

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

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<https://doi.org/10.22306/al.v13i3.816>**Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain****Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib**Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Av. Mohamed El Kharraz, Tétouan, 93000, Morocco,
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Abstract: Companies are reaping the advantages of integration mostly through information sharing. The main goal of this study is to develop an empirical model based on results from Meta Analytic Review, in order to explain the impact of five explanatory variables from existing literature (Trust, Legal Contract, Commitment, Power, IT Capacity) on Financial and Non-Financial Performance via the mediating variable (Information Sharing) across the Moroccan Automotive Supply Chain. The choice of the Moroccan Supply Chain is based on the very limited and underdeveloped existing literature. To fill this gap, we conducted a questionnaire on a sample of 100 employees working in 'Tangier Automotive City'. Using SPSS 28.0 software, we attempt to verify the reliability and validity of the measurement scales. Subsequently, we proceeded to test the hypotheses via the structural equation modelling method with the help of the Smart PLS software. The results show the effect of the studied variables on sharing of information. They also show how important sharing information is for improving supply chain performance. This research fills a vacuum in the literature by using real-world examples from a developing nation and giving Moroccan managers useful advice on how to improve cooperation in the supply chain.

1 Introduction

Today, the economy is growing so fast, and the world is becoming more competitive and globalized. In this context, supply chains need to be more coordinated, responsive, and efficient. In fact, Supply Chain Management has changed from looking at the chain from inside _a single function_ to looking at it from the outside, including all the chain's stakeholders. This vision for integration stresses the need for all partners to coordinate their efforts to achieve shared objectives. This logic makes operations more efficient, saves costs, and allows all partners to respond more quickly to market needs. However, before the supply chain can be integrated, a couple things need to be in place: all partners must be able to share data in real time, and information must be easy to find. To meet these two requirements, the chain's stakeholders must agree to share information with each other. In this setting, exchanging information has become a keyway to improve overall performance and make it easier for supply chain partners to work together. Being able to provide fast, accurate, and useful information lowers uncertainty, risks, and helps everyone in the supply chain make better decisions.

Even while sharing information is important for strategy, it is still not done uniformly, especially in developing countries where there are still structural, technical, and social barriers. Morocco is a concrete example of this problem. The proof that the Moroccan literature review in this regard was very limited. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to delve into the international literature to critically examine the findings of these studies by contrasting them with the reality of the empirical data from the Moroccan Automotive industry.

This way of looking at things will enable us to add to the literature on the information exchange in the Moroccan supply chain. As a result, for Moroccan academics and students who want to do in-depth research on a related topic, our findings and the gaps indicated can serve as research pathways. Thus, the conclusions could be useful for Moroccan businesses that are currently debating the value of this approach in the managerial setting.

In this light, the concern of our study seeks to respond to two principal questions: "what is the effect of each factor on the degree and the frequency of sharing information between Moroccan Automotive supply chain participants?" In this work logic, we suggest examining any potential connections between the key explanatory factors from the literature (Trust, Legal

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

contract, IT capacity, Commitment, and Power), and the mediating factor (Information Sharing). With the aforementioned factors in mind, we then ask: "How much does this sharing affect the financial and non-financial performance of the mentioned channel?"

Accordingly, our study model will be formed by breaking down these interactions into seven hypotheses, as presented in (Figure 1).

- H1: Trust has a significantly positive impact on information sharing in the supply chain.
- H2: The legal contract positively affects sharing information in the supply chain.
- H3: The advancement of information technology has a positive effect on sharing information in the supply chain.
- H4: Commitment impacts the sharing of information in the supply chain in a positive way.
- H5: Power has a markedly negative effect on information sharing in the supply chain.
- H6: Information sharing has a strong positive effect on the financial performance of the supply chain.
- H7: Information sharing has a high beneficial role to play in the non-financial performance of the supply chain.

On the basis of this statement and the hypotheses derived from it, we shall set out a simplified research model.

