

SUPPLIER COLLABORATION AND CORPORATE SUCCESS OF BREAD AND CONFECTIONERY FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT**D. C. Igani (Ph.D), Nwankwo, Osondu Victor & Afia Imeh***igani22@gamil.com***Department of Marketing, Ignatius Ajuru university of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria****ABSTRACT**

This study empirically investigated the relationship between Supplier Collaboration and Corporate Success of Bread and Confectionery Firms in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to determine how information sharing and joint planning relates with market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt. The research design adopted was the correlational research design and the chosen population for this study comprised of thirty-two (32) bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt. This study adopted the census approach in which 5 managers were selected from each of the bread bakery firms in Port Harcourt, this brought about a total of one hundred and sixty (160) respondents. However, only 132 managers properly filled and returned their questionnaire for the study that was designed in the Likert 5-point scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the two null hypotheses developed for this study. The results of the analysis it was revealed that collaboration which are information sharing and joint planning have positively and significantly relate with market share growth. Based on these findings, was concluded that timely and accurate exchange of information with suppliers contributes to competitive positioning. More notably, joint planning exhibits a strong and statistically significant positive relationship with market share growth. Therefore, the study recommended amongst others that bread and confectionery firms should actively engage suppliers in joint planning sessions to align production schedules, demand forecasts, and market strategies, thereby improving responsiveness and market performance.

Keyword(s): Supplier Collaboration; Information Sharing; Joint Planning; Corporate Success; Market Share Growth

INTRODUCTION

The increasing competitiveness in Nigeria's food processing sector, particularly within bread and confectionery firms, has underscored the need for stronger and more strategic supply chain practices. Supplier collaboration—defined broadly as the strategic alignment, information sharing, and joint problem-solving between firms and their suppliers—has emerged as a critical enabler of corporate success in today's dynamic business environment. This is particularly true in Port Harcourt, where firms operate within volatile economic and infrastructural conditions that demand resilience, agility, and sustained relationships with upstream partners. Hamilton-Ibama and Kwelle (2023) assert that bread-producing firms in Rivers State must prioritize supplier development to ensure competitiveness and sustainability. Their study underscores the connection between supplier capability-building and firm-level outcomes like innovation, reduced costs, and customer satisfaction. In this context, the bread and confectionery segment becomes a fertile ground for evaluating how collaborative supplier engagement drives long-term business viability.

The Nigerian business landscape, characterized by infrastructural limitations and fluctuating macroeconomic conditions, makes supplier collaboration not just beneficial but essential. In particular, bread and confectionery firms in urban hubs like Port Harcourt face unique challenges such as irregular power supply, price volatility of raw materials, and fragmented logistics systems. These issues make it difficult for firms to operate efficiently without robust support from reliable suppliers. Njoku and Kalu (2015) emphasize that effective supply chain management, including deep collaboration with suppliers, is instrumental in enhancing profitability and operational efficiency in

Nigeria's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Collaborative efforts allow firms to forecast demand accurately, optimize inventory levels, and respond rapidly to market changes, especially in a sector where product freshness and speed-to-market are critical.

Theoretical perspectives have also suggested that supplier collaboration can foster innovation, operational responsiveness, and risk mitigation—all crucial to the success of SMEs in Nigeria's food manufacturing industry. Ikpesu and Mark (2023) illustrate how accounting ethics and supplier relationships jointly impact performance in eateries and snack production firms in Port Harcourt. Their findings suggest that businesses which maintain transparent and ethical relationships with suppliers often report better service delivery, improved supplier loyalty, and more consistent raw material availability. Moreover, the flexibility that comes from collaborative planning enables firms to align their supply strategies with broader corporate objectives such as market expansion, customer retention, and brand differentiation. In an environment where access to finance and infrastructure is constrained, such alignment with suppliers becomes not just strategic but a key survival tactic.

