

## **FACTORS IMPEDING THE ROLE OF DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS IN SUPPLY CHAIN OF BEVERAGE PRODUCTS IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA: A CASE OF BAKHRESA FOOD PRODUCTS LIMITED**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Despite the critical role played by distribution channels in supply chain, along with strategies made by government, the beverage products in Dar es Salaam-Tanzania are still discounted following the distribution channels inability to undertake supply chain roles. This paper examined the factors impeding distribution channels in Supply Chain of beverage products and recommended strategies for improving the same. Qualitative approach was adopted and data were drawn from a purposive sample of 50 respondents through interviews and focus group discussions. Accordingly, distribution channels in Supply Chain was impeded by poor transportation, inadequate storage facilities, inability to improve quality and poor marketing services. The study recommends some ways to minimise the impediments. These include ensuring suitable road infrastructures; providing soft loans and grants to the distribution channels in order to buy modern storage facilities; adequate and reliable storage facilities and ensuring adequate electric power supply. The inability to value addition should be alleviated through empowering financially to obtain enough capital of buying effective handling and storage facilities. Authorities responsible for quality assurance should play their active role in ensuring quality assurance and standards of beverage products; to improve marketing services, devising the innovative ways of reaching the customers by adopting adequate promotion techniques. Therefore, factors impeding the role of distribution channels in Supply Chain of beverages can be alleviated through improvement of storage, distribution and transportation, value addition and quality as well as improving marketing services.*

**Keywords:** *Distribution channels, Beverage Products, Impediments, Supply Chain*

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background Information**

Supply chain of beverage commodities provides significance to the traders and customers through purchasing and consuming it. This raises the demand and supply to the parties involved in supply chain such as the residents, ordinary traders and alike (Petruzzi *et al.*, 2017). In Tanzania, majority of traders and consumers depend on the supply chain of beverage commodities to conduct trade while on the other hand utilise them to gain their diet and nutritional status (Journal, Science, & Brasileira, 2018).

Supply chain for beverage products plays a role of ensuring traders and customers promote their business activities and obtain employment, increases the government revenues and minimises the poverty among traders involved in selling and purchasing them (Subramani, 2018).

In general, beverage commodities consumption in developing countries and particularly in Tanzania is an essential activity for the formal and informal traders (Petruzzi *et al.*, 2017). Traders and customers depend on selling and purchasing of beverage products such as soda, water, and juice and alike to maintain their life and wellbeing and income (Santos *et al.*, 2018).

Moreover, supply chain consists of parties involved in fulfilling a request. Within each company, such as manufacturer the supply chain includes the activities involved in receiving the customers 'request of products and/or services,

including but not limited to new product development, marketing, operations, distribution, finance and customer services (Chopra & Meindl, 2007). Indeed, supply chain management is the set of activities utilised to efficiently integrate suppliers, producers and stores so that products are distributed to the right quantities, at the right locations, in a right time to the right quality so as to satisfy service level requirement to final consumers (Felea & Albăstroiu, 2013). On the other hand, the supply chain of beverage products involves many distribution channels, responsible for making available products to final consumers (Ackerley, Sertkaya, & Lange, 2010). These include producers, distributors, suppliers, transporter, wholesalers, and retailers. The producer is the first channel who produces a bulk of products from manufacturing industries then sells it to distributors (Kregiel, 2015b). Then, the distributors are the second part to beverage commodities who undertake the contribution of distributing the products to the wholesalers and retailers (Distribution & Group, 2015). The wholesaler plays vital role of assembling goods, breaking in the bulk, warehousing or storing, transporting, grading, packing, pricing and sells it to retailers (Jessop, 2012; Vorst, 2004). Again, retailers collect and perform the dual functions of buying and assembling of goods, warehousing and storing them before delivering to the final consumers (Friberg, 2017; Dalal & Bisht, 2019). In this part, distribution channels form a contribution in beverage supply chain. Generally, distribution channels intended to make sure the beverage products are available to the customers through the uses of distribution networking and transportation structures (NG & CHUNG, 2009).

Distribution channels contribute in facilitating distribution and transportation services. This is for providing appropriate distribution and transportation facilities which helps to transfer the beverage products from producers towards other channels in business supply chain (Friberg, 2017). By doing this, they facilitate the flows of beverage products from the point of origin to another and mainly from the production to the consumption point (Point *et al.*, 2014). Secondly, they facilitate storage services for the products such as providing cold storage warehouses (Distribution & Group, 2015). Thirdly, they provide marketing information services to the parties involved in supply chain as well as ensure products value and quality for the supply chain of beverage commodities (Dalal & Bisht, 2019; Kregiel, 2015a). To this end, it is fair to conclude that, the role of distribution channels in procurement and supply chain of beverage commodities is important and compulsory to the traders and customers in particular.

Globally, distribution channels play very critical functions of supporting the supply chain of any commodity. Principally, beverage commodities account for half of businesses in which distribution network design is also significant (Kregiel, 2015a). Moreover, countries such as India, Malaysia, Australia and United States, the distribution channels contribute on facilitating products and information flow, ensure protective packaging, prevention of products from contamination and chemical deterioration as well as ensuring products storage before delivering to the customers. In these countries most of beverage commodities known as soft drinks which are consumed by hundreds of customers depend on their choice and preferences (Guide *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, the distribution channels to these countries are hampered by challenges such as limited funds to access the distribution facilities, remote location of the consumers, limited stakeholders' intervention to participate fully in supply chain of beverage products, communication barriers, lack of knowledge of consumers, inadequate storage facilities, poor infrastructure, packaging issues, technological issues, quality and safety issue, inadequate government support to mention just a few in this context (Dalal & Bisht, 2019).

