Magna Scientia Advanced Research and Reviews

eISSN: 2582-9394

Cross Ref DOI: 10.30574/msarr

Journal homepage: https://magnascientiapub.com/journals/msarr/

(REVIEW ARTICLE)

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Enhancing FMCG supply chain traceability and efficiency with blockchain technology implementation

Amarachi Queen Olufemi-Phillips [1,*], Abbey Ngochindo Igwe [2], Onyeka Chrisanctus Ofodile [3], Nsisong Louis Eyo-Udo [4] and Titilope Tosin Adewale [5]

[1] *Independent Researcher, UK.*
[2] *Independent Researcher, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.*
[3] *Sanctus Maris Concepts Ltd, Nigeria.*
[4] *Ulster University, United Kingdom.*
[5] *Labatt Breweries of Canada.*

Magna Scientia Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 12(02), 008–032

Publication history: Received on 24 September 2024; revised on 01 November 2024; accepted on 04 November 2024

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.30574/msarr.2024.12.2.0178

Abstract

Enhancing supply chain traceability and efficiency in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is critical for mitigating counterfeit losses and ensuring product integrity. This study proposes a comprehensive model for the implementation of blockchain technology tailored to the unique demands of the FMCG supply chain. The model emphasizes transparency, accountability, and real-time data sharing among stakeholders, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and consumers. By integrating blockchain, the FMCG industry can create a tamper-proof record of each transaction and product movement, significantly improving traceability from production to point-of-sale. Key components of the proposed model include a decentralized ledger that captures product information, provenance data, and transaction history. This approach facilitates efficient tracking of products, enhances supply chain visibility, and enables stakeholders to authenticate goods at any stage. Moreover, by employing blockchain's smart contract functionality, the model allows for automated compliance verification and streamlined processes, reducing the time and resources required for audits and inspections. The study further explores potential extensions of blockchain technology to incorporate smart contracts that can automate various supply chain operations. These contracts can facilitate automatic payments upon delivery confirmation, trigger inventory replenishment orders based on real-time data, and enforce compliance with regulatory requirements without human intervention. By leveraging these technological advancements, FMCG companies can significantly reduce counterfeit losses and improve overall supply chain efficiency. This not only protects brand reputation but also fosters consumer trust, which is vital in an increasingly competitive market. The implications of this research highlight the transformative potential of blockchain technology in the FMCG sector, paving the way for future innovations in traceability and efficiency. In conclusion, this study presents a robust framework for blockchain implementation in the FMCG supply chain, addressing critical issues of traceability and counterfeiting while offering pathways for future enhancements through smart contracts.

Keywords: FMCG; Supply Chain Traceability; Blockchain Technology; Counterfeit Losses; Smart Contracts; Transparency; Efficiency; Decentralized Ledger

1. Introduction

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is characterized by its high volume, rapid turnover, and intense competition. It encompasses a wide range of products, including food and beverages, personal care items, and household goods, all of which are essential to everyday life. The complexity of FMCG supply chains arises from multiple

* Corresponding author: Amarachi Queen Olufemi-Phillips

factors, including diverse sourcing channels, extensive distribution networks, and the need for quick response times to changing consumer demands (Adejugbe & Adejugbe, 2014, Oham & Ejike, 2024, Oyewole, et al., 2024, Reis, et al., 2024). As consumers become increasingly aware of product quality, safety, and ethical sourcing, the challenges within the FMCG supply chain have intensified. Companies face mounting pressure to ensure the integrity and authenticity of their products, particularly in an environment where counterfeit goods pose significant risks to brand reputation and consumer trust.

Traceability is a critical aspect of supply chain management in the FMCG industry. It involves the ability to track a product's journey from its origin to the consumer, providing transparency and accountability throughout the supply chain. Effective traceability is essential for preventing counterfeit products, as it allows companies to verify the authenticity of their goods and assure customers of their safety (Agu, et al., 2024, Oham & Ejike, 2024, Oyeniran, et al., 2023, Paul, Ogugua & Eyo-Udo, 2024). Moreover, traceability enhances product integrity by enabling swift responses to recalls, thereby mitigating potential health risks. In a landscape where consumers are increasingly prioritizing transparency and ethical consumption, the ability to provide verifiable information about product origins and handling is paramount.

The purpose of this study is to propose a blockchain implementation model aimed at enhancing supply chain traceability and efficiency within the FMCG sector. Blockchain technology, with its decentralized, immutable ledger system, offers a promising solution to the challenges of traceability in supply chains (Adewusi, et al., 2024, Ogunjobi, et al., 2023, Oyeniran, et al., 2022, Soremekun, etal., 2024). By providing a secure and transparent means of recording transactions, blockchain enables all participants in the supply chain to access real-time data regarding product movement and status. This level of visibility not only streamlines operations but also fosters trust among stakeholders, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and consumers (Ajiva, Ejike & Abhulimen, 2024, Daraojimba, et al., 2023, Okeke, et al., 2022, Ugochukwu, et al., 2024). As the FMCG sector continues to evolve in response to consumer demands and technological advancements, the implementation of blockchain presents a strategic opportunity to revolutionize supply chain practices, enhance operational efficiency, and safeguard product integrity. Through this study, we aim to explore the potential of blockchain technology in addressing the complexities of FMCG supply chains and improving traceability to ultimately benefit both businesses and consumers (Ahuchogu, Sanyaolu & Adeleke, 2024, Ogbu, et al., 2023, Oyeniran, et al., 2023).

