When the Shelf Is Invisible: A Reorder-Gated Method for New-Product Decisions in Opaque Wholesale Channels

Syed Syyeduzzaman (Corresponding Author)
Independent Researcher and Industry Practitioner
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: ceo@eternalhotelsupplies.com

Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business
E-ISSN: 2289-8298

Vol. 14, Issue 2, pp. 147-160. Sep. 2026

Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan
Locked Bag 36, 16100 Pengkalan Chepa
Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia
http://journal.umk.edu.my/index.php/jeb

Date Received: 9 August 2026
Date Accepted: 29 September 2026

DOI: 10.17687/jeb.v14i2.1696

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Abstract – Purpose: Small suppliers may see dealer orders but not consumer sell-through. This study asks which observable channel event should trigger a new-product decision and what managers may reasonably infer from it. Method: An analytical single case uses three ERP-recorded opening orders from three Bangladeshi dealers between 6 May and 16 July 2026: 275 sets across 34 product variants. Transaction records were separated from practitioner interpretation and classified by timing relative to consumer exposure. Findings: At cutoff, none had been delivered, billed, paid or reordered; the case therefore cannot validate reorders as predictors of demand. Opening orders show dealer commitment, while a paid post-exposure reorder would provide evidence consistent with depletion. Repeated reorders would indicate channel persistence, although alternative explanations would remain. Contribution: Academically, the inference-rights framework links observable events to bounded claims; managerially, it yields proportionate hold, continue, investigate or scale decisions. Longitudinal, multi-firm evidence is required before validation.

Keywords: "Channel opacity", "Dealer reorder", "Demand evidence", "New-product decisions", "Wholesale distribution ", "Information processing".
JEL Classification: M31; L26

1. Introduction

On 16 July 2026, a small tableware venture could see an opening order book of 275 sets worth BDT 1.87 million. It could identify the three dealers that had ordered, the dates of their orders and every product variant in the book. It could not see whether a consumer wanted any of them. None of the goods had yet been delivered, billed or paid, and the independent wholesale channel did not provide item-level sell-through data. The firm's records were precise at the point of sale to the dealer and silent at the shelf.

That asymmetry creates a problem before it creates a forecasting problem. Managers must first decide what an observable event is entitled to mean. An opening order may be commercially valuable because it commits a dealer to a product, but it occurs before the dealer has observed consumer response. Treating that order as downstream validation can

release production, working capital and assortment commitments on evidence that does not yet contain consumer information. Refusing to learn from it at all is equally unhelpful. The managerial task is to match the size of a decision to the maturity of the signal available when the decision is made.

Demand-planning research largely addresses settings in which order histories can be combined with point-of-sale, inventory or sell-through data. These streams show both the value and the limits of downstream visibility. Point-of-sale data do not always outperform order histories, retailer inventory affects the orders a supplier receives, and the value of shared retail data may lie as much in planning alignment as in forecast accuracy (Williams & Waller, 2010; Williams et al., 2014; Van Belle et al., 2021; Saarinen et al., 2025). Related models explain when retailers have incentives to withhold demand information (Dai et al., 2022). Yet these approaches still begin with downstream information that is captured, shareable or purchasable.

The focal venture faced a narrower and more severe condition. It had usable internal order records but no systematic consumer-sales record and no contractual access to showroom data. A more sophisticated forecasting model could not repair the missing observation. Until a later channel event carried new information, the firm needed a defensible way to control both its claims and its commitments.

Against this setting, the paper asks: What observable event should trigger a new-product decision when consumer sell-through is unavailable? It develops, but does not validate, a reorder-gated framework that assigns each observable event a limited inference and reserves larger commitments for more mature evidence.

Two contributions follow. An organizational information-processing view usually directs a firm to increase its capacity to handle uncertainty. When that response is not immediately feasible, a small firm can instead restrict what each observable event is allowed to authorize. The paper also extends new-product gating beyond launch. Conventional gates organize evidence for development decisions; the proposed framework adds a post-launch gate for an opaque channel, where a dealer's reorder is the first observable event after possible consumer exposure. This remains a bounded claim. A paid reorder is proposed as a better-timed signal than an opening order, not as direct proof of consumer demand or a validated forecasting method.