The same issue has been observed in Africa practically Southern, Northern and West Africa in which distribution channels facilitate products flow, increases products access and availability, protect consumers right as well as ensuring home delivery of beverage products to the ultimate customers (Ackerley *et al.*, 2010). On the other side of coin, supply chain of beverage products is faced with major problems and impediments which also the role of distribution channels to play them all in supply chain. These include but not limited to poor government enforcement to provide soft loans, transportation problems, marketing problems, poor purchasing income to consumers and alike (Distribution & Group, 2015).

Basing on the above noted roles and worldwide challenges, the government of Tanzania has made several initiatives and established regulatory framework aimed at improving the standard of business and the traders in business supply chain of any commodities and that of beverages in particular. For example, the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Tanzania has facilitated industrial and trade developments through creating enabling legal framework. The ministry is also responsible for formulation, administration and review of policies and strategies for industrial and commercial development as well as creation of enabling environment for industrial and trade development (HODECT, 2012; URT, 2010). Moreover, there is a number of relevant trade and business policies in Tanzania such as Trade Act, and National Bureau of Standards for the purpose of overseeing trade in general and the beverage products in particular (United

Republic of Tanzania (URT), 2005). The National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction II is one of the strategies in practice established for improving transportation network infrastructures with the major purposes of increasing the speed of products delivery to the target customers, reducing transportation berries such as transportation costs and alike as well as facilitating the storage facilities and the access of marketing and distribution channels to get loans (URT, 2010).

Other activities of distribution channels and manufacturing industries are covered in Tanzania Bureau of Standards. The Bureau addresses the activities in which the industries are supposed to undertake when improving the beverage products to final consumers. These include the approval, registration and control of use of standard marks, undertaking measures for quality control of commodities, services and environment of all descriptions and promoting standardisation in industry and trade; making arrangements or providing facilities for the testing and calibration of precision instruments; assisting industries in setting up and enforcing quality assurance and environmental management systems procedures and alike (Standards, & Financial, 2009). The Bureau on the other hand, performs a critical role on establishing the supply chain of beverage products by providing favourable laws and policies which guide and enhance smooth operation of the beverage products (Standards, 2010)

Unfortunately, despite the great importance attached to the distribution channels in the whole process of supply chain and the initiatives made by the government of Tanzania in supporting the same, the role of distribution channels in supply chain of beverage products is still under performance with some traders viewing them to be source of delay of conducting beverage products rather than business facilitators in beverages supply chain (Morogoro *et al.*, 2019). Specifically, distribution channels in Tanzania have been diverged from their intended goals to the supply chain of beverage commodities, noting that they are the key business facilitators and that of beverage products in particular (Subramani, 2018).

Furthermore, the failure of distribution channels to play the beverages supply chain such as transportation, marketing, quality, distribution, pricing, promotion as well as at storage services has led to a number of challenges including but not limited to poor distribution options and network facilities, poor coordination and integration, inadequate storage facilities, processing issues, technological and networking issues to mention just a few in this concern (Santos *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, some traders and customers feel that distribution channels do not confirm their intended role as expected as required following to the problems they impeded when facilitating the supply chain of beverage commodities (Lehtinen *et al.*, 2016). Although the distribution channels provide facilities like means of transportation, storage facilities, pricing and promotion, most customers are not satisfied with their role and just see them as dissatisfaction of utilizing beverage products and are the sources of poor quality of services more specifically delay to deliver the product on time to final customers. This further suggests that distribution channels are incapable of performing their role (Kregiel, 2015a).

In addition to the above, we have noted that the distribution channels play a very positive critical role in supply chain of any product and that of beverage products in particular. The involvement of distribution channels in beverage commodities has a remarkable impact on the traders and customers' wellbeing and income and that of source of generating wealth of products or services to final consumers (Guide *et al.*, 2014). However, despite the critical role played by the distribution channels in the whole process of supply chain, the same role has not been affordable and reflected among the distribution channels themselves, traders and customers involved in beverage products of Tanzania and Dar es Salaam city in particular. For example, at the retailers' stage, beverage products are shown and displayed in the way which customers feel unimportant to buy the products. On the other one hand, majority of channel members sell their products at unofficial places such as next to the roads while the other put their commodities to non-electrical storage facilities such as non-electrical refrigerators which have been put with ice bars (Guide *et al.*, 2014; Kregiel, 2015a). In most cases, the distributional channels such as wholesalers and retailers have limited access to the markets they lack capital to buy adequate storage facilities to ensure sustainable beverage supply chain. They lack proper handling facilities which is the biggest issue and the great challenge for supply chain of beverage products in most of the developing countries (Guide *et al.*, 2014).