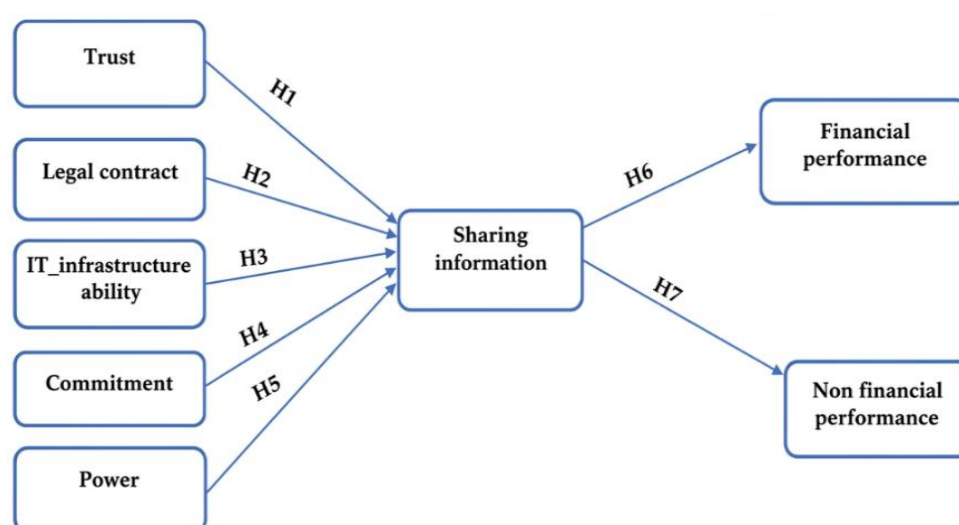


Figure 1 Simplified research model

In this direction, we initially conducted a Meta Analytic Review to cover the Information sharing aspects in Supply Chain Management. The outcomes of this preliminary stage serve as background to establish a starting point for the development of the Exploratory Analysis. The examination is conducted using a quantitative methodology along with the questionnaire data collection technique. In fact, our methodology seeks the selection of pre-existing measurement scales from the literature, the creation and organization of the questionnaire followed by its administration, the gathering of data to eventually use applications devoted to this subject (in our case we used IBM SPSS statistics version 28 and Smart PLS).

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: section 2 presents the findings of the Meta Analytic Review. While section 3 is dedicated to describing our research process in a precise and structured way. In Section 4, a case study is conducted to test the proposed approach, then results are presented. While those results were analysed and discussed in section 5. Finally, in section 6, as a conclusion to our research, we want to develop a general assessment of our scientific added value, as well as the common threads for a future projection of this research.

2 Meta analytic review

Information sharing has been on the research agenda for several decades and continues to receive attention both from researchers and practitioners [1]. This interest is due to his role at the heart of the concept of the supply chain. It is the breadth of information exchanged in an interfirm relationship [2] that is also a fundamental element in managing the flow of information in the supply chain process [3]. Due to this interest, publications are multiplying, in this regard, we conducted a Meta Analytic Review to ensure the research rigor and replicability of the study and to encompass the diverse theoretical aspects surrounding our subject (The final sample consisted of 146 papers).

By combining the outcomes of the performed analyses, it is possible to provide insights into the main areas investigated by the literature on information sharing in supply chains, related risks, and opportunities.

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

Figure 2, identified five major areas or aspects of information sharing in supply chains based on the analysis of the selected literature. First, a substantial body of research examines the impact of information sharing on supply chain performance. In total, 60 papers out of the 146 reviewed studies, representing nearly 41% of the sample, address this issue, highlighting the strong academic interest in understanding how information sharing contributes to supply chain effectiveness. Numerous empirical and theoretical studies [4-6] consistently demonstrate that information sharing is crucial for enhancing supply chain performance and fortifying connections among supply chain participants. Additionally, with 35 studies concentrating on the characteristics that affect the partners' willingness to participate in information exchange and the quality of the information shared, the drivers of information sharing represent a significant area of research, comprising almost 24% of the sample. These determinants are typically categorized into three principal groups: factors pertaining to individual psychology and behaviour, factors associated with information technology infrastructure and capabilities, and factors derived from Social Exchange Theory, encompassing trust, commitment, and reciprocity [7]. Thirdly, only fourteen papers investigate the challenges associated with the implementation of information sharing. There is less study that looks at the problems that come with information technology, but this stream generally looks at problems like information asymmetry, information distortion, opportunistic behaviour, and the bullwhip effect. Finally, there is a lot of talk in the literature on the many ways that firms share information. These approaches include many strategies, tactics, and processes used by corporations to enhance information exchange across supply chain participants.

