The Influence of Distributor Competence, Informational Sharing on Distribution Performance: The Role of Distributional Commitment

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study began with the differences in research results on the relationship between distributor competence and distributor performance. By using the theory of resource advantage, we developed distributional commitment as a way to overcome this gap. The sample used was 115 respondents using non-probability sampling techniques and Structural Equation Modeling analysis techniques. The results of the study explain that distributor competence, information sharing has a significant effect on distributional commitment which ultimately has a significant effect on distributor channel performance.
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INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly tight business competition, entrepreneurs must adapt effective marketing strategies to stay relevant in the market. Factors that drive changes in strategy include the emergence of new competitors, new brands, added product value, price competition, and the number of agents or distributors as intermediaries. In an era of globalization and increasingly complex business competition, distribution is one of the critical elements in the supply chain. Effective and efficient distribution plays an important role in ensuring product availability in the market, minimizing operational costs, and increasing customer satisfaction. In response to this challenge, companies increasingly recognize the importance of establishing strong partnerships with distributors to optimize distribution performance. Top of Form

Various studies that have been conducted related to distribution channel capacity and distribution channel performance have produced various understandings that distribution channel capacity is an important factor. Conflict in distribution channels tends to result in low channel performance.(Milan, Dorion, and da Rosa Matos 2012). In different environmental situations, companies can choose appropriate distribution flexibility strategies (focusing on physical distribution flexibility, demand management flexibility, coordination flexibility, or distribution flexibility alignment) that suit their distribution environment.(K. Yu, Cadeaux, and Song 2012). Distribution channel efficiency can be improved in several ways: improving information systems, reducing failures, increasing utilization and increasing output. The test

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results of the proposed approach show good applicability of the developed approach.(Andrejić and Kilibarda 2016). Implementation of centralized distribution channels will result in competitive advantages for logistics companies.(Albernaz, Henrique, Ursula Gomes Rosa Maruyama and Correa 2014). In addition, managing the benefits of the delivery process will result in high distribution channel performance.(Turner, Martinez, and Bititci 2004). From various studies, it is shown that distribution channels produce various performances with various existing dimensions. However, there are also several studies that show contradictory results, such as those conducted by(Nevins and Money 2008)which explains that individual values in managing distribution channels have different perceptions from their perceptions regarding performance. Likewise, research(Gunawan, Nawangpalupi, and Sitompul 2014)which explains that the Company experiences relatively high delivery times, resulting in delays in meeting customer demand and reducing customer satisfaction. For more details, please see Table 1 below: Bottom of Form

Table 1. Research gap between distributor channel capacity and distributor channel performance

gap	researcher	Results
There are different views or research on the relationship between distributor channel capacity and distributor channel performance.	(Nevins and Money 2008)	Individualistic values have a negative effect on performance perceptions, and differences in cultural context negatively affect satisfaction with distribution channel relationships.
	(Nie et al. 2019) .	These results show that offline channels improve distribution channel performance compared to using dual channels.
	(Gunawan, Nawangpalupi, and Sitompul 2014)	The Company's distribution channel capacity experienced relatively high delivery times, resulting in delays in meeting customer demand and lowering customer satisfaction.

The results above show that there is still inconsistency in views and research on the relationship between distribution channel capacity and distribution channel performance. This is the problem of this research. To solve this gap, we developed a distributional commitment variable rooted in the Resource Advantage theory (Hunt & Morgan, 2008). To test the model we developed, we used the variables of information sharing, distributor competence and distributor channel performance. We tested this model using micro, small and medium business actors located in the Aru Islands Regency, Maluku Province.

Theoretical Basis and Hypothesis Development

Resource advantage Theory of competition

Resource advantage theory in the context of business competition focuses on how companies can leverage their unique resources to create sustainable competitive advantage.(Hunt 2012). In distribution channels, this theory refers to how companies can leverage in-depth knowledge of the market, strong relationships with distributors, and

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advanced technology to achieve an advantage.(Wittmann, Hunt, and Arnett 2009)These resources are difficult for competitors to imitate, allowing the firm to control market access, reduce distribution costs, and increase efficiency. By optimizing the use of these resources, the firm can develop a dominant position in the distribution channel, build distributor loyalty, and provide better customer service. Overall, the Resource Advantage theory helps explain how firms can achieve competitive advantage by leveraging unique resources in managing distribution channels.