Consequently, the overall objective of this research is to assess the role of distribution channels in Supply Chain of beverage products with the view to establishing the extent to which the distribution channels are capable of performing their role and examining the factors impeding their role from effectively supporting beverages supply chain and recommend measures to improve the situation. The paper makes several contributions through providing relevant policy advocacy materials for the government as well as commercial banks more strategically to provide soft loans and

grants to distribution channels since it is among the critical areas in promoting self-employment, improve consumers' livelihood, generating income and revenue to the people and government. Second, it also contributes to the knowledge base for further researches in the field of Procurement and Supply Chain of beverage products.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Beverage products play a significant contribution in ensuring traders and customers activities, products supply for majority of consumers and above all contribute to the income of government and traders who are involved in supply chain (Heng & House, 2016). Distribution channels form an important strategy and key party to the beverage supply chain and trade in particular including facilitating distribution and transportation, ensure value addition and quality, marketing services and storage (Guide *et al.*, 2014). When performing their role, distribution channels are faced with serious problems such as limited access markets, lack of capital to buy adequate storage facilities, lack of proper handling facilities, poor distribution, poor coordination and integration, processing issues, technological and networking issues and alike (Santos *et al.*, 2018).

Based on the critical role and problems facing distribution channels, the government of Tanzania has made tireless efforts to reverse the situation. For instance, The Ministry of Trade has reviewed trade policies and strategies for industrial and commercial development as well as creation of industrial and trade development (URT, 2010). Above all, government standard regulations and laws have been formulated for the purpose of overseeing trade, and standard of products including the beverage products in Tanzania (Standard, 2010; URT, 2005). But, the role of distribution channels is still confined enough to beverage products. This is also evidenced by the Trade Act. Unfortunately, despite the importance of crucial role played by distribution channels in relation to the business, the role of distribution channels in the Procurement and Supply Chain of beverage products in Africa in general and Tanzania in particular is highly underperformed being viewed as a business delaying with the context of beverage commodities rather than business facilitators for the supply chain and trade.

Moreover, various studies (notably Guide *et al.*, 2014; Heng & House, 2016; Kregiel, 2015a; Santos *et al.*, 2018; Morogoro *et al.*, 2019; Subramani, 2018) have been undertaken regarding the beverage commodities; but these studies focused on the contribution to the distributors more than to other distribution channels role like retailers. Specifically, these studies explained the distribution efforts to the producers while that they ignored the whole efforts of wholesalers and retailers when they undertake the role of supply chain of beverage products to final consumers.

Owing to the above serious challenges, this study intends to assess the role of distribution channels in supply chain of beverage products with the view to establish as to why distribution channels fail to play their principle contribution of supporting supply chain of beverage products and what measures should be taken to improve the situation.

### **Objectives of this paper**

The objective of this paper was to examine the factors impeding the distribution channels in supply chain of beverage products in a bid to provide measures of improving the supply chain of beverage products. Specifically, this study ascertained impediments to distribution channels in the supply chain of beverage products and recommended measures for improving the same.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Factors impeding the distribution channels to transportation for beverage products**

Literature show that distribution channels are impeded by transportation problems when it comes to transport beverage products. Firstly, they are hampered by price increases for transportation facilities such as increases of fuel prices (Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016). The second problem in this aspect is poor application of transportation regulations as one of the major challenges of distributing to beverage products (Industry *et al.*, 2018). Closely related to this aspect is limited and nearly inadequate number of channel members specifically to facilitate transportation for beverage products (Industry *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, distribution channel is faced with shortage of vehicles designed to facilitate transportation and distribution of beverage commodities to ultimate customers (Distribution & Group, 2015). For example, few of them include but not limited to pick up and truck. Also transportation costs for beverage supplies become the problem to the distribution channels (Paper, 2013; Makweba *et al.*, 2005)

On top of that, there is limited and shortage of handling facilities within a truck in which the distribution channels opt to use manual handling for loading and unloading beverage commodities (Mangino *et al.*, 2018.) Furthermore, distribution channels is hampered by the lack of skills and knowledge related to fetch customers and public in general noting that, skills and knowledge helps to maintain customer relations with manufacturing companies (Articles, 2015; Manager & Development, 2016). On top of that, distribution channels are faced with lack of technology especially

technology related to arrangement of transportation and distribution for beverage commodities (Articles, 2015). For example, they lack the necessary tools for facilitating distribution and transportation of beverage supplies such as presence of outdated pallets within the trucks. Furthermore, distribution for beverage commodities is faced with shortages of carriers which can add transport facilities to the customers (Industry *et al.*, 2018). This shows that, a number of fleets for beverages supplies are missing to various categories of distribution channels (Makweba *et al.*, 2005; Industry *et al.*, 2018). Another factor is poor road network and connectivity especially during the raining season (Issa & Munishi, 2020). Subsequently, poor road infrastructure in the city hampers the performance of distribution channels to undertake critical role of beverage products.

#### **Factors impeding distribution channels to storage for beverage products**

One among the factors is unreliable electricity. For example, it does not only affect production processes but also products that depend on cold chain facilities (Santos *et al.*, 2018). Another factor is poor storage facilities as a result leads to products spoilage and may present health risks to traders and consumers. On the other side, distribution channels are affected by government regulations to ensure sufficient storage facilities and services; this could be affected by limited storage warehouses and depot when it comes to facilitate storage of beverage products (Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016). Closely related to this is lack of control over incoming and outgoing of beverage products after producing them from manufacturing industries and warehouses, this is perhaps affected by poor storage facilities (Jessop, 2012). For example, they are hampered by inadequate doors, alarm system, windows and walls when storing the products in the warehouses. In addition, lack of enough packaging materials for ensuring branding and labelling hinder the performance of distribution channels in the storage of beverage commodities (Morogoro *et al.*, 2019). Beyond that, unreliable power supply (electricity) leads to poor performance of distribution channels to complete supply chain for beverage products (Issa & Munishi, 2020)

