

Omni-Channel Supply Chain Orientation and Procurement Performance of Oil Marketing Firms in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract: *Omni-channel supply chain orientation improves efficiency by integrating inventory management and streamlining processes across multiple sales platforms, reducing redundancies and costs. It also enhances agility by enabling quick responses to market shifts and supports sustainability through optimized logistics and reduced waste in operations. Nonetheless, oil marketing firms in Kenya confront significant obstacles in acquiring and sustaining a diverse supplier network and streamlined distribution infrastructure. At present, the primary challenge in the oil sector is minimizing the supply costs of products. It was against this background that the researcher assessed the influence of omni-channel supply chain orientations on the procurement performance of oil marketing firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The study was anchored on network theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population was the oil marketing firms operating in Nairobi County. Therefore, the study's unit of analysis comprised the 114 oil marketing firms, with the unit of observation being the 114 procurement managers of the aforementioned companies. The questionnaires was used in data collection. Descriptive and inferential data analysis were employed. In descriptive analysis, means, percentages and standard deviations were used. In inferential analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis were utilized. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) aided data analysis. Findings were presented through tables. The descriptive research findings indicated that omni-channel orientation affected the procurement performance of oil marketing firms. Inferential analysis, particularly correlation results, revealed significant relationship with coefficient of ($r=0.740^{**}$; $p=0.000$) between omni-channel orientation and procurement performance. Furthermore, the regression analysis showed a coefficient of determination of $R^2=0.548$, indicating that omni-channel supply chain orientation explained 54.8% of the variation in procurement performance, highlighting its significant influence on the procurement performance of oil marketing firms. The study concludes that omni-channel orientation improves procurement performance through better channel integration and order fulfillment. The study recommends that oil marketing firms streamline sales channels and optimize sourcing strategies to improve order fulfillment and procurement performance.*

Keywords: *Omni-Channel Supply Chain Orientation, Procurement Performance, Oil Marketing Firms*

I. Introduction

Omni-channel orientation incorporates the seamless integration of diverse channels such as online, offline, and mobile platforms, to ensure better customer experience (Durugbo & Al-Balushi, 2023). This approach prioritizes cross-channel communication and adaptable fulfillment choices, aiming to enhance customer satisfaction and adjust to the evolving dynamics of the market. For oil marketing firms, omni-channel supply chain orientation boosts efficiency by unifying inventory management across retail, wholesale, and online channels, minimizing operational redundancies and preventing fuel shortages (Matinde & Atikiya, 2023). It further enhances agility by allowing swift adaptation to changing market demands and fuel prices, while supporting sustainability through optimized fuel distribution routes and reduced waste in the supply chain. The oil marketing firms operate within Kenya's petroleum subsector, which encompasses three upstream, midstream, and downstream (EPRA, 2022).

The upstream segment involves activities such as exploration, development, and production of crude oil and natural gas (Mbae & Ismail, 2022). The midstream segment focuses on the storage and transportation of crude oil, with potential for expansion to include refining. The downstream segment encompasses the supply, distribution, and marketing of petroleum products. The procurement of oil products in Kenya is overseen by key government entities by the National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK) and the Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC) (Molete, 2021). These organizations are integral to the oil industry, facilitating the procurement, transportation, and distribution of oil products nationwide. NOCK, as the state-owned oil company, manages various aspects of the oil supply chain, including procurement, refining, and distribution, often collaborating with industry stakeholders to ensure the accessibility and affordability of oil products for consumers. Meanwhile, KPC is responsible for the safe and efficient transportation of crude oil and refined petroleum products through its extensive pipeline network. KPC's procurement role involves ensuring the smooth transport of oil products from refineries and storage facilities to distribution points across Kenya (Matinde & Atikiya, 2023). Together, NOCK and KPC work in conjunction with oil marketing companies to maintain the efficiency of Kenya's oil procurement system, thereby contributing to the nation's economic growth.