Hypothesis Development.

The relationship between distribution channel competence and distribution channel commitment

Distribution channel competence is the ability of distribution channel members to complete tasks related to moving and selling products to end consumers. Commitment is the willingness of distribution channel members to carry out their tasks voluntarily and wholeheartedly.(Kim, Hibbard, and Swain 2011)There is a positive relationship between distribution channel competence and commitment. The higher the competence of the distribution channel, the higher the commitment of the distribution channel members. This is because competent distribution channel members will find it easier to complete their tasks, so they will be more satisfied and motivated to work.(Sheu and Hu 2009)

Various studies that show the relationship between distribution channel competence and commitment: ResearchIons and Profile (2021)explains that the synergy between offline and online channels, as well as the development of experiential elements (online and in-store) appear to be key elements of brand commitment. The researchKumar and Sadarangani (2019)explains that the resources in the distribution channel competency have a significant effect on the commitment of distribution channel members. In long-term cooperation using the internet of things, a logistics company acting as a distributor will increase the commitment of the cooperation carried out.(W.-H. Yu, Chiu, and Tung 2019).

The relationship between information sharing capability and commitment.

Trust and information sharing significantly affect the level of relationship commitment between wholesalers, distributors and retailers with their main trading partners. Therefore, efforts to increase trust and information sharing between trading partners can improve relationship commitment in supply chain management.(Abdullah and Musa 2014; Battistelli et al. 2019).

Research in the supply chain at PT PP Prsero Tbk in Indonesia also shows that knowledge sharing competency can increase affective commitment, and is also greatly moderated by the development of workforce competency.(Vidyani and Desiana 2019). Information sharing capabilities can increase trust. When employees, channel members, or customers feel that they can share information freely and openly, they are more likely to trust each other. This trust is essential for building strong relationships and increasing commitment. Information sharing capabilities can increase transparency. When information is shared freely and openly, all parties involved have a shared understanding of the situation at hand. This can help to reduce conflict and increase efficiency.

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Sharing information in distributor channels using information technology is also studied in a world full of digitalization in various activities also resulting in high distributor channel performance.(Fawcett et al. 2007). Therefore, the concept of information sharing in distribution channels plays a very important role. Information sharing capability can increase engagement. When employees, channel members, or customers feel that they can provide feedback and are involved in decision making, they are more likely to feel involved in their work. This involvement is important for increasing motivation and performance. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that information sharing capability has a positive relationship with commitment. The higher the information sharing capability, the higher the commitment. Therefore, companies must pay attention to their information sharing capability if they want to increase the commitment of their employees, channel members, or customers.(Dion and Goodman 2001).

The relationship between distributor commitment and distributor performance
StudiesKrause, Handfield, and Tyler (2007)found that supplier development efforts, commitment, and social capital accumulation are positively related to increased performance of the buying firm. Entrepreneurial orientation is very important in the study of entrepreneurship. In SMEs, its influence is recognized globally. ResearchIqbal et al. (2021)involving 1095 SME employees, testing orientation, leadership, commitment, and innovation. The results of the study showed a positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, commitment and innovation performance. Commitment mediates entrepreneurial orientation and innovation performance. Leadership affects entrepreneurial orientation, commitment. SMEs need entrepreneurial orientation and transformational leadership to increase innovation. The results explain that commitment has a positive effect on innovation performance. Likewise, research investigating sales force commitment will have a positive impact on sales performance(Iqbal et al. 2021; Lam 2012)

Research conducted in Indonesia shows the same results that distributor commitment will improve distributor performance in MSME distributor companies in the Special Region of Jakarta.(Ramli 2019)

Therefore, based on these studies, it can be concluded that commitment is positively related to distributor performance. When distributors are committed to their relationships with manufacturers and suppliers, they are more likely to invest in the relationship, work toward common goals, and perform better.