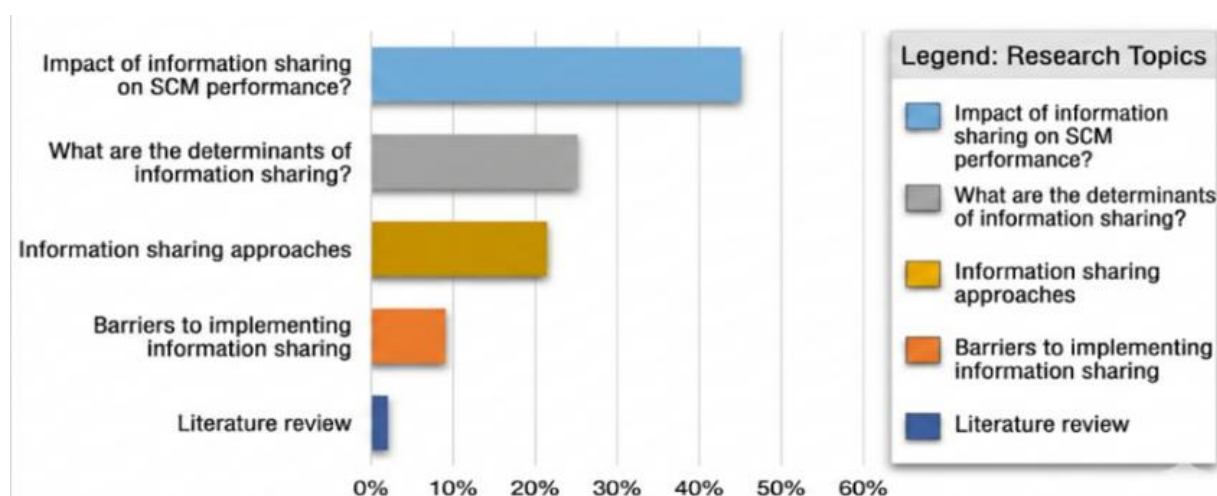


Figure 2 Distribution of articles by information sharing aspect

3 Methodology

Regarding methodological approach, we first conducted a Meta-Analytic Review. The findings of this first stage provide us the background we need to develop the theoretical model. Then, relevant variables were defined, and measurement scales were chosen. In a second step, we utilized a quantitative method using a questionnaire to collect data and to contrast finding with the reality of the Moroccan supply chain. This logic allows us to test our research model to affirm or refute the totality of our hypotheses,

3.1 The choice of measurement scales

Using the theoretical findings of the Meta-Analytic Review as a starting point, we were able to figure out what criteria are most crucial for sharing information and what performance measures are most relevant. The last phase included selecting appropriate and compatible measurement scales for our study's context. In this regard, the research conducted by [8] was used to define the Legal Contract dimension, while the scale developed by Doney and Cannon (1997) was employed to evaluate Trust. Concerning the Development of Information Technologies, the scale proposed by [9] was considered the most suitable, given its alignment with the objectives of the research. Commitment and Power were measured using established and widely validated scales, namely those developed by [10] for Commitment, and for power [11,12]. With respect to information sharing, we adopted the measurement scales proposed by [13,14], which have been extensively used in supply chain management research. Finally, performance was assessed using a combination of financial and non-financial indicators: financial performance was measured based on the scales developed by [12,13], whereas non-financial performance was evaluated using the measurement framework proposed by [15-17].

3.2 Sample characteristics

We have decided for the automotive sector. Our choice is attributed to a number of factors, namely (1) the development and growth of this sector in Morocco, (2) the large number of manufacturers who have recently decided to move to the

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

kingdom, (3) the technology progress experienced by this sector requiring collaboration and communication among the various stakeholders in the chain to ensure a successful bet and increase profit.

Regarding the geographical location, we chose to work on the Tangier Automotive city located at Tangier. Thus, the final sample is 100 employees.

3.3 A quantitative investigation

There was a solid reason to choose a quantitative investigation. This scientifically-based, rigorous procedure is built on two main steps:

- We utilized SPSS to undertake an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) as the first step in reducing the amount of data. The approach allowed us to check the memory variables' internal consistency and look into the underlying structure of the measurement items. EFA was used to check the validity and reliability of the measuring scales, make sure they were unidimensional, and see whether the data samples were representative enough.
- Second, the research hypotheses were tested and the theoretical model was either validated or refuted through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). For this purpose, we opted for the SmartPLS software, which is particularly suitable for complex models and predictive-oriented research. SmartPLS enabled the assessment of both the measurement model and the structural model, providing robust estimates of relationships between latent constructs.

