs, and enhance supply chain efficiency. In recent years, the role of 3PLs has expanded beyond traditional logistics to include strategic partnerships, value-added services, and sustainable practices. However, Bront and Romero (2024) argue that the success of 3PL relationships depends on effective communication, trust, and the alignment of business objectives between partners. The increasing complexity of global supply chains and the need for flexible, responsive logistics solutions have further highlighted the importance of 3PL providers. As businesses seek to adapt to volatile markets and customer demands, the strategic collaboration with 3PLs has become a critical factor for maintaining competitiveness and optimizing supply chain performance.

### **Dimensions of Third-Party Logistics**

#### **Transportation Management**

Transportation management is a critical aspect of logistics that involves planning, coordinating, and optimizing the movement of goods from their origin to their destination. Effective transportation management not only aims to reduce costs but also to enhance delivery efficiency, customer satisfaction, and supply chain visibility. According to Kołacz and Verheyen (2025), transportation management systems (TMS) are increasingly leveraging technology to optimize routes, monitor shipments in real time, and manage inventory levels effectively. The integration of digital platforms has transformed transportation management, enabling real-time data analytics and improving decision-making capabilities. Zainul Abideen (2025) further highlights the use of simulation modeling in optimizing transportation strategies, especially during disruptions, illustrating the potential for cost savings and increased efficiency. Despite its benefits, transportation management faces challenges such as fluctuating fuel prices, regulatory issues, and environmental concerns. However, advancements in green logistics and the adoption of electric vehicles are emerging solutions that promote sustainability in transportation management.

#### **Order Fulfillment**

Order fulfillment encompasses the complete process of receiving, processing, and delivering customer orders. This involves inventory management, warehousing, picking and packing, shipping, and tracking deliveries. According to Aich, Sengupta, and Pasam (2025), automation technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and robotic process automation (RPA) have revolutionized order fulfillment by optimizing inventory control, reducing errors, and enhancing customer satisfaction. Effective order fulfillment is vital for maintaining customer loyalty and competitive advantage, especially in the e-commerce sector where customer expectations for rapid, accurate deliveries are high. Hamedani and Aslam (2025) further assert that AI-powered systems improve demand forecasting, streamline order processing, and reduce lead times, thereby increasing operational efficiency. However, achieving seamless order fulfillment requires a cohesive integration between inventory systems, customer relationship management (CRM), and transportation management systems (TMS). Challenges like inventory shortages, delayed shipments, and logistical disruptions can compromise the order fulfillment process, leading to decreased customer satisfaction. Consequently, businesses are increasingly investing in sophisticated fulfillment technologies to mitigate these risks and enhance overall supply chain efficiency.

## **Marketing Performance**

Marketing performance refers to the effectiveness of marketing strategies in achieving business objectives such as increased sales, market share, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty. It involves measuring the impact of marketing activities using various metrics like return on investment (ROI), customer retention, and lead conversion rates. According to Permatasari et al. (2025), digital marketing, particularly through social media, has proven instrumental in enhancing the marketing performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by expanding market reach and engaging target audiences effectively. Similarly, Rosiana (2025) highlighted the positive correlation between entrepreneurial competencies, innovation, and marketing performance, demonstrating that businesses adopting innovative marketing techniques experience higher customer engagement and improved brand reputation. However, the effectiveness of marketing performance varies across industries, with factors such as competitive intensity, customer preferences, and market dynamics influencing the outcomes. Effective evaluation of marketing performance not only helps businesses optimize their marketing strategies but also aids in making data-driven decisions that align with organizational goals.

## **Measure of Marketing Performance**

### **Market Share Growth**

Market share growth refers to a company's increase in its percentage of total sales within a specific industry or market. It is a key performance metric that indicates a firm's competitiveness, operational efficiency, and marketing effectiveness. According to Hayyawi and Jasim (2025), market share growth is strongly associated with an organization's strategic competence, as businesses that effectively utilize resources, innovate, and enhance product quality tend to capture a larger market share. Strategic marketing, competitive pricing, and customer-centric approaches are pivotal in expanding market share. Permatasari, Yulianto, and Iqbal (2025) highlight the role of digital marketing, particularly through social media, in driving market share growth for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Effective use of digital platforms enhances brand visibility, engages customers, and facilitates direct communication, thereby improving sales performance. However, maintaining market share in a highly competitive environment requires businesses to adapt swiftly to market changes, innovate continuously, and prioritize customer satisfaction. Market share growth not only signifies success in business strategy but also enhances a firm's influence and bargaining power within the industry.

## **Theoretical Review**

The transaction cost theory (TCT) was adopted for this study to explore the relationship between third-party logistics (3PL) and the marketing performance of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Developed by Coase (1937) and later expanded by Williamson (1985), TCT suggests that firms outsource logistics activities to reduce transaction costs associated with in-house logistics operations, such as monitoring, coordination, and enforcement costs. By delegating logistics to specialized 3PL providers, firms can achieve economies of scale, leverage expertise, and focus on their core competencies, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and market responsiveness (Njagi, 2017). This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant to the Nigerian business environment, where infrastructural challenges and regulatory bottlenecks often increase transaction costs for in-house logistics management. Consequently, by outsourcing logistics to third-party providers, food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt can mitigate these challenges and optimize their marketing performance through more effective distribution, timely deliveries, and better inventory management.

The relevance of TCT to this study lies in its ability to explain the strategic decision-making process of firms when considering outsourcing logistics functions to third parties. Given the competitive nature of the food and beverage industry in Port Harcourt, firms must balance the costs and benefits of internal versus external logistics management to maximize marketing performance (Kithu, 2022).

TCT posits that when the cost of performing a task internally exceeds the cost of outsourcing, firms are motivated to collaborate with 3PL providers, enabling them to focus on customer-centric strategies and expand their market reach. Additionally, TCT emphasizes the role of trust and contractual agreements in minimizing opportunistic behaviors by logistics providers, thereby securing long-term partnerships that enhance marketing performance (Shanker et al., 2022). Thus, applying TCT helps understand how outsourcing logistics can optimize marketing efficiency, minimize costs, and enhance the competitive positioning of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

### **Empirical Reviews**

Ezirim, Lawrence, Idakwo, and Amadi (2024) examined the relationship between third-party logistics (3PL) and marketing performance in the oil and gas sector in Rivers State, Nigeria. Their study sought to understand how outsourcing logistics services influenced operational efficiency and market competitiveness. Using a survey research design, they gathered data from 150 logistics managers across oil and gas firms. The researchers applied multiple regression analysis to evaluate the impact of various 3PL services like inventory management, transportation, and warehousing on marketing performance metrics, including customer satisfaction, market share, and brand equity. Their findings showed a significant positive relationship between effective third-party logistics and enhanced marketing performance, highlighting that firms that integrated comprehensive 3PL services experienced reduced logistics costs, faster market reach, and improved customer satisfaction. The study recommended that businesses should strategically align their logistics outsourcing with marketing objectives to optimize market outcomes. The limitations of this study included a focus on only oil and gas firms, suggesting a need for further research across other sectors like food and beverage to generalize the results. This research is pertinent to the current study as it underscores the critical role of 3PL services in influencing marketing performance, which can be insightful for understanding similar dynamics in Port Harcourt's food and beverage sector.

A study by Okpighe and Ogbolu (2024) explored the impact of third-party logistics collaboration on supply chain performance within public health management in South-South Nigeria. The researchers aimed to assess how collaboration with 3PL providers could enhance marketing and operational performance in a sector often plagued by logistics inefficiencies. Data were collected from 200 healthcare supply chain managers and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) to determine the relationship between logistics outsourcing and key performance indicators like inventory turnover, order fulfillment rate, and customer satisfaction. The findings indicated a significant correlation between effective 3PL collaboration and improved marketing performance. Specifically, the study revealed that logistics collaboration reduced lead times, minimized inventory costs, and enhanced customer service, which positively impacted brand perception and competitive positioning. However, the study also noted challenges such as coordination issues and a lack of trust between healthcare organizations and 3PL providers, which could limit the potential benefits of outsourcing. The relevance of this study to the current research lies in its emphasis on the importance of effective collaboration in third-party logistics, which is crucial for optimizing marketing performance, especially in dynamic sectors like food and beverages in Port Harcourt.

Smith (2024) investigated the coordination between supply chain partners and third-party logistics (3PL) providers in enhancing marketing performance within the manufacturing industry. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data from 250 manufacturing firms and in-depth interviews with logistics managers. Using factor analysis and regression techniques, the study examined the influence of strategic coordination, information sharing, and contractual agreements on logistics and marketing performance. The findings revealed that firms with strong collaborative relationships with their 3PL providers experienced better marketing outcomes, including increased market share, improved brand loyalty, and enhanced customer satisfaction. The research highlighted that effective coordination and transparent communication with logistics partners were critical in optimizing distribution networks, reducing stockouts, and ensuring timely deliveries, which directly contribute to marketing success. Despite its comprehensive approach, the study's limitation included

a focus on manufacturing firms, suggesting a gap in understanding the nuances of the food and beverage industry. The relevance to the current study is significant, as it emphasizes the strategic importance of coordination between food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt and their 3PL partners to boost marketing performance.

**Research Methodology**

This paper adopted the correlational research design. The population of this study comprised of thirty-five (35) registered food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. In choosing respondents for the study, the census approach was adopted. The census approach enabled the researcher to study the entire population with a focus on the managerial staff. To generate data for the study, the questionnaire was distributed in the frame of five (5) copies per firm, a total of one hundred and seventy-five (175) respondents was used as the study subjects. The paper utilized the primary data source, the primary data was obtained through the administration of copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. The formulated hypotheses was tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) with the aid of SPSS version 23.0

**Data Analysis**

All 175 copies questionnaire were produced and distributed, fully covering the target sample (100%). 135 were deemed valid, making up 77.1% of the total distributed. These valid responses are central to the study, offering reliable data for investigating third-party logistics and marketing performance of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

**Research Question One:** What is the relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt?

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms.

**Table 1: Computation of Pearson Correlation on the Relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms.**

		Third-Party Logistics	Market Share Growth
Third-Party Logistics	Pearson Correlation	1	.468**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	135	135
Market Share Growth	Pearson Correlation	.468**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	135	135

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source: SPSS output, 2025.**

The SPSS output on Table 1 shows that a Pearson’s Correlation was run to assess the relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt using a sample of 135 managers as respondents. The strength and direction of the relationship between the variables are indicated by the r -value which is 0.468. This means there is a moderate and positive relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, significance of the relationship is shown by the probability value which is 0.000 less than the threshold of 0.05 indicating that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant. In other words, there is a moderate, positive and

statistically significant relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt ( $r = 0.468$ ,  $N = 135$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). We therefore reject the null hypothesis which stated that transportation management has no significant relationship with market share growth and concede that there is a significant relationship between transportation management and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

**Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt?

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

**Table 2 Computation of Pearson Correlation on the Relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Correlations**

		Order Fulfillment	Market Share Growth
Order Fulfillment	Pearson Correlation	1	.666**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	135	135
Market Share Growth	Pearson Correlation	.666**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	135	135

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source: SPSS output, 2025.**

The SPSS output on Table 2 shows that a Pearson's Correlation was run to assess the relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt using a sample of 135 managers as respondents. The strength and direction of the relationship between the variables are indicated by the  $r$ -value which is 0.666. This means there is a strong and positive relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, significance of the relationship is shown by the probability value which is 0.000 less than the threshold of 0.05 indicating that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant. In other words, there is a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt ( $r = 0.666$ ,  $N = 135$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). This means that there is a significant relationship between order fulfillment and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

### CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that transportation management has a moderate yet significant impact on market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Food and beverage firms should invest in advanced inventory management systems and staff training to minimize errors, reduce delivery times, and ensure customer satisfaction, which can boost market share growth.
2. Improve logistics by using efficient routing software, maintaining a reliable fleet, and collaborating with experienced logistics partners to reduce delays and transportation costs, enhancing overall service quality.

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