#### **Factors impeding the distribution channels to marketing services for beverage products**

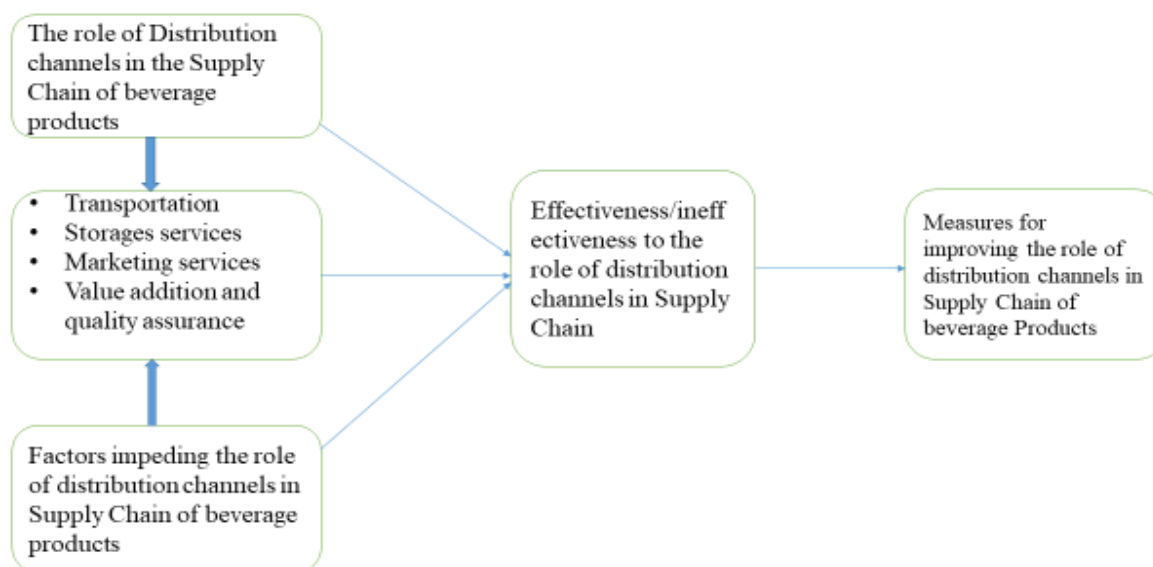
Another factor impeding the distribution channels is provision of marketing services for beverages related products. These include the factors associated with insufficient promotion strategies specifically to promote and advertise beverage commodities (Lehtinen *et al.*, 2016). Second, distribution channels are hampered by limited funds to afford promotion for beverage products since, products need high advertisement so as to display them to ultimate and potential customers (George & Iravo, 2014). Further, distribution channels are confronted by shortage of professionals characterized with lack of advocacy to ensure marketing services for beverage products (Mangino *et al.*, 2018). This aspect is also hampered by unreliable demand and supply of beverage products. This further shows that distribution channels are not sure and figure out order processing and promise from the potential customers in business supply chain (Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016). Closely related to this is lack of enough fund for the customers to afford to buy beverage products like juice and soda (Ackerley *et al.*, 2010).

#### **Factors impeding to value and quality for beverage products**

One among the factors impeding the distribution channels in beverage supply chain is unreliable value and quality. Firstly, distribution channels are hampered by inadequate customer satisfaction, an aspect that leads to poor quality of some beverage products such as water (Makweba *et al.*, 2005). Another factor is lack of enough capital to acquire the new technology for improving the new brand of beverage supplies (Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016; Kregiel, 2015a). Moreover, distribution channels are confronted by poor technology for processing and producing beverage products. This shows that manufacturing industries employ old technology to facilitate beverage production (Dalal & Bisht, 2019). Another factor is lack of skills and knowledge for ensuring product delivery and manufacturing. This indicates that majority of distribution channels particularly producers and distributors seem to have less awareness and skills which enable them to produce enough beverage products (Makweba *et al.*, 2005; Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016)

#### **Conceptual framework**

The problem at hand concerns the failure and inability of distribution channels to effectively play the role of Supply Chain of beverage products which included inability to adequately facilitate distribution and transportation (Industry *et al.*, 2018), inability to provide adequate storage facilities and services (Makweba *et al.*, 2005; Jessop, 2012), poor marketing services (Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016) as well as inadequate ensuring value addition and quality services for beverage products from the producing firms to customers (Makweba *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, to improve the role of distribution channels in Supply Chain of beverage product, it is imperative to examine factors impeding the role of distribution channels in Supply Chain of beverage products. It is expected that the reliable and valid data obtained from this assessment can help to improve the role of distribution channels in supply chain of beverage products. The conceptual framework for this research is presented in figure 2.1 below.



**Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework**

### Methodology

This research was carried out in Dar es Salaam city and specifically at Bakhresa Food Products Limited in which beverage products are easily accessible; making it simple for the author to get the right information on the factors impeding the distribution channels in supply chain of beverage products. This industry has the following divisions; Azam dairy products, Azam ice cream division, Azam water division, Azam juices division and Azam carbonates soft drink division. Moreover, Dar es Salaam is the largest city in Tanzania that borders the Indian Ocean on the East and the Coast Region on the other sides. It is comprised of four Municipal Councils, namely Kinondoni, Ilala, Temeke, Ubungu and Kigamboni. The region had a population of 4,364,541 according to the official 2012 census (MoF, 2013). This study adopted a qualitative approach owing to the importance of study and its ability to examine and deeply understand the factors impeding the distribution channels for the supply chain of beverage products. The approach made it possible to capture feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of various groups that were interviewed as formerly suggested by qualitative research experts (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2018; Hancock, 2006; Cresswell 2013). Purposive sampling was employed considering the respondents' experience and their ability to provide relevant information. The study employed a sample size of 50 respondents who included industrial officers, distributors, customers, wholesalers, retailers, transporters and suppliers of beverages supply from Bakhresa Food Products Company limited in Dar es Salaam. This number was picked infinite and rigorous due to lack of adequate sample framework from the field. This study also adopted case study design so as to facilitate a holistic perspective on causality because it treats the case as a specific area of qualitative design. On the one hand, the design therefore offers the possibility of investigating causal complexity where there are many relevant factors but few observations (Spinks & Canhoto, 2015; Rose *et al.*, 2015). Also, case study strategy helped the researcher to explore in-depth a program, organization, project, event, activity, process, and one or more individuals (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013; Suryani, 2013). Methods of data collection included documentary review, in-depth interviews with 50 industrial officers, distributors, customers, wholesalers, retailers, transporters and suppliers. The interviews lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. The respondents such as customers, transporters and suppliers wholesalers and retailers consisted of 6 to 7 participants of men and women aged around 23–45 years who were interviewed, hence interview picked 30 respondents. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) comprised of 5 to 10 respondents and it helped to capture perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of the distribution channels towards the role of factors impeding the distribution channels in the supply chain of beverage products. The FGD sessions were moderated by the two researchers, one played the role of chairman and the other one a recorder. The first group of about 7 respondents were customers, the second was retailers of about 6 respondents and industrial officers were 7 respondents from Bakhresa Food Products limited. Some of the documents reviewed by researchers included former relevant research reports, government reports, and website pages. Others were government policies and regulations such as trade act, National Bureau of Standards, License Act as well as the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction II.

Moreover, in-depth interviews were conducted with around 30 respondents including industrial officers, distributors, customers, wholesalers, retailers, transporters and suppliers. Before participating in the interviews, ethical consideration were made known to the informants based on the qualitative guidelines. It was noted that participants were free to engage and withdraw from the study at any time while their piece of information also were treated confidential. This method was particularly relevant given that it facilitated to get the right information on the impediments facing distribution channels. It also enabled the authors to re-structure the interview guide and questions as well as modify the repeated questions based on the respondents' knowledge, ideas, views and perceptions (Mikkelsen 2005). The interviews facilitated interaction between authors and respondents given that some of the respondents were too busy to deal with industrial operations while the other such as retailers sometimes lack the appropriate permanent office or place to store the questionnaires. Moreover, some of the respondents were in hurry in such a manner that they were not ready to fill in a questionnaire which made the authors to apply in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion. Owing to the qualitative approach applied in this study, the authors employed content analysis strategy to summarize, arrange, organize, interpret, analyse, and present the findings in relation to the main and specific objectives. The reports were generated based on the research objectives. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis was facilitated using MAXQDA 10 [VERBI Software, Marburg, Germany]. Data were grouped accordingly; codes were generated, leading to categories and themes.

Furthermore, the authors ensured reliability and validity of the findings when applying prolonged engagement with respondents especially the wholesalers and retailers. Triangulation was adopted in which more than one methods of data collection were used. Data were audited and checked to ensure that they were reliable and valid at Bakhresa Food Products Limited.

### **Findings and Discussion**

This section examines factors impeding the role of distribution channels in supply chain of beverages products which include four major roles; (1) facilitate transportation and distribution (2) provision of storage facilities and services (3) facilitating marketing services (4) value addition and quality improvement. This is in response to the foregoing sections which shows that increasingly distribution channels are incapable of successfully playing their role of beverages supply chain.

#### **Factors impeding the distribution channels to transportation for beverage products**

Findings show that several factors hinder the distribution channels from playing their role of facilitating beverages distribution and transportation. First was increase of transportation charges and prices as confirmed by 62% of the respondents, who affirmed that transportation facilities demand a lot of money that makes some distribution channels to use pick-ups or canters for facilitating distribution of the beverages products. Closely related to this, was the poor applied transportation rules and regulations as attested by over 46% of the respondents. They stated that, transportation and distribution regulations were to be considered but they ignore them when they distribute large quantities of cartons of beverage products like water to the potential customers. On top of that, distribution channels were confronted by limited and inadequate number of channel members who could help products transportation to reach the customers timely as attested by around 40% of the respondents. They further stated that, there were many distributors who were specifically were dealing with the daily consumed products such as water. One respondent said that:

*Beverages industries receive a lot of orders of mineral water compared to other products like Fursana, Azam Cola and juice. You can see that majority of distribution channels need water due to the fact that the business is in the market line at any time and place made it simple for the traders to order them frequently in a competitive trade (Male water trader (33), Bakhresa Food Products Limited)*

The transportation and distribution factors further complicated by the shortages of vehicles designed to facilitate distribution and transportation partly from producers to the customers who are in remote areas as attested by around 56% of the respondents. Closely related to above was limited and shortages of handling facilities within the vehicles as confirmed by around 54% of the respondents. This hardly demonstrated that vehicles lack the handling facilities such as pallets, handling truckers instead loading workers, load the products by hands when approaching to the customers and traders. This evidence was reported by one respondent below:

*Most of the vehicles are not well designed to facilitate beverage transportation and distribution, company and distribution members opt to facilitate the commodities by means of simple canter, pick-up, toyo and Fusso for easily*

