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Supplier Resource Dependence, Value Creation and Competitive Advantage: The moderating role of Supply Chain Collaboration and Strategic Alliance

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Abstract

Purpose: Value creation within supplier relationships is crucial for organizational success. Collaboration efforts between organizations and their suppliers contribute to the development of innovative products, streamlined processes, and overall operational excellence. Understanding the mechanisms through which value is created within these relationships is imperative for sustainable competitiveness.

Methodology: The research uses an explanatory design to examine the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. A quantitative research strategy was employed, collecting numerical data through structured questionnaires. A purposive sampling technique was employed in this study to select 400 respondents from the population of supply chain stakeholders in Ghana's alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage industry.

Findings: The findings of the study indicate that supplier resource dependency does not have an effect on competitive advantage. Supplier resource dependency significantly influences value creation. There is a statistically significant relationship between value creation and competitive advantage. Strategic alliances amplify the positive impact of value creation on competitive advantage. Supply chain collaboration significantly moderates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage. Value creation positively mediates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage. The findings provide robust theoretical evidence that supply chain collaboration moderates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study builds on resource dependency theory (RDT) by integrating collaborative practices as a moderating factor, showing how dependency can be leveraged for value co-creation and risk mitigation. The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the synergy between value creation and strategic alliances. This insight adds to the resource-based view (RBV) by demonstrating that alliances not only provide access to external resources but also enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of value creation processes. The study recommends that firms should prioritize building strong, long-term relationships. Organizations should invest in collaborative technologies such as integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and cloud. Organizations should formalize strategic alliances with suppliers, customers, and other key stakeholders.

Keywords: *Supplier resource dependence, Value creation, Competitive advantage, Supply Chain Collaboration, Strategic Alliance*

1.1 Introduction

In the increasingly globalized and competitive business environment, firms are heavily reliant on external resources for their survival and growth. The resource dependence theory (RDT) posits that organizations must acquire critical resources from their external environment to achieve their objectives. Supplier resource dependence highlights this dependency, particularly emphasizing the need for strategic supplier partnerships to secure resources efficiently. This reliance on suppliers has a profound impact on firm value creation and competitive advantage, as firms must navigate the complexities of managing resource constraints and supplier relationships effectively (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Yang et al., 2020). The dynamics of supplier resource dependence stem from the asymmetry in control over critical inputs, which can constrain a firm's strategic flexibility and operational efficiency. Firms that depend heavily on a limited number of suppliers are vulnerable to risks such as price fluctuations, supply disruptions, and opportunistic behavior. However, strategic management of these dependencies can lead to significant value creation. By fostering long-term supplier relationships, firms can benefit from improved supply reliability, cost efficiencies, and access to innovative solutions (Zhao et al., 2019). Moreover, leveraging supplier relationships as a strategic asset enables firms to co-create value by integrating supplier expertise into product development and operational processes. For instance, firms engaged in close collaboration with suppliers often experience enhanced product quality, reduced time-to-market, and greater alignment of goals, all of which contribute to superior value creation (Ramsay et al., 2020).

Competitive advantage is increasingly derived from firms' ability to harness external resources effectively, particularly through strategic supplier partnerships. Firms that manage supplier dependencies with robust strategies tend to outperform competitors by achieving cost leadership, differentiation, or a mix of both. This stems from the synergies created when suppliers contribute specialized capabilities that complement the firm's internal strengths (Barney, 1991; Wu & Wu, 2021). However, supplier dependence also requires firms to navigate power dynamics and negotiate favorable terms. Firms that excel in managing supplier relations often develop capabilities in risk mitigation, flexibility, and innovation adoption, which collectively enhance their competitive position in the market (Kim et al., 2022). Supply chain collaboration has emerged as a critical factor in mitigating the risks associated with supplier dependence. Effective collaboration enables firms to achieve better alignment of objectives, share critical information, and foster joint problem-solving, all of which strengthen the resilience and agility of the supply chain. Studies show that collaborative supply chains are better equipped to manage resource dependencies while maintaining high levels of efficiency and performance (Cao et al., 2021). Collaboration also facilitates trust and transparency, reducing the likelihood of opportunistic behavior by suppliers. This ensures that resource constraints are managed strategically, enhancing the firm's ability to leverage supplier relationships for competitive advantage (Gunasekaran et al., 2020).