4 Results

This section presents the empirical results obtained from the analysis conducted in this study. The main objective is to examine the relationships between the determinants of information sharing and their impact on supply chain performance within the Moroccan automotive supply chain context. The findings presented in this section are based on statistical analyses conducted using the collected survey data. The results provide insights into the strength and significance of the relationships between the studied variables and help validate or reject the proposed research hypotheses. These results also offer an empirical foundation for the discussion and managerial implications presented in the following sections.

4.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Applying this procedure to our study allowed us to examine the correlations between the items of each variable to reduce them to a reduced number of factors. To accomplish this, we applied a Principal Component Analysis, which allowed us to delete the components that disturbed while still maintaining a coherent framework. In the end, 5 items were deleted, leaving 37 for the confirmatory analysis.

Table 1 shows, that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index is (KMO) 0.858, _witch measure the sampling adequacy_, making the distribution homogeneous (Meritorious). Table 2 is rotated component matrix.

Table 1 PCA results

Measure / Test	Parameter	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure	Sampling Adequacy	.858
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4280.275
	Df(degrees of freedom)	666
	Sig.(p-value)	<.001

Table 2 Rotated component matrix

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

Rotated Component Matrix							
Component Loadings for Identified Components (n=7)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A1					.756		
A2					.729		
A3					.782		
B1			.731				
B2		.443	.681				
B4			.668				
C1			.658				
C3			.640				
C4			.693				
D1	.837						
D2	.727						.482
D3	.707						.527
E1	.475					.646	
E2						.775	
E3	.475					.591	
F2			.585				
F3			.624				
G1	.970						
G2	.957						
G3	.971						
G4	.960						
G5	.974						
G6	.976						
G7	.962						
G8	.962						
H1				.0752			
H2				.780			
H3				.785			
H4				.774			
H5				.697			
I1		.672		.465			
I2		.752					
I3		.885					
I4		.786					
I5		.827					
I6		.621		.467			
I7		.691					
Extraction: Principal Component Analysis							
Rotation: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization (7 iterations).							

4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

According to [18], structural equation modelling consists of two phases: Measurement and Structure. The measurement phase involves a confirmatory analysis to validate the items corresponding to the latent variables. On the other hand, the structural phase seeks to validate the hypotheses by analyzing the relationships of cause and effect between the variables that constitute the model.

4.2.1 Measurement model using SMART PLS

The measurement models for all concepts in our theoretical framework are assessed for appropriateness, reliability and validity.

Table 3 Reliability analysis and convergent validity analysis

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted(Validity)
IT	.993	.979	.853
Engagement	.857	.933	.874
Financial performance	.918	.938	.753
Information sharing	.800	.855	.500
Legal contract	.929	.826	.620
Non-Financial performance	.935	.947	.720
Power	.888	.930	.817
Trust	.773	.868	.687

To assess the reliability of our constructs, we will use Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) (Table 3).

Regarding reliability (consistency), all coefficients exceed the reliability thresholds, as both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability exceed 0.7. Thus, the reliability of the different constructs of our model is good.

To assess validity, we will examine convergent and discriminant validity.

Convergent validity (Accuracy) has been established for all constructs, as the average variance of each item that makes up the construct exceeds the accepted threshold of 0.500. However, information sharing has a score of 0.500, making it still valid.

To validate the one-dimensionality of our measurement scales and the discriminant validity of our constructs, SMART PLS proposes several indices. we use The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) witch (as mention Table 4) have a value equal to 1 with itself and less than 0.90 with the other variables. This means that we have a good Discriminant Validity.

Table 4 Discriminant validity analysis of variables using HTMT

	IT	Engagement	Financial performance	Information sharing	Legal contract	Non-financial performance	Power	Trust
IT	1							
Engagement	0.137	1						
Financial performance	0.106	0.649	1					
Information sharing	0.102	0.698	0.516	1				
Legal contract	0.786	0.094	0.086	0.095	1			
Non-financial performance	0.089	0.597	0.758	0.593	0.101	1		
Power	0.496	0.511	0.488	0.512	0.431	0.455	1	
Trust	0.088	0.642	0.468	0.779	0.135	0.375	0.485	1

4.2.2 Structural model using SMART PLS

The next step involves examining the structure of our model. This includes identifying any causal dependencies between our endogenous and exogenous variables. To accomplish this, we must first evaluate the quality of the model and then test the hypotheses to confirm or refute them.