*distribution and transportation of beverages commodities from production site to the customers point (Group discussion (6 members), Bakhresa Food Products Limited)*

Another factor that hampered transportation and distribution of beverages products was lack of technology as evidenced by 48% of the respondents. It was reported that distribution channels did not apply any technological devices or knowledge whereby manufacturing industries opted to use technology during the production. But when it came to distribution, vehicles lack necessary technological devices such as handling. On the other hand, lack of enough capital as reported by 39% of the retailers hampered the availability of new technological tools for loading and unloading of beverages commodities. This showed that distributors loaded and offloaded products manually taking lot of time. Not only that but also Fusso and canters were neither installed nor equipped with modern storage facilities such as deep freezers and refrigerators as confirmed by one of the respondents below:

*Sometimes our distributors use Fusso and canters, which do not have advanced loading and offloading tools as well as storage equipment. In this case, distributors use their efforts by loading and offloading the commodities by free hands which take lot of time when approached to traders and customers. This perhaps reduce the smooth flow of products to various customers in business supply chain (Male trader (32), Bakhresa Food Products Limited).*

On top of that, distribution channels were complicated by lack of skills and knowledge for fetching potential customers instead they were able to go to customers and community for advertising and promoting beverage products as further dilapidated by over 44% of the respondents.

**Table 4.1: Summary Impediments to Transportation and distribution of beverages**

Nature of impediment to transportation and distribution	Response	Frequency in %	Rank
<b>Increases transportation charges and prices</b>	31	62	1
<b>Poor applied transportation rule and regulations</b>	23	46	5
<b>Limited and inadequate number of channels members</b>	20	40	7
<b>Shortages of vehicles for distribution and transportation</b>	28	56	2
<b>Limited and shortages of handling facilities within the trucks</b>	27	54	3
<b>Lack of technology</b>	24	48	4
<b>Lack of skills and knowledge for fetching customers</b>	22	44	6
<b>Lack of enough capital</b>	20	39	8

Source: Field data, 2021

Therefore, it can be concluded that, the role of distribution channels in the distribution and transportation of beverages products was hindered by above factors as indicated in table 4.1 Most of these transportation and distribution factors correspond well with the existing literature as formerly ascertained by (Articles, 2015; Manager & Development, 2016; Paper, 2013; Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016; Industry *et al.*, 2018; Makweba *et al.*, 2005). However, the factor related to lack of enough capital to buy handling and storage tools has not been well captured in literature; may be it is because of the uniqueness of the beverages products to the distribution channels in Tanzania.

#### **Factors impeding the distribution channels to storage for beverage products**

It was revealed that the critical challenge to the distribution channels is storage services as it was complicated by unreliable power supply or electricity as attested by around 38% of the respondents. This showed that there is a frequent power cut-off making it difficult to ensure reliable and sufficient storage of beverages commodities. This led to lack of assurance of maintaining storage of products like Apple punch, Fursana, Azam energy and Azam cola. One respondent narrated hereunder:

*We have frequent power-cut off at the retail shops; it's now the normal situation because we experience this condition frequently. Consequently, power cut off jeopardizes the beverage trade leading to lack of cold products which are not much needed by customers (Male trader (38), Bakhresa Food Products Limited).*

Moreover, distribution channels were affected by poor and outdated storage facilities owing to the lack of fund to buy new ones as evidenced by 56% of the respondents. The respondents simply confirmed that, they used outdated refrigerators and freezers put with ice to facilitate storage. Also, beverage retailers were conversant with the use of freezers nearby the main roads or city which has been put with ice for ensuring cold storage facilities for beverages

like Apple punch, Fursana juice, Azam cola and Azam energy. This hardly showed that, lack of funds by retailers made it difficult for them to pay for electric services for their business. Furthermore, distribution channels were confronted by poor adopting government and municipal rules and regulations when undertaking their storage of beverages products as stated by majority of 46% of the respondents. One respondent said that:

*Sometimes it could not be easy to follow each and everything directed by the municipal council specifically to conduct business at the city centre. Apparently coming of President Magufuli everyone was free to conduct business to the place as he/she wanted to pay for 20,000/- to get business identity. By the way, you can store and cover your products as a temporary storage in order to open it again tomorrow and after tomorrow (Female Juice trader (34), Bakhresa Food Products Limited).*

Another factor was limited storage depot and warehouses as further dilapidated and confirmed by majority of the respondents of around 53%. They went further to say that, distribution channels particularly agents and wholesalers were hampered by absence and lack of central storage depot for facilitating storage and distribution. Moreover, it was found that warehousing facilities were located at the manufacturing industries and totally missing at the distribution channels. Closely related to above was lack of packaging materials specifically used to ensure the branding and labelling them as attested by majority of 62% of the respondents. They went further claiming that, packaging materials were produced and conducted by producers at the manufacturing industries. Whereby distribution channels required to inspect and ensure the appropriate number of packages and quantities of their products. One respondent reported below:

*People think that marketing channels like retailers, ordinary wholesalers and brokers maintained the packaging materials by themselves. They cannot be able to buy them because each industry has its own packaging facilities and design. Look, various marketing channels can request the products here or at any other company. You can ask yourself that! Is there any significance to provide packaging materials? (Male worker (36), Bakhresa Food Products Limited).*

Distribution channels were hampered by lack of knowledge and skills when it comes to store their products as confirmed by around 41% of the respondents. They further stated that, products such as juice, water and Azam cola were stored in one fridge. Therefore, summary of the factors hindering storage of beverage products is shown in the table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Summary factors hindering storage of beverage products**