2. Literature review and theoretical framing

Organizational information-processing theory begins from the proposition that uncertainty increases the amount of information an organization must process to perform a task (Galbraith, 1974; Tushman & Nadler, 1978). Organizations can respond by increasing their information-processing capacity, for example through information systems and lateral communication, or by reducing the amount of uncertainty to which a decision is exposed. This distinction matters in supply chains because the focal organization often does not control the information infrastructure of the firms downstream from it.

Research on supply-chain visibility usually examines how information sharing improves coordination. The bullwhip literature shows that orders can become distorted as they travel upstream when firms lack visibility of consumption and inventory (Lee et al., 1997). More recent research likewise treats retail data as a means of improving manufacturers' forecasts or planning alignment. Van Belle et al. (2021), for example, find that shared sell-through and inventory data can improve short-term wholesaler-demand forecasts. Saarinen et al. (2025) find that retail-data integration does not uniformly improve forecast accuracy, but can improve tactical and operational alignment. These studies make an important point for the present analysis: an intermediary order is not a transparent reading of end demand. Its meaning depends partly on the downstream inventory and planning process that produced it.

Downstream information cannot always be shared on demand. Channel members may lack incentives to disclose private demand information (Dai et al., 2022). Evidence from 81 manufacturing SMEs in Austria and Germany finds that smaller firms share less information digitally and remain less active in multi-tier supply-chain management, even though such integration matters for transparency (Winter et al., 2023). Saarinen et al. (2025) similarly observe that smaller retailers often rely on periodic reports rather than dedicated data platforms because of resource constraints. Although these settings differ from the Bangladeshi wholesale channel examined here, they show that limited visibility may reflect capabilities and incentives rather than an upstream firm's failure to request a report.

For a small supplier, increasing information-processing capacity may be impossible in the short run. A supplier cannot manufacture point-of-sale data that the channel does not record, compel independent dealers to disclose it, or necessarily afford syndicated market coverage. This paper considers another response: limit the commitment attached to an ambiguous signal. Such restraint does not eliminate uncertainty. It prevents an event with little downstream information from authorizing a decision that assumes much more.

Orders and consumption are linked, but they are not the same measure. Williams and Waller (2010) show that the value of point-of-sale information relative to order history varies across forecasting settings. Williams et al. (2014) demonstrate an inventory-balance effect: future retailer orders reflect not only consumer sales but also the retailer's inventory position. Hartzel and Wood (2017) likewise find that improvements from point-of-sale reporting vary with order frequency, quantity and variability. A dealer can therefore place, delay or enlarge an order for reasons that are not reducible to current consumer purchases.

Order timing adds another distinction at product launch. An opening order is placed before the dealer has observed the product's performance in its own channel. Retail buyers' selection of new products can reflect relational embeddedness as well as their assessment of the offering (Kaufman et al., 2006). Their initial commitment may arise from the product, the relationship, the offered terms or expected consumer demand. This case cannot determine which explanation drove each dealer and does not claim that opening orders generally exaggerate demand. Its narrower claim is logical: because an opening order precedes local consumer exposure, it cannot contain evidence produced by that exposure.

Reorders occur later. When placed after documented delivery and a reasonable selling period, they can incorporate information unavailable when the dealer placed the opening order, including experience of stock movement, customer enquiries, display performance and remaining inventory. Yet a reorder may also reflect shelf filling, seasonal preparation, favourable credit, commitment to a range or a shortage in the opening quantity. Inventory-balance research prevents the analysis from relabelling this event as sell-through. It is an observable update in dealer commitment after exposure, and its evidential value depends on timing and the alternatives that remain plausible.

Stage-gate approaches divide new-product development into stages separated by decisions that require specified information (Cooper, 2008). Their value does not come from adding more checkpoints; it comes from preventing a project from receiving larger commitments before it has produced the evidence assigned to a gate. Cooper also emphasizes that gates should be scalable rather than rigid, because the evidence appropriate to one project may be disproportionate for another.