Table 5 Analysis of the quality of the structural model

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Financial performance	0.216	0.208
Information sharing	0.521	0.495
Non-financial performance	0.285	0.277

Upon analysis of the R-square (showed in Table 5) results that are applied to our two output variables, financial and non-financial performance, it becomes apparent that:

Our model predicts 21% of the data in relation to financial performance.

Our model explains 28% of the data in relation to non-financial performance.

Table 6 provides a summary of our hypothesis testing based on the structural equation model:

Table 6 Summary of the hypothesis test

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

	Hypothesis	T statistics	P values	Result
H1	Trust has a significantly positive impact on information sharing in the supply chain.	3.687	0.000	Accepted
H2	The legal contract positively affects sharing information in the supply chain.	0.468	0.460	Rejected
H3	The advancement of information technology has a positive effect on sharing information in the supply chain.	0.677	0.498	Rejected
H4	Commitment impacts the sharing of information in the supply chain in a positive way.	3.106	0.002	Accepted
H5	Power has a markedly negative effect on information sharing in the supply chain.	1.487	0.137	Rejected
H6	Information sharing has a positive effect on the financial performance of the supply chain.	3.760	0.000	Accepted
H7	Information sharing has a beneficial role to play in the non-financial performance of the supply chain.	4.570	0.000	Accepted

In conclusion, the impact of five input variables on the intermediate variable (information sharing) was investigated. According to the path coefficient analysis, two relationships were identified, namely the relationship between trust/commitment and information sharing. The same analysis revealed that the other three determinants did not explain the degree and frequency of information sharing in the supply chain.

Regarding the output variables (financial and non-financial performance), the analysis of the correlation coefficients showed a positive relationship between information sharing and these two variables throughout the supply chain.

We re-examine the design of our research model, (as visualized in Figure 3) stressing the contribution coefficients of each variable and emphasizing the relationships that have been validated and those that have failed.

