



## **Chapter IX**

# **Factors Affecting Inter-Organisational Information Management Systems Used to Coordinate Australian Food Processor Chains**

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## **Abstract**

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*It is agreed that good communication systems between organisations increase customer satisfaction and relationship behaviour and are important issues in chain collaboration and competition. However, less is known about the details of how information is used to manage relationships and coordinate customers and suppliers in chains. In earlier stages of the*

*research, a dynamic model of interorganisational information management systems (IOIMS) and relationships was developed. This chapter presents an evaluation of this model based on a survey of Australian food processors and a green life industry case study and an evaluation of a revised version of this model. It was found that a strategic-oriented IOIMS were positively associated with IOIMS satisfaction that was, in turn, positively associated with perceived current outcomes (satisfaction with performance, perceived responsiveness, and strength of relationship trust). However, (attitudinal) commitment to develop long-term customer/supplier relationships was not significantly associated with the IOIMS, IOIMS satisfaction, or current outcomes. Results were moderated by the nature of the business environment—power/dependency, experience, and market uncertainty. These findings are discussed along with implications for management and suggestions for future research.*

## Introduction

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There is support for the idea that suppliers' efforts to assist communication increases customer satisfaction, which, in turn, improves competitive advantage (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Keith, Jackson, & Crosby, 1990; Leuthesser & Kohli, 1995; Mohr, Fisher, & Nevin, 1996; Mohr & Nevin, 1990; Mohr & Sohi, 1995; Uzzi, 1997). However, very little research has been conducted on how information is exchanged through chains of collaborating organisations to achieve this (chain—a vertical sequence of at least three organisations, that is, focal firm, a customer, and a supplier). Of interest were studies that detailed how, when, and why information was exchanged to manage customers and suppliers and to increase competitive advantage. The empirical studies found that quantitatively collected data from chains of organisations did not look in detail at how information systems worked (Clare, Shadbolt, & Reid, 2002; Hardman, Darroch, & Ortmann, 2002; Lehtinen & Torkko, 2004; Matanda & Schroder, 2002; Spekman, Kamauff, & Myhr, 1998). Most published chain research has been based on case studies where generalisation of results can be problematic (e.g., Champion & Fearne, 2002; Chatfield & Bjorn-Andersen, 1997; Kola, Latvala, & Vertanen, 2002; Korneliussen & Grønhaug, 2003; Lefebve, Cassivi, Lefebve, Léger, & Hadaya, 2003; Lindgreen, Trienekens, & Vellinga, 2004; Pratt, 2002; Simons, Francis, Bourlakis, & Fearne, 2003; Trienekens, 1999; Van der Vorst, 2000; Van Dorp, 2004). Even in the more substantial research into two organisations in a dyad (e.g., focal firm and customer), none were found that looked at information systems used to manage the relationship (e.g., Anderson & Weitz, 1992; Anderson & Narus, 1990; Clare et al., 2002; Claro, Zylbersztajn,

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