RESEARCH METHOD

*Types of research*used in this research is quantitative research. Quantitative research is a number or figures that are definite so that they can be arranged and also make it easier to read, and make it easier for researchers to create an understanding.(Sugiyono 2014). This research was conducted in Aru Regency, Dobo City, Maluku Province for 3 months. According toThe Greatest Showman (2014)Population is defined as a generalization area consisting of: objects/subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics that are determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions drawn. The number of samples in this study was 115 MSME businesses. *Sampling techniques*, in this study the sampling technique used

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is non-probability sampling, with a purposive sampling method whose sample selection is based on a certain characteristic in a population that can be used to achieve research objectives. The criteria used in collecting this data are respondents who have used motorbikes for > 2 years and are recorded in the Dobo city government database*Measurement Scale*   According to(Sugiyono 2014)Likert scale is a scale used to measure people's attitudes, opinions and perceptions about social phenomena with a Likert scale, the variables will be measured as indicators and then arranged in the form of questions or statements that have a very negative to very positive gradation (1-10). Measurement of variables This study uses 4 variables, namely Distributor competence, sharing distributional information, distributional commitment and distribution channel performance. These variables will be defined and measured in the form of indicators which will ultimately be translated into a research questionnaire. The Distributor Channel Competence variable uses 3 indicators developed by(Nie et al. 2019); the variable of distributive knowledge sharing uses 3 indicators that were developed(Baihaqi and Sohal 2013; Chen, Lin, and Yen 2014). Distribution channel commitment variable uses 3 indicators that were developed(Dion and Goodman 2001); Distribution channel performance variables use 3 indicators developed by(Akdoğan and Durak 2016)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile. Respondents in the study were 115 business actors engaged in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as described in table 2 below.

Table 2. Profile of respondents of MSME actors in Aru Islands Regency.

Variables		%
Position	owner	78.4
	manager	12.7
	Labor	8.8
type of business	Family business	72.5
	cooperation	27.5
business fields	Local commodities	53.9
	mobile phone	19.6
	food	26.5
LOng Business	< 5 years	79.4
	6 – 8 years	12.7
	> 8 years	12.7
Labor	1 labor	42.2
	2 labors	28.4
	>= 3 labors	29.4
marketing	Out of town	17.6
	In the city	9.8
	combination	72.5
Profit per month	< IDR 1,000,000	39.2
	IDR 1,000,001 – 3,000,000	41.2
	> IDR 3,000,000	19.6

Source: various studies

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Structural Model Analysis

Structural Model Analysis is a statistical approach that models complex relationships between latent variables and observations. It involves building measurement models and structural models, which allow for hypothesis and theory testing. Tests on the structural model are conducted to test the relationships between latent constructs, using various methods such as the R-square test and path analysis. The results of the analysis can be seen in Figure 1 below. The normality test as a requirement in this analysis shows that the overall normality value is still in a fairly good number, namely 5.568.
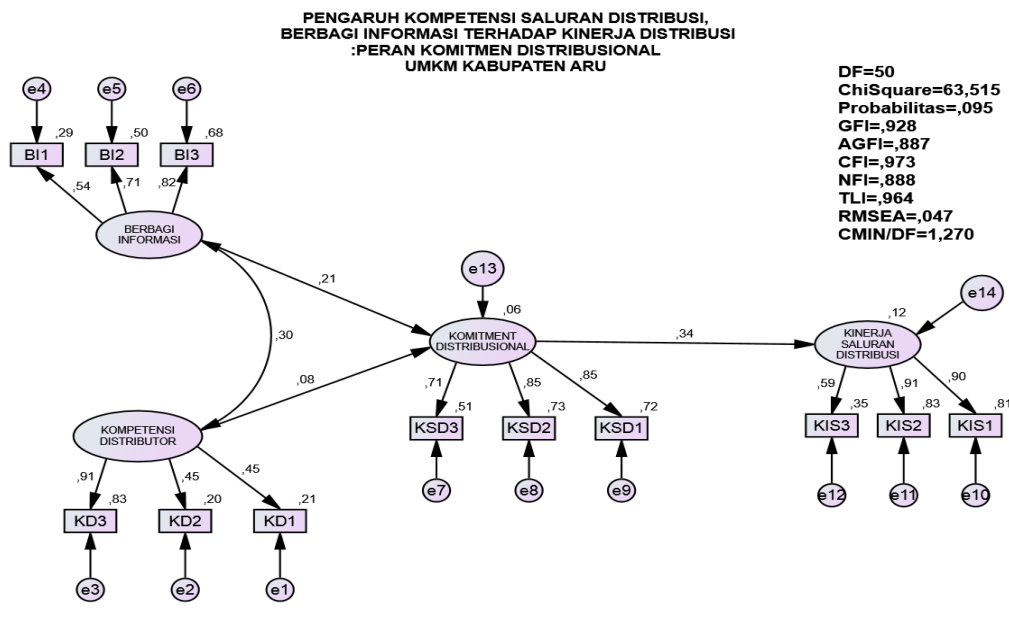
Data Normality Evaluation

According to Hair et al (1998) SEM when estimated using Maximum Likelihood Estimation, requires the fulfillment of the normality assumption. As explained in the previous chapter, the statistical value that can be used to test normality is the z-value. The rule of thumb that is commonly used is the critical value of ±2.58, meaning that we can reject the normality assumption at a probability level of 0.01 (Hair et al, 1998) Univariate and multivariate data normality tests, the results of which are shown in table 2 below:

Table 3.: Data normality test

Variable	min	max	skew	cr	kurtosis	cr
KIS3	4,000	9,000	-,259	-1,187	-,071	-,162
KIS2	4,000	10,000	-,327	-1,497	,821	1,880
KIS1	4,000	10,000	-,393	-1,801	,540	1,237
KSD3	3,000	10,000	-,724	-3,320	,947	2,169
KSD2	3,000	10,000	-,384	-1,761	,023	,052
KSD1	3,000	10,000	-,172	-,789	,221	,507
BI3	4,000	10,000	-,410	-1,881	,536	1,228

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Variable	min	max	skew	cr	kurtosis	cr
BI2	5,000	10,000	-,057	-,262	,151	,347
BI1	5,000	10,000	-,050	-,228	-,463	-1,060
KD3	4,000	10,000	-,015	-,068	,213	,489
KD2	4,000	10,000	-,026	-,121	-,403	-,923
KD1	3,000	10,000	-,299	-1,370	-,496	-1,137
Multivariate					18,184	5,568

Goodness of Fit Index of empirical research models.
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) in SEM analysis is a measure that evaluates the extent to which a model fits empirical data. It measures the fit between the proposed model and the observed data, providing an indication of how well the model explains the relationships between variables. This can be seen in table 3 below.

Table 4. Goodness of fit index of empirical research models

Goodness of fit index	Cut off value	Model results	information
Absolute Fit Model			
X^2 -Chi Square		63.5	Expected small value, X^2 with DF 50 is71,420So it appears that the value of 63.5 looks smaller than 71.420.
Degrees of freedom, DF		50	
X^2-significance Probability	≥ 0.05	0.095	*Fit*
CMIN/DF	≤ 2.00	1,270	*Fit*
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.047	*Fit*
GFI	≥0.90	0.926	*Fit*
Parsimonious Fit Measure			
AGFI	≥0.90	0.887	*Fit (Marginal)*
TLI	≥0.95	0.964	*Fit*
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.973	*Fit*

Source: Processed Primary Data

Hypothesis Testing.
Hypothesis testing in this model requires testing the null hypothesis which states that the regression coefficient between the relationships is equal to zero through the t-test which is common in regression models (Ferdinand, 2005).

Table 5. Regression weight Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) empirical research model

			Estimate	SE	CR	P	Label
DISTRIBUTIONAL_COMMITMENT	<---	DISTRIBUTOR_COMPETENCY	,147	,202	,725	,468	par_9
DISTRIBUTIONAL_COMMITMENT	<---	SHARE INFORMATION	,402	,241	1,671	,095	par_11
DISTRIBUTION_CHANNEL_PERFORMANCE	<---	DISTRIBUTIONAL_COMMITMENT	,299	,088	3,402	***	par_10

Source: Processed Primary Data

The discussion of the results of the hypothesis testing based on Table 4 above is as follows:

Hypothesis testing 1: the higher the distribution channel competence, the higher the distribution commitment.

This variable explainsDistribution channel competence as the ability to complete tasks related to the transfer and sale of products to end consumers, the ability to select channel members, the ability to manage relationships and the ability to adapt to prices will result in commitment between distribution channels, namely increasing long-term partnerships, strong relationships between channels and the spirit of carrying out tasks in the channel.

The results of statistical testing on this first hypothesis are an estimated parameter value of 0.1.47, standard error estimation 0.202, critical ratio value 0.725 with probability value of error rate of 0.468. By using alpha 0.05, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis stating that the higher the competence of distribution channels, the stronger the distribution commitment can be accepted.

Hypothesis testing 2: The higher the distribution channel information sharing, the higher the distributor commitment.

The variable of information sharing quality in distributor channels is the ability and readiness of channel members to share relevant data, information and knowledge in order to improve efficiency, coordination and decision making.(Chen, Lin, and Yen 2014)which is reflected in the exchange of market demand information, synergy of cooperation and exchange of changes in trends will result in a level of distributor commitment, both long-term commitment, strong relationships in channels and the spirit of carrying out tasks.

.   The results of statistical testing of the second hypothesis are the parameter value is 0.402, the standard error estimate is 0.241, the critical ratio value is 1.671 and the probability value of the error rate is 0.093. By using alpha 0.05, it can be concluded that the second hypothesis which states that the higher the market orientation of the relationship, the higher the company's relational excellence can be accepted.

Hypothesis testing 3 The higher the distributor commitment, the higher the distributor channel performance.

Distributor commitment produces distributor channel performance which is reflected in the punctuality of delivery, business partner satisfaction and operational cost efficiency. The statistical test results of this third hypothesis are the parameter value is 0.299, the standard error estimate is 0.088, the critical ratio value is 3.671 and the probability value of the error rate is 0.000. By using an alpha of 0.05, it can be concluded that the fourth hypothesis states that the higher the distributor commitment, the higher the distributor channel performance.

CONCLUSION

The results of the empirical test on the first hypothesis which states that the higher the distributor's competence, the higher the commitment of the UMKM distributor, is accepted. This study shows that distributor competence has a positive but insignificant influence on distributional commitment. The existence of this positive influence also shows that the more the company increases its competence in moving and selling its goods, the more it will encourage the creation of mutually beneficial, effective and trusting business relationships. The results of this study are also supported by several research results conducted by(Sheu and Hu 2009)which explains that competent distributors will increase efforts to carry out the tasks they are entrusted with. Likewise with ResearchKumar and Sadarangani (2019)explains that the resources in the distribution channel competency have a significant influence on the commitment of distribution channel members. In long-term cooperation using the internet of things, a logistics company acting as a distributor will increase the commitment of the cooperation carried out.(W.-H. Yu, Chiu, and Tung 2019). The results of the second hypothesis test state that the higher the capability of sharing information, the higher the distributor's commitment. Companies that develop commitment in the distributor channel will produce distributor commitment. This is in line with research on supply chain companies where each member of the information sharing channel will increase their commitment.(Abdullah and Musa 2014; Battistelli et al. 2019). The third hypothesis states that the higher the distributor commitment, the higher the distributor channel performance. This explains that companies with high commitment will be able to increase consumer satisfaction, high market share and good sales growth. This is in line with research(Fawcett et al. 2007)in information technology companies and research by Ramly 2019 and Iqbal (2021) and MSMEs in Ambon City(Peilouw and Sitaniapessy 2023)

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