Strategic alliances further strengthen the link between supplier resource dependence, value creation, and competitive advantage. By entering into alliances, firms can pool resources, share risks, and access new markets, thus reducing the vulnerabilities associated with dependence on a few suppliers. Strategic alliances also create opportunities for knowledge sharing and technological innovation, which are pivotal for sustaining competitive advantage in dynamic markets (Li et al., 2023). Research indicates that firms engaged in strategic alliances often experience improved resource access and operational efficiencies, leading to enhanced firm value. Additionally, alliances can shift the power dynamics in supplier relationships, allowing firms to negotiate more equitable terms and reduce dependence-related risks (Huo et al., 2022). The study of supplier resource dependence, firm value creation, and competitive advantage is particularly relevant in the context of modern supply chain practices characterized by globalization, technological advancements, and environmental uncertainties. Firms are increasingly recognizing the importance of supply chain collaboration and strategic alliances in addressing challenges such as resource scarcity, market volatility, and sustainability concerns. By integrating these moderating mechanisms, firms can better manage supplier relationships, create sustainable value, and maintain a competitive edge in the market (Tang et al., 2021). This study addresses the critical interplay between supplier resource dependence, firm value creation, and competitive advantage, emphasizing the transformative role of supply chain collaboration and strategic alliances. By exploring these relationships, the study seeks to contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of resource management in supply chains.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the contemporary global business environment, firms increasingly rely on external suppliers for critical resources, intensifying the implications of supplier resource dependence (SRD) on organizational outcomes. Resource dependence theory underscores that organizations must manage external dependencies to achieve strategic objectives and mitigate risks (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). However, excessive dependence on suppliers can create vulnerabilities such as resource constraints, higher bargaining power for suppliers, and supply chain disruptions, which threaten firm value creation and competitive advantage (Kim et al., 2022). Despite the growing significance of SRD in supply chain management, firms struggle to identify effective mechanisms to manage these dependencies while optimizing their operational and strategic outcomes. This raises a fundamental challenge: how can firms effectively navigate supplier dependencies to sustain value creation and gain a competitive edge? Emerging evidence suggests that supply chain collaboration and strategic alliances can play transformative roles in mitigating the negative consequences of SRD. Collaborative supply chain practices, such as joint problem-solving, shared information systems, and synchronized planning, have been shown to enhance trust and reduce power asymmetries, thereby fostering a more equitable and efficient exchange of resources (Cao et al., 2021). Similarly, strategic alliances enable firms to pool resources, share risks, and access complementary capabilities, creating opportunities for innovation and market expansion (Li et al.,

2023). Despite the promising potential of these moderating mechanisms, their adoption remains inconsistent across industries. Many firms fail to integrate collaboration and alliances into their supply chain strategies, limiting their ability to manage SRD effectively. While existing research provides valuable insights into SRD and its implications, there remains a significant gap in understanding the mechanisms through which firms can convert SRD into strategic opportunities. Specifically, limited attention has been given to the interplay between SRD, supply chain collaboration, and strategic alliances in the context of value creation and competitive advantage. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the moderating effects of supply chain collaboration and strategic alliances, providing a nuanced understanding of how firms can optimize supplier relationships for long-term success.

2. Relationship between supplier resource dependence and competitive advantage

A positive relationship can emerge when supplier resource dependence enables efficiency gains and cost reductions. Leveraging suppliers for economies of scale, process improvements, or cost-sharing arrangements can positively impact a firm's cost competitiveness. Strategically managing supplier resource dependence can result in efficiency gains, cost reduction, and improved competitiveness through a more streamlined and collaborative supply chain (Hippold, 2020). Forming strategic alliances with suppliers, even if it involves a level of dependence, can lead to capability enhancement. The collaboration may strengthen a firm's capabilities, contributing to a positive relationship with competitive advantage. Strategic alliances with suppliers, driven by a recognition of resource interdependence, can enhance a firm's capabilities and contribute positively to its competitive advantage (Kenton, 2024). An over-reliance on specific suppliers may create vulnerability to supply chain disruptions. This negative aspect of supplier resource dependence can have adverse effects on a firm's competitive advantage if it leads to interruptions in the supply of critical inputs. High levels of supplier resource dependence, without proper risk mitigation strategies, can expose firms to the risk of supply chain disruptions, negatively impacting their competitive advantage (Katsaliaki, Galetsi and Kumar, 2021). Hence this study proposes that:

H1: supplier resource dependence has a negative relationship with competitive advantage.

2.1 Relationship between supplier resource dependence and value creation

When a firm is dependent on its suppliers for key resources, it fosters a collaborative relationship between the two parties. This collaboration often leads to better coordination, information sharing, and joint problem-solving efforts. As a result, firms can identify opportunities for innovation and process improvement, ultimately leading to value creation (Frazier, 2017). Supplier resource dependence encourages firms to specialize in their core competencies while relying on suppliers for complementary resources and expertise. This specialization allows firms to focus their efforts on areas where they can create the most value, leading to increased efficiency and productivity (Lamming, 2016). Dependence on suppliers can also mitigate risks associated with supply chain disruptions. By developing strong relationships with suppliers, firms can better anticipate and

respond to potential disruptions, ensuring continuity in operations. This resilience contributes to value creation by minimizing downtime and maintaining customer satisfaction (Sarkis, 2015). Supplier resource dependence can result in cost savings through economies of scale and scope. By consolidating purchases and leveraging their dependence on suppliers, firms can negotiate better prices and terms, reducing their overall procurement costs. These cost savings can then be passed on to customers or reinvested in value-adding activities (Cao et al., 2017). Based on the arguments raised, it is hypothesized that:

H2: supplier resource dependence has a positive relationship with value creation.

2.2 Relationship between value creation and competitive advantage

Supplier resource dependence, characterized by a company's reliance on its suppliers for critical resources, can foster value creation through various mechanisms, contributing to competitive advantage and organizational performance. Recent research has shed light on the positive relationship between supplier resource dependence and value creation. One key mechanism through which supplier resource dependence enhances value creation is through collaborative innovation and knowledge sharing. As highlighted by Kim and Min (2019), close relationships with suppliers enable companies to access external knowledge, expertise, and resources, fostering innovation and product development. By leveraging the capabilities of their suppliers, companies can introduce new products or improve existing ones, thereby creating value for customers and gaining a competitive edge in the market. Moreover, supplier resource dependence can lead to operational efficiencies and cost savings, contributing to value creation. Research by Klassen and Vereecke (2018) emphasizes the importance of supplier integration and collaboration in achieving supply chain efficiency. When companies depend on their suppliers for crucial resources, they are incentivized to work closely together to streamline processes, reduce waste, and optimize supply chain performance. This collaboration can result in cost reductions, improved quality, and faster time-to-market, all of which enhance value creation for the company and its stakeholders. Companies that strategically manage their supplier relationships and leverage external resources effectively are well-positioned to create value for their customers and stakeholders, driving sustainable growth and success. This study proposes that:

H3: value creation has a positive relationship with a competitive advantage.

