

**An Exploration of Antecedents and Consequences of Distributor  
Stewardship Behavior in Channel Relationships**



By

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## ABSTRACT

Although much of the existing research on channel partner governance focuses on contractual and relational mechanisms, studies have also found evidence of stewardship playing a salient role in governing interfirm exchanges. In the first part of this study, the authors conceptualize and test a model of stewardship oriented behaviors (SOBs), identifying its key antecedents and consequence. SOBs reflect channel partner behaviors that are inclined towards the long term benefits of suppliers rather than towards their own short term self-interests. Stewardship governance based on intrinsic and identification motivation of partners is proposed to explain the variation in channel partner's display of SOBs towards the firm.

In the second study, the authors provide more insights into the mechanisms through which SOB's effect supplier firm performance. In this regard authors examine the mediating role of two network constructs: network embeddedness (NE) and network identity (NI) as two network perspectives that are critical when economic performance is embedded in social structures, as is typically the case in marketing channel relationships.

Data from 237 manufacturer-distributor-downstream partner triads of the Indian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) and pharmaceutical industry shows strong support for the effects of intrinsic motivation and identification motivation on channel partner's display of SOB's, which in turn enhances firm's NE, NI and performance. This research provides a starting point for managers taking the first step towards stewardship governance in interfirm relationships. Future research directions and managerial implications of the findings are discussed.

**Keywords:** Channel partner governance. Stewardship governance. Stewardship oriented behaviors. Firm performance. Network embeddedness, Network Identity.

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## Acronyms Used in the Study

1	RP	Relationship Performance (Firm's/Manufacturer's relationship performance. Conceptualised as firm's/manufacturers' economic outcomes from the relationship)
2	IM	Internalized Motivation
3	non IM	Non-internalized Motivation
4	SOBs	Stewardship oriented Behaviors (Displayed by Channel Partners/Distributors)
5	NE	Network Embeddedness (Firm's/Manufacturer's relationship with downstream partners (Retailers, Wholesalers and Re-Distributors))
6	NI	Network Identity (Firm's/Manufacturer's attractiveness in the eyes of other distributors and downstream partners (Retailers, Wholesalers and Re-Distributors))