2. Background and Literature Review

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector operates in a dynamic environment characterized by rapid product turnover and intense competition. However, this industry faces several significant challenges that can undermine efficiency, transparency, and consumer trust. One of the most pressing issues is the proliferation of counterfeit products. The counterfeit market has grown substantially, driven by consumer demand for affordable goods and the ease of replicating popular products (Adewale, et al., 2024,Ofodile, et al., 2024, Oyeniran, et al., 2024, Uwaoma, et al., 2023). This issue not only poses financial losses for legitimate companies but also endangers consumer safety, as counterfeit products often fail to meet regulatory standards and quality controls. As a result, companies in the FMCG sector are under immense pressure to enhance product traceability, ensuring that consumers can verify the authenticity and quality of the goods they purchase.

Another critical challenge in FMCG supply chains is the lack of transparency. Traditional supply chain practices often involve multiple intermediaries, resulting in fragmented data and limited visibility. This obscurity can hinder companies' ability to track products throughout their lifecycle, complicating efforts to address issues like product recalls and quality assurance. Inefficiencies in tracking can also lead to delays, increased operational costs, and lost sales opportunities (Anyanwu, et al., 2024, Ofodile, et al., 2024, Oyeniran, et al., 2022, Usuemerai, et al., 2024). With consumers increasingly demanding transparency regarding product origins and handling, the need for a robust solution that addresses these challenges has never been more urgent.

Blockchain technology has emerged as a potential solution to these issues. Defined as a decentralized digital ledger that records transactions across multiple computers, blockchain offers several key features that make it particularly relevant to supply chain management. Its decentralized nature eliminates the need for a central authority, empowering all participants in the supply chain to access and verify information independently (Anyanwu, et al., 2024, Ofodile, et al., 2024, Oyeniran, et al., 2022, Usuemerai, et al., 2024). This characteristic enhances trust and collaboration among stakeholders. Additionally, blockchain's immutability ensures that once a transaction is recorded, it cannot be altered or deleted, providing a reliable and tamper-proof record of product movement. Furthermore, the transparency afforded by blockchain allows stakeholders to trace products at each stage of the supply chain, from raw material sourcing to

end-consumer delivery, significantly improving accountability and oversight (Adepoju & Esan, 2023, Bassey, 2022, Lukong, et al., 2024, Manuel, et al., 2024).

Previous research on blockchain applications in supply chains has highlighted its transformative potential across various industries. Studies have shown that blockchain can improve supply chain traceability, enhance operational efficiency, and reduce costs. For instance, in the food industry, blockchain has been applied to track the journey of products from farm to table, enabling rapid identification of contamination sources during recalls (Adeniran, et al., 2024, Odunaiya, et al., 2024, Oyeniran, et al., 2024). Similarly, in the pharmaceuticals sector, blockchain has been used to verify the authenticity of drugs, combating counterfeit medications. The positive outcomes observed in these sectors underscore blockchain's relevance to the FMCG industry, where similar challenges persist.

Research specific to the FMCG sector has begun to emerge, illustrating how blockchain can enhance supply chain practices. Several studies have documented successful pilot projects that have implemented blockchain solutions to improve traceability and transparency. For example, leading FMCG brands have experimented with blockchain to track the provenance of their ingredients, ensuring that they meet ethical and sustainability standards (Adewusi, Chiekezie & Eyo-Udo, 2022, Oyeniran, et al., 2023, Raji, et al., 2024). These initiatives not only provide assurance to consumers but also strengthen brand loyalty by demonstrating a commitment to quality and integrity. Moreover, blockchain's ability to create smart contracts—self-executing agreements coded into the blockchain—has the potential to streamline transactions and reduce administrative costs associated with traditional contract management.

In summary, the FMCG sector grapples with significant challenges, including counterfeit products, lack of transparency, and inefficiencies in tracking. These issues highlight the need for innovative solutions that enhance product traceability and operational efficiency. Blockchain technology, with its key features of decentralization, immutability, and transparency, presents a compelling opportunity to address these challenges (Abass, et al., 2024, Odeyemi, et al., 2024, Oyeniran, et al., 2024, Uzougbo, Ikegwu & Adewusi, 2024). Existing literature indicates that blockchain has been successfully applied in various industries, including food and pharmaceuticals, demonstrating its potential to transform supply chain practices. As research continues to explore the implications of blockchain for the FMCG sector, it becomes increasingly clear that this technology could play a vital role in ensuring product integrity and improving overall supply chain performance (Adejugbe & Adejugbe, 2019, Chumie, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Oyewole, et al., 2024). The following sections will delve deeper into the implementation of blockchain technology in FMCG supply chains, examining case studies, potential benefits, and strategies for overcoming obstacles to adoption.

3. Proposed Blockchain Implementation Model

The proposed blockchain implementation model for enhancing supply chain traceability and efficiency in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector seeks to address the multifaceted challenges that have long plagued this industry. By leveraging the inherent advantages of blockchain technology, the model aims to create a more transparent, efficient, and accountable supply chain, ultimately enhancing consumer trust and brand integrity (Adejugbe, 2020, Odeyemi, et al., 2024, Oyeniran, et al., 2023, Reis, et al., 2024). At its core, the model is designed to integrate a decentralized ledger system that enables real-time data sharing among all participants in the supply chain, thereby fostering collaboration and improving operational efficiency.