2.3 Mediating effect of value creation on the relationship between supplier resource dependence and competitive advantage

Supplier resource dependence, characterized by a company's reliance on its suppliers for crucial inputs, can significantly impact its competitive advantage. However, the extent to which supplier resource dependence directly translates into competitive advantage is contingent upon the value created through these supplier relationships. Value creation acts as a mediator in this relationship by transforming the resources obtained from suppliers into competitive advantages. As emphasized

by Zhao et al. (2020), value creation mechanisms such as innovation, operational efficiencies, and supply chain resilience are essential for leveraging supplier resources effectively and gaining a competitive edge. For example, close collaboration with suppliers can facilitate co-innovation and the development of unique products or services that differentiate the company from competitors. This innovation-driven value creation enhances the company's ability to meet customer needs and preferences more effectively, thereby strengthening its competitive advantage (Bouncken et al., 2022). Resource dependency theory posits that organizations depend on external resources, such as suppliers, to fulfill their needs and achieve their goals (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Supplier resource dependence, therefore, refers to the extent to which a company relies on its suppliers for critical inputs. This dependence can influence the company's competitive advantage by shaping its access to resources and capabilities necessary for success. Value creation plays a pivotal role in mediating the relationship between supplier resource dependence and competitive advantage within the resource dependency framework. Based on the issues raised, it is proposing that:

H4: value creation positively mediates the relationship between supplier resource dependence and competitive advantage.

2.4 Moderating effect of supply chain collaboration on the relationship between supplier resource dependence and value creation

Supply chain collaboration plays a crucial role in moderating the relationship between supplier resource dependence and value creation, offering opportunities for companies to leverage their dependence on suppliers to enhance value creation processes. While high levels of dependence can pose risks, supply chain collaboration offers a strategic avenue for maximizing the benefits derived from supplier relationships and enhancing value creation. Supply chain collaboration fosters closer relationships between companies and their suppliers, facilitating information sharing, joint problem-solving, and coordinated decision-making (Tachizawa & Gimenez, 2020). Through collaborative initiatives such as joint product development, process improvement projects, or shared risk management strategies, companies can harness the resources and expertise of their suppliers to create greater value for customers. One way in which supply chain collaboration moderates the relationship between supplier resource dependence and value creation is by facilitating innovation. Collaborative relationships enable companies to tap into the knowledge and capabilities of their suppliers, leading to the co-creation of innovative products, services, or processes (Soni et al., 2021). By leveraging the complementary strengths of both parties, companies can introduce novel solutions that meet customer needs more effectively, driving value creation. Companies that engage in collaborative partnerships with their suppliers are better positioned to leverage their dependence on suppliers to create greater value for customers and stakeholders, driving competitive advantage and long-term success. This study proposes that:

H5: supply chain collaboration positively moderates the relationship between supplier resource dependence and value creation

2.5 Moderating effect of strategic alliance on the relationship between value creation and competitive advantage

Strategic alliances provide companies with access to additional resources, capabilities, and markets, which can enhance their ability to create value and differentiate themselves in the marketplace. One way in which strategic alliances moderate the relationship between value creation and competitive advantage is by enabling companies to leverage complementary strengths and resources. By forming alliances with partners possessing unique capabilities or market access, companies can enhance their value creation potential and gain a competitive edge (Park & Ungson, 2018). For example, a technology company may form a strategic alliance with a research institution to access cutting-edge R&D capabilities, leading to the development of innovative products that differentiate it from competitors. The resource-based view (RBV) offers a theoretical lens through which to understand how strategic alliances moderate the relationship between value creation and competitive advantage. According to the RBV, a firm's competitive advantage stems from its unique bundle of resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Strategic alliances provide firms with access to additional resources and capabilities, thereby enhancing their competitive position through value creation. Strategic alliances serve as a mechanism for firms to access and leverage external resources and capabilities that complement their existing strengths, thereby enhancing value creation. This aligns with the RBV's premise that competitive advantage arises from the strategic deployment of valuable resources (Peteraf, 1993). By forming alliances with partners possessing complementary assets or expertise, firms can combine their resources to create synergies that enhance value creation and competitive advantage. This study proposes that:

H6: strategic alliance positively moderates the relationship between value creation and competitive advantage.