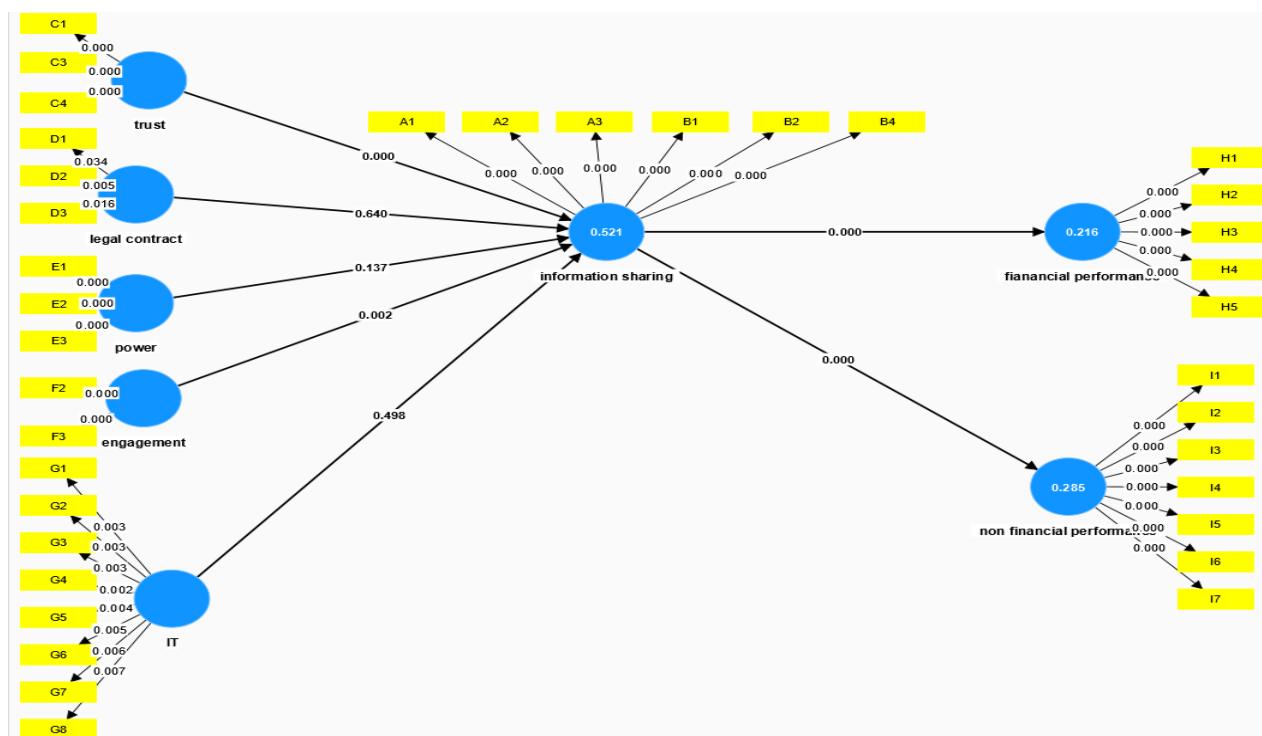


Figure 3 Modelling relationships using structural equations

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

5 Discussion

The results obtained in this study provide important insights into the factors influencing information sharing and their impact on supply chain performance within the Moroccan automotive industry. Overall, the empirical findings confirm that collaborative relationships between supply chain partners play a critical role in facilitating effective information exchange. Thus the overall performance is positively impacted.

To make a comparison between results and literature review, and to justify the differences observed, we offer the following observations for each construct included in our research model.

Our results are discussed considering two central research questions.

5.1 To what extent do the drivers influence the exchange of information between the participants in the Supply Chain?

The literature review on this issue has uncovered numerous studies aiming to establish a linear relationship between various variables and information sharing in the supply chain. However, these studies typically focus on investigating one or more factors. In this context, we intend to discuss our results concerning each determinant separately, particularly in the case of our sub-hypotheses.

5.1.1 Trust has a significant positive impact on information sharing in the supply chain

Regarding this particular issue, the results show that there is a positive relationship between the fact that chain partners keep their promises and the degree and frequency of information exchange. This relationship is supported by a correlation coefficient of 3.687 with a significant p-value (0.000).

The analysis indicates that trust is the most significant determinant of information sharing. When supply chain partners develop strong mutual trust, they are more willing to exchange strategic and operational information. This result is consistent with previous studies in supply chain management literature, which highlight that trust reduces opportunistic behavior and encourages long-term cooperation between partners. [7] assert that trust is the paramount element influencing the extent of information sharing across enterprises. [20-25] demonstrate that trust is a big reason why individuals are willing to contribute, and they also illustrate how important trust is for getting better information. [8] assert that trust is an essential component of interpersonal acquaintance, subsequently influencing the intensity of collaborative efforts. Furthermore, do quantitative research within the context of information sharing to investigate the relationship between trust levels and the concept of social exchange [20]. We have decided to utilize information-sharing as our main way to measure consumer trust since it is such an important factor. The purpose of this approach is to help people who make decisions choose partners [21]. Moroccan auto workers said that trust between everyone in the chain is the most critical thing that makes it possible for information to flow.

5.1.2 The legal contract has a positive impact on information sharing in the supply chain

According to the hypothesis test, in the context of our study, the legal contract showed no effect on information sharing, contradicting the literature, which, on the contrary, confirms the benefits of this strategy.

From the employees' point of view, the presence of the governing structure is not sufficient to encourage them to share data among the stakeholders in the supply chain, and the legal contract will not succeed in protecting their benefits and rights.

5.1.3 The enhancement of information technologies has a positive influence on information sharing in the supply chain

A debate has emerged on the necessity of determining whether information and communication technologies (ICTs) will contribute to the process of knowledge sharing. This issue has increasingly caught the interest of researchers worldwide, given its vital impact on enhancing the speed and accuracy of exchange and its role in the coordination and decision-making process [22-24].

Thereby, Scuotto, Caputo, Villasalero, & Del Giudice (2017) support this viewpoint by asserting that information technology application is a useful way to assist partners share knowledge [25].

In our study of the automotive sector in Morocco, despite the availability and development of powerful software that facilitates this objective, its impact on the degree and frequency of information sharing remains statistically insignificant. This is supported by a T Statistic value of 0.677 and a p-value greater than 0.05, even with the identification of numerous very strong correlations.

This finding is surprising, but it seems that employees believe that the development of ICT has facilitated the exchange of information without necessarily affecting the willingness and extent information sharing. To put it another way, information technology is necessary for sharing but no longer serves as a driving force behind engagement (in the process of information sharing).

5.1.4 Engagement positively impacts information sharing in the supply chain

In the literature, engagement is often associated with trust or legal contracts, demonstrating its positive impact in combating opportunism and uncertainty [26-28].