Nature of impediments to storage facilities / services	Respon se	Frequency in %	Rank
Unreliable power supply	19	38	6
Poor and outdated storage facilities	28	56	2
Poor adopting of government & municipal rule and regulation	23	46	4
Limited storage depot and warehouses	27	53	3
Lack of packaging materials	31	62	1
Lack of knowledge and skills	21	41	5

Source: Field data, 2021

Concluding from the above table, it can be said that the role of distribution channels to storage services was complicated by poor and outdated storage facilities, poor adaptation of government and municipal rules and regulations, limited storage depots and warehouses as well as lack of packaging materials. These factors had been ascertained among the distribution channels as supported in the similar study by (Makweba *et al.*, 2005(; Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016; (Jessop, 2012). Specifically Jessop (2012) reported in this aspect that, distribution channels are hampered by poor storage facilities when it comes to store beverage supplies. For example, they are hampered by inadequate doors, alarm system, windows and walls when storing the products in the warehouses. This suggests that, this current study complements well with the existing literatures and theories about this particular subject matter. However, factors relating to lack of knowledge and skills has not been adequately stated in the reviewed literature searches in this aspect of storage. This could be among the unique contributions of this current work.

#### **Factors impeding the distribution channels to marketing services**

Findings revealed a number of factors impeding marketing services for beverage products were inadequate market services. One of them was related to insufficient promotion strategies for promoting beverage supplies as confirmed

by 42% of the respondents. They proved that distribution channels such as retailers were hampered by poor marketing knowledge to promote their beverage products to the public. This further indicated that promotion was performed by manufacturing company as evidenced by one respondent below:

*For the beverage products to grow and develop, manufacturing firms promote the products either by advertising them or through publicity. Promotion techniques help to build customers awareness, promote company trade name, increases the market shares as well as building the trust of the products in the mind of customers (Male distributor (38), Bakhresa Food Products Limited).*

Another factor was limited funds by the distribution channels like retailers to ensure marketing services as attested by 42% of the respondents. Owing to this, manufacturing company promotes the products by itself without the link of distribution channels. One respondent reported here under;

*Apparently, majority of distribution channels have limited funds to promote their business once after buying from the producers. In this case, producers insist promo tools to be used once after production completing from the production unit. On the other side, promotion techniques can be practiced so as to attract several customers to buy beverage products (Male trader (33), Bakhresa Food Products Limited).*

Another factor was absence of professionals characterized with advocacy by distribution channels as confirmed by around 44% of the respondents. It was found that, distribution channels have little knowledge and skills when it comes to sell the products to the traders and customers. Lack of advocacy forced them to use outdated marketing techniques such as putting and selling the products nearby same competitors of the same beverage products at the same business location in business supply chain. One respondent narrated hereunder:

*Some retailers and wholesalers of the beverage products pretend to sell their products at nearby or nearly the same location of the same competitors to the similar product line. Look at the city, you can find that retailers sell juices and water while their neighbours also sell the same of the other companies. This is a misfortune because traders, retailers and wholesalers ended up losing their income and customers (Male and Female retailers (29), (31), Bakhresa Food Products Limited).*

On top of that, marketing services were affected by unreliable demand and supply as reported by around 52% of the respondents. Further, it was found that demand and supply depend on existence of wholesalers than retailers, whereby to some other circumstance they depend on customer's preferences, purchasing power as well as income. For example, Azam cola and Azam energy were mostly used in Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Morogoro and the regions which are too hot compared to the areas with low temperature.

Beyond that, distribution channels were confronted with lack of enough fund by the customers to buy beverage products as evidenced by around 50% of the respondents. This was found that, lack of capital by the customers led the products to stay a lot of waiting time. Retailers and wholesalers of the beverage relied on the unavailability of order process or order call from the customers which lead the products to stay a long waiting time without purchasing by consumers. This hardly demonstrated that beverage supply chain particularly on marketing services is unjustifiable to various categories of distribution channels. Another factor was large number of beverage competitors in the city as confirmed by around 48% of the respondents. They stated that at the city, beverage commodities were produced by Bakhresa Food Products Limited, Mo enterprises and alike. Summary of factors impeding marketing services is summarized in table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Summary of factors hindering facilitating marketing services.**

Nature of factors hindering to facilitating marketing services	Response	Frequency %	Rank
Insufficient promotion strategies	21	42	6
Limited funds to afford promotion	21	42	6
Absence of professionals and lack of advocacy	22	44	5
Unreliable demand and supply of beverage products	26	52	2
Lack of enough fund by customers	25	50	3
Lack of frequent orders	28	56	1
Large number of competitors	24	48	4

**Source: Field data, 2021**

In a nut shell, therefore, factors hindering facilitating marketing services included insufficient promotion strategies, limited funds to afford promotion for beverage products, shortage of professional and lack of advocacy, unreliable demand and supply of beverage products, lack of enough fund by customers as well as lack of order frequently. These challenges correspond well with the existing literatures as formerly discussed by (Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016; George & Iravo, 2014; Makweba *et al.*, 2005). However, the findings observed through the study conducted by (Mangino *et al.*, 2018) was similar and correspond well to this current findings as it was found that shortage of professionals characterized with lack of advocacy to ensure marketing services for beverage products were the big challenges to the beverage supply chain. Specifically, lack of enough fund for the customers to afford to buy beverage products like juice and soda hampered the supply chain of beverages products in urban areas. Moreover, factors related to large number of competitors had not been captured through existing literatures, may be due to the seriousness of the respondents on the marketing services and efforts they take to sell their products to the customers. Subsequently, this is one of the new contributing factors and knowledge by this current finding.