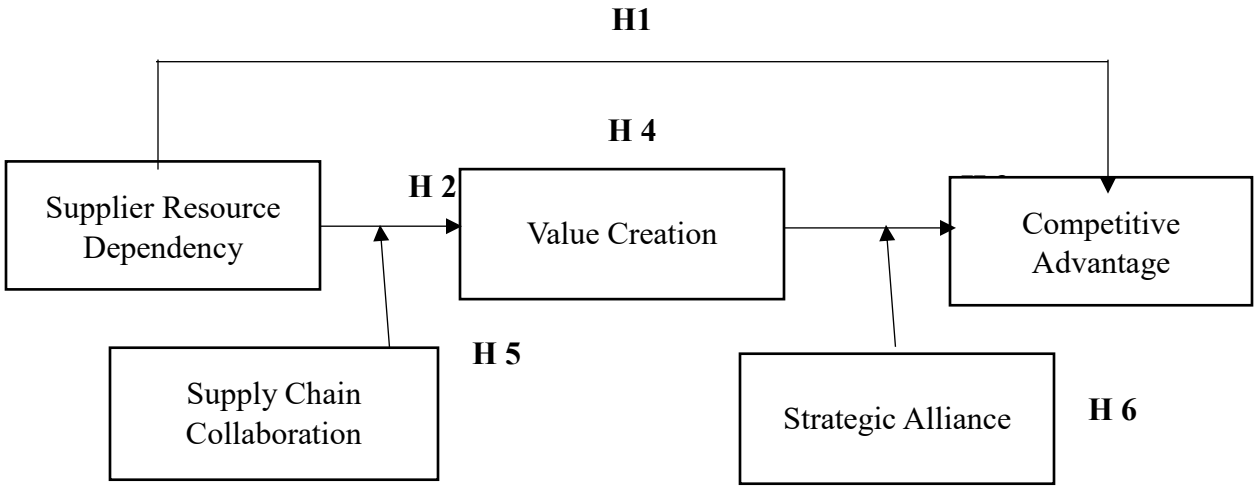

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework for the Study, Source: Researcher's Own Construct, 2023

2.6 Resource Dependence Theory

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), developed by Pfeffer and Salancik in 1978, posits that organizations depend on external resources to survive and thrive (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Over the years, scholars have expanded and refined this theory, exploring its applicability across various organizational contexts. In their study, Jones and Hillman (2018) examined how firms' strategic decisions are influenced by their dependence on external resources. They found that firms with high resource dependence are more likely to engage in strategic alliances to mitigate risks associated with dependence (Jones & Hillman, 2018). In a more recent work, Chen et al. (2020) investigated the role of resource dependence in shaping organizations' innovation strategies. They argued that organizations facing high resource dependence may prioritize incremental innovation to maximize resource efficiency, while those with lower dependence may pursue more radical innovation to gain a competitive edge (Chen et al., 2020). Furthermore, Li and Qian (2019) explored the relationship between resource dependence and organizational performance in the context of emerging economies. Their findings suggested that resource dependence negatively affects organizational performance in the short term, but firms can enhance performance through effective resource management strategies (Li & Qian, 2019). Additionally, Zhang and Li (2023) conducted a meta-analysis to synthesize findings from various studies on resource dependence in the healthcare sector. They highlighted the importance of understanding resource dependencies in healthcare organizations to improve resource allocation and enhance patient care (Zhang & Li, 2023).

RDT posits that organizations depend on external resources such as capital, technology, information, and legitimacy to achieve their goals (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). This dependency shapes organizational behavior and decision-making processes. RDT emphasizes the importance of interorganizational relationships in managing resource dependencies. Organizations form alliances, partnerships, and networks to access critical resources and reduce dependency risks (Jones & Hillman, 2018). Power plays a crucial role in resource dependence relationships. Organizations with greater access to resources wield power over those dependent on them, influencing resource allocation and strategic decisions (Li & Qian, 2019). RDT suggests that organizations employ various strategies to manage resource dependencies. These strategies include diversification, vertical integration, outsourcing, and strategic alliances, aimed at reducing vulnerability and enhancing resource access (Chen et al., 2020). RDT acknowledges the dynamic and uncertain nature of organizational environments. Organizations must adapt to changing external conditions and manage their dependencies amidst uncertainty to ensure survival and success (Zhang & Li, 2023).

2.7 Resource-Based Theory

Resource-Based Theory (RBT) is a foundational framework in strategic management that focuses on how organizations achieve sustainable competitive advantage through the effective

management of their unique resources and capabilities. Resource Heterogeneity: RBT posits that resources vary across firms in terms of their type, quantity, and quality (Barney, 1991). Sustainable competitive advantage arises from possessing resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). Resource Immobility: Resources that are difficult to replicate or transfer to other firms confer a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). This immobility can result from factors such as unique historical conditions, complex organizational structures, or tacit knowledge. Dynamic Capabilities: RBT emphasizes the importance of dynamic capabilities, which enable firms to adapt and renew their resource base in response to changing market conditions (Teece et al., 1997). Dynamic capabilities include the ability to innovate, learn, and reconfigure resources to seize new opportunities. Resource-Based View and Innovation: Scholars have explored the relationship between RBT and innovation, highlighting how firms leverage their unique resources and capabilities to drive innovation (Gomes et al., 2016). Research has examined the role of dynamic capabilities in fostering innovation and the impact of resource recombination on breakthrough innovations. Resource Heterogeneity and Firm Performance: Studies have investigated the link between resource heterogeneity and firm performance across various industries and contexts (Hitt et al., 2012). Research findings suggest that firms with valuable, rare, and inimitable resources tend to outperform their competitors over the long term. Resource Orchestration and Value Creation: Recent research has focused on resource orchestration strategies, which involve leveraging complementary resources and capabilities to create value (Peteraf et al., 2013). Scholars have examined how firms orchestrate their resource portfolios to enhance competitiveness and sustain superior performance. Resource-Based Theory continues to be a central framework for understanding how organizations achieve competitive advantage through their unique resources and capabilities. The literature reviewed highlights the enduring relevance of RBT principles in explaining firm performance, innovation, and value creation. Continued research and application of RBT principles are essential for guiding strategic decision-making and fostering sustainable competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving business environment.

3. Methodology

The research uses an explanatory design to examine the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. An explanatory research design is often employed in studies aiming to understand "how" and "why" specific phenomena occur. This aligns with the study's objective to explore how supplier resource dependence influences firm value creation and competitive advantage and why supply chain collaboration and strategic alliances might moderate these relationships. A quantitative research strategy was employed, collecting numerical data through structured questionnaires. The quantitative strategy is justified as it aligns with the study's positivist philosophy, which prioritizes measurable outcomes and hypothesis testing. It enables a structured investigation of the proposed relationships while minimizing researcher bias, ensuring the objectivity and validity of findings (Bryman, 2016). A deductive approach was adopted, starting

with theory development and hypothesis formulation based on existing literature, followed by empirical testing. Deductive reasoning aligns with the positivist philosophy, as it focuses on testing predefined hypotheses (Trochim et al., 2016). The deductive approach, rooted in scientific reasoning, begins with a general theory or hypothesis and proceeds to test its validity through specific observations and data. This methodology moves from the general to the specific, making it a highly structured and logical way of conducting research (Bryman, 2016). In essence, the deductive approach emphasizes testing pre-established hypotheses derived from theoretical frameworks. In this process, researchers first identify a broad theory or model to guide their investigation. From this, they formulate hypotheses statements that predict outcomes based on the theory. These hypotheses are then tested using empirical data, allowing researchers to confirm or refute the initial theoretical assumptions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

4.Results and Discussions

Table 4.1 Reliability and Validity Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.950
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	18348.340
	df	903
	Sig.	.000

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Supplier Resource Dependence	.866	4
Value Creation	.958	12
Competitive Advantage	.871	7
Supply Chain Collaboration	.958	12
Strategic Alliance	.928	8

The KMO value of 0.950 indicates excellent sampling adequacy. According to Kaiser (1974), KMO values above 0.90 are considered "marvelous," suggesting that the data is suitable for factor analysis and the variables are highly interrelated, providing a robust foundation for the study. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity result shows an approximate chi-square value of 18,348.340 with 903 degrees of freedom and a significant p-value (.000). The reliability results for each construct indicate internal consistency, measured by Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 4.2 Composite Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Construct	CR	AVE	DV
Supplier Resource Dependence	0.904	0.704	0.839
Value Creation	0.948	0.605	0.778
Competitive Advantage	0.929	0.520	0.721
Supply Chain Collaboration	0.923	0.622	0.789
Strategic Alliance	0.705	0.661	0.813

Table 4.2.1 Items factor Loadings

Loadings	Loadings	Loadings	Loadings	Loadings
SRD1 .894	VC1 .759	CA1 .720	SCC1 .746	SA1 .790
SRD2 .915	VC2 .761	CA2 .751	SCC2 .733	SA2 .811
SRD3 .811	VC3 .757	CA3 .689	SCC3 .777	SA3 .949
SRD4 .722	VC4 .736	CA4 .726	SCC4 .780	SA4 .766
	VC5 .749	CA5 .687	SCC5 .761	SA5 .705
	VC6 .811	CA6 .714	SCC6 .767	SA6 .893
	VC7 .815	CA7 .759	SCC7 .816	SA7 .700
	VC8 .806		SCC8 .847	SA8 .859
	VC9 .788		SCC9 .864	
	VC10 .772		SCC10 .746	
	VC11 .824		SCC11 .781	
	VC12 .750		SCC12 .832	

Composite Reliability (CR) values measure the internal consistency of constructs. A threshold of 0.7 or higher is commonly recommended. All constructs have CR values above 0.7, indicating strong reliability. AVE measures the degree to which a construct explains the variance of its indicators. An AVE value of 0.5 or higher indicates adequate convergent validity. All constructs exceed the 0.5 threshold, confirming that their indicators share a high degree of common variance. Discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE (represented as DV values)

is greater than the inter-construct correlations. The DV values for all constructs are above the recommended threshold of 0.7, confirming good discriminant validity. All constructs meet the reliability threshold with CR values above 0.7, ensuring internal consistency across the items. The AVE values indicate that the items within each construct sufficiently converge to measure the underlying concept. The DV values confirm that the constructs are distinct from each other, minimizing concerns about multicollinearity. The constructs are well-defined, reliable, and valid, supporting their suitability for inclusion in advanced statistical analyses, such as structural equation modeling (SEM). Tables 4.2 and 4.2.1 collectively confirm that the measurement model is robust, with strong evidence of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. These results provide a solid foundation for testing hypothesized relationships in the conceptual framework.

Table 4.3 Total Variance Explained

Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
20.919	48.648	48.648	20.919	48.648	48.648
6.191	14.397	63.045	6.191	14.397	63.045
1.541	3.584	66.629	1.541	3.584	66.629
1.344	3.125	69.754	1.344	3.125	69.754
1.131	2.630	72.384	1.131	2.630	72.384

The table presents the rotated component matrix from a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation, where five components were extracted. This method identifies the factor loadings of various items on each component, illustrating how well each item aligns with the latent constructs. Common Method Bias (CMB) arises when variance in the data is attributed primarily to the measurement method rather than the constructs being measured. It can compromise the validity of research findings, especially in self-reported data. Harman's single-factor test is commonly used to evaluate CMB by examining whether a single factor accounts for a disproportionate amount of variance. The first factor explains 48.648% of the total variance. The cumulative variance explained by the first five factors is 72.384%. After extraction, the first factor still explains 48.648% of the variance, with the cumulative variance for the extracted factors unchanged. Harman's single-factor test suggests that CMB is present if a single factor explains >50% of the total variance. In this case, the first factor explains 48.648%, which is slightly below the threshold, indicating minimal likelihood of severe CMB. Multiple factors (five) collectively explain 72.384% of the variance, showing that variance is distributed across distinct constructs rather than dominated by a single factor. Since no single factor dominates the variance, and multiple factors account for the data structure, the influence of common method bias is not a significant concern in this study.

Table 4.4 Model Fit Indices for the measurement model

Model Fit Indices	Values
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	.970
Normal Fit Index (NFI)	.969
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.980
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	.950
Adjusted Goodness of Fit (AGFI)	.889
Root mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.009
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.980
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	.922

Evaluating the goodness of fit of a measurement model is crucial to ensure its suitability for representing the data. Table 4.5presents multiple fit indices, reflecting the robustness of the model. Below is an in-depth discussion of each metric, supported by relevant literature. The GFI measures the proportion of variance explained by the estimated covariance. A value above 0.90 is considered acceptable, while values near 1 are indicative of excellent fit (Byrne, 2016). The GFI of 0.970 confirms the model adequately fits the data. The NFI compares the hypothesized model to a null or baseline model. Values above 0.90 indicate a good fit, with higher values suggesting superior performance (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The reported value of 0.969 demonstrates a strong fit for the data. The CFI accounts for sample size, addressing limitations of other indices. A CFI of 0.980 surpasses the threshold of 0.95, indicating excellent model fit (Bentler, 1990). The TLI balances the model's fit and complexity. Values above 0.95 indicate an excellent fit (Hair et al., 2020). The TLI value of 0.950 meets this criterion, suggesting the model is well-structured without overfitting. The AGFI adjusts the GFI to penalize model complexity. The threshold for acceptability is typically ≥0.90, but 0.88–0.89 is sometimes regarded as marginally acceptable, particularly when other indices are strong (Hooper et al., 2008). The value of 0.889 suggests slight room for improvement. The RMSEA evaluates the extent to which the model approximates the data, with lower values indicating better fit. A value ≤0.08 is acceptable, and ≤0.05 is ideal. The reported value of 0.009 reflects an almost perfect fit, strongly supporting the model's validity (MacCallum et al., 1996). The IFI compares the model to a null model, rewarding parsimony and high fit. The value of 0.980 surpasses the threshold of 0.90, confirming strong model performance (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The RFI adjusts for model complexity, with values above 0.90 signifying a good fit (Bollen, 1989). The reported value of 0.922 supports the adequacy of the model. The measurement model demonstrates excellent fit across multiple indices (GFI, NFI, CFI, TLI, IFI, RFI), with all exceeding recommended thresholds. Notably, the RMSEA value of 0.009 indicates an almost perfect fit. Although the AGFI is slightly below the ideal threshold, its marginal deviation is unlikely to detract from the overall model quality given the strength of the other metrics. The model's fit indices strongly suggest that the measurement model is a reliable and valid

representation of the data, with only minor limitations. The excellent RMSEA and high CFI, IFI, and GFI values further confirm its suitability for hypothesis testing and interpretation.

Table 4.5 Hypothesis Testing and Findings

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	T	p	Remarks
H1	SRD - - > CA	.118	1.195	.232	Not Supported
H2	SRD - - > VC	.049	15.187	.000	Supported
H3	VC - - > CA	.153	6.496	.000	Supported
H4	SCC*SRD - - >VC	.037	3.649	.000	Supported
H5	SA* VC - - > CA	.030	5.199	.000	Supported
H6	VC - - > SRD - - > CA	.049	14.904	.000	Supported

4.2 Discussion of Results

The relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage is not statistically significant. This suggests that supplier resource dependency alone does not have a direct impact on competitive advantage. Supplier resource dependency arises when firms rely on critical resources or capabilities controlled by suppliers, aligning with Resource Dependence Theory (RDT). While dependency may initially seem beneficial for resource acquisition, it can also result in vulnerabilities, such as reduced negotiation power, supply disruptions, and overreliance on a single source (Prajogo et al., 2019). These vulnerabilities can negate the potential for sustained competitive advantage if dependency limits a firm's strategic flexibility or increases costs. Moreover, competitive advantage stems from unique, inimitable capabilities, often requiring proactive supplier collaboration rather than dependency. Firms overly dependent on suppliers may lack the leverage to foster innovation or co-create value, thereby undermining their ability to differentiate in the market (Chen et al., 2020). Conversely, balanced partnerships that avoid excessive reliance often prove more conducive to competitive positioning.

The findings of the study indicate that supplier resource dependency significantly influences value creation. This finding suggests that the more dependent a firm is on suppliers, the greater the potential for value creation in the supply chain. Supplier resource dependency significantly influences value creation, as it facilitates access to critical resources and capabilities essential for enhancing organizational efficiency and innovation. Rooted in Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), this relationship underscores the importance of external resource acquisition in addressing internal resource gaps, thereby driving competitive outcomes. When firms depend on suppliers for unique and scarce resources, they gain access to specialized inputs, knowledge, or technologies that might be unavailable internally. This access enhances their ability to create differentiated products and services, contributing to value creation (Chen et al., 2020). For instance, dependency on suppliers with advanced technological capabilities allows firms to innovate and meet evolving customer demands, translating into improved market positioning and operational performance.

The effect of value creation on competitive advantage is statistically significant, indicating that value creation is a strong driver in sustaining and enhancing competitive advantage. Value creation is a critical determinant of competitive advantage, as it enables firms to deliver superior benefits to customers while differentiating themselves from competitors. The statistically significant relationship between value creation and competitive advantage stems from the ability of firms to leverage unique capabilities and resources to meet customer needs effectively and sustainably. Value creation directly contributes to competitive advantage by enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Firms that deliver high-quality products, innovative solutions, or superior services create value that aligns with customer preferences, which strengthens brand equity and market positioning (Porter & Heppelmann, 2020). This differentiation allows firms to command premium pricing, attract new customers, and achieve sustainable growth.

The findings clearly show that strategic alliance enhances the positive effects of value creation on competitive advantage, emphasizing the importance of external partnerships in leveraging value creation. Strategic alliances amplify the positive impact of value creation on competitive advantage by fostering collaboration, leveraging complementary strengths, and enabling resource sharing between firms. By pooling resources, knowledge, and capabilities, strategic alliances enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of value creation processes, driving sustainable competitive advantage. One of the primary ways strategic alliances enhance value creation is by fostering innovation. Partnering firms often combine their expertise to develop new products, processes, or technologies that meet customer needs more effectively. This co-innovation results in unique value propositions that competitors find challenging to replicate, thereby strengthening competitive advantage (Chen et al., 2020). For instance, alliances between technology firms and manufacturers often lead to advanced product designs that capture market share.

The findings clearly show that supply chain collaboration moderates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage. Supply chain collaboration significantly moderates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage by transforming dependency into a strategic asset. When firms collaborate effectively with suppliers, they can mitigate the risks associated with resource dependency while amplifying its benefits, thus fostering a stronger competitive position. Supplier resource dependency often arises when firms rely on critical resources or capabilities controlled by suppliers. While such dependency can provide access to valuable inputs, it may also lead to vulnerabilities, such as power imbalances and reduced flexibility. Supply chain collaboration, characterized by shared goals, open communication, and joint problem-solving, helps mitigate these risks by fostering trust and alignment between partners (Chen et al., 2020). Through collaboration, firms can build stronger relationships with suppliers, ensuring that resource dependencies are managed constructively.

The mediation analysis investigates how value creation serves as an intermediary in the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive. The results indicate that value

creation mediates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage. This indicates that supplier resource dependency indirectly influences competitive advantage through its effect on value creation, which is consistent with previous research highlighting the role of value creation in enhancing competitive advantage. Value creation acts as a mediator between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage by transforming dependency into opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and differentiation. Firms relying on suppliers for critical resources can leverage these dependencies to create value, which, in turn, strengthens their competitive position. Supplier resource dependency provides firms access to unique inputs, technologies, or expertise that are essential for producing high-quality products or services. However, the benefits of this dependency are not automatically realized. Value creation serves as the mechanism through which firms transform supplier resources into offerings that satisfy customer needs, enhance satisfaction, and build brand loyalty (Chen et al., 2020). For instance, suppliers with advanced technological capabilities enable firms to innovate, creating value that distinguishes them from competitors.

5. Theoretical Implication

. The study builds on resource dependency theory (RDT) by integrating collaborative practices as a moderating factor, showing how dependency can be leveraged for value co-creation and risk mitigation. The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the synergy between value creation and strategic alliances. It posits that strategic alliances amplify the positive effects of value creation on competitive advantage by fostering access to complementary resources, technologies, and markets. This insight adds to the resource-based view (RBV) by demonstrating that alliances not only provide access to external resources but also enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of value creation processes. The findings advance alliance theory by emphasizing the role of collaborative frameworks in unlocking latent value and positioning firms for market leadership.

The research establishes value creation as a crucial mediating factor in the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage. This contribution bridges the gap in the literature by explaining the mechanism through which resource dependency impacts organizational outcomes. The findings extend the dynamic capabilities theory (DCT) by underscoring the importance of value creation as a transformative process that converts resource dependencies into competitive strengths. It also emphasizes that firms can mitigate dependency risks and harness supplier resources to co-create innovations, improve efficiency, and achieve differentiation. Together, these contributions provide a nuanced theoretical framework that integrates supply chain collaboration, strategic alliances, and value creation into the broader discourse on competitive advantage. They offer valuable insights into how firms can navigate complex interdependencies, leverage collaborative mechanisms, and optimize resource utilization to achieve sustainable performance. These findings open avenues for further research on inter-organizational dynamics and their implications for strategic and operational success.

5.1 Policy Implication

Policymakers should promote initiatives that encourage collaboration among supply chain stakeholders. This can include tax incentives, grants, or subsidies for firms that demonstrate robust supplier collaboration practices. Regulators can establish policies mandating transparency and information-sharing across supply chains to enhance collaboration. Such policies reduce opportunistic behavior, enabling firms to turn supplier dependencies into opportunities for mutual growth. Introducing industry standards for collaborative agreements and partnerships can streamline operations and reduce the risks associated with resource dependency. Policies fostering shared technology platforms or inter-organizational training programs can enhance alignment and trust among supply chain partners. Governments and industry bodies should create frameworks that facilitate the formation of strategic alliances, especially in industries with high supplier dependency. These frameworks can include legal provisions for joint ventures, co-investment incentives, and intellectual property protections to encourage innovation. Policymakers can develop bilateral or multilateral trade agreements that incentivize strategic alliances across borders, enabling firms to access global resources and markets, thereby enhancing value creation and competitive advantage. Encouraging PPPs as a form of strategic alliance can help industries leverage public resources and expertise while fostering private sector innovation and value creation. Policies should prioritize funding and grants for innovation projects, particularly those that involve co-creation with suppliers. For example, innovation hubs or incubators can be established to promote collaborative product development and process improvements. Policymakers and industry regulators should create an enabling environment for supply chain collaboration, strategic alliances, and value creation. By aligning these policies with broader economic and industry goals, firms can effectively mitigate supplier dependency risks, foster innovation, and enhance competitiveness. These measures also contribute to national and global economic resilience by promoting sustainable supply chain practices.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are provided to organizations, managers, and policymakers to optimize supply chain collaboration, strategic alliances, and value creation for sustained competitive advantage. Firms should prioritize building strong, long-term relationships with key suppliers based on trust, mutual benefits, and shared goals. This can be achieved through regular communication, joint planning, and shared decision-making processes. Organizations should invest in collaborative technologies such as integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and cloud platforms that facilitate seamless communication and data sharing between supply chain partners. This will ensure more efficient resource allocation, minimize disruptions, and enhance overall collaboration. Encouraging the formation of cross-functional teams that include key supply chain partners can enhance knowledge-sharing and problem-solving capabilities, thus making the supply chain more adaptive and resilient.

Companies should invest in developing the capabilities of their suppliers through training, technology transfer, and joint problem-solving. This will ensure that supplier relationships are more productive and that value is co-created in a way that strengthens competitive advantage. Organizations should formalize strategic alliances with suppliers, customers, and other key stakeholders. Formal alliances allow for clearer roles, responsibilities, and resource commitments, fostering a stronger alignment of objectives and more effective value creation. Firms should seek alliances not only within their industry but also across sectors. This diversification can provide access to unique resources and competencies, enhancing the capacity for innovation and competitive differentiation.

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future Study

This study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits its ability to establish causal relationships over time. While the study provides valuable insights into the moderating and mediating effects of supply chain collaboration, strategic alliances, and value creation, it cannot definitively establish cause-and-effect relationships. A longitudinal approach would allow for the examination of how these relationships evolve over time. While the study focuses on the moderating and mediating roles of supply chain collaboration, strategic alliances, and value creation, other potential factors such as organizational culture, technological capabilities, and market dynamics may also influence the relationships between supplier resource dependence and competitive advantage. The exclusion of these factors may limit the comprehensiveness of the study's findings. Future studies could expand the geographical scope by including organizations from multiple countries or regions. This would help in understanding the role of cultural, economic, and institutional factors in moderating the relationships between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage. Comparative studies between developed and developing economies could reveal interesting contrasts in supply chain dynamics and strategic alliances. Future studies should adopt a longitudinal research design to examine how the relationships between supplier resource dependency, value creation, competitive advantage, and supply chain collaboration evolve over time. This would help in establishing causal links and understanding the long-term impact of supply chain collaboration and strategic alliances on competitive advantage. The increasing role of digital technologies, such as AI, blockchain, and IoT, in supply chain management presents an exciting avenue for future research. Understanding how digitalization affects supplier resource dependency, value creation, and competitive advantage could offer valuable insights for firms aiming to enhance their strategic capabilities in an increasingly digital world.

5.4 Conclusion

The relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage is often context-dependent and influenced by mediating and moderating factors. The lack of a statistically significant relationship could be attributed to the complexity and multidimensionality of supplier

relationships in dynamic supply chain environments. The absence of a significant relationship might also reflect the moderating role of supply chain collaboration or strategic alliances. Collaboration can mitigate dependency risks and enhance value creation, but without it, dependency alone may fail to translate into competitive advantage. Supplier resource dependency significantly influences value creation by providing access to critical resources, fostering innovation, and enhancing adaptability. Firms that strategically manage these dependencies can leverage them for sustained value creation and competitive advantage. Supplier resource dependency significantly influences value creation, as it facilitates access to critical resources and capabilities essential for enhancing organizational efficiency and innovation. There is a statistically significant relationship between value creation and competitive advantage stems from the ability of firms to leverage unique capabilities and resources to meet customer needs effectively and sustainably. The statistically significant relationship between value creation and competitive advantage reflects the essential role of delivering superior customer value, fostering innovation, enhancing operational efficiency, and maintaining strategic agility. Firms that prioritize value creation are more likely to achieve and sustain competitive advantage in today's dynamic markets.

Strategic alliances amplify the positive impact of value creation on competitive advantage by fostering collaboration, leveraging complementary strengths, and enabling resource sharing between firms. By pooling resources, knowledge, and capabilities, strategic alliances enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of value creation processes, driving sustainable competitive advantage. Strategic alliance enhances the positive effects of value creation on competitive advantage by driving innovation, optimizing resources, extending market reach, and fostering continuous improvement. Firms that strategically engage in alliances position themselves to create and sustain superior competitive advantages in dynamic markets. Supply chain collaboration significantly moderates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage by transforming dependency into a strategic asset. When firms collaborate effectively with suppliers, they can mitigate the risks associated with resource dependency while amplifying its benefits, thus fostering a stronger competitive position. Supply chain collaboration moderates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage by mitigating risks, enhancing value creation, and fostering resilience. Firms that prioritize collaborative practices can transform dependency into a strategic lever for sustained competitive success. Value creation mediates the relationship between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage by transforming access to critical resources into differentiated offerings, operational efficiency, and sustainable partnerships. Firms that effectively channel dependencies into value creation are better positioned to secure and sustain their competitive edge. Value creation acts as a mediator between supplier resource dependency and competitive advantage by transforming dependency into opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and differentiation. Firms relying on suppliers for critical resources can leverage these dependencies to create value, which, in turn, strengthens their competitive position.

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