Supply chain orientation enhances efficiency, responsiveness, and overall performance by aligning processes, fostering collaboration, and adapting to dynamic market conditions (Durugbo & Al-Balushi, 2023). Nonetheless, the oil marketing firms in Kenya face logistics challenges regarding optimizing delivery routes, managing inventory levels, and effective coordination with customers. These have resulted into inefficiencies within supply chains, manifesting as increased costs and constrained adaptability to market needs. For instance, VIVO Energy witnessed a 28% rise in operating costs, from \$247 million to \$315 million between 2022 and 2023, as indicated by the VIVO Energy Annual Report (2023). In the same period, the company suffered a loss of 35%. Effective omni-channel supply chain orientation aligns supply chain activities with organizational objectives and market demands, ultimately streamlining the operations. However, the operational inefficiencies of oil marketing firms raise concerns regarding the effectiveness of their supply chain orientation. The past studies have not adequately evaluated the relationship between supply chain orientations and procurement performance in the context of oil marketing firms. Mbae and Ismail (2022) assessed the effect of procurement risk drivers on the performance of oil marketing companies in Kenya. The study's results revealed a positive correlation between transportation and delivery as well as geopolitics with the drivers of procurement risk among oil marketing companies. Arapha (2022) researched on the sustainable supply chain management practices and firm performance of oil marketing firms in Kenya. The study found that social supply chain practices, information sharing, internal environmental management, strategic supply chain integration, partnership, and responsible eco-design all positively and significantly affect firms' performance. These studies did not explicitly consider the broader aspect of omni-channel supply chain orientation, leaving gaps in understanding the holistic approach to managing supply chains in oil marketing firms. The current research examined the influence of omni-channel supply chain orientation on the procurement performance of oil marketing firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

II. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of omni-channel orientation on procurement performance of oil marketing firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

III. Literature Review

The omni-channel supply chain orientation seamlessly integrates diverse sales channels, comprising physical stores, online platforms, and mobile applications, to deliver a cohesive shopping experience for customers (Raza & Govindaluri, 2021). This strategy enables customers to engage with a brand across various touch points, such as online browsing and in-store purchases, while ensuring uniformity in product availability, pricing, and service standards. Through prioritizing flexibility and convenience, omni-channel orientation aims to boost customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention (Song, Shi, Song, & Huq, 2021). This approach is particularly relevant in the evolving retail environment characterized by heightened connectivity. Channel integration stands as a cornerstone of this approach, encompassing the alignment of physical stores, online platforms, mobile applications, and other pertinent channels (Mishra, Gangwar, & Sahoo, 2023). This fusion guarantees customers a seamless transition across different channels while upholding consistency in product details, pricing, promotions, and customer service. Channel integration aims to dismantle barriers between diverse sales channels, providing customers with enhanced flexibility and convenience (Weber, 2022). Continuous sourcing optimization emerges as another pivotal element of omni-channel orientation, concentrating on the dynamic management of sourcing strategies to efficiently meet customer demand. In the context of omni-channel retailing, adaptable and responsive sourcing practices become essential to ensure product availability across all channels and locations (Raza & Govindaluri, 2021). This involves fine-tuning inventory levels, production schedules, and supplier relationships to mitigate stockouts, backorders, and surplus inventory. Retailers may utilize sophisticated analytics and

demand forecasting methodologies to anticipate customer preferences and adjust sourcing strategies accordingly, ensuring streamlined product sourcing and distribution across the omni-channel landscape.

Continuous sourcing optimization empowers retailers to swiftly adapt to market fluctuations and supply chain disruptions, preserving high service standards and customer satisfaction (Mishra et al., 2023). Order fulfillment reliability emerges as a critical tenet of omni-channel orientation, emphasizing the paramount importance of accurate, prompt, and consistent order fulfillment across all channels (Raza & Govindaluri, 2021). In light of customers' expectations for swift and dependable order fulfillment irrespective of the chosen channel, retailers must invest in robust logistics and fulfillment capabilities to meet these demands. This entails refining warehouse operations, optimizing transportation networks, and enhancing last-mile delivery processes to ensure timely delivery to customers' preferred destinations. Additionally, retailers may offer flexible fulfillment options such as click-and-collect, ship-from-store, and same-day delivery to cater to diverse customer preferences and delivery needs. The network theory offers a thorough comprehension of the interconnections within the supply chain network, emphasizing the essentiality of coordination and collaboration (Küffner, Münch, Hähner, & Hartmann, 2022). It enables the detection of potential bottlenecks, inefficiencies, and vulnerabilities, empowering organizations to enact strategic measures to boost performance and manage risks. This comprehensive strategy cultivates a resilient and flexible supply chain ecosystem, adept at navigating dynamic market landscapes and unexpected disruptions.