**Factors impeding the distribution channels to value and quality for beverage products;**

Findings for this particular role ascertained that one of the factors to value addition and quality for the beverage products by the distribution channels was inadequate customer satisfaction as confirmed by around 44% of the respondents. They went further emphasizing that, their services such as product delivery to reach final consumers were not enough because customers bought products by coming to the office.

This role was further complicated by lack of enough capital to acquire the new technology for promoting products quality and brand instead that branding and quality were performed by manufacturing company as further attested by 54% of the respondents. They stated that, products brand may change time to time, year after year so as to cope with customer needs and market competition.

Closely related to that was poor technological processing to produce and process beverages products as attested by around 30% of the respondents. It was found that, some beverage companies adopted old technology to produce beverage products while the other were flexible to cope with new technological application in terms of equipment and machine to use. Closely related to the above was lack of skills and knowledge for ensuring products delivery and manufacturing by around 30% of the respondents. This included lack of skills related to the products manufactured, as well as mixing with raw materials or raw inputs. On the other side, lack of skills related to product packaging and putting the products within a package such as bottle were the critical factors that jeopardized the distribution channels.

Furthermore, inability to produce adequate packaging devices was another factor impeding the distribution channels such as retailers as attested by around 36% respondents. This showed that, packaging facilities were produced by company while they were absent to the distributional channels. Therefore, summary of the factors to value addition is shown in table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Summary of value addition & quality for beverage products**

<b>Nature of impediments to the value addition and quality improvement</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency %</b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b>Inadequate customer satisfaction</b>	22	44	2
<b>Lack of enough capital to acquire the new technology</b>	27	54	1
<b>Inability to produce packaging devices</b>	18	36	3
<b>Poor technological processing</b>	15	30	4
<b>Lack of skills and knowledge</b>	15	30	4

**Source: Field data, 2021**

Drawing from the above table, it is clear that factors hindering value addition and quality for beverage supply chain include inadequate customer satisfaction, lack of enough capital to acquire the new technology, poor technological processing as well as lack of skills and knowledge for products delivery and manufacturing. These particular factors correspond well with the works as formerly ascertained and shown by (Makweba *et al.*, 2005; Ruteri & Outsourcing, 2016). However, an interesting part of this discussion relates to the inadequate customer satisfaction and lack of enough capital to acquire the new technology. However, factors related to inability to produce packaging devices have not been well captured by available literature. Accordingly, this is one of the new knowledge contributions by this current research.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to examine the factors impeding the role of distribution channels in procurement and supply chain of beverage products and recommending factors for improving the role of distribution channels in this aspect. Findings show that factors impeding distribution and transportation of beverage products include; increased transportation charges and prices, poor applied transportation rule and regulations, limited and inadequate number of channels members, shortages of vehicles for distribution and transportation, limited and shortages of handling facilities within the trucks, lack of technology, lack of skills and knowledge for fetching customers and lack of enough capital. Secondly, impediments to provision of storage services was rotated to unreliable power supply, poor and outdated storage facilities, poor adaptation of government and municipal rule and regulation, limited storage depot and warehouses and lack of packaging materials. Thirdly, impediments to marketing services include; insufficient promotion strategies, limited funds to afford promotion for beverage products, shortage of professional and lack of advocacy, unreliable demand and supply of beverage products, lack of enough fund by customers and lack of order frequently. Finally, impediments to value addition and quality improvement was rotated to inadequate customer satisfaction, lack of enough capital to acquire the new technology, poor technological processing, and lack of skills and knowledge for products delivery.

### Recommendations

In order to alleviate the above mentioned impediments, the following recommendations should be taken into account; For alleviating the impediments to distribution channels in facilitating transportation of the beverage products, first of all we recommend advocacy, regulations and knowledge to be improved to ensure that distribution channels are adhered to in facilitating the distribution role. Responsible authorities such as LATRA in Tanzania should improve road infrastructure which include alternative roads in the city as well as fly over to halt the traffic jam in the urban centres. This will improve transportation of beverage products in Dar es Salaam.

Secondly, in order to improve storage facilities, government and other responsible authorities such as ministry of finance as well as commercial banks should provide soft loans and grants to the distribution channels in order to buy modern storage facilities such as modern refrigerators and freezers designed to store beverage commodities. Also, there must be reliable electric power supply that will ensure reliable cold storage more especially for beverage products as well as invest heavily on the modern storage technology.

Thirdly, in order to improve marketing services, distribution channels should be devised with innovative ways of ferrying the customers by adopting adequate promotion techniques such as using direct marketing, publicity, physical distribution or the possibility for ferrying them to the nearest and accessible home place, where they could be provided with the marketing information.

Then, in order to improve value addition and quality improvement for beverage products, distribution channels should be empowered financially to obtain enough capital for buying effective handling and storage facilities. This could be through enabling them to have access to soft loans by government and commercial banks. Moreover, distribution channels should be sensitized on the proper knowledge and skills for ensuring high value and quality of ensuring customers satisfaction. Also, the authorities responsible for quality assurance and value additions such as Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) and the Small Industries and Development Organisation (SIDO) should play their active role in ensuring quality assurance and standards of beverage products in Tanzania.

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