The model structure is built around a decentralized ledger that serves as the backbone of the blockchain implementation. Unlike traditional centralized systems, where a single entity holds control over data, a decentralized ledger distributes data across a network of computers (Adepoju & Esan, 2024, Bassey, 2023, Imoisili, et al., 2022, Osunlaja, Adepoju & Esan, 2024). This feature ensures that all stakeholders can access and verify information independently, reducing the likelihood of data tampering or fraud. In this model, each transaction related to product movement—from sourcing raw materials to the final sale at retail—will be recorded in real time (Ahuchogu, Sanyaolu & Adeleke, 2024, Orieno, et al., 2024, Oyewole, et al., 2024). This means that manufacturers, distributors, and retailers can update the ledger with relevant data, such as production dates, quality checks, and inventory levels. By maintaining an accurate and up-to-date record of product information, the decentralized ledger not only enhances transparency but also facilitates rapid response to any issues that may arise within the supply chain, such as product recalls or quality concerns.

A critical aspect of the proposed model is its focus on enhancing traceability features. The blockchain implementation allows for the tracking of products at every stage of the supply chain, providing a comprehensive view of a product's journey from production to consumption. Each product will be assigned a unique digital identifier, which will be linked to the blockchain. This identifier will enable stakeholders to trace the product's history, including its origin, processing, and distribution pathways (Adewusi, et al., 2024, Nnaji, et al., 2024, Oriekhoe, et al., 2024, Uwaoma, et al., 2023). In

practice, this means that consumers can scan a QR code on a product's packaging to access detailed information about its journey, including where it was produced, how it was transported, and any quality checks it underwent along the way. This level of traceability not only empowers consumers to make informed purchasing decisions but also provides brands with valuable data to enhance their sustainability and ethical sourcing initiatives.

Moreover, the model recognizes the importance of stakeholder engagement in the successful implementation of blockchain technology. The primary stakeholders in this ecosystem include manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and consumers. Each stakeholder plays a crucial role in contributing to the blockchain network (Agu, et al., 2024, Nnaji, et al., 2024, Onesi-Ozigagun, et al., 2024). Manufacturers, for instance, are responsible for entering product data into the blockchain at the point of production. They must ensure that the information is accurate and comprehensive, reflecting all relevant quality controls and certifications. Distributors, on the other hand, update the ledger with data related to transportation and handling, allowing for seamless tracking as products move through the supply chain (Adepoju & Esan, 2023, Bassey, 2022, Esan, Nwulu & Adepoju, 2024). Retailers can utilize the blockchain to access real-time inventory data, helping them manage stock levels more effectively and respond quickly to consumer demand.

Consumers also play a vital role in the blockchain network. By interacting with the blockchain through product scanning, they become active participants in the supply chain. This engagement not only promotes transparency but also fosters a sense of trust between consumers and brands. As consumers increasingly prioritize ethical consumption and sustainability, their ability to verify product information enhances brand loyalty and encourages companies to maintain high standards of integrity throughout their supply chains (Adegoke, et al., 2024, Nnaji, et al., 2024, Onesi-Ozigagun, et al., 2024).

In addition to these core stakeholders, regulatory bodies can also be integrated into the blockchain model. Their involvement can enhance compliance and oversight, ensuring that products meet safety and quality standards. By granting regulators access to the blockchain, they can conduct audits and inspections more efficiently, leveraging real-time data to assess compliance rather than relying on retrospective reporting (Adepoju, Atomon & Esan, 2024, Bassey, 2023, Esan, et al., 2024).

The proposed blockchain implementation model further incorporates advanced technologies to enhance its functionality. For example, the use of the Internet of Things (IoT) devices, such as sensors and RFID tags, can enable automated data collection at various stages of the supply chain. These devices can monitor environmental conditions during transport, providing data on temperature, humidity, and other factors that may affect product quality (Adejugbe & Adejugbe, 2015, Nnaji, et al., 2024, Onesi-Ozigagun, et al., 2024). By integrating IoT technology with blockchain, stakeholders can ensure that the information recorded on the ledger reflects accurate and real-time conditions, thereby enhancing traceability and accountability.

Moreover, smart contracts—self-executing contracts with the terms of the agreement directly written into code—can be employed to automate various processes within the supply chain. For example, a smart contract could be programmed to trigger payment upon the successful delivery of goods to a retailer, streamlining transaction processes and reducing administrative overhead. This automation not only enhances efficiency but also minimizes the potential for disputes, as all terms are transparently recorded on the blockchain (Adeoye, et al., 2024, Nnaji, et al., 2024, Onesi-Ozigagun, et al., 2024).

To successfully implement this model, a strategic approach to change management is essential. Stakeholders must be educated about the benefits and functionalities of blockchain technology, and clear guidelines must be established regarding data input and management. Collaboration among stakeholders will be key to ensuring that the blockchain is effectively utilized and that all parties are committed to maintaining the integrity of the data recorded.

In conclusion, the proposed blockchain implementation model for enhancing supply chain traceability and efficiency in the FMCG sector presents a transformative opportunity to address longstanding challenges. By integrating a decentralized ledger system, the model fosters real-time data sharing among stakeholders, enhances product traceability, and engages consumers in the supply chain process (Adebayo, Paul & Eyo-Udo, 2024, Mokogwu, et al., 2024, Onesi-Ozigagun, et al., 2024). The involvement of manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and consumers, along with the potential for incorporating IoT technology and smart contracts, positions this model as a robust solution for the complexities of the FMCG supply chain. As the industry increasingly prioritizes transparency and accountability, the adoption of this blockchain model could revolutionize practices, ensuring that consumers can trust the products they purchase while enabling brands to uphold their commitments to quality and integrity (Adepoju, Esan & Ayeni, 2024, Bassey, 2024, Esan & Abimbola, 2024).