Moreover, regional studies further validate the role of supplier collaboration in supporting corporate growth and sustainability in the food sector. For instance, Wuse (2018) discusses the cassava value chain in the Niger Delta, noting that synergy between raw material suppliers and processors significantly enhances efficiency and reduces production bottlenecks. Similarly, Ofonyelu (2017) observes that firms in the confectionery sub-sector which engage in supplier-driven innovation are more resilient to market shocks and consumer preference shifts. These findings align with Munonye and Esiobu's (2017) broader observations on agribusiness sustainability in Nigeria, where they note that long-term relationships and joint value creation with suppliers are pivotal to consistent corporate performance. Therefore, in a regional economic hub like Port Harcourt, fostering supplier collaboration is not merely a competitive strategy; it is a foundation for operational continuity and business success in the bread and confectionery manufacturing space.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognized importance of supplier collaboration in enhancing organizational outcomes, many bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt still experience operational inefficiencies, raw material shortages, inconsistent product quality, and stunted business growth. These challenges suggest a disconnect between firms and their upstream suppliers, indicating that supplier relationships are either underdeveloped or poorly managed. While literature such as Hamilton-Ibama and Kwelle (2023) and Njoku and Kalu (2015) emphasizes the benefits of structured supplier engagement—ranging from reduced costs to improved responsiveness—there is little empirical clarity on how these dynamics play out in the specific context of bread and confectionery production in Port Harcourt. Most firms in this sector are small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that rely on local supply chains, yet they rarely adopt formalized collaboration strategies such as joint planning, information sharing, and supplier capacity building.

Moreover, there appears to be a research gap in understanding the specific mechanisms through which supplier collaboration contributes to corporate success in this niche sector within the Nigerian context. While some studies examine general supply chain practices in Nigerian industries, they often overlook industry-specific dynamics like perishability of goods, demand volatility, and dependency on imported inputs that uniquely affect the bread and confectionery business. The absence of localized studies tailored to Port Harcourt—an economic hub in the Niger Delta—means that decision-makers in this industry operate with limited data on how supplier relationships can be leveraged for strategic advantage. Consequently, without a targeted investigation into this relationship, many firms risk continued inefficiency, limited scalability, and vulnerability to supply disruptions, ultimately threatening their competitive position and long-term survival.

Conceptual Framework

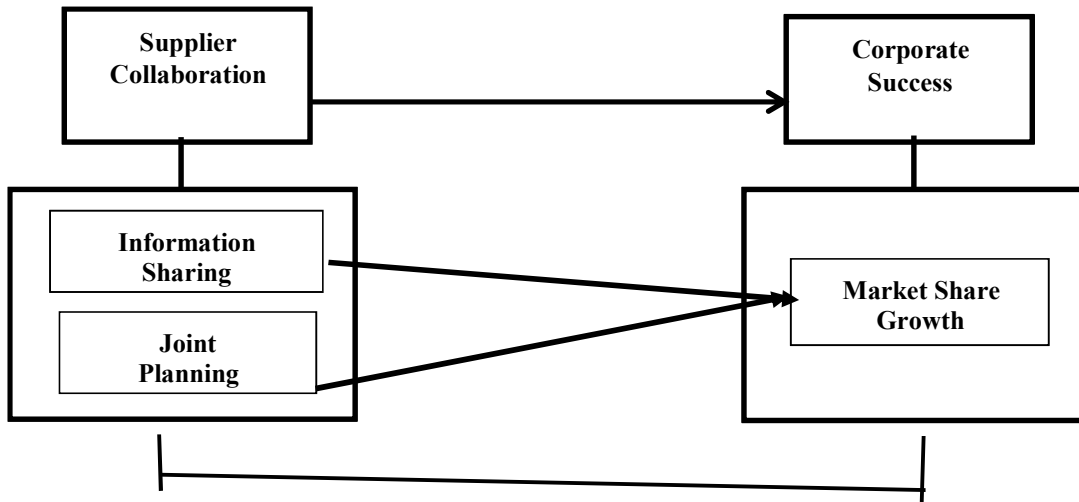


Figure 1:1: the conceptual model showing the relationship between supplier collaboration and corporate success of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt.

Sources: Hamilton-Ibama &Kwelle (2023);Kaplan & Haenlein (2021)

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between supplier collaboration and corporate success of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt., such as;

1. examine the relationship between information sharing and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt.
2. ascertain the relationship between joint planning and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this paper:

1. What is the relationship between information sharing and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the relationship between joint planning and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested to prove the significance of the relationships:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between information sharing and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between joint planning and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt.