Opaque wholesale channels create a post-launch extension of this problem. A product can pass technical development, secure dealer bookings and enter production while the upstream supplier still lacks evidence of consumer response. The missing gate sits between channel placement and scaled replenishment. An opening order is evidence for initial placement. A post-exposure reorder is a later and different event. A repeated reorder pattern is different again. Combining these events into a single label such as demand collapses the sequence through which uncertainty is reduced.

Bringing the information-processing and stage-gate perspectives together explains both sides of the problem. Information-processing theory shows why observable transactions differ in what they reveal; gate logic links those differences to proportionate commitments. The resulting principle is simple: the firm should not authorize a decision whose empirical premise has not yet become observable.

Existing demand-planning studies explain how downstream sales and inventory information can improve forecasts or planning. Information-sharing research explains why channel members may or may not disclose such information. New-product research explains how staged gates can discipline investment. What remains less clearly specified is the decision architecture for a small supplier facing all three conditions at once: downstream data are absent, intermediary orders are visible, and a production decision must be made before an empirical demand model can be estimated.

An inference-rights framework addresses that residual problem without declaring any single proxy to be demand. For each observable event, it asks when the event occurred relative to consumer exposure, what changed in the dealer's commitment, which rival explanations remain and how much managerial commitment the event can reasonably authorize. The contribution is a testable architecture for controlling inference under opacity, not a claim that reorders validate demand.

3. Methodology

3.1. Case design and evidence

An analytical single-case design supports the development of a preliminary decision framework (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014); it is not used to estimate a population relationship. Case selection followed an unusually clear information-processing contrast. Upstream commercial events were recorded at SKU and dealer level, while downstream consumer transactions were completely unobserved. The venture was also preparing its first production cycle with constrained working capital, so the distinction carried an immediate decision consequence. Together, these conditions expose the boundary between what the records establish and what managers may be tempted to infer.

The Bangladeshi tableware supplier sold through independent dealers, which in turn supplied retail showrooms. It owned no showroom-level point-of-sale system and had no contractual feed of consumer transactions or retailer inventory. This case is not presented as representative of all Bangladeshi firms, SMEs or wholesale channels. It is a critical illustration of one condition: detailed sell-in records combined with zero direct sell-through visibility.

Observation begins with the first recorded opening order on 6 May 2026 and ends with a reconciled internal snapshot dated 16 July 2026. Three dealers placed three opening sales orders comprising 275 sets with a prospective value of BDT 1.87 million. Across the order book were 30 variants from the focal Imperfection range and four from a familiar Marble range. Individual orders contained 75, 140 and 60 sets.

At the cutoff date, the ERP marked every order as awaiting delivery and billing. Delivered quantity and billed quantity were both zero, no customer advance had been recorded, and no paid reorder existed. The record therefore captures dealer commitment before market exposure. It cannot show consumer response, dealer depletion, collection reliability or the performance of the proposed reorder gate.

Analysis drew on three source layers:

Transaction records: the dated ERP order snapshot established order dates, dealer count, quantities, assortment and transaction status.

Channel and operating records: the documented channel map and internal business assessment established the route from supplier to dealer to showroom to consumer, the absence of a downstream reporting feed, and the commercial decisions facing the venture.

Practitioner interpretation and planning materials: dated owner assumptions and a scenario-planning model recorded the intended use of reorders, seasonal judgment and proposed decision gates. These materials informed framework development but were not treated as evidence that the framework had worked.

3.2. Analysis and safeguards

Documentary observations and practitioner interpretations occupied separate columns in the source-status matrix. Only documentary records could establish transaction status, quantity, date or the presence of delivery, billing, payment and reorder. Practitioner accounts could explain why a decision rule appeared useful, but could neither change an order's recorded status nor confirm a downstream outcome. When an interpretation exceeded the record, documentary status governed and the interpretation remained only as an assumption or proposed mechanism. Thus, a strong opening order book could not support an inference of delivery, consumer acceptance or recurring demand.