4. Reducing Counterfeit Losses

In an increasingly competitive market, the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector faces substantial challenges posed by counterfeit products. These counterfeit goods not only threaten consumer safety but also undermine brand integrity and loyalty, leading to significant financial losses for legitimate businesses. The implementation of blockchain technology offers a robust solution to these challenges, enhancing supply chain traceability and efficiency while significantly reducing counterfeit losses (Ahuchogu, Sanyaolu & Adeleke, 2024, Mokogwu, et al., 2024, Oham & Ejike, 2024).

Blockchain technology operates on the principles of decentralization, immutability, and transparency. These features enable the creation of a secure and tamper-proof record of every transaction in the supply chain (Adepoju, Nwulu & Esan, 2024, Bassey, 2023, Esan, 2023, Oyindamola & Esan, 2023). By utilizing blockchain, FMCG companies can establish mechanisms for authenticating products at every stage of the supply chain, from production to retail. Each product can be assigned a unique digital identifier linked to its specific blockchain entry. This identifier can include comprehensive data such as origin, manufacturing processes, and distribution history (Adewusi, Chiekezie & Eyo-Udo, 2023, Mokogwu, et al., 2024, Olutimehin, etal., 2024). By scanning a product's barcode or QR code, consumers and retailers can instantly access this information, verifying the product's authenticity.

The integration of smart contracts within the blockchain framework further enhances product authentication. Smart contracts are self-executing contracts where the terms of the agreement are written directly into code. For instance, a smart contract could be programmed to automatically verify that a product meets certain criteria before it is allowed to move to the next stage of the supply chain (Arinze, et al., 2024, Mokogwu, et al., 2024, Olutimehin, etal., 2024, Uwaoma, et al., 2023). This might include ensuring that the product is sourced from an approved supplier, meets quality standards, or has been stored under specified conditions. If a product does not meet these criteria, the smart contract could trigger alerts or prevent the product from progressing through the supply chain. This automated verification process significantly reduces the risk of counterfeit products entering the market.

The impact of enhanced traceability on brand protection cannot be overstated. In a landscape where consumer trust is paramount, the ability to verify product authenticity plays a critical role in maintaining brand integrity. When consumers can easily access information about a product's origin and journey, they are more likely to feel confident in their purchases (Adepoju, Akinyomi & Esan, 2023, Bassey & Ibegbulam, 2023, Enebe, et al., 2022). This transparency cultivates a stronger connection between brands and their customers, fostering loyalty and repeat business.

Moreover, by reducing the incidence of counterfeit products, companies can safeguard their reputation and avoid the legal and financial ramifications associated with counterfeit-related issues. Counterfeits can lead to customer dissatisfaction, harmful health effects, and even legal consequences if a counterfeit product causes harm (Agu, et al., 2024, Mokogwu, et al., 2024, Olutimehin, etal., 2024, Soremekun, etal., 2024). The reputational damage from such incidents can be severe and long-lasting, often resulting in decreased sales and loss of market share. By implementing a blockchain-based authentication system, FMCG companies can proactively protect their brand from the threat of counterfeits, thereby enhancing consumer trust and loyalty.

Furthermore, enhanced traceability enabled by blockchain technology allows companies to respond more effectively to potential threats. In the event of a product recall, for example, companies can quickly trace the affected products back through the supply chain. This rapid identification of the source of the issue not only mitigates financial losses but also demonstrates a commitment to consumer safety (Adeniran, et al., 2024, Modupe, et al., 2024, Olutimehin, etal., 2024). When brands can assure consumers that they are taking swift action to address quality concerns, it reinforces trust and bolsters brand reputation.

The financial implications of reducing counterfeit losses through blockchain implementation are significant. The global costs associated with counterfeit products run into the billions, impacting not only the affected brands but also the overall economy. By enhancing product traceability and authenticity verification, companies can reduce their exposure to these losses, resulting in improved profit margins and increased market share (Adewusi, et al., 2024, Eghaghe, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2023, Sanyaolu, et al., 2024). Moreover, as consumer awareness of counterfeiting issues grows, brands that prioritize transparency and authenticity are likely to gain a competitive edge in the market.

Additionally, the integration of blockchain technology fosters collaboration among stakeholders in the FMCG supply chain. Manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and consumers all have a vested interest in ensuring the authenticity of products (Adejugbe, 2024, Komolafe, et al., 2024, Olutimehin, etal., 2024, Oyewole, et al., 2024). By providing a shared platform where all parties can access real-time data regarding product movement and authenticity, blockchain creates

an environment of accountability. This collaboration enhances the effectiveness of anti-counterfeiting measures and builds a collective commitment to maintaining the integrity of the supply chain.

Despite the numerous advantages, the implementation of blockchain technology in the FMCG sector is not without its challenges. For successful adoption, stakeholders must invest in the necessary infrastructure and technology, as well as undergo training to understand how to utilize the blockchain system effectively. Additionally, there may be resistance from stakeholders who are accustomed to traditional practices (Adewusi, et al., 2022, Komolafe, et al., 2024, Olutimehin, etal., 2024). Overcoming these barriers requires a strategic approach that includes clear communication of the benefits, comprehensive training programs, and possibly phased implementation to allow stakeholders to adapt gradually.

Moreover, while blockchain technology can significantly reduce counterfeit losses, it is essential for companies to adopt a holistic approach to combat counterfeiting. This includes implementing additional security measures, such as packaging innovations, tamper-evident seals, and advanced labeling techniques (Agu, et al., 2024, Eghaghe, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Raji, et al., 2024). Combining these strategies with blockchain can create a multi-layered defense against counterfeit products, providing an even stronger safeguard for brands and consumers alike.

