

# **The Relationship Between Supply Chain Collaboration, Supply Chain Responsiveness, and Customer Satisfaction in South African Manufacturing SMEs**

**Irvine Langton<sup>1</sup>, Chenedzai Mafini<sup>2</sup>**

*Vaal University of Technology, South Africa*

### **Abstract**

In South Africa, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are acknowledged as a major contributor to national GDP and employment creation. Manufacturing SMEs are among the most dominant forms of SMEs in South Africa. However, their success is hamstrung by numerous challenges that affect their growth and sustainability. Lack of collaboration and responsiveness across the supply chains (SCs) have been branded as striking challenges contributing to the failure of many manufacturing SMEs in the country. The primary aim of this study is to investigate the impact of supply chain collaboration (SCC) on SC responsiveness (SCR) and customer satisfaction (CS) of South African manufacturing SMEs. The study followed a quantitative survey approach. A questionnaire was distributed to a purposively sampled 321 managers, owners and SC management (SCM) professionals drawn from manufacturing SMEs in the Gauteng, Free State, and North-West provinces of South Africa. Hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM) based on the SMART partial least squares (PLS) technique. The results reveal that SCC and SCR impacted positively on CS. Further, SCR significantly mediated the relationships between SCC and CS. The study suggests that the implementation of SCC and SCR programmes is vital in influencing CS. This study contributes to SCM literature as it is one of the few studies exploring SCC, SCR, and CS in the context of the South African manufacturing SMEs.

**Keywords:** supply chain management; performance; supply chains; information sharing