Framework development proceeded in six steps. Analysis began by ordering the transaction sequence from interest and booking through delivery, collection and possible reorder. Each event was then classified by whether it occurred before or after the dealer could have observed consumer response. For every event, the source-status matrix recorded the narrowest supported inference and the rival explanations identified in order-formation and inventory research. Organizational information-processing theory supplied the next test: a later event could reduce uncertainty only if it contained information unavailable earlier. New-product gate logic then linked the sequence to staged commitments, and a final stress test examined false-positive and false-negative conditions.

No category was induced from observed reorder outcomes because none existed. Timing classifications are deductive, based on the difference between pre-exposure and post-exposure information; interpretations of order ambiguity are theory-informed; and the specific gates and labels are practitioner-designed proposals. Terms such as low, moderate and stronger evidence describe a reasoned provisional ordering rather than estimated statistical weights.

The author's role in developing the venture provided access to its transaction and decision records and created a commercial conflict. It also increased the risk of interpreting progress too favourably. A fixed cutoff date, the source-separation rule and explicit reporting of zero delivery and reorder constrain that risk. The analysis contains no identifiable dealer, customer or consumer information and uses no interviews or interventions with human participants.

4. Observed case evidence

Table 1 reports the complete transaction state used in the analysis. Dealer identities are replaced with case codes because identity adds no analytical value.

Table 1: Opening-order record at the 16 July 2026 cutoff

Dealer	Order date	Sets	SKU lines in order	Delivered	Billed	Advance paid	Reorder observed
Dealer A	6 May 2026	75	9	0%	0%	No	No

Dealer	Order date	Sets	SKU lines in order	Delivered	Billed	Advance paid	Reorder observed
Dealer B	9 May 2026	140	28	0%	0%	No	No
Dealer C	16 May 2026	60	12	0%	0%	No	No
Total or book-level status		**275**	**34 unique ordered variants**	**0%**	**0%**	**No**	**No**

One result is commercially encouraging: three independent dealers made opening commitments across a broad assortment. The same record imposes an analytical constraint because every order remained upstream of consumer exposure at the cutoff. A substantial and internally detailed order book can therefore exist while the central outcome of interest remains unobservable.

Three bounded findings follow from the record. The venture had functioning dealer-level sell-in data, so its difficulty was not a complete absence of commercial information. Those records stopped before delivery and could not distinguish dealer confidence from consumer response. That missing visibility mattered because production and assortment commitments had to be considered before any post-exposure transaction could be observed.

Nothing in the case establishes that opening orders overpredict demand, that paid reorders predict demand accurately, that a particular observation window is optimal, or that reorder-gated firms outperform firms using another rule. Such claims require later cycles or comparative data. The case identifies an inference gap; it does not validate the framework proposed to manage it.

5. The proposed reorder-gated framework

5.1. How the framework works
Five elements organize the framework:
Channel opacity -> observable event -> permissible inference -> remaining rival explanations -> proportionate decision commitment
Channel opacity removes direct observation of consumer purchases, leaving the firm with a sequence of channel events rather than demand itself. Because each event occurs at a different point relative to consumer exposure, each permits a different inference. Rival explanations remain visible, and the managerial gate limits how much capital, production and assortment commitment the evidence can authorize.

This structure differs from treating a reorder as a substitute demand measure. It treats the reorder as an update in an evidence sequence. Its informational value comes from the fact that it occurs after the dealer has had an opportunity to learn, while its limitations arise because the supplier still cannot observe what produced the dealer's decision.

Table 2 combines the overlapping evidence and proxy tables used in the earlier manuscript. The categories are intentionally conservative.