In conclusion, the implementation of blockchain technology in the FMCG supply chain presents a transformative opportunity to reduce counterfeit losses significantly. By establishing robust mechanisms for authenticating products through secure records and smart contracts, companies can enhance traceability and protect brand integrity. This enhanced traceability not only fosters consumer trust but also enables brands to respond proactively to potential threats, safeguarding their reputation and financial performance (Ahuchogu, Sanyaolu & Adeleke, 2024, Komolafe, et al., 2024, Olutimehin, etal., 2024). As the FMCG sector continues to evolve, adopting blockchain technology will be crucial for companies looking to thrive in an increasingly complex and competitive marketplace. By prioritizing transparency and authenticity, brands can build lasting relationships with consumers, driving loyalty and success in the long run.

5. Future Extensions: Smart Contracts

The future of supply chain management in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is poised for significant transformation through the implementation of smart contracts within blockchain technology (Adepoju, Esan & Akinyomi, 2022, Bassey, Aigbovbiosa & Agupugo, 2024, Enebe, Ukoba & Jen, 2024). Smart contracts are self-executing agreements with the terms of the contract directly written into lines of code. They automatically enforce and execute the terms of the agreement when predetermined conditions are met, functioning seamlessly within the blockchain framework (Abhulimen & Ejike, 2024, Kaggwa, et al., 2024, Olutimehin, etal., 2024, Usuemerai, et al., 2024). This automation eliminates the need for intermediaries and enhances transparency, security, and efficiency in supply chain processes.

Smart contracts operate on a decentralized ledger, ensuring that all parties involved have access to the same information simultaneously. This feature not only enhances trust among stakeholders but also minimizes the risks of fraud and errors that can occur in traditional contract execution. The result is a more streamlined process, allowing for rapid transactions and a reduction in administrative overhead (Adebayo, et al., 2024, Iyelolu, et al., 2024, Olurin, etal., 2024, Oyewole, et al., 2024). As the FMCG sector grapples with challenges such as counterfeit products, inefficiencies, and complex regulatory requirements, the integration of smart contracts offers promising solutions that could redefine operational practices.

One of the primary applications of smart contracts in FMCG supply chains is automated payments. Traditionally, payment processing can be a cumbersome and time-consuming task, often involving multiple intermediaries, manual checks, and potential delays (Agupugo, 2023, Bassey, Aigbovbiosa & Agupugo, 2024, Enebe, Ukoba & Jen, 2023). Smart contracts revolutionize this process by facilitating automatic payments upon delivery confirmation. When goods are delivered, sensors or RFID tags can trigger the smart contract, verifying that the conditions of the delivery have been met (Adebayo, Paul & Eyo-Udo, 2024, Eghaghe, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2023, Usuemerai, et al., 2024). Once confirmed, the smart contract automatically executes the payment to the supplier or distributor without requiring additional manual intervention. This immediacy not only improves cash flow for suppliers but also strengthens relationships between partners by ensuring timely payments.

In addition to automated payments, smart contracts play a crucial role in inventory management. Accurate inventory levels are vital for FMCG companies, as they directly impact sales, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. Smart contracts can be programmed to trigger inventory replenishment based on real-time data analytics. For instance, if inventory levels for a specific product fall below a predetermined threshold, the smart contract automatically

generates a purchase order to restock the item (Agu, et al., 2024, Iyelolu, et al., 2024, Olorunyomi, et al., 2024, Raji, et al., 2024). This automation helps prevent stockouts and ensures that products remain available for consumers, enhancing overall customer satisfaction. By relying on real-time data, companies can also make more informed decisions regarding inventory management, reducing excess stock and associated carrying costs.

Moreover, regulatory compliance in the FMCG sector is increasingly complex due to stringent regulations concerning food safety, labeling, and environmental standards. Non-compliance can lead to severe penalties, product recalls, and damage to brand reputation. Smart contracts can significantly streamline compliance processes by automatically enforcing regulations without manual intervention. For example, a smart contract could be programmed to verify that all necessary quality checks have been completed before a product is allowed to proceed through the supply chain (Adejugbe & Adejugbe, 2016, Iyelolu, et al., 2024, Olorunyomi, et al., 2024). If a product fails to meet regulatory requirements, the smart contract can halt its movement until the issues are resolved. This automation not only reduces the burden on compliance teams but also ensures that products consistently meet the necessary standards, safeguarding consumer health and safety (Agupugo & Tochukwu, 2021, Bassey, Juliet & Stephen, 2024, Enebe, Ukoba & Jen, 2019). The advantages of smart contracts extend beyond individual applications; they collectively contribute to creating a more agile and responsive supply chain ecosystem. By automating critical processes and reducing the need for manual intervention, companies can allocate resources more effectively and focus on strategic initiatives (Ajala, etal., 2024, Egieya, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Sanyaolu, et al., 2023). Additionally, the transparency provided by blockchain technology ensures that all parties have access to the same information, fostering collaboration and trust among stakeholders.

As the FMCG sector continues to evolve, the potential for smart contracts to drive innovation is immense. However, successful implementation requires careful consideration of several factors. First, there must be a commitment from all stakeholders to adopt and integrate these technologies (Adejugbe & Adejugbe, 2020, Ijomah, et al., 2024, Olorunyomi, et al., 2024). This includes investment in the necessary infrastructure, such as blockchain platforms and IoT devices, as well as training employees to navigate new systems effectively. Furthermore, companies must ensure that their smart contracts are designed with robust security measures to prevent unauthorized access or tampering.

Moreover, while smart contracts can enhance efficiency and traceability, they are not a panacea. Companies must remain vigilant in addressing potential vulnerabilities, such as coding errors or discrepancies in data inputs. Establishing clear protocols for maintaining and auditing smart contracts will be essential to ensure their reliability and effectiveness over time (Agupugo, et al., 2022, Bassey, et al., 2024, Enebe, et al., 2022). Furthermore, companies should engage in continuous improvement efforts, seeking feedback from stakeholders to refine and optimize their smart contract applications.

The integration of smart contracts into the FMCG supply chain also raises questions regarding data privacy and ownership. While transparency is a significant advantage of blockchain technology, stakeholders must navigate the complexities of sharing sensitive data while protecting proprietary information (Adewusi, Chiekezie & Eyo-Udo, 2022, Ijomah, et al., 2024, Olorunyomi, et al., 2024). Striking the right balance between transparency and privacy will be crucial for fostering trust among partners while ensuring compliance with data protection regulations. Additionally, regulatory bodies must adapt to the rise of smart contracts and blockchain technology. As these technologies gain traction, regulations may need to evolve to address new challenges and opportunities. Collaborating with industry leaders to establish clear guidelines will be essential to facilitate the adoption of smart contracts in the FMCG sector while ensuring consumer protection and market integrity (Adeoye, et al., 2024, Ehimuan, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2023, Samira, et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the future of FMCG supply chains is being reshaped by the integration of smart contracts within blockchain technology. These self-executing agreements offer a myriad of applications that can enhance traceability and efficiency, from automated payments and inventory management to regulatory compliance. By leveraging the advantages of smart contracts, FMCG companies can streamline operations, foster collaboration among stakeholders, and ultimately protect their brands from the threats posed by counterfeit products and inefficiencies (Agu, et al., 2022, Ijomah, et al., 2024, Olorunsogo, et al., 2024, Raji, et al., 2024). However, successful implementation requires a comprehensive approach that includes stakeholder engagement, robust security measures, and a commitment to continuous improvement. As the FMCG sector continues to embrace innovation, the role of smart contracts in driving operational excellence and customer satisfaction will only grow, paving the way for a more resilient and responsive supply chain landscape (Agupugo, et al., 2022, Bassey, et al., 2024, Enebe & Ukoba, 2024).

6. Implementation Challenges and Solutions

The implementation of blockchain technology within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) supply chain offers transformative potential for enhancing traceability and efficiency. However, despite the promising benefits, several challenges must be navigated to achieve successful integration (Akinrinola, et al., 2024, Ijomah, et al., 2024, Okoye, et al., 2024, Soremekun, etal., 2024). This analysis highlights the technical barriers, stakeholder adoption issues, and legal and regulatory considerations that companies may encounter in their efforts to adopt blockchain technology, along with potential solutions to overcome these hurdles.

One of the primary technical barriers to implementing blockchain in the FMCG supply chain is the integration of this technology with existing systems. Many companies have established supply chain management systems that may not be compatible with blockchain. This can lead to significant complexities in data migration and interoperability between blockchain platforms and legacy systems. For instance, traditional databases may rely on centralized architecture, while blockchain operates on a decentralized model (Adeniran, et al., 2022, Ihemereze, et al., 2023, Okoye, et al., 2024, Uzougbo, Ikegwu & Adewusi, 2024). The challenge lies in ensuring that data can flow seamlessly between these differing systems without compromising integrity or security.

To address these technical barriers, companies should consider a phased implementation approach. This strategy involves gradually integrating blockchain technology into the existing supply chain systems rather than attempting a complete overhaul at once. By starting with pilot projects or smaller segments of the supply chain, companies can test the blockchain integration in a controlled environment (Ahuchogu, Sanyaolu & Adeleke, 2024, Ihemereze, et al., 2023, Okoli, et al., 2024). This allows for identifying potential issues and refining the approach before a broader rollout. Additionally, investing in middleware solutions can facilitate interoperability between blockchain and legacy systems, enabling smoother data transitions and communications. Collaborating with technology providers that specialize in blockchain integration can also provide valuable insights and expertise, helping companies navigate the complexities associated with technical integration (Agupugo, Kehinde & Manuel, 2024, Bassey, et al., 2024, Enebe, 2019, Lukong, et al., 2022).

Another significant challenge is the need for stakeholder adoption. The successful implementation of blockchain technology hinges on the willingness of all supply chain participants—manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and even consumers—to embrace the change. Often, stakeholders may be resistant to adopting new technologies due to concerns about the costs associated with implementation, the perceived disruption to established processes, or a lack of understanding of the technology's benefits (Adewale, et al., 2024, Igwe, et al., 2024, Okogwu, et al., 2023, Oyewole, et al., 2024). This reluctance can hinder the potential for blockchain to deliver its promised enhancements in traceability and efficiency.

To foster stakeholder buy-in, effective communication is essential. Companies should clearly articulate the benefits of blockchain technology, focusing on how it can address current pain points within the supply chain, such as counterfeiting, inefficiencies, and lack of transparency. Conducting workshops, webinars, and training sessions can help stakeholders understand blockchain's functionalities and potential applications in their operations (Adewusi, et al., 2024, Igwe, Eyo-Udo & Stephen, 2024, Okeke, et al., 2024). Demonstrating real-world use cases, particularly from within the FMCG industry, can also be a powerful motivator. By showcasing successful implementations and quantifiable results, stakeholders may be more inclined to recognize the value of adopting blockchain technology.

Incentivizing adoption can be another effective strategy. This might include offering financial support or sharing the costs associated with initial implementation among stakeholders. Establishing collaborative networks where benefits are collectively recognized and shared can also create a sense of community and mutual interest in pursuing blockchain solutions (Agu, et al., 2024, Ehimuan, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Sanyaolu, et al., 2024). Additionally, forming partnerships with industry associations or consortia can amplify the benefits of collective adoption, encouraging stakeholders to engage and share resources for successful implementation.

The legal and regulatory considerations surrounding blockchain technology in the FMCG supply chain cannot be overlooked. The decentralized nature of blockchain can pose unique challenges regarding accountability and compliance with existing regulations. For instance, in many jurisdictions, laws and regulations governing data privacy, consumer protection, and product safety are still evolving (Adegoke, et al., 2024, Ibikunle, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2024, Usuemerai, et al., 2024). Companies may struggle to ensure that their blockchain implementations comply with these regulations, particularly when it comes to how data is recorded, shared, and accessed.

To navigate the complex legal landscape, companies must conduct thorough research into the regulatory requirements that apply to their operations and the specific use of blockchain technology. This may involve consulting with legal experts who specialize in blockchain and supply chain regulations to ensure compliance with both local and international laws. Engaging with regulatory bodies early in the implementation process can also facilitate a clearer understanding of expectations and potential challenges (Adejugbe, 2024, Ibikunle, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2024, Raji, et al., 2024). Companies should advocate for the development of regulations that recognize and support the unique aspects of blockchain technology, ensuring that they are not disadvantaged by outdated legal frameworks.

Furthermore, establishing robust data governance frameworks is essential for addressing legal concerns related to data ownership, privacy, and security. Companies should develop clear policies regarding data access, sharing, and retention within the blockchain environment (Adejugbe & Adejugbe, 2018, Ehimuan, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2023, Uzougbo, Ikegwu & Adewusi, 2024). This includes defining roles and responsibilities for stakeholders involved in the blockchain network to ensure accountability and compliance with relevant laws. Another potential solution is the adoption of hybrid blockchain models that combine both public and private blockchain functionalities. This approach allows companies to leverage the transparency of public blockchains while maintaining control over sensitive data through private or permissioned networks (Adejugbe & Adejugbe, 2018, Gidiagba, et al., 2023, Okeke, et al., 2023). By carefully selecting which data to store on public versus private platforms, companies can navigate regulatory challenges more effectively while still benefiting from the enhanced traceability and efficiency that blockchain offers.

In summary, while the implementation of blockchain technology in the FMCG supply chain presents significant opportunities for enhancing traceability and efficiency, it is accompanied by several challenges. Technical barriers related to system integration can be mitigated through phased approaches, middleware solutions, and collaboration with technology experts (Adewusi, Chiekezie & Eyo-Udo, 2023, Eyo-Udo, Odimarha & Kolade, 2024, Okafor, et al., 2023). Encouraging stakeholder adoption requires effective communication, incentives, and real-world demonstrations of value. Additionally, addressing legal and regulatory considerations demands thorough research, proactive engagement with regulatory bodies, and robust data governance frameworks. By acknowledging and addressing these challenges, FMCG companies can successfully implement blockchain technology, ultimately transforming their supply chain operations and positioning themselves for future success in a rapidly evolving marketplace (Adejugbe, 2021, Ejike & Abhulimen, 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Oyewole, et al., 2024).

7. Benefits of Blockchain Implementation

The implementation of blockchain technology within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) supply chain has the potential to revolutionize the industry by significantly enhancing traceability and efficiency while simultaneously strengthening consumer trust. The multifaceted benefits of blockchain adoption are crucial for addressing the complexities of modern supply chains, where issues such as counterfeiting, inefficiencies, and lack of transparency can undermine product integrity and brand reputation (Ajala, etal., 2024, Eyo-Udo, Odimarha & Ejairu, 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Uzougbo, Ikegwu & Adewusi, 2024).

One of the most significant benefits of blockchain technology is enhanced traceability. Traditional supply chains often struggle with transparency, making it difficult to track products from their origin to the end consumer. With blockchain, every transaction and movement of goods is recorded in an immutable and decentralized ledger. This means that all stakeholders in the supply chain, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and consumers, have access to a single source of truth regarding the product's journey (Agu, et al., 2024, Eyo-Udo, 2024, Okeke, et al., 2023, Raji, et al., 2024). Each participant can verify the authenticity of products and trace their origins, allowing for quick identification of any issues that may arise, such as contamination or counterfeit goods.

Enhanced traceability not only bolsters accountability among supply chain participants but also significantly improves response times in the event of product recalls or safety issues. For instance, if a food safety concern is identified, a company can quickly trace the affected products back through the supply chain to determine their origins and remove them from the market. This capability minimizes the risk to consumers and protects the brand's reputation, ultimately fostering a safer marketplace (Abiona, etal., 2024, Ewim, 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Oyewole, et al., 2024). Furthermore, the ability to provide transparent and verifiable information about product origins can enhance a brand's storytelling, helping to communicate sustainability efforts and ethical sourcing practices to consumers.

In addition to improved traceability, blockchain implementation can lead to increased efficiency across the FMCG supply chain. Traditional supply chains often involve multiple intermediaries and a plethora of paperwork, which can slow down operations and increase costs. By utilizing blockchain technology, companies can streamline processes and reduce the reliance on manual record-keeping and documentation (Adegoke, Ofodile & Ochuba, 2024, Ewim, et al., 2024,

Okeke, et al., 2023, Uzougbo, Ikegwu & Adewusi, 2024). Smart contracts, which are self-executing contracts with the terms of the agreement directly written into code, can automate various processes, such as payment settlements and order fulfillment. This reduces the time spent on administrative tasks and allows for more efficient operations overall.

Moreover, the real-time data provided by blockchain can enhance inventory management. With accurate, up-to-date information on stock levels and product movements, companies can optimize their inventory, reducing excess stock and minimizing waste. This efficiency leads to cost savings, as companies can better align their production and distribution strategies with actual demand (Adeniran, et al., 2024, Ewim, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Sonko, et al., 2024). Additionally, reduced administrative overhead and increased operational efficiency translate to lower overall costs, enabling companies to allocate resources more effectively and improve their bottom line.

The implementation of blockchain technology also strengthens consumer trust, an increasingly vital component in the FMCG sector. In an age where consumers are more conscious of where their products come from and how they are made, transparency is key to building confidence. Blockchain provides an unprecedented level of transparency, allowing consumers to access detailed information about the products they purchase (Agu, et al., 2024, Ewim, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2023, Raji, et al., 2024). They can verify claims regarding sourcing, sustainability practices, and product safety directly from the blockchain ledger.

This transparency fosters trust as consumers feel empowered with the knowledge that they are making informed decisions. When brands are open about their practices and can back up their claims with verifiable data, they are more likely to establish long-term relationships with their customers (Akinrinola, et al., 2024, Ejike & Abhulimen, 2024, Okeke, et al., 2023, Usman, et al., 2024). In contrast, a lack of transparency can lead to skepticism and distrust, particularly when consumers are faced with ambiguous labeling or conflicting information. By embracing blockchain technology, FMCG companies can differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace and attract a more loyal customer base.

Additionally, as sustainability becomes a priority for consumers, blockchain can play a pivotal role in demonstrating a brand's commitment to ethical practices. For example, companies can use blockchain to verify and showcase their sustainability efforts, from sourcing raw materials responsibly to reducing carbon footprints during production and distribution (Adejugbe & Adejugbe, 2019, Ewim, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Usuemerai, et al., 2024). Consumers increasingly demand transparency regarding the environmental and social impact of their purchases, and brands that can effectively communicate their commitment through blockchain will resonate more strongly with eco-conscious shoppers.

Moreover, blockchain technology facilitates collaboration among various stakeholders within the supply chain. By enabling a shared, tamper-proof record of transactions and product movements, all participants can work towards common goals, such as improving sustainability, reducing waste, and enhancing efficiency (Addy, et al., 2024, Ejike & Abhulimen, 2024, Okeke, et al., 2024, Tula, et al., 2023). This collaborative approach fosters a sense of community among stakeholders, encouraging them to adopt best practices and contribute to a more ethical supply chain ecosystem.

In conclusion, the benefits of blockchain implementation in enhancing FMCG supply chain traceability and efficiency are manifold. Enhanced traceability improves accountability and allows for swift responses to product safety issues, thereby safeguarding consumers and protecting brand integrity. Increased efficiency streamlines operations and reduces costs, leading to better resource allocation and improved profitability (Adewusi, et al., 2022, Ewim, et al., 2024, Okeke, et al., 2023, Shoetan, et al., 2024). Furthermore, strengthened consumer trust is achieved through greater transparency, empowering consumers to make informed decisions and fostering loyalty to brands that demonstrate ethical practices. As the FMCG industry continues to evolve, blockchain technology stands out as a transformative solution that can address current challenges while paving the way for a more transparent, efficient, and trustworthy marketplace (Ajala, etal., 2024, Ejike & Abhulimen, 2024, Okeke, et al., 2022, Soremekun, etal., 2024). By investing in blockchain, FMCG companies position themselves for success in an increasingly competitive landscape, ultimately benefiting not only their bottom line but also the consumers and communities they serve.

8. Conclusion

The exploration of blockchain technology’s implementation in enhancing traceability and efficiency within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) supply chain has underscored its critical role in addressing the industry's pressing challenges. Key findings reveal that blockchain provides an unprecedented level of transparency, allowing for the creation of a decentralized, immutable ledger that tracks products from their origin to the consumer. This enhanced traceability not only fortifies accountability among stakeholders but also empowers companies to respond swiftly to

safety concerns and recalls, ultimately safeguarding consumers and reinforcing brand integrity. Furthermore, the efficiency gains from automating processes through smart contracts and real-time data access enable FMCG companies to streamline operations, reduce costs, and optimize inventory management.

Looking ahead, there are numerous avenues for further research in the field of blockchain applications within FMCG supply chains. Investigating advancements in blockchain technology, such as the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning, could enhance predictive analytics and decision-making processes. Additionally, exploring the scalability of blockchain solutions in diverse geographic and regulatory contexts will be vital for broader adoption. Research could also focus on the development of standardized protocols that facilitate interoperability among various blockchain systems used by different stakeholders in the supply chain.

In conclusion, the transformative potential of blockchain technology cannot be overstated. By improving supply chain integrity and reducing counterfeit losses, blockchain fosters a more transparent, efficient, and trustworthy environment for both businesses and consumers. As the FMCG industry continues to evolve, the adoption of blockchain will likely become a critical differentiator, enabling companies to build stronger relationships with consumers, enhance operational efficiencies, and navigate the complexities of modern supply chains. Embracing this innovative technology presents an opportunity not only for individual companies but for the industry as a whole to drive meaningful change toward a more ethical and sustainable future.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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