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

These findings are consistent with our results in the Moroccan context. Commitment has a positive and highly significant effect on the degree and willingness to share information among automobile supply chain stakeholders. Based on our sample, trust and engagement constitute a coherent set that has a motivational effect on chain actors to share information easily and frequently.

5.1.5 Power significantly has a negative impact on information sharing in the supply chain

Here we have found no causal relationship between power and the extent and frequency of information sharing, which is understandable as almost all elements of the sample believe that they do not exercise power in their relationship with their partners. This is reflected in the responses provided, which ranged from 'strongly disagree' to not agree. As most participants did not have this attitude, we could not identify any significant impact of this variable on the exchange of information.

5.2 How does this sharing affect the financial and non-financial performance of the chain in question?

Numerous studies delve into this question, even with the absence of a clear distinction between these two components in the existing literature.

The literature interrogates the relationship between information sharing and performance, often indirectly through the supply chain integration perspective. Several authors attempt to explore the impact of integration practices on performance, as seen in the works of Huang, [28-31].

In a different perspective, [24] suggest the integration of internal and external information is conducive to both reactive and proactive flexibility in the supply chain, resulting in high operational performance.

A considerable number of studies analyze the direct relationship between the impact of information sharing and supply chain performance. [22] prove that information sharing among chain partners through the use of RFID technology results in improved performance. Another study by [11] identifies two dimensions of information sharing: connectivity and willingness. Both dimensions affect operational performance. In addition, [20] find that information sharing has a significant impact on chain performance in terms of reducing total costs and increasing service quality [17,28,31].

The following is a description of our findings in terms of the order of our hypotheses:

5.2.1 Information sharing has a positive impact on financial performance

It is apparent that our model can successfully predict 21% of the data regarding financial performance when analyzing the R^2 results applied to this variable. This indicates that information sharing has a positive impact on financial performance, although this relationship is considered relatively weak. This is demonstrated by the correlation coefficient (path coefficient) of 3.760 with a significant p-value (less than 0.05).

5.2.2 Information sharing has a positive impact on non-financial performance

Our research model's confirmatory analysis showed that there is a causal link between sharing knowledge and performance that isn't related to money in the automotive supply chain. The R-squared, which is a measure of how well the regression is, shows the same relationship. Our model made up 28% of the total for measures that had nothing to do with money. This shows that sharing information has a positive influence on performance indicators other than financial ones, even when the rate seems low. The extremely high correlation coefficient (T: 4.570, Pv: 0.000) provides further proof that this is true.

This study underscores the significance of information sharing as a strategy to enhance performance and foster connections within the Moroccan automotive supply chain. Based on the statistics, it's evident that the ability to use technology and the ability to build relationships, including trust and commitment, have a big effect on how well partners can share information. Sharing information is a big part of both financial and non-financial success, and the fact that the two are linked in a good way indicates how important it is strategically. These results substantiate the proposed research methodology by validating established theoretical frameworks and provide robust empirical data pertinent to the Moroccan industrial context.

6 Conclusions

This study focused on information sharing across the Moroccan Automotive Supply chain, highlighting its impact on performance and pinpointing the primary determinants influencing its implementation. The study employs known theoretical frameworks and approved measuring scales to conduct a comprehensive and contextually relevant analysis. Results showed that Trust and Commitment have a significantly positive impact on information sharing. On the other hand, Power, the Legal contract and the Advancement of information technology does not markedly affect this one. Finally, the R-square Analysis showed that Information sharing has a positive effect on the overall performance of the supply chain. Even if the findings do provide us helpful theoretical and managerial insights, it's crucial to remember that there are certain limits. Culture, uncertainty, and opportunistic behavior were excluded from the research since they were deemed beyond the parameters of the selected factors. The results are not applicable to the whole Moroccan Automotive sector because of the restricted sample size and the geographical focus on the Tangier region. In addition, the findings are not generalizable to other businesses since

Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

Fatima Ezzahra Boussehaib, Ouail El imrani, Soumaya Aharouay

the study examined just one. To address these limitations, further research should expand their sample to include more industrial sectors, while considering implementation challenges and information-sharing strategies as possible moderating factors. Qualitative study should complement quantitative evaluations to better explore practitioners' perceptions of information sharing in supply chains and the actual challenges it poses.

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Evaluating the mediating role of information sharing between the main drivers and performance in the Moroccan automotive supply chain

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