Table 2: Proposed evidence sequence under wholesale-channel opacity

Observable event	Position relative to consumer exposure	Narrowest permissible inference	Important alternative explanations	Proportionate decision
Positive comment or enquiry	Before exposure	Interest exists	Politeness, curiosity, no purchasing authority	Record only
Opening booking	Before exposure	Dealer expresses willingness to try	Relationship, novelty, favourable terms, no final commitment	Record the booking; do not commit scale or claim downstream validation
Confirmed opening order	Before exposure	Dealer is willing to try and commercially commit	Relationship, novelty, terms, expected rather than observed demand	Plan a bounded launch; do not claim downstream validation
Delivered opening order	Exposure can begin	Product has entered the channel	Display may be delayed or incomplete	Start the eligibility clock and verify exposure conditions
Collected opening sale	Exposure may have occurred	Dealer commitment has converted to cash for the supplier	Dealer stock may remain unsold	Close the first commercial cycle; do not infer consumer depletion
First paid reorder after an eligible exposure period	After possible exposure	Evidence is consistent with depletion or renewed dealer confidence	Shelf filling, seasonal build, favourable credit, thin opening stock, dealer-specific strategy	Continue or replenish in a controlled quantity; investigate confounds
Repeated paid reorders across periods or dealers	After repeated exposure	Stronger evidence of demand persistence in the observed channel	Common seasonal shock, coordinated dealer policy, continuing incentives	Consider controlled scale subject to margin, returns and concentration checks

Two changes from the earlier ladder are material. A single paid reorder no longer establishes consumer pull or defines a decisive commercial click; it is evidence consistent with depletion, and its interpretation remains conditional. Repeated reorders demonstrate persistence in the observed dealer channel rather than durable product-market fit. That narrower description can be audited against later records. The sequence also separates an opening booking from a confirmed opening order because the two carry different degrees of commitment, although the present record contains confirmed orders only and cannot illustrate that distinction empirically.

A missing reorder is meaningful only after a dealer has had a reasonable opportunity to expose and sell the product. The eligibility clock must therefore begin at documented delivery, not at booking or order confirmation. The present case cannot estimate the correct duration because no delivery had occurred by the cutoff. A later empirical application should define the window before evaluating the outcome and record at least the delivery date, opening quantity, known display delay, season, dealer inventory position and reorder date.
Starting the clock at the opening order can create a false negative because production and delivery consume part of the window. Leaving it undefined creates hindsight because managers can extend or shorten the period after seeing the result. A pre-specified, context-sensitive interval avoids both errors, although later evidence must calibrate its numerical value.

The earlier manuscript described automatic kill, continue and scale gates. Available evidence supports a more qualified decision architecture:

Hold: Before delivery, the opening order may authorize bounded production and channel placement, but it cannot authorize a claim of consumer validation.

Continue: A first paid reorder after an eligible window can authorize controlled replenishment. It does not by itself authorize broad scale.

Investigate: No reorder after the window triggers an investigation of remaining stock, display, season, credit and opening quantity before a kill decision. Silence is not automatically failure.

Scale: Repeated paid reorders across more than one dealer or period may authorize controlled scale when margins, returns and concentration remain acceptable.

Adding an investigate gate recognizes that the same observed absence can arise from weak consumer response, excessive opening stock, poor display, liquidity constraints or a slow season. Decisions remain disciplined because those rival explanations stay visible.

5.2.Propositions for later testing

The case does not test the following propositions. They define the empirical programme needed to evaluate the framework.

Table 3:Untested propositions and required evidence

Proposition	Required test	Evidence that would weaken it
P1. A post-exposure paid reorder contains more information about later dealer-channel persistence than opening-order volume alone.	Compare opening volume and first-reorder status against subsequent reorder histories across products and dealers.	Opening-order volume predicts later persistence as well as or better than reorder status.
P2. The informational value of a first reorder is moderated by opening inventory, elapsed exposure time, season and dealer credit conditions.	Model later reorder persistence while observing inventory and timing confounds.	Reorder interpretation is stable across these conditions.
P3. Matching commitment to signal maturity reduces overproduction relative to scaling from opening orders, but may delay successful products.	Compare inventory, write-down, service and timing outcomes across decision rules.	Gating adds delay without reducing inventory or decision error.

By separating conceptual logic from empirical claims, these propositions also make the proposal falsifiable. If opening orders predict persistence equally well, or reorder-gating merely delays successful products, the framework should be revised or abandoned.

