

Evaluation of the Effect of Marketing Strategies Alignment on Supply Chain and Organizational Performance (Case Study: Entekhab Industrial Group)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effect of marketing strategies alignment on supply chain and organizational performance in the Entekhab industrial group. The purpose of this study is functional - practical and the nature and the method of it is descriptive – survey and is of correlation type. The population of this study includes managers at various levels in the Entakhab industrial group in 2012 and statistical sample were 159 who were selected by simple random sampling. In this study, a questionnaire was used for data collection and statistical tests were used to analyze data and test hypotheses. To confirm the Justifiability of the questionnaire, comments and advice of supervisors and some management professors was used and management software SPSS was used to assess the reliability And, Cronbach's alpha was 0/921. In this study, SPSS and AMOS software and path analysis were used for data analysis that the results indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between marketing strategies alignment with supply chain on the performance of supply chain, also there is a significant positive relationship between the performances of supply chain with the organizational performance.

Keywords: supply chain management, supply chain, marketing strategy, supply chain performance, organizational performance.

1. Introduction

Manufacturers and business companies are faced with new challenges to participate in today's global economy. The large number of suppliers and their intense competition and increasing expectations of consumers for better quality and faster servicing, put a lot of

pressure on producers; factors that may have not already existed. Companies realized that in this condition alone cannot do everything and on the other hand, in addition to the local resources, management and supervision of resources and associated components out of company are required. This is due to the competitive advantages with the aim of gaining a greater share of the market. Accordingly, activities such as material procurement, production planning, warehousing, inventory control, distribution, delivery and customer service that already have been done in company level, was transferred to the supply chain level. A main issue in supply chain is management, control, and coordination of activities. Supply chain management will do it such as their customers can receive products with reliable quality and service in the shortest possible time and with minimum cost (Weir, 2001).

Rapid changes and uncertainty in the markets has caused to organizations understanding of the supply chain which they are joined in and the role that they play has had great importance. Companies that know how make strong supply chains and participate in them, will have a significant competitive advantage in the market. Also competition in the companies in the global markets has had a growing trend of the 90s (Li et al, 2006). Companies looking to increase customer satisfaction and improve the efficiency of their business to achieve the most competitive power (Kannan & Tan 2005). Timely delivery of products to customers with lower cost will increase the competitiveness of companies (Tan et al, 2002). Companies recognize that cannot improve the performance of the organization and their business performance unless focus on the supply chain (Childhouse & Towill, 2003).

Gains from supply chain management include all materials handling activities (raw materials to the final product) and the flow of information and transactions. (Tadeusz, 2012). And supply chain management, including systematic and strategic coordination of the traditional business and tactics that are used in these sections, whether the particular company or the entire chain, with the goal of long-term improving the performance of each of the companies and the whole supply chain (G. Dwayne et al, 2012). On the other hand, it is relatively difficult to achieve alignment of marketing strategies because determining value for ultimate customers of supply chain and effective communication between variable customer demands and total supply chain partners is very difficult. But Griffin and Kahn has expressed that "best firms" will show higher levels of cross-organizational and inter-organizational cooperation based on the sale and profit of new product. The "best firms" have developed collaboration capabilities that will provide a relatively better position compared to their competitors to identify and respond to changing customer demands. Powers and Reagan (2007); claim that supply chain partners, especially the buyers and sellers, will benefit of the competitive advantage of the strong long-term relationships and relation factors that are known important in practice (Powers and Reagan, 2007). And since there is little attention to coordination and integration of supply chain processes in the total marketing, this is one of the first experimental studies to evaluate the relation between constructs of marketing strategy alignment, supply chain performance and constructs of organizational performance which marketing strategy alignment is antecedent of supply chain performance and supply chain performance is antecedent of organizational performance. so it can provide useful solutions to improve performance of organizations.

Current research supports these goals that alignment of marketing strategies in the marketing mix with the supply chain has impact on the performance of the supply chain in the Entekhab industrial group as well as performance of supply chain has impact on the organizational performance in the Entekhab industrial group.

2. Research literature

2.1. 1. Marketing strategy alignment

Marketing strategy alignment is defined as the development and implementation of a supply chain level marketing strategy by supply chain partners for the purpose of providing the highest total value to the supply chain's ultimate customers (Cavinato, 1992; Min & Mentzer, 2000; Natarajan & Weinrauch, 1990). Successful marketing strategy alignment requires that marketing representatives of the organization collaborate with supply chain partners to: 1) plan and execute the conception of new products and services for ultimate customers, 2) plan and execute pricing, promotion, and distribution strategies for the sale of products and services to ultimate customers, 3) develop integrated processes that create value for ultimate customers, and 4) develop integrated processes that communicate the value developed to ultimate customers (Chen & Paulraj, 2004; Ho et al., 2002; Keefe, 2008). Marketing strategy alignment is relatively difficult to achieve because it is difficult to determine what the ultimate customer of the supply chain values and to effectively communicate changing customer demands to all supply chain partners. In summarizing the results of the 2003 PDMA Best Practices Study, Barczak, Griffin, and Kahn (2009) state that the "best firms" in terms of sales and profits, from new products, exhibit higher levels of intra-organizational collaboration and inter-organizational collaboration. These "best firms" have developed collaborative capabilities that position them relatively better than their competitors to identify and respond to changes in customer demands.

2.1.2. The marketing mix strategy

We should notice that the price is just one of the marketing tools that the company uses to achieve its goals. Decisions related to the prices should be coordinated with product design, distribution system and advertising rate in order to have effective and successful marketing program, because marketing decisions about other marketing factors will affect the pricing decisions. For example, a manufacturer that uses of many intermediates, will use many intermediates to encourage and persuade them to sell his products, and tries to consider more profit margin in his price for intermediates to encourage and motivate them to sell his products and replace them instead of competitors' products, or a manufacturer that wants to his product have been had high performance and high quality should set a higher price for his product to offset the cost of production. Most organizations first positioning their product based on the price then will determine other marketing factors so that be consistent with their price (Esmail Pour, 2005).

2.1.3. Strategic coordination in the marketing

The key issue for the management is coordination between strategy levels and with the external environment of the organization. According to many theories of harmony and organization composition, in the organizations that coordination between underlying, structural and strategic factors in their composition is high, their effectiveness is too high. Each of the systems in the organization's strategy levels should be coordinated with the its subsystems and also with the high levels and its aligned systems so that management issue can be manifested and create synergy to achieve the goals of the organization. (Erabi & rezvany, 2006: 5) For example, the functional unit of human resources (HR), the HR strategy should be coordinated with the company strategy, business strategy and strategies of other functional units such as production, marketing, finance, information systems and research and development. On the other hand, subsystems strategy of human resources should be coordinated with HR functional unit strategies - internal coordination. Each of the inner and outer coordination can also be taken vertically and horizontally, which will result in four types

of coordination: vertical outer coordination, horizontal outer, vertical inner and horizontal inner (Armstrong, 2005:74-66).

2.2.1 Supply Chain Management

Supply chains are value chains that cover supplier to final customer. Supply chain management requires coordination and integration of business processes across the supply chain to meet and respond to demand's changes of final customers (Lambert et al., 2000). Supply chain management is coordination of the production, inventory, location, and transportation among the components of a supply chain in order to achieve the best combination of responsiveness, efficiency for the considered market (Danese et al., 2012).

2.2.2 Criteria for Supply chain performance

Supply chain management such as every management system and approach, requires to the performance measurement system. For this purpose, a variety of criteria can be used. An approach is using the Supply Chain Operations Reference Model (score) which represents an effort to standardize assessment of supply chain performance. Measurement criteria include: Reliability: (Timely delivery, Delivery time fulfilling orders, Fill rate: fraction of demand that is fulfill from inventory, Fulfilling the order).

Flexibility: (Supply chain response time, production flexibility)

Costs: (Cost of supply chain management, Warranty costs as a percentage of revenue) (Sukatia et al., 2012).

2.2.3. A conceptual framework for supply chain

Supply chain management, as it performs today, is originated from marketing, supporting and production. There are three aspects of supply chain management that is shown in Figure: These three dimensions are: 1) inter-functional coordination (managing activities and processes within a company's support obligation); 2) among- functional coordination (such as coordination between support and financial, support and production, support and marketing) as they are being made in the functional areas of the company and 3) coordination of inter-organizational activities of supply chain between companies that are legally separated, are done in the product stream channel, such as between a company and its suppliers (Faizabadi, 2003).

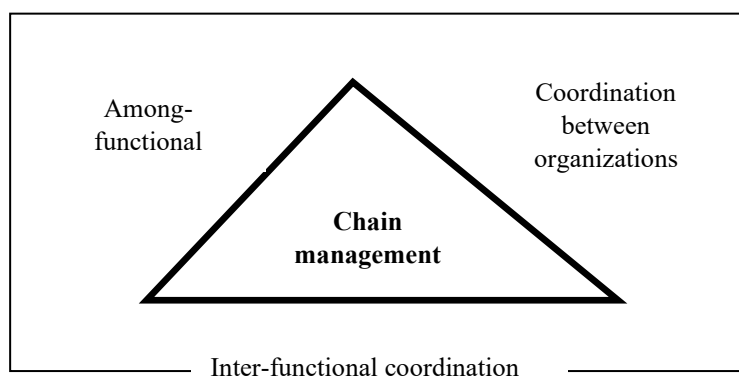


Fig 1. Conceptual framework for supply chain (Feizabadi, 2003)

2.3.1. Performance of organization

2.3.2. Meaning and concept of performance

The Oxford English Dictionary defines performance as (to implement, to apply, and do any regular work or commitment). This definition in addition is related to the outcomes and outputs show that the performance is closely related to the work doing and gained results. Thus, the performance can be considered as "behavior" (The way that organizations, teams and individuals can use to do something).

Campbell (1995) believes that the behavior is in the performance and should be distinguished from the results because some of the systems factors can eliminate results. It is important to determine clear meaning of the performance word because without a clear definition of performance, organization cannot be managed and evaluated. Bates and Haltom (1995) define performance as (performance is a multi-dimensional structure that its variables depends on many factors. They also claim that determining the purpose of evaluation is very important than evaluating of performance results and behavior). There are different views about the nature of the performance. Kahn (1996) argues that performance is a process that individual does not attend to it and in fact it is separated from the target. Bernardin (1995) believes that (performance must be defined as business results, because these results have strongest relation with the organization's strategic goals, customer satisfaction and economic participation) (Golshani, 2012). A comprehensive view about the performance is obtained when it includes behavior and results. This theory was proposed by Barombaresh: (performance is meant to behaviors and results. behaviors are derived from factor and convert performance from thought to action) behaviors are not just tools to achieve results but are outcomes that are taken from product of physical and mental tasks and can be separated from results. This definition of performance leads to this conclusion that data (behavior) as well as outputs (results) should be considered during the management of teams and individuals performance and this model is called (performance mix model) (Hartel, 1995) that including ability or competence level, results and also goal determining and review (Armstrong, 2007: 11).

2.3.3. Alan Yelsy model of organizational performance (satellite model for organizational performance)

You should always remember that organizational efficiency is the result of several factors that has been proposed in the satellite model of organizational performance. In this model, key factors have been identified that are including as follows: 1) Organizational structure; 2) Knowledge; 3) Inhuman Resources; 4) The strategic position; 5) Human Process. Some items will be examined in each of the above factors: Type of organization, various management systems, information systems and flexibility are considered in the evaluation of organizational structure. Required knowledge for organizational efficiency is including technical knowledge, administrative knowledge, human process and system.

In the study of inhuman resources, facilities, workshops, workplace, type of technology, investment rate and liquidity are considered. The strategic position of the

organization is including its activities type and markets type that are associated in it, social policy, the quantity and quality of human resources and environmental changes. And finally human process is values of individuals and groups, attitudes, norms, and interactions between them. By combining these factors, not only achieving the organization's current goals and social needs are necessary, but the change process to achieve the organization's goals and future needs is also essential. (Rezaeian, 1994: 279).

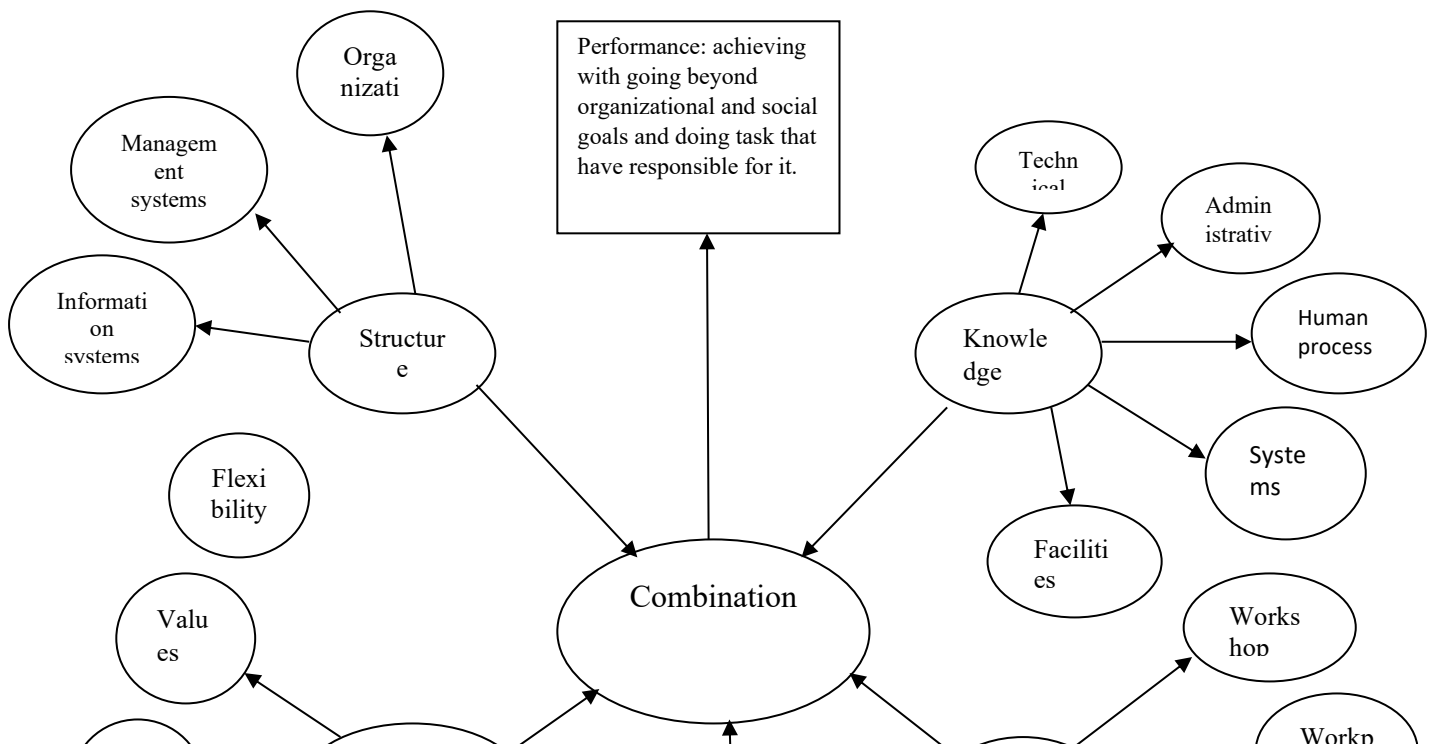


Fig 2. The figure of satellite model for organizational performance (Rezaeian, (1994): 128)

3. Conceptual model of research

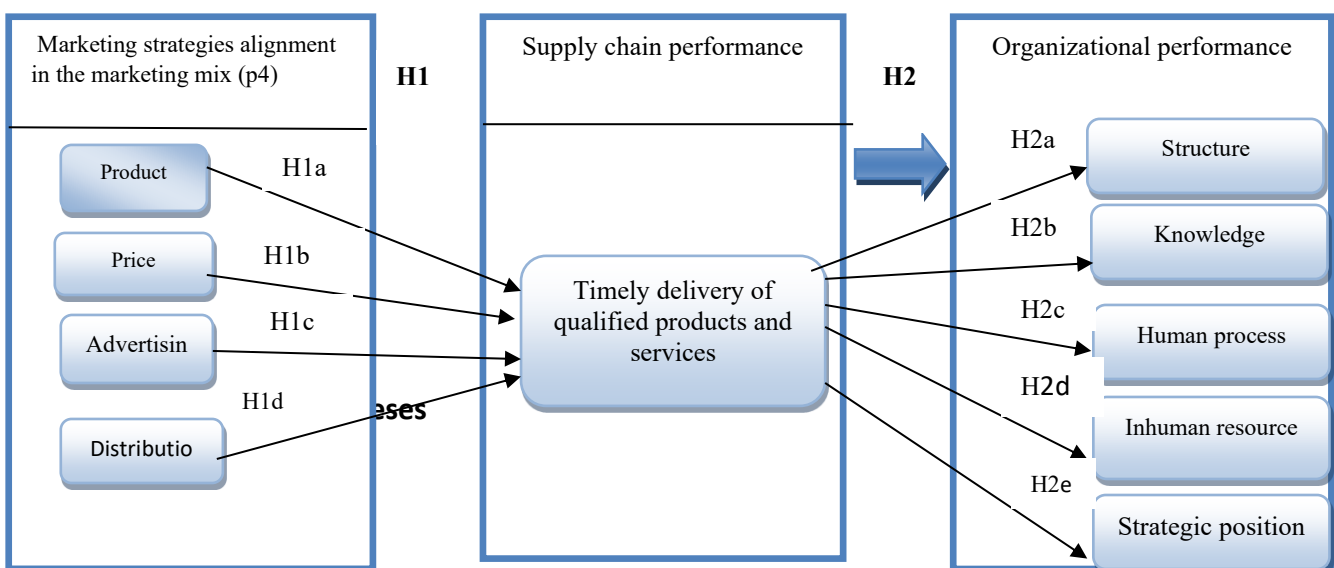


Fig 3. Conceptual model

4.1. The main hypothesis

H1: aligning marketing strategies in the marketing mix with the supply chain has impact on the supply chain performance in the Entekhab industrial group.

4.2. Two main hypotheses

H2: supply chain performance has impact on the organizational performance in the Entekhab industrial group.

5. Research method

Research method in this study is descriptive – survey and is of correlation type and in terms of position is the field and library study. The purpose of descriptive studies is regular and systematic description of the specific situation as the real and objective describing- (namely what is).As regards in this study, library research methods and literature review and also field methods including questionnaire will be used and its purpose is to investigate the effects of the supply chain performance in the marketing mix on the supply chain performance and then analyze the effects of the of the supply chain performance on the organizational performance through a questionnaire that sending to the managers. It can be said that this is field study based on the nature and methods of research. To gather theoretical information about the subject, related books and articles are investigated and the questionnaire was used to collect data.

6. Method and tools for data collection

Questionnaire was used to collect data and information for analysis. This questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section contains a brief description about questionnaire to provide more clarity for respondents, the second part of the questionnaire included personal data that have five questions including gender, age, education level, years of service and administrative position of respondents. The third section includes questions related to the evaluation of relationship between marketing strategies alignment with the supply chain on the organizational performance. The third section of the questionnaire has been designed as package. The Likert scale has been used for answers to questions in the third section, so that the 5 options for each question have been used.

7. Justifiability and reliability of questionnaire

7.1. Validity

Validity of a test (tools) is usually determined by specialist by those skilled in the subject. At this stage, testing experts, consultation with the faculty supervisor and consultant and the opinions of experts in the field of insurance in question designing has used.

7.2. Reliability

Cronbach's alpha has been used in this study to determine the reliability of the test. First, a questionnaire randomly distributed and collected among 30 subjects and then its Cronbach's alpha was obtained by SPSS statistical software that this number indicates that whether questionnaire has needed reliability. Table (1) shows Cronbach's alpha for variables. total cronbach's alpha was obtained 0.921 from theses questionnaire.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha for variables

Row	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
1	Marketing strategy alignment (MSA)	20	0.86
2	Supply chain performance (SCP)	9	0.84
3	Organizational performance (OP)	15	0.87
Total questionnaire		44	0.92

8. Population and statistical samples and sampling method

Statistical population of this research included all managers of Entekhab industrial group that their total are 412 people according to last position in 2012 and by letting it in the sample size formula, sample number between managers, supervisors and chief of Entekhab industrial group is 199 people. Cochran formula for finite population was used to determine the required sample minimum size:

$$n = \frac{Nz^2_{\alpha/2}p(1-p)}{(N-1)d^2 + z^2_{\alpha/2}p(1-p)}$$

9. Sampling method

It is assumed that in the simple random sampling, population have relative homogeneity and are homogeneous; but it's not always that population have heterogeneity and homogeneity, therefore, they can divided in to the special sub-sections and sub-groups who have inter- group heterogeneity. Simple random method is not suitable in these communities, because all or most of samples may be elected from a group or class and therefore is not representative of the general population. Classification method was used to solve this problem in the selection of the sample; this means that individuals are divided into different classes according to their inter-group characteristics and samples are selected proportionally from among all classes (Hafez niya, 2010 :152). In the population under study, 200 eligible persons randomly selected based on factors (availability, having patience, being compassionate and ...) and questionnaires were delivered to them to answer it. 159 questionnaires were returned from 200 distributed questionnaires and were used for analysis. The questionnaire return rate is 80% and has the ability for generalize.

10. Data analysis method

Two statistical techniques that are well known and commonly used in social research have been used in this study to analyze collected data. So that data processing has been done in both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics levels after data collection and data extraction. In the descriptive study, collected data related to the individual and demographic characteristics has been studied and gained results are presented in tables and graphs. In the next section (inferential statistics) research hypotheses have been evaluated using normality tests, regression tests, variance analysis, Friedman test and structural equation.

10.1. Inferential statistics (research hypothesis testing)

Path analysis model has been used to test the main research model. In the path model, there is often more than one internal variable. Each variable can only be as a dependent

variable or simultaneously as an independent and dependent variable (Ghassemi, 2010). In the main model of this study, timely delivery of quality products and services is an internal variable that plays the role of the independent variable and also dependent variable. But the variables of product, price, advertising and distribution are external variables that have only the role of independent variable and also structural variables, human process, strategic position, inhuman process and the knowledge are internal variables that have only the role of dependent variable. Main research model with free and fixed parameters is shown in the following figure.

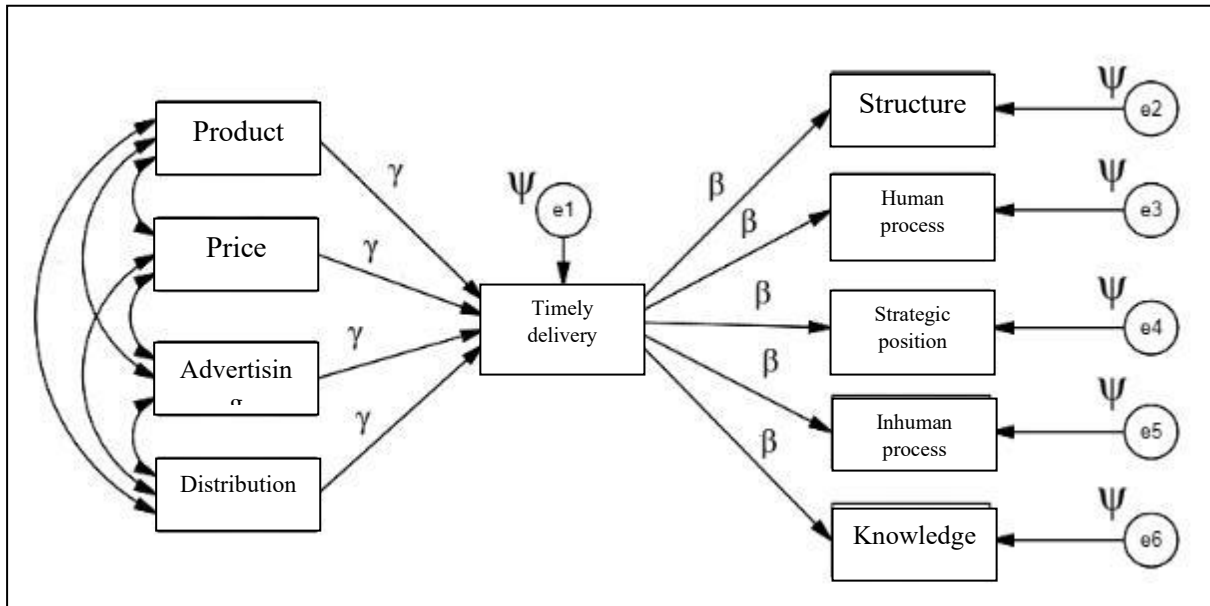


Fig 4. Path analysis model

After the test of standard coefficients model, paths are as follows

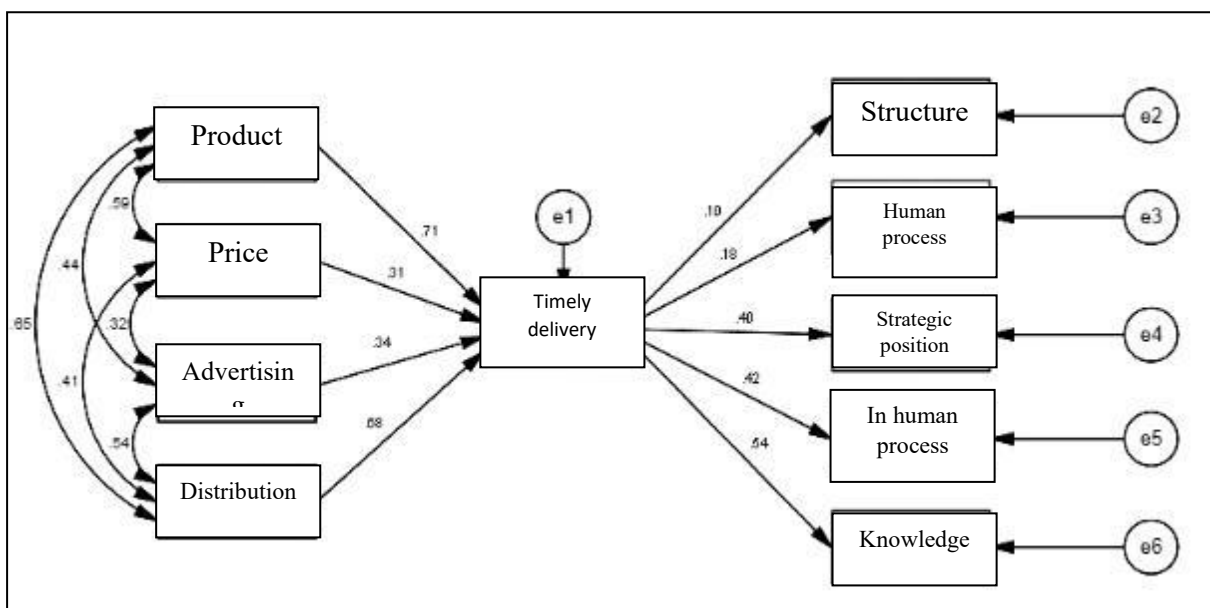


Fig 5. Coefficients of research model path after the test

Significant relationships between model components and path coefficients are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Path coefficient of research model to test hypothesis

Result	PURPORST P	Critical rate C.R.	Standard error S.E.	Standard coefficient	
confirmed	***	6.932	0.003	0.706	Timely delivery <--- product
confirmed	0.007	2.687	0.128	0.308	Timely delivery <---price
confirmed	0.003	2.953	0.144	0.335	Timely delivery <--- advertising
confirmed	***	6.231	0.105	0.684	Timely delivery<--- distribution
Rejected	0.322	0.990	0.099	0.098	structure<--- timely delivery
confirmed	0.062	1.864	0.098	0.179	Human process<--- timely delivery
confirmed	***	3.564	0.110	0.394	Strategic position--- timely delivery
confirmed	***	3.869	0.122	0.422	Inhuman process<--- timely delivery
confirmed	***	4.666	0.162	0.538	acknowledge <--- timely delivery
*** shows that P amount is less than 0.001					

Table 2. shows that variables of strategic alignment of the marketing mix has positive and direct impact on the timely delivery of quality products and services. As well as the timely delivery of quality products and services has direct and positive impact on the organizational performance variables except the structure variables and human process. Table 3. shows the fitness indices of the model.

Table 3. the fitness indices of the model.

type of fitness index	Index	model
	NPAR	34
	DF	21
	P) more than 0.05(	0.96
Absolute	CMIN (Chi Square)	29.822
	GFI)more than 0.9 (	0.920
Comparative or relative	)more than0.9(TLI	0.938
	)0.9 more than(NFI	0.914
	CFI) more than0.9(	0.971
Thrifty	PNFI)more than 0.5(	0.427
	PCFI) more than 0.5(	0.453
	RMSEA) less than0.8(	0.078
	CMIN/DF) less than 5(	1.420

Reported fitness indices in the above table except thrifty indices (PCFI and PNFI) indicate an acceptable fitness of the developed model.

10.2. Path analysis model for the main research hypothesis test

Path analysis model and AMOS software has been used to test the main hypothesis of research. Path analysis model for the main hypothesis test with its free parameters is as follows.

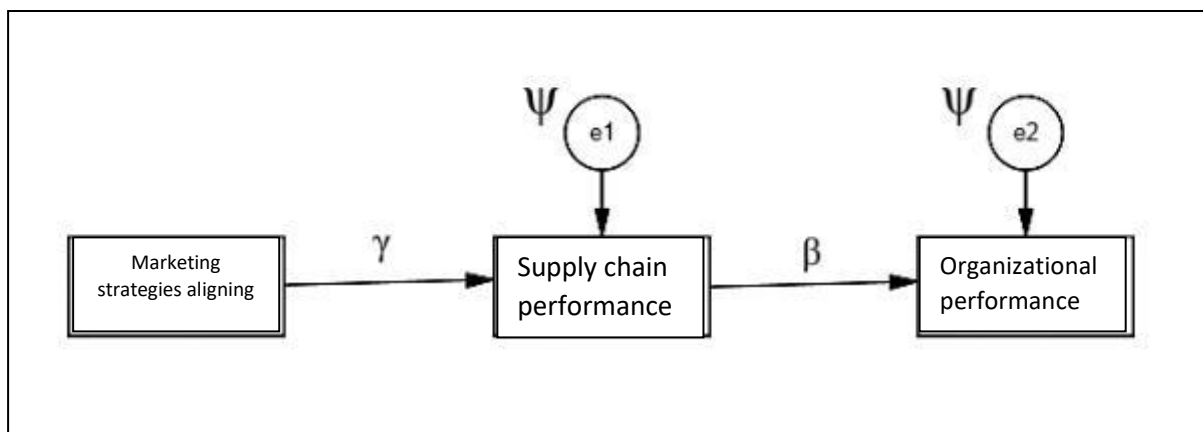


Fig 6. Path analysis model to test the main hypotheses

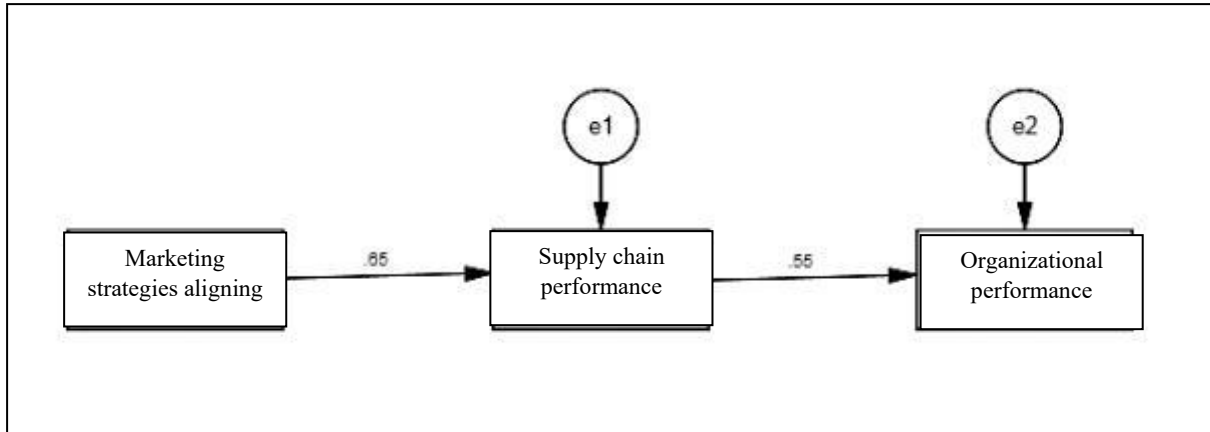


Fig 7. shows path analysis model after the test.

The following table 4. Shows the path coefficients of the above model

Result	PURPORST P	Critical rate	Standard error	Standard coefficient	
Confirmed	***	7.093	0.114	0.649	Supply chain performance<marketing strategies aligning
Confirmed	***	5.411	0.085	0.546	Organizational performance <supply chain performance
*** shows that P amount is less than 0.001					

The results of the above table show that the main first and second hypotheses are confirmed (significantly smaller than the 05/0). I.e. marketing strategies alignment has a direct and positive impact on the supply chain performance with the standard coefficient 65/0. Also supply chain performance has a direct and positive impact on the organizational performance with the standard coefficient 0.55.

11. Discussion and Conclusion:

Since the results of the first main hypothesis of this study is aligned with the results of Kenneth and Diane and Anthony (2012) and Barchak et al (2009), in their study one model is proposes and evaluated that merges marketing strategy alignment, supply chain performance and constructs of the organizational performance. Also the results of the two main hypotheses are aligned with the results of Anthony et al (2011) So as well as the history of these studies, the results of this study that first time was done in the Iranian manufacturing industry and is a good source for future studies about supply chain management in other Iranian industries and will help specialists and managers to design an efficient, coordinated and responsible supply chain. Gained results of statistical analysis indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between marketing strategy alignment with supply chain on the supply chain performance. Also there is significant and positive relationship between supply chain performance and organizational performance. In this study there is significant relationship between timely delivery of products and services with the structure of organization too and there is no relationship between timely delivery of products and services with the human process.

11.1. Suggestions

Based on research's results, suggestions will be provided in two parts: executive and for future. In this section according to the gained results about the confirmation of the research hypothesis, we will provide recommendations for organizations that are working in a competitive environment such as Entekhab industrial group: 1) Marketing managers in line with their partnership in the collective supply chain, in order to integrate and coordinate marketing strategies, try to focus on supply chain performance, they should try to develop a marketing strategy in the supply chain. This strategy will directly lead to improved organizational performance. Instead, relationship between marketing strategies alignment and organizational performance can be provided through supply chain performance. 2) Since the alignment is an ongoing process and therefore requires constant changes in all aspects of the organization, so it should be considered as one of the top priorities in the organization. 3) Three main steps were proposed in this research to align supply chain with the organization strategies. The first step is to identify markets in which your organization operates. The second step is to define the strengths or competitive advantages of your organization and the role that they can play in serving. The last step is making capabilities required for the supply chain that can support of your organization's role. 4) Organizations can determine their supply chain status in order to gain competitive advantage and create synergic in the age of super competitive and move to the proper status and achieve the desired result in the target market through a proper program design and implementation for the marketing mix (Essentially four mix product, price, place, promotion) because marketing mix model can help marketing manager to develop better marketing tactics that are suitable for business environment and also increase the chance for competitive advantage achievement and retention in the market with the better understand of behavior and dynamism of competitors in the market. And marketing managers should do strategies alignment with the focus on the decisions that improve total supply chain performance. 5) according to the results of second main hypothesis that show significant and positive relationship between organizational performance and supply chain performance, organizations should have effective, responsible, flexible and especially integrated supply chain so that improve organizational performance. 6) In related to the delivery process, that in this study was expressed as the supply chain performance measurement; integrate delivery process with other supply chain processes, because good performance in the product delivery is required to the proper management. 7) Given the importance of supply chain performance in the organization knowledge, education and awareness in the organization about the supply chain, can be a powerful tool in communicating the benefits of integrated supply chain. 8) Supply chain partners must share information, define and assign responsibilities and align incentives, so valuable tips along the managers' way will be offered for alignment making. 9) Since there is significant and strong relationship between supply chain and strategic position, so you must pay attention to the importance of supply chain in the organizations missions' development to have a good and responsive organization against markets' threats and organizations technology changes. 10) Organization structure should be designed so that hierarchy and administrative laws and procedures would be low; the flexibility of structure would be high. As in these organizations, units would have a great deal of coordination and information flows would do easily and quickly.

11.2. Suggestions for future research

Researchers should try to study the following in their next research: 1) Retest the research model with the statistical population changing. 2) Entering other variables and developing a model and designing a practical model with other factors affecting supply chain performance, They can do research in this area. 3) In this study, Allen Yelsy satellite model was used to evaluate the organizational performance. Other researchers can also investigate this research with other models.

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