Theoretical Foundation

The theory that underpinned this paper is the resource-based view theory.

Resource-based View Theory

The resource-based view (RBV) theory is a strategic management framework that emphasizes the internal resources of a firm as the primary determinants of its competitive advantage and long-term performance. Initially developed by Wernerfelt (1984) and further refined by Barney (1991), RBV posits that organizations can achieve sustained competitive advantage if they possess valuable, rare,

inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources. These resources can be tangible or intangible, including physical assets, technological capabilities, human skills, relationships, and organizational processes. Unlike traditional economic theories that focus on external industry factors, the RBV directs attention to internal capacities and the strategic utilization of unique resources to differentiate the firm in the marketplace. In this context, the effectiveness of a firm in managing its supply chain relationships, such as collaborative supplier engagement, can be viewed as a core intangible resource that contributes to improved performance and competitive strength.

In relation to the study on supplier collaboration and corporate success of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt, the RBV theory is highly relevant. Supplier collaboration itself can be considered a strategic capability—a firm-specific resource developed through relational trust, mutual commitment, shared knowledge, and co-investment with suppliers. Such collaborations enable firms to optimize procurement, reduce production disruptions, innovate in product development, and respond effectively to market dynamics—all of which are critical to success in the bread and confectionery industry where quality, freshness, and timeliness are vital. For example, Hamilton-Ibama and Kwelle (2023) emphasize that supplier development activities directly impact the competitiveness of bread firms in Rivers State by enhancing operational effectiveness and reducing dependency on unstable supply lines. By cultivating collaborative supplier relationships as a resource, firms are better positioned to manage cost structures, improve customer satisfaction, and expand market presence—key markers of corporate success. This aligns with Barney's (1991) assertion that strategic resources, when properly harnessed, drive superior firm performance. Therefore, the RBV framework provides a theoretical basis for understanding why and how supplier collaboration serves as a lever for gaining and sustaining competitive advantage in the Port Harcourt bakery and confectionery sector.

Supplier Collaboration

Supplier collaboration refers to the strategic process through which firms and their suppliers work closely to achieve mutual goals, enhance operational efficiency, and co-create value. Unlike traditional buyer-supplier relationships that are transactional and short-term, collaborative supplier relationships are built on trust, transparency, and long-term engagement. In the context of bread and confectionery firms, supplier collaboration enables timely procurement of quality raw materials, cost optimization, and innovation in production processes. It promotes alignment of objectives, synchronized logistics, and responsiveness to market demands, all of which are essential in competitive and time-sensitive industries. According to Hamilton-Ibama and Kwelle (2023), supplier development and engagement significantly improve competitiveness and overall performance in bread-producing firms in Rivers State. This is supported by Monczka et al. (2015), who argue that supplier collaboration is vital for supply chain integration, leading to enhanced product quality, cost reduction, and faster time-to-market.

Moreover, effective supplier collaboration fosters the exchange of expertise and resources, allowing firms to improve service delivery and gain a competitive edge. It typically involves joint decisionmaking, shared risk management, and coordinated investment in innovation and technology. The result is a resilient supply chain capable of withstanding market volatility and supply disruptions. In developing economies like Nigeria, where infrastructural challenges and unstable policy environments persist, such collaboration is critical. Njoku and Kalu (2015) highlight that successful firms in Nigeria's food and beverage sector often distinguish themselves by cultivating strong, cooperative relationships with suppliers, leading to superior performance in dynamic markets.

Dimensions of Supplier Collaboration Information Sharing

Information sharing in supply chains is the deliberate and structured dissemination of relevant data—such as inventory levels, demand forecasts, order status, and production schedules—between firms

and their partners, particularly suppliers. It is a fundamental pillar of supplier collaboration, as it facilitates transparency, reduces uncertainties, and enables effective decision-making across the supply chain. In the bread and confectionery sector, where perishable raw materials like flour, sugar, and dairy are involved, accurate and timely information is essential for reducing waste, managing lead times, and ensuring product freshness. Christopher (2016) emphasizes that high levels of information sharing lead to improved synchronization of supply chain activities, better inventory control, and faster responsiveness to customer needs.

Furthermore, information sharing builds trust and commitment among supply chain partners, enhancing their ability to jointly respond to market changes. It enables suppliers to better understand the buyer's needs, adjust their production capacities, and align logistics to minimize delays. In Port

Harcourt, where bread and confectionery firms often face supply chain disruptions due to infrastructure constraints, effective information sharing becomes even more crucial. According to Ikpesu and Mark (2023), firms that maintain open channels of communication with suppliers tend to report fewer operational bottlenecks and higher levels of customer satisfaction, contributing to sustained growth and improved corporate image.

Joint Planning

Joint planning involves collaborative decision-making between a firm and its suppliers to align operations, resources, and objectives across the supply chain. This process typically includes shared planning of production schedules, inventory management, demand forecasting, and promotional activities. In the bread and confectionery industry, joint planning can ensure consistent availability of ingredients, efficient resource allocation, and coordinated response to fluctuating demand. Mentzer et al. (2001) assert that joint planning enhances supply chain integration by reducing inefficiencies and fostering proactive problem-solving among partners. For firms in Port Harcourt, joint planning can mitigate the effects of supply disruptions, reduce costs, and enhance customer service.

In addition to operational advantages, joint planning builds mutual accountability and strengthens the strategic partnership between businesses and their suppliers. It encourages shared investment in new technologies and innovation, enabling firms to adapt more quickly to industry trends. Hamilton Ibama and Kwelle (2023) report that bread firms in Rivers State that engage in collaborative planning with their suppliers often experience improved production continuity and greater alignment with market expectations. This synergy is particularly valuable in a competitive environment where firms must frequently adjust production to meet consumer preferences and maintain quality standards.

Corporate Success

Corporate success refers to the achievement of an organization's strategic goals, which may include profitability, market leadership, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and sustainable growth. It is often measured through financial indicators, market performance, employee engagement, and the ability to innovate and adapt. In the bread and confectionery industry, corporate success is demonstrated by consistent product quality, strong brand recognition, customer loyalty, and the ability to scale operations. According to Munonye and Esiobu (2017), firms that integrate supplier collaboration into their strategic management practices are more likely to experience operational excellence and financial stability in Nigeria's food production sector.

Corporate success is closely tied to how well a firm manages its supply chain, including the nature of its relationships with suppliers. Effective collaboration with suppliers can lead to cost savings, better risk management, and enhanced value delivery to customers. Njoku and Kalu (2015) observe that in the Nigerian context, firms with structured supply chain processes and strong supplier networks outperform those with ad hoc and reactive procurement practices. Therefore, building

strategic alliances and embedding collaborative practices into the core of supply chain management are essential steps for achieving long-term success in today's fast-evolving marketplace.

Measure of Corporate Success

Market Share Growth

Market share growth refers to the increase in a firm's proportion of sales in its industry relative to its competitors over time. It is a key indicator of competitive advantage and strategic positioning. For bread and confectionery firms, gaining market share often means expanding distribution networks, improving product quality, and responding effectively to consumer trends. Growth in market share reflects the firm's ability to attract and retain customers, often by offering superior value through

innovation, pricing strategies, and brand differentiation. According to Tersoo (2014), agribusiness firms that prioritize supply chain optimization and supplier collaboration experience accelerated market penetration and stronger customer base expansion in Nigeria.

Achieving and sustaining market share growth requires more than just excellent marketing; it demands an efficient and responsive supply chain that can deliver on customer expectations consistently. Supplier collaboration plays a vital role in this by ensuring the timely availability of raw materials and enhancing production flexibility. Ikpesu and Mark (2023) note that eateries and snack producers in Port Harcourt who maintain robust supplier networks and engage in regular joint planning often outperform competitors in market coverage and brand loyalty. As such, market share growth is not merely a reflection of external competitiveness, but also of internal efficiency and supplier relationship strength.

Empirical Reviews

A seminal study by Hamilton-Ibama and Kwelle (2023) examined the relationship between supplier development and the competitiveness of bread-producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The authors conducted a quantitative study that focused on supplier collaboration as a strategic mechanism for improving operational outcomes in the bakery industry. Using structured questionnaires administered to 120 respondents drawn from selected bread-producing firms in Port Harcourt, the study assessed how different dimensions of supplier collaboration—supplier training, joint problem-solving, information sharing, and long-term partnership—impacted firm competitiveness. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between supplier development initiatives and corporate competitiveness, measured by indicators such as market responsiveness, product consistency, and profitability. The authors concluded that firms that engaged in long-term strategic partnerships with their suppliers reported higher efficiency and product quality compared to those that maintained transactional relationships. The study's methodology was robust, employing regression analysis to test the hypothesized relationships, and its findings provide empirical support for the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory by identifying supplier collaboration as a core strategic capability. However, while the study focused on competitiveness, it did not fully explore other dimensions of corporate success such as customer loyalty or innovation capacity, indicating a need for broader inquiry.

Njoku and Kalu (2015) explored the strategic role of supply chain management—including supplier collaboration—in enhancing profitability within Nigeria's food and beverage industry. Their research was based on a case study approach, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources. They examined firms that had successfully implemented collaborative supply chain practices and compared their performance metrics with those that had not. The study found that supplier collaboration, particularly in the areas of joint planning and real-time information sharing, significantly improved profitability, reduced inventory costs, and led to faster order fulfillment. These operational gains translated into financial success and increased market share for participating firms. Their findings strongly support the idea that supplier collaboration enhances firm agility and responsiveness, which are critical success factors in the highly perishable and competitive bread and confectionery sector.

The study used descriptive and inferential statistics to validate its findings and emphasized the importance of mutual trust and open communication in fostering effective collaboration. However, one of the limitations was the lack of industry-specific focus on the bread and confectionery segment, which may have nuanced operational challenges not captured in the broader food and beverage category.

In a study by Ikpesu and Mark (2023), the role of ethical supplier relationships and corporate performance was examined in the context of eateries and confectionery businesses in Port Harcourt metropolis. The researchers adopted a mixed-method approach, combining survey data from 85 food business operators with interviews and observational insights. Their empirical analysis revealed that supplier collaboration rooted in ethical practices—transparency, fairness in negotiations, timely payments, and adherence to contractual terms—was positively correlated with corporate performance indicators such as customer retention, operational reliability, and business reputation. The authors argued that firms which engaged suppliers as partners rather than mere vendors tended to receive preferential treatment in raw material supply and benefited from suppliers' willingness to innovate

and adapt. The study employed correlation and regression techniques to analyze the data and found a statistically significant relationship between ethical supplier collaboration and business growth. A key strength of this study is its contextual relevance to Port Harcourt's SME sector, which mirrors the dynamics of many bakery and confectionery firms. However, the study was limited in scope as it did not differentiate the specific forms of supplier collaboration (e.g., technological integration vs. logistics coordination), which could offer deeper insights into operational levers of success.

Munonye and Esiobu (2017) conducted a study on sustainability and agribusiness development in Nigeria, focusing on how supply chain partnerships influence corporate sustainability and long-term growth. Using data collected from 150 agribusiness firms including food processors and confectionery manufacturers, the study applied structural equation modeling (SEM) to investigate the effect of collaborative supplier relationships on sustainability indicators such as cost efficiency, supply consistency, and innovation. The findings established that supplier collaboration had a strong mediating effect on resource efficiency and waste reduction, both of which were linked to improved business performance and longevity. The researchers posited that consistent engagement with suppliers in joint planning, innovation co-creation, and risk sharing fosters an environment conducive to sustainable business practices. The study's methodological rigor and use of SEM allowed for a nuanced understanding of the mediating variables that influence corporate success through supplier relationships. While the study did not focus solely on Port Harcourt, its inclusion of firms from across the South-South region, including Rivers State, renders its findings highly applicable. Nonetheless, the research called for further segmentation of firm sizes to understand whether small and large businesses derive different value from supplier collaboration.

Research Methodology

This study adopted the correlational research design. The population of this study comprised of thirtytwo (32) registered bread bakery firms operating in Port Harcourt. The information was obtained from <https://www.finelib.com/cities/port-harcourt/business/-food/-confectioneries>. Since the population of the study is thirty-two (32) registered bread bakery firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, the same 32 bread bakery firms was adopted as the sample size for the study. The study adopted a census approach, the census approach enabled the researcher to study the entire population with a focus on managers. Five managers (business development manager, production manager, brand manager, sales area manager and marketing manager) was targeted in generating information for this study. In this case, the questionnaire was distributed in the frame of five (5) copies per bakery firm. A total of one hundred and sixty (160) respondents was used as the study subjects. In this study the primary data source was used in the study. The questionnaire was the instrument for data collection in this study. The questionnaire was designed after reviewing related literature on the

subject matter. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the various hypotheses formulated.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Questionnaire Administration, Retrieval and use

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percent
Produced Copies	160	100 %
Distributed Copies	160	100 %
Retrieved Copies	143	89 %
Copies not Retrieved	17	11 %
Valid Copies	132	82 %

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

As indicated from the statistics in Table 1 with regard to the production, distribution and use of questionnaire, a total of 1 copies (100%) of the questionnaire were produced by the researcher and 160 copies (100%) were distributed to respondents. Out of the 160 copies distributed 143 copies (89%) were retrieved and 17 copies (11%) were not retrieved. Also, 132 copies (82%) were used for the analysis. It is important to state that 132 of questionnaire used for analysis is huge and should be seen as covering a very significant portion (82%) of the sample size of 160.

Testing of Hypotheses

Research Question One: What is the relationship between information sharing and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between information sharing and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Computation of relationship between information sharing and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt
Correlations

	Information Sharing	Market Share Growth
Information Sharing		
	Pearson Correlation	.497 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1 .000
	N	132 132
Market Share Growth		
	Pearson Correlation	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000 1
	N	132 132

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

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

The SPSS output in Table 2 shows the results of a Pearson's Correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between information sharing and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt, using a sample of 132 managers. The correlation coefficient (r-value) is 0.497, indicating a moderate and positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as information sharing increases, there is a corresponding increase in market share growth. The statistical significance of this relationship is demonstrated by the p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This confirms that the relationship between information sharing and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. In practical terms, this finding implies that bread bakery firms in Port Harcourt can benefit from focusing on information sharing.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between joint planning and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between joint planning and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 3: Computation of relationship between joint planning and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt Correlations

	Joint Planning	Market Share Growth
Joint Planning		
Pearson Correlation		.635 **
Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.000
N	132	132
Market Share Growth		
Pearson Correlation	.635**	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	1
N	132	132

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

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

The SPSS output presented in Table 3 indicates the results of a Pearson's Correlation analysis conducted to evaluate the relationship between joint planning and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt, based on a sample of 132 managers. The correlation coefficient (r-value) is 0.635, which signifies a strong and positive relationship between joint planning and market share growth of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt. This suggests that as joint planning increases, market share growth also tend to rise. The significance of this relationship is further confirmed by a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant and unlikely to be due to random chance. Practically, these findings imply that bread bakery firms in Port Harcourt should prioritize joint planning to enhance market share growth.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the critical role of supplier collaboration in enhancing the corporate success of bread and confectionery firms in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the findings indicate that information

sharing has a moderate but significant positive relationship with market share growth ($r = 0.497$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that timely and accurate exchange of information with suppliers contributes to competitive positioning. More notably, joint planning exhibits a strong and statistically significant positive relationship with market share growth ($r = 0.635$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that collaborative strategic planning with suppliers yields substantial benefits in expanding market reach. These results underscore the importance of close supplier partnerships in driving sustainable growth and operational efficiency within the industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Bread and confectionery firms should actively engage suppliers in joint planning sessions to align production schedules, demand forecasts, and market strategies, thereby improving responsiveness and market performance.
2. Firms should develop structured information-sharing platforms that facilitate real-time communication and transparency with suppliers to support better decision-making and supply chain coordination.

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