6. Discussion

One theoretical implication concerns how a firm responds when it cannot process the information a decision would normally require. Research commonly emphasizes increasing visibility through shared data, platforms or analytical capability. In the focal case, those mechanisms could not operate in time for the decision at hand. A complementary response is to reduce the size of the decision that ambiguous information can authorize. This temporary governance mechanism does not replace the search for better data; it governs the period before those data exist.

A second implication separates an event from the inference it can support. Order research shows that retailer orders combine demand, inventory and policy effects. Applied to new-product governance, that insight makes the timing of learning explicit. An opening order records a dealer's ex ante commitment; a reorder records an ex post update whose content

remains partially hidden. Treating the later event as stronger without calling it conclusive is the central theoretical move.

A final implication extends decision gates beyond launch. Stage-gate research focuses on the evidence required to move a project forward, yet an opaque channel can place the product in the market before the supplier receives any demand observation. The proposed post-launch gate ties replenishment and scale to the maturity of channel evidence. Its investigate stage prevents a mechanical no-reorder rule from confusing poor exposure with poor demand.

This framework does not solve forecasting without data. It addresses an earlier governance question: what may the firm conclude before a forecast can be estimated? The boundary matters because available numbers can look persuasive. In the focal case, 275 sets and BDT 1.87 million were real features of the opening order book, but neither moved the observation beyond dealer commitment.

Research showing that downstream data can improve or realign planning examines a later state. Van Belle et al. (2021) and Saarinen et al. (2025) ask what manufacturers can do when retail data become available; the present framework asks what commitments are defensible before that transition. It also follows the caution in Williams et al. (2014): because inventory mediates order formation, even a reorder remains an imperfect demand signal. The eligibility clock and investigate gate translate that caution into a decision rule.

The case also qualifies the simple prescription that small firms should digitize. Upstream orders were already digitized; opacity existed across organizational boundaries, not inside the order book. Winter et al. (2023) show that SME information sharing in multi-tier networks remains uneven. What matters is not only whether a firm has a system, but whether its channel produces and shares the observation needed for the decision.

7. Managerial implications

Managers can operate the framework with ordinary transaction records. For each launch, the supplier records opening order date and quantity, actual delivery date, the start of an eligible exposure window, collection status, first reorder date and quantity, and any known confound such as excess opening inventory or a seasonal build. Reports should then describe the event in the language of Table 2 rather than call every commercial milestone demand.

This vocabulary lets managers recognize a real opening commitment without financing an unsupported conclusion. It also turns waiting into a defined learning period. Before delivery, the firm prepares a bounded launch; after delivery, it starts the observation clock. A first paid reorder supports controlled replenishment, while repetition across dealers or periods can support scale. Silence triggers investigation before termination.

Direct sell-through data make this framework unnecessary. It also fits poorly when reorders occur too slowly to inform a product decision or when centrally mandated purchasing contains little local learning. Larger firms may accept more false positives in exchange for

speed. The strongest use case combines constrained capital, inaccessible consumer data, a decision-relevant reorder horizon and a material cost of premature scale.

8. Limitations and future research

Four limitations bound the contribution. Evidence comes from one venture and one wholesale configuration, which can clarify a decision condition but cannot establish prevalence or average effects. No product had been delivered by the cutoff, so the study observed neither a paid-reorder nor a sell-through cycle; the proposed ordering of evidence is theoretically reasoned and managerially specified rather than empirically validated. The author's founder role creates a self-confirmation risk that source separation can constrain but not remove. Dealer inventory, display quality, credit constraints and consumer enquiries also remain unobserved, although each could explain later reorder behavior.

Future research should begin with a longitudinal test that follows the three opening dealers from delivery through collection and repeated reorder windows. A stronger design would then compare multiple products, dealers and firms, recording opening quantity, exposure time, inventory position, season and credit conditions. This would permit direct comparison of opening-order volume, first-reorder status and repeated reorders as predictors of later channel persistence. A comparative design could also test whether reorder-gated decisions reduce write-downs and overproduction enough to justify any delay imposed on successful products.

