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# SUPPLY CHAIN AGILITY AND MARKETING SUCCESS OF LOGISTICS FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE NIGERIA

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## Abstract

The dynamic and competitive nature of the logistics industry in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, demands firms to adopt strategies that enhance responsiveness and marketing outcomes. This study examines the relationship between supply chain agility and marketing success of logistics firms in Port Harcourt. Employing a cross-sectional survey design, primary data were collected from 129 managers of selected logistics firms using a structured questionnaire. The study analyzed the data using descriptive statistics and tested hypotheses with Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. Findings indicate that alertness, a key dimension of supply chain agility, has a significant positive relationship with market share and sales growth, highlighting the critical role of agile supply chain practices in achieving marketing success. The study provides empirical evidence supporting the integration of supply chain agility into marketing strategies and offers practical recommendations for logistics managers aiming to improve competitive performance. The results contribute to both theory and practice by demonstrating how agility in supply chain operations directly enhances firm-level marketing outcomes in emerging market contexts.

***Keywords**:*

*Supply chain agility, alertness, marketing success, logistics firms, Port Harcourt, sales growth, market share.*

## Introduction

The intensity of competition in contemporary business environments has compelled managers of logistics firms and strategic thinkers to adopt innovative approaches that ensure survival, growth, competitiveness, and profitability. In increasingly dynamic markets where stakeholders demand superior value and competitors exert mounting pressure firms must continuously adapt their operational and marketing strategies to remain relevant. As noted by Ateke and Iruka (2015), organizations must strategically reposition themselves in response to environmental turbulence in order to sustain performance outcomes.

Agile logistics has therefore emerged as a critical organizational capability. It refers to the capacity of a firm to effectively adjust its tools, techniques, and operational initiatives in response to unpredictable environmental conditions. According to Gunner, Cemberci, and Civelek (2018), logistics agility enables firms not only to respond rapidly to changing customer requirements thereby enhancing marketing outcomes but also to adapt swiftly to operational disruptions and strategic partnership dynamics. In essence, agility enhances responsiveness, coordination, and market adaptability, which are crucial for marketing success.

Marketing success represents the extent to which a firm achieves its market-oriented objectives, including increased market share, sales growth, customer satisfaction, and competitive positioning. Ferdinand (2000) conceptualizes marketing success as the measurable achievement derived from a firm's overall marketing activities and strategies. The pursuit of marketing success remains the fundamental driver of marketing decisions and strategic initiatives (Ateke & Iruka, 2015).

Supply chain agility is rooted in several interrelated capabilities. Gligor (2015) identifies these capabilities as vigilance (the ability to detect environmental changes and opportunities), accessibility (rapid access to relevant information), decisiveness (timely strategic decision-making), swiftness (rapid implementation of decisions), and flexibility (the ability to reconfigure operations and strategies as required). Collectively, these dimensions strengthen a firm's ability to respond proactively and effectively to market volatility.

Empirical studies have examined the relationship between supply chain agility and organizational performance with mixed findings. For example, Serut (2013) reported a positive association between supply chain agility and firm success. Conversely, De Giovanni and Vinzi (2012) found that green supply chain management did not significantly influence organizational performance. Similarly, Azevedo, Carvalho, and Cruz Machado (2011) reported a combination of positive and non-significant relationships. These inconsistencies suggest that contextual factors may shape the strength and direction of the relationship between supply chain agility and marketing outcomes.

Despite growing scholarly interest, there remains a paucity of empirical evidence specifically addressing the influence of supply chain agility on the marketing success of logistics firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Given the strategic importance of Port Harcourt as a commercial and oil-servicing hub, logistics firms operating within this environment face unique environmental uncertainties and competitive pressures. Consequently, this study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by examining the extent to which supply chain agility influences the marketing success of logistics firms in Port Harcourt.

## Statement of the Problem

The contemporary business environment in Nigeria, particularly within Port Harcourt, Rivers State, is characterized by intense competition, infrastructural challenges, fluctuating customer demands, and frequent operational disruptions. Logistics firms operating in this environment are expected to deliver timely, cost-effective, and reliable services while simultaneously improving

marketing outcomes such as market share, sales growth, and customer retention. However, many logistics firms continue to experience unstable performance, declining customer loyalty, and inconsistent sales growth despite significant investments in operational processes.

Supply chain agility has been identified in extant literature as a strategic capability that enhances responsiveness, flexibility, and adaptability in turbulent environments. It enables firms to detect market changes early, access relevant information quickly, make timely decisions, and adjust operations efficiently. Although prior studies have examined the relationship between supply chain agility and firm performance, empirical findings remain inconsistent. While some studies report a positive and significant relationship between supply chain agility and organizational success, others reveal weak or non-significant associations. These mixed findings create uncertainty regarding the true influence of supply chain agility on marketing-related outcomes.

More importantly, there is limited empirical evidence specifically addressing how supply chain agility influences the marketing success of logistics firms in Port Harcourt. Most existing studies have been conducted in developed economies or in manufacturing contexts, with little attention given to logistics firms operating within Nigeria's unique socio-economic and infrastructural conditions. Consequently, it remains unclear whether dimensions of supply chain agility such as alertness, flexibility, and responsiveness significantly contribute to marketing success indicators like market share and sales growth in this context.

This gap in knowledge necessitates a focused investigation into the relationship between supply chain agility and marketing success of logistics firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Therefore, the problem of this study is the lack of clear empirical evidence on whether and to what extent supply chain agility influences the marketing success of logistics firms operating in Port Harcourt.

## Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between supply chain agility and marketing success of logistics firms in Port Harcourt, while the specific objective of this study are listed below:

i. To examine the relationship between alertness and market share of logistics firms in Port Harcourt.
ii. To examine the relationship between alertness and sales growth of logistics firms in Port Harcourt.

## Research Questions

With regards to the study, the question addressed is:

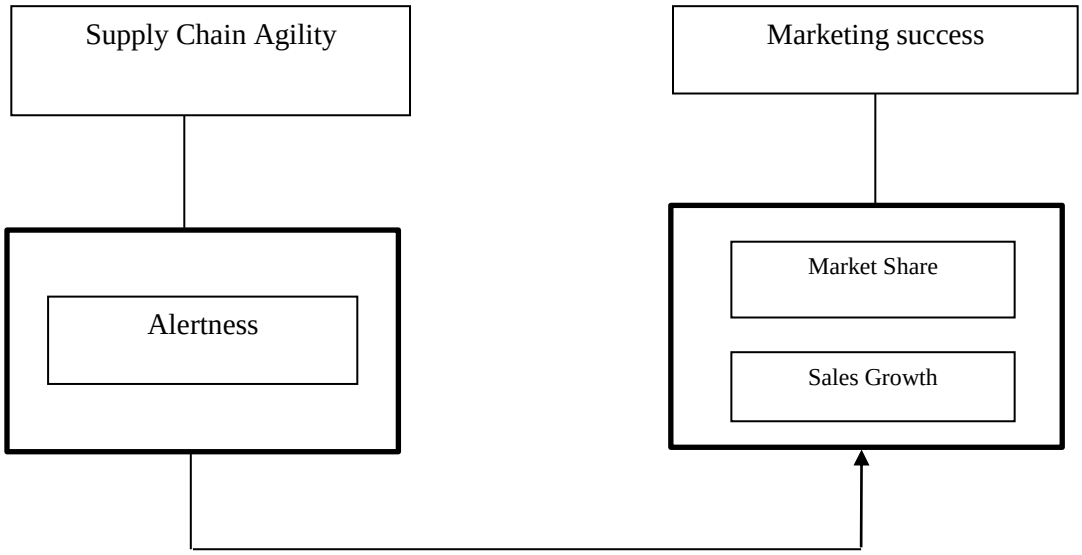
i. What is the relationship between alertness and market share of logistics firms in Port Harcourt?
ii. What is the relationship between alertness and sales growth of logistics firms in Port Harcourt?

## Research Hypotheses

**$H_{01}$** There is no significant relationship between alertness and market share of logistics firms in Port Harcourt

**$H_{02}$** There is no significant relationship between alertness and sales growth of logistics firms in Port Harcourt

### Conceptual Framework




**Source:** Nwaizugbo, 2004; Serut, 2013; Ateke & Iruka, 2015
Conceptual framework on supply chain agility and marketing success

## Literature Review

### Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on two main theories that explain the dynamics of supply chain agility and marketing success of logistics firms. Resource Based View Theory and The Relational View Theory.

According to Betelhem Guta (2016), the theoretical underpinning that explains firm's competitive strategy can be traces to the resource base view theory of Barney (1991). The resource base view theory holds the view that a firm can be said to be competitive in nature only when its resources, strategy and capabilities are distinctive and not be easily imitated by others. This view appears to be supported by logistics and supply chain management research (Lynch, Keller & Ozment, 2000). According to Barny (1986) resources of a firm can be classified into organizational capital resources, physical capital resources and human capital resources. Capabilities can be defined as

skills that a firm needs in other to task full advantage of its assets. Logistics firms may decide to focus on implementing reverse logistics practices in other to expose the negative environmental success of its competitors. In this way, the firm can create a niche for its products. To develop and implement reverse logistics practices firms must create environmental responsible policies and invest on necessary equipment and training. Firms competitiveness can be achieved through implementing reverse logistics practices which would lead to increase in market share and consequently higher profit margins (Fortes, 2009).

The relational view theory suggests that a firm's sources of competitive advantage may extend beyond firm boundaries. Studies show that partners who are willing to make relations-specific investments and combine resources in unique ways can achieve superior levels of success (Asanuma, 1989; Dyer 1996). The RV theory supports the transition in unit of analysis from firm to supply chain, and is considered a vital extension to the RBV (Fawcett and Walller, 2011). Firms may not be able to develop supply chain agility accrues from the focal firm investing in specific relationships with its supply chain members. While offering different perspectives on sources of competitive advantage, the RV and RBV's dynamic perspective are not self-exclusive. Combined, they offer stronger theoretical support for considering firm supply chain agility as a source of competitive advantage. Aside from firm-level resources, organizations can also transform extant supply chain resources into distinctive capabilities (Newbert, 2007; Allred et al. 2011).

## Supply Chain Agility

Supply chain agility has gained increasing scholarly attention due to heightened environmental uncertainty, globalization, and technological disruption. Agility is generally conceptualized as an organization's ability to thrive amid continuous and unpredictable change (Sarkis, 2001). Similarly, DeVor et al. (1997) describe agility as the capability of firms to operate profitably in competitive environments characterized by ongoing turbulence. Sharifi and Zhang (1999) further argue that agility involves coping with unexpected changes, surviving environmental threats, and exploiting change as an opportunity for strategic advancement.

Within supply chain management, agility has been widely recognized as a strategic response mechanism to market volatility. Martin Christopher (2000) emphasizes that an agile supply chain must be market-sensitive that is, capable of detecting and responding to real demand rather than relying solely on forecasts. Sharp et al. (1999) conceptualize supply chain agility as the ability to respond rapidly to changes in customer demand. Similarly, Ismail and Sharifi (2006) describe it as the collective capability of supply chain members to align network structures and operations with dynamic customer requirements.

Further, Li et al. (2008) argue that supply chain agility results from integrating environmental alertness with the capability to deploy resources proactively and reactively in a timely and flexible manner. Swafford et al. (2008) empirically demonstrate that information technology integration and supply chain flexibility significantly enhance agility, which in turn improves firm performance.

More recent studies reinforce these arguments. Gligor et al. (2015) show that supply chain agility positively influences customer satisfaction and competitive performance. Kabra et al. (2016) report that agility strengthens operational performance, while Dubey et al. (2018) highlight the role of big data analytics capability in enhancing supply chain agility and resilience. Additionally, Ivanov (2020) argues that agile and resilient supply chains became particularly critical in responding to global disruptions such as pandemics and geopolitical instability.

Collectively, these studies position supply chain agility as a dynamic capability that enhances responsiveness, competitiveness, and marketing outcomes.

## Dimensions of Supply Chain Agility

Scholars have identified several dimensions of supply chain agility. Zhang and Sharifi (2000) categorize agility into responsiveness, competency, flexibility/adaptability, and speed. Responsiveness refers to the ability to detect and respond to change quickly; competency involves efficiently achieving organizational goals; flexibility denotes the ability to adopt alternative processes; and speed reflects the rapid execution of activities.

In supply chain contexts, Martin Christopher (2000) introduces the concept of market sensitivity as a key agility dimension, emphasizing demand-driven supply chains. Gligor (2015) further identifies vigilance (alertness), accessibility, decisiveness, swiftness, and flexibility as core components of supply chain agility. More recently, Eckstein et al. (2015) argue that agility enhances supply chain adaptability and alignment, thereby strengthening firm performance.

## Alertness

Alertness is a critical dimension of supply chain agility and refers to the ability to quickly detect changes, opportunities, and threats in the business environment. Drawing from entrepreneurial theory, Israel Kirzner (1997) conceptualizes alertness as the discovery of previously unnoticed opportunities. In organizational contexts, alertness involves environmental scanning, information processing, and proactive response capability.

Gligor (2015) suggests that vigilant firms can anticipate market shifts and respond strategically before competitors. Similarly, Overby et al. (2006) argue that organizational agility anchored on alertness and responsiveness enhances competitive performance. Firms that cultivate alertness are therefore better positioned to achieve improved marketing outcomes.

## Marketing Success

Marketing success is commonly defined as the extent to which marketing activities achieve organizational objectives. Homburg et al. (2007) define marketing success in terms of effectiveness and efficiency in achieving revenue growth, market share, and profitability. Ambler et al. (2001) emphasize that marketing performance reflects how well marketing actions contribute to broader business goals.

From a productivity standpoint, Sheth (2002) argues that marketing success can be evaluated as the ratio of marketing outputs to marketing inputs. Morgan and Rego (2006) further demonstrate that strong marketing capabilities significantly influence firm performance indicators such as sales growth and profitability.

More recent contributions by Katsikeas et al. (2016) suggest that marketing strategy implementation effectiveness directly impacts firm performance. Likewise, Rust (2020) emphasizes that data-driven marketing capability enhances firm value and growth outcomes in dynamic markets. The measures of market success used in this study are market share and sales growth.

**Market Share:** Market share represents the proportion of industry sales captured by a firm and reflects its competitive position. Gunasekaran et al. (2005) suggest that market share indicates the extent of consumer patronage relative to competitors. Nwokah and Didia (2015) describe it as a critical measure of competitive strength.

Ateke and Nwulu (2017) argue that increased market share reflects organizational health and strategic effectiveness. More recently, Vorhies and Morgan (2005) confirm that superior marketing capabilities contribute significantly to market share growth.

**Sales Growth:** Sales growth measures the rate of increase in sales revenue over time and is a major indicator of marketing success and business sustainability. Morgan and Rego (2006) identify sales growth as a key outcome of effective marketing capability. Ambler (2003) similarly notes that sustained sales growth reflects successful strategic marketing execution.

Didia and Nwokah (2015) argue that sales growth indicates organizational wellness and long-term viability. Furthermore, Ateke and Kalu (2016) emphasize that monitoring sales growth trends enhances forecasting accuracy and strategic decision-making.

Recent research by Katsikeas et al. (2016) and Rust (2020) further demonstrates that strategic marketing alignment and digital capability significantly drive sales growth in competitive and technology-driven markets.

## Supply Chain Agility and Marketing Success

Swafford et al. (2008) emphasized the strategic importance of supply chain agility within organizational structures, arguing that both supply chain flexibility and the effective deployment of information technologies significantly enhance agility capabilities. Their study further demonstrated that the interaction among flexibility, information technology integration, and agility produces synergistic effects that ultimately improve overall business performance. Similarly, Cemberci (2011) established a positive relationship between supply chain agility, supply chain management performance, and firm-level success, thereby reinforcing the mediating role of supply chain effectiveness in achieving superior organizational outcomes.

Supply chain management performance, as a key indicator of organizational success, has been shown to improve when agility is embedded within supply chain processes. Empirical evidence suggests that agile supply chains enhance responsiveness, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction, which in turn contribute to improved firm performance. Recent scholarly contributions further underscore the strategic relevance of supply chain agility in contemporary competitive environments. Studies by Gligor et al. (2015), Sangari et al. (2015), Kabra et al. (2016), Caliskan et al. (2016), Chan et al. (2017), and Kabukcu et al. (2017) consistently report that supply chain agility constitutes a critical strategic capability that enhances firm competitiveness and marketing performance outcomes.

## Alertness and Marketing Success

Business alertness has been widely recognized as a significant determinant of marketing success. Empirical evidence suggests that entrepreneurs and firms exhibiting high levels of alertness tend to perform better on key success indicators. Andrew Van de Ven (1986) conceptualized alertness as the ability to identify and exploit opportunities for developing new products, services, or work practices. This perspective aligns with the foundational work of Joseph Schumpeter (1934), who emphasized innovation through novel combinations of resources as a driver of competitive advantage. In contrast, Israel Kirzner (1997) highlighted alertness as the discovery of previously unnoticed opportunities, often resulting in incremental improvements or adaptations of existing products and services.

The success of business ventures is therefore closely linked to the degree of entrepreneurial alertness. Alertness enhances the capacity to recognize emerging market signals, process new information, and creatively recombine resources to meet evolving customer needs. It strengthens strategic decision-making by fostering innovation, logical extension of ideas, and effective application of knowledge. Consequently, firms that cultivate organizational alertness are better positioned to achieve sustained marketing success through improved opportunity recognition, customer responsiveness, and competitive differentiation.

## Methodology

**Research Design:** This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design to examine the influence of supply chain agility on the marketing success of logistics firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional design is appropriate for studies that seek to collect data from respondents at a single point in time in order to describe variables and examine relationships among them (Creswell, 2014). The design was considered suitable because it enables the researcher to investigate the extent and nature of the relationship between supply chain agility and marketing success without manipulating the study variables.

**Population of the Study:** The target population comprised twenty-six (26) registered logistics firms operating in Port Harcourt as documented in the Yellow Pages directory (2014 edition). However, due to accessibility constraints, the accessible population was limited to four (4) logistics firms located within Port Harcourt metropolis. From these firms, a total of 190

managerial staff constituted the study population. Managers were selected because of their direct involvement in supply chain decisions and marketing-related activities, thereby making them well-positioned to provide reliable information relevant to the study variables.

**Sample Size and Sampling Technique:** The sample size of 129 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations:

n=N1+N(e)2n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}n=1+N(e)2N

Where:

- $n$ = sample size
- $N$ = population size (190)
- $e$ = level of significance (0.05)

This formula is widely used in survey research to ensure adequate representation while maintaining statistical reliability. The selected respondents were drawn using an appropriate sampling technique to ensure that all eligible managers had a fair chance of participation.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** Primary data were collected through the administration of one hundred and twenty-nine (129) structured questionnaires to the selected respondents. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert-type scale to measure the dimensions of supply chain agility (e.g., alertness) and marketing success (e.g., market share and sales growth).

**Validity and Reliability of the Instrument:** Content and face validity of the instrument were established through expert review by academics and professionals in logistics and transportation management to ensure clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the measurement items.

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to determine internal consistency. According to Cronbach (1951), a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable for social science research. Therefore, constructs with alpha values equal to or greater than 0.70 were deemed reliable for the study.

**Method of Data Analysis:** Data collected were coded, tabulated, and presented in frequency distribution tables, with values expressed in percentages for descriptive analysis. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between supply chain agility and marketing success variables. The choice of Spearman correlation was appropriate because it measures the association between ordinal variables and does not assume normal distribution (Siegel & Castellan, 1988).

All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

## Analysis and Discussion Of Findings

A total of 129 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 100 copies were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 77.5%.

### Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Analysis

Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the dimension of the independent variable (alertness) and the measure of the dependent variable (market share). The results are presented in the tables below.

## Alertness and Market Share

| | | | Alertness | Market Share |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Alertness | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .351** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | . |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |
| | Market Share | Correlation Coefficient | .351** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |

**.Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above reveals a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient of 0.351. This result indicates that there is a small but definite linear relationship between alertness and market share. This is because the correlation coefficient is greater than 0.20 i.e r = 0.35.

Since the significant value (P-value) of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis. The conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between alertness and market share of logistics firms in Port Harcourt.

### Alertness and Sales Growth

| | Alertness | Sales growth | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Alertness | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .351** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | . |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |
| | Sales growth | Correlation Coefficient | .351** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | | N | 100 | 100 |

**.Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above reveals a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient of 0.351. This result indicates that there is a small but definite linear relationship between alertness and sales growth. This is because the correlation coefficient is greater than 0.20 i.e r = 0.35.

Since the significant value (P-value) of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis. The conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between alertness and sales growth of logistics firms in Port Harcourt.

## Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between alertness and market share of logistics firms in Port Harcourt. The hypothesis was tested at a 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). The statistical result revealed a probability (p) value of 0.000, which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Based on the decision rule that the null hypothesis should be rejected when $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that a statistically significant relationship exists between alertness and market share of logistics firms in Port Harcourt.

This finding suggests that logistics firms that demonstrate higher levels of alertness through early detection of market changes, customer preferences, and competitive threats are more likely to achieve improved market positioning and increased market share. The result aligns with the findings of Serut (2013), who reported a significant positive relationship between supply chain agility and firm success. It also corroborates the work of Gligor et al. (2015), who found that agility capabilities enhance competitive performance and customer responsiveness. Furthermore, Swafford et al. (2008) emphasize that agility enabled by flexibility and information technology integration contributes significantly to improved organizational performance outcomes. The implication is that alertness serves as a strategic mechanism through which logistics firms strengthen their competitive advantage and expand their share of the market.

The second hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between alertness and sales growth of logistics firms in Port Harcourt. Similarly, this hypothesis was tested at a 5% level of significance. The statistical analysis produced a probability (p) value of 0.000, which is below the threshold of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that a significant relationship exists between alertness and sales growth of logistics firms in Port Harcourt.

This finding implies that firms that are more vigilant and proactive in identifying environmental shifts and customer demands tend to experience higher sales growth. Alertness enables firms to capitalize on emerging opportunities, introduce timely service innovations, and respond swiftly to competitive pressures, all of which contribute to increased revenue performance. This outcome is consistent with Morgan and Rego (2006), who argue that strong marketing-related capabilities drive superior sales performance. It also supports the argument of Ivanov (2020), who emphasizes that agile supply chains enhance firm resilience and performance, particularly in dynamic environments.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the theoretical proposition that supply chain agility specifically the dimension of alertness plays a critical role in enhancing key indicators of marketing success, including market share and sales growth, among logistics firms in Port Harcourt.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between supply chain agility and marketing success among logistics firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, with a focus on alertness. The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between alertness and both market share and sales growth. Firms that demonstrate high levels of vigilance in detecting market changes and customer needs are better positioned to achieve superior marketing success. These results corroborate previous studies emphasizing that supply chain agility enhances organizational competitiveness and performance (Swafford et al., 2008; Gligor et al., 2015; Morgan & Rego, 2006). The study concludes that alertness, as a key dimension of supply chain agility, plays a critical role in driving marketing success in dynamic and competitive logistics environments.

## Recommendations

1. **Enhance Market Intelligence Systems:** Logistics firms should implement real-time data monitoring, customer feedback mechanisms, and competitive intelligence tools to strengthen alertness capabilities and facilitate timely strategic decision-making.
2. **Invest in Digital Technologies and Capacity Building:** Integrating information systems and providing staff training can improve responsiveness, flexibility, and the effective execution of strategic decisions.
3. **Embed Agility in Organizational Culture:** Alertness and proactive response should be institutionalized as part of organizational strategy to foster continuous innovation and competitive advantage.

## Suggestions for Further Research

1. Future studies should explore additional dimensions of supply chain agility, including flexibility, responsiveness, accessibility, and decisiveness, to provide a more comprehensive analysis.
2. Research should be extended to other regions and industries to assess the generalizability of findings beyond Port Harcourt and the logistics sector.
3. Longitudinal studies are recommended to examine the impact of supply chain agility on marketing success over time, allowing for causal inferences.
4. Comparative studies across industries could provide insights into sector-specific variations in the relationship between supply chain agility and marketing outcomes.

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