Network theory relates to the supply chain orientation. It emphasizes interconnectedness among actors, resources, and processes, offering insights into information flow and collaborations (Akyuz & Gursoy, 2020). It identifies critical nodes and bottlenecks, aiding in optimization of coordination and decision-making. Leveraging network principles enhances supply chain resilience and agility, meeting customer demands efficiently. The network theory elucidates the interconnections among diverse actors, resources, and processes within the supply chain ecosystem, which resonates with the omni-channel orientation's focus on integrating sales channels seamlessly to deliver a unified customer experience (Hallikas, Immonen, & Brax, 2021). Additionally, Network theory complements lean orientation by underscoring the significance of optimizing coordination, resource allocation, and decision-making to minimize waste and enhance efficiency across the supply chain.

Moreover, technology orientation applies network theory principles to leverage digital tools and innovations for improved visibility, automation, and data-driven insights (Akyuz & Gursoy, 2020). Furthermore, network theory reinforces collaborative orientation by emphasizing partnerships and cooperation among supply chain stakeholders, fostering innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness to effectively meet customer needs. Collectively, the integration of network theory in supply chain orientation contribute to cultivating agile, efficient, and customer-centric supply chain ecosystems that drive sustainable growth in today's dynamic market landscape. The empirical studies related to omni-channel supply chain orientation and procurement performance were reviewed. Njuguna and Namusonge (2023) conducted an assessment of fourth-party Logistics and performance within oil and gas marketing companies in Kenya. Employing a descriptive design for quantitative data collection, the study utilized questionnaires to gather information. The findings revealed significant correlations between warehouse management and performance ($r = .785, p = .000$), suggesting that enhancing warehouse management could lead to improved performance in fourth-party logistics due to its substantial influence. Similarly, transportation showed a favorable relationship with performance in Fourth-Party Logistics ($r = .622, p = .000$), indicating a significant impact on performance.

Blom, Lange, and Hess (2021) undertook study on the omnichannel promotions and their effect on customer satisfaction. The results indicate that there are favorable outcomes associated with both aligning a shopping goal with a monetary promotion in an omnichannel context for enhancing customer satisfaction. These beneficial effects are attributed to superior service quality and are shown to be lessened in the case of hedonic product categories and for individuals motivated by hedonic shopping experiences. Chen, Su, Li, Wu, Zheng, and Xu (2022) explored the impact of omni-channel collaborative marketing on customer loyalty to fresh retailers. The research model utilized structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings revealed that price coordination and service and distribution coordination of the omnichannel collaborative marketing strategy positively impact the omnichannel shopping experience and customer loyalty. Additionally, while product and sales promotion coordination doesn't directly influence customer loyalty, it does so indirectly through the mediating effects of the omnichannel shopping experience.

In their research, Mbae and Ismail (2022) investigated how procurement risk drivers influence the performance of oil marketing companies in Kenya. Employing a descriptive research design, the study utilized structured questionnaires to gather data from 159 respondents. Quantitative analysis, specifically multiple regression analysis, was employed to analyze the data. The results revealed a positive correlation between transportation and delivery as well as geopolitics

with procurement risk drivers among oil marketing companies. Ondari (2022) conducted research on service operations strategies and the operational performance of petroleum companies in Kenya. The research utilized a descriptive research design method, with the sample population comprising major oil companies in the country. The findings showed that the dimensions of service operation strategies, such as processes and workflows, information, and customer participation, positively influence operational performance. The relationship between omni-channel supply chain orientation and procurement performance is illustrated in Figure 1:

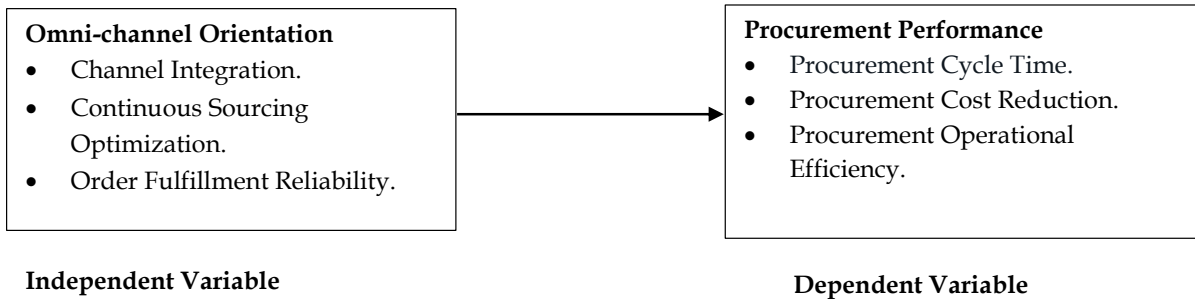


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research gaps were identified from the empirical review and the current research sought to address them. Njuguna and Namusonge's (2023) study falls short in adequately examining the potential optimization of logistics processes and overall performance enhancement through the application of lean principles or technology-driven solutions in these companies. To address this gap, the current study assessed the omni-channel orientation within the supply chains of oil marketing firms. The study by Mbae and Ismail (2022) did not address omni-channel supply chain orientation, which is crucial in understanding the broader integration of multiple sales and distribution platforms. The current study sought to fill this gap by exploring channel integration, continuous sourcing optimization, and order fulfillment reliability, areas vital for enhancing supply chain efficiency and agility in oil marketing firms. Ondari's (2022) research was unclear regarding the integration of processes, information management, and customer participation strategies throughout the supply chain. The present study analyzes and aligns operational scalability, automated quality control, digitized SC tasks with the company's broader supply chain of the oil marketing firms.

IV. Research Methodology

The current study adopted a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design was appropriate for the study as it allowed for detailed data collection and an adequate description of omni-channel supply chain orientation and procurement performance. The target population was the oil marketing firms operating in Nairobi County. Therefore, the study's unit of analysis comprised the 114 oil marketing firms, with the unit of observation being the 114 procurement managers of the aforementioned firms. This means that one procurement manager was involved from each oil marketing firm. In this study, the focus was on procurement managers, whose numbers were manageable. Rather than engaging sampling, a census technique was used to include all the 114 procurement managers from oil marketing firms in Nairobi County. A structured questionnaire was used. Descriptive and inferential data analysis was employed. In descriptive analysis, means, percentages and standard deviations were used. In inferential analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis were utilized. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) aided data analysis. In regression analysis, the following model was utilized:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y = Procurement Performance

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Beta Coefficient

X_1 = Omni-channel Supply Chain Orientation

ϵ = Error Term

V. Results

The study targeted a population of 114 oil marketing firms, resulting in the preparation and distribution of 114 questionnaires. Of the questionnaires issued, 82 were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 71.9%, which was deemed adequate for the study.

5.1 Descriptive Statistical Results

The study sought to establish the influence of omni-channel supply chain orientation on procurement performance. The descriptive findings are presented in Tables 1 and 2:

Table 1: Influence of Omni-channel Supply Chain Orientation on Procurement Performance

	N	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
	Percentage (%)							
Our company seamlessly integrates sales channels to enhance efficiency.	82	41.5	45.1	12.2	1.2	0	4.27	0.721
Information is harmonized across all sales channels.	82	36.6	46.3	13.4	1.2	2.4	4.13	0.872
We regularly adjust our sourcing strategies to ensure cost-effectiveness.	82	30.5	43.9	22	2.4	1.2	4.00	0.861
Our firm effectively coordinates inventory management across different channels to prevent stakeouts.	82	15.9	42.7	29.3	8.5	3.7	3.59	0.981
Order processing and fulfillment are consistently efficient across all channels.	82	12.2	37.8	32.9	13.4	3.7	3.41	0.993
Continuous optimization of sourcing processes is an integral part of our procurement function.	82	15.9	50	22	12.2	0	3.70	0.885

The descriptive findings established that 41.5% of the respondents strongly agreed (Mean=4.27; Std. Dev.=0.721) that their respective oil marketing firms seamlessly integrate sales channels to enhance efficiency. The seamless integration of sales channels enhances the procurement performance of oil marketing firms by streamlining operations and improving communication across departments. This leads to greater efficiency in sourcing, inventory management, and overall procurement processes. 46.3% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.13; Std. Dev.= 0.872) that information is harmonized across all sales channels in their firms. Harmonizing information across all sales channels improves the procurement performance of oil marketing firms by ensuring consistent and accurate data flow, which supports better decision-making and coordination. This integration reduces errors, enhances forecasting, and optimizes procurement processes. Additionally, 30.5% of the respondents agreed and 43.9% strongly agreed thus 74.4% at least agreed (Mean=4.00; Std. Dev.=0.861) that they regularly adjust their sourcing strategies to ensure cost-effectiveness. Frequently updating sourcing strategies boosts procurement performance by helping oil marketing firms maintain cost-effectiveness and adapt to market fluctuations. This proactive approach optimizes procurement costs and enhances operational efficiency. However, 29.3% of the respondents had differing views (Mean=3.59; Std. Dev.=0.981) that their companies effectively coordinate inventory management across different channels to prevent stakeouts. Similarly, 32.9% of the respondents were indifferent (Mean=3.41; Std. Dev.=0.993) to the fact that order processing and fulfillment are consistently efficient across all channels. Moreover, 65.9% of the respondents agreed that continuous optimization of sourcing processes is an integral part of their procurement function.

The indicated that the ongoing optimization of sourcing processes is vital to improving the procurement performance of oil marketing firms by increasing cost efficiency, strengthening supplier relationships, and enhancing operational effectiveness. This continuous improvement enables firms to adapt to market shifts, remain competitive, and secure favorable terms from suppliers, resulting in better procurement outcomes. The research has revealed that the procurement performance of oil marketing firms is significantly influenced by omnichannel orientation, which is a key aspect of their overall supply chain orientation. This relationship underscores the importance of integrating multiple channels to streamline procurement processes and enhance performance. The study aligns with Njuguna and Namusonge (2023), who assessed fourth-party logistics and performance in Kenya's oil and gas marketing firms. Their findings revealed that better warehouse management and transportation practices significantly improve performance in fourth-party logistics.

Table 2: Procurement Performance

	N	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std.
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	Percentage (%)						Dev.	
Effective management of cycle times ensure timely delivery of products.	82	40.2	51.2	7.3	1.2	0	4.30	0.661
Our supply chain processes' costs are sustainable.	82	30.5	54.9	13.4	0	1.2	4.13	0.733
Our procurement activities are operationally efficiency.	82	34.1	50	11	2.4	2.4	4.11	0.875
Our procurement processes are streamlined to minimize lead times.	82	34.1	45.1	17.1	3.7	0	4.10	0.811
Our cost reduction initiatives consider total cost of ownership (TCO) and long-term value.	82	31.7	48.8	12.2	6.1	1.2	4.04	0.895
We emphasizes supply chain orientation to drive cost savings and operational improvements.	82	30.5	43.9	15.9	8.5	1.2	3.94	0.960

According to the findings, 40.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and 51.2% agreed thus 91.4% at least agreed (Mean=4.30; Std. Dev.=0.661) that effective management of cycle times ensures timely delivery of products. 85.4% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.13; Std. Dev.=0.733) that supply chain processes' costs are sustainable. Moreover, the respondents agreed (Mean=4.11; Std. Dev.=0.875) that their firms' procurement activities are operationally efficient. Furthermore, 79.2% of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.10; Std. Dev.=0.811) that procurement processes are streamlined to minimize lead times. They also agreed (Mean=4.04; Std. Dev.=0.895) that cost reduction initiatives consider total cost of ownership (TCO) and long-term value and emphasize supply chain orientation to drive cost savings and operational improvements. Overall, the descriptive findings of the study demonstrated that the omni-channel supply chain orientation affected the procurement performance of oil marketing firms. It shapes the procurement efficiency and effectiveness, underscoring the integral relationship between comprehensive supply chain strategies and enhanced operational outcomes. These results highlight the critical effect of aomni-channel supply chain orientation on optimizing procurement performance among the oil marketing firms.

5.2 Inferential Statistical Results

Inferential analysis involves using statistical methods to draw conclusions about a population of interest. In this study, Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis and regression analysis were incorporated.

5.2.1 Correlation Analysis Results and Discussions

Correlation analysis assess both the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables. Correlation analysis was carried out to establish the relationship between omni-channel supply chain orientation. The findings are presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Correlation between Omni-channel supply chain orientation and Procurement Performance

		Procurementperformance
Omni-channel Supply Chain orientation	Pearson Correlation	.740**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	82

According to the findings, the relationship between omni-channel supply chain orientation and procurement performance was strong, positive and significant (r=0.740**; p=0.000). This shows that as omni-channel supply chain orientation improves, procurement performance also tends to enhance significantly. The p-value of 0.000 further confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, indicating a robust association between the two variables. It means that omni-channel orientation influenced the procurement performance of oil marketing firms.

5.2.2 Regression Analysis Statistical Results

Regression analysis is a statistical method employed to investigate the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable. The regression analysis results are presented in Tables 4, 5 and 6.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.740 ^a	.548	.542	.29475

a. Predictors: (Constant), Omni-channel Supply Chain Orientation

The findings shows that the correlation coefficient was R=0.740 with coefficient of determination R²=0.548. This demonstrates a significant relationship between omni-channel supply chain orientation and procurement performance. It implies that omni-channel orientation accounted for 54.8% of the variation in procurement performance. This means that omni-channel supply chain orientation affected the procurement performance of oil marketing firms.

Table 5: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.418	1	8.418	96.897	.000 ^b
	Residual	6.950	80	.087		
	Total	15.369	81			

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Omni-channel Supply Chain Orientation

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results shows that the F-value=96.897 was significant (p=0.000) at 95% confidence level. This means that the overall model was fit. As such, omni-channel orientation affected the procurement performance.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.517	.265		5.729	.000
Omni-channel supply chain orientation	.672	.068	.740	9.844	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Procurement Performance

The model was $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ was interpreted as $Y = 1.517 + 0.672 X_1$. According to the regression coefficients, the beta coefficient for omni-channel orientation is $\beta = 0.672$, indicating that a one-unit increase in omni-channel orientation results in a 0.672-unit change in procurement performance. This means that procurement performance was predictable from procurement performance. The t-value was 9.844 was significant (p=0.000) at 95% confidence level. This means that procurement performance of oil marketing firms was affected by the omni-channel supply chain orientation.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study established that omni-channel supply chain orientation significantly influences the procurement performance of oil marketing firms. Effective channel integration facilitates seamless coordination across multiple sales channels, thereby enhancing procurement efficiency and accuracy. Additionally, continuous sourcing optimization ensures that firms consistently refine their sourcing strategies to adapt to market changes, leading to more cost-effective and reliable procurement processes. Order fulfillment reliability within omni-channel orientation underscores the importance of dependable and timely order execution, which directly impacts overall procurement performance by improving service levels and reducing operational disruptions. Overall, the omni-channel supply chain orientation emphasizes the need for oil marketing firms to adopt comprehensive supply chain strategies to achieve sustainable procurement performance and competitive advantage.

VII. Recommendation

The study recommends that oil marketing firms streamline their sales channels for consistent operations and continuously optimize sourcing strategies to adapt to market changes. Additionally, focusing on improving order fulfillment processes will ensure timely and accurate deliveries, thereby enhancing overall procurement performance.

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