Later tests may reject parts of the framework. A useful gate must specify what evidence would close it, which rival explanation could reopen it and what outcome would show that waiting costs more than it saves.

9. Conclusion

The focal venture knew exactly what three dealers had ordered and still did not know what consumers wanted. That is the problem of the invisible shelf. The opening orders established commercial commitment, not downstream validation, because they were recorded before delivery and consumer exposure.

A reorder-gated framework does not turn a dealer reorder into consumer sales data. It treats the reorder as a later, imperfect update and limits the decision that update can authorize. Linking channel opacity, event timing, rival explanations and staged commitment offers a transparent way to govern decisions until richer data exist. Whether this approach improves decisions remains an empirical question for the next commercial cycles, not the opening order book.

Disclosure Statement
Conflict of interest: The author is the founder of, and has a commercial interest in, the anonymized venture examined in this study.

Funding: The author received no financial support for this research, authorship or publication.

Data availability: The analysis is based on anonymized commercial records. The underlying ERP records contain confidential third-party information and are not publicly available. A de-identified description of the analytical fields and calculations may be provided to the editor where confidentiality permits.

Ethical considerations: The study analyzes the author's own business records and reports no identifiable dealer, customer or consumer information. It includes no participant interviews or intervention with human participants.

Generative AI disclosure: Generative AI assisted with drafting and language refinement based on author-provided records and instructions. The author selected the evidence, verified the analysis and accepts full responsibility for the manuscript.

Acknowledgement

N/A

References

Cooper, R. G. (2008). Perspective: The Stage-Gate idea-to-launch process: Update, what's new, and NexGen systems. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 25*(3), 213-232. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5885.2008.00296.x

Dai, Y., Dou, L., Song, H., Zhou, L., & Li, H. (2022). Two-way information sharing of uncertain demand forecasts in a dual-channel supply chain. *Computers & Industrial Engineering, 169*, 108162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cie.2022.108162

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review, 14*(4), 532-550. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308385

Galbraith, J. R. (1974). Organization design: An information processing view. *Interfaces, 4*(3), 28-36. https://doi.org/10.1287/inte.4.3.28

Hartzel, K. S., & Wood, C. A. (2017). Factors that affect the improvement of demand forecast accuracy through point-of-sale reporting. *European Journal of Operational Research, 260*(1), 171-182. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2016.11.047

Kaufman, P., Jayachandran, S., & Rose, R. L. (2006). The role of relational embeddedness in retail buyers' selection of new products. *Journal of Marketing Research, 43*(4), 580-587. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.43.4.580

Lee, H. L., Padmanabhan, V., & Whang, S. (1997). Information distortion in a supply chain: The bullwhip effect. *Management Science, 43*(4), 546-558. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.43.4.546

Saarinen, L., Huttunen, P., & Rehman, O. (2025). Revisiting the value of data sharing in retail supply chain demand planning. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management, 45*(11), 1910-1936. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOPM-07-2024-0560

Tushman, M. L., & Nadler, D. A. (1978). Information processing as an integrating concept in organizational design. *Academy of Management Review, 3*(3), 613-624. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1978.4305791

Van Belle, J. E., Guns, T., & Verbeke, W. (2021). Using shared sell-through data to forecast wholesaler demand in multi-echelon supply chains. *European Journal of Operational Research, 288*(2), 466-479. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2020.05.059

Williams, B. D., & Waller, M. A. (2010). Creating order forecasts: Point-of-sale or order history? *Journal of Business Logistics, 31*(2), 231-251. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2158-1592.2010.tb00150.x

Williams, B. D., Waller, M. A., Ahire, S., & Ferrier, G. D. (2014). Predicting retailer orders with POS and order data: The inventory balance effect. *European Journal of Operational Research, 232*(3), 593-600. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2013.07.016

Winter, M., Dopler, S., Müller, J. M., & Zeisler, A. (2023). Information sharing and multi-tier supply chain management of SMEs in the context of Industry 4.0. *Procedia Computer Science, 217*, 1378-1385. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2022.12.336

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage.