

The Impact of State-of-the-Art Supply Chain Management Practices on Operational Performance

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Abstract— This particular study aimed to determine whether the companies' business operations in this modern-day context are impacted by the management practices or features of the supply chain. In terms of methodology, it relied more on descriptive-analytical technique along with a desktop survey by reviewing suitable literature based on the identified aim of the study. Thus, an attempt had been made to retrieve secondary-based information from distinct sources including scholarly journals that were related to the issue identified. The entire findings being derived from this particular research revealed that a strong association exists between supply chain management and firms' operational performances and thereby impact one another at large. The study also made certain further recommendations, one of which included that such organizations must follow a planned approach for developing their respective supply chain management practices by maintaining proper communication along with coordination of the suppliers and the customers.

Keywords— Operational Performance, Supply Chain, Suppliers, Supply Chain Practices

1. Introduction

Businesses operating in a similar sector in this present day context are considered to be facing intense competition over market shares. This identified issue eventually forced such modern businesses to think differently for using those management methods that can help them to reap several significant benefits. Some of these benefits are expected to include increasing market share on an individual basis and accomplishing a superior degree of competitive position in the respective market(s) or industry(s), wherein they operate [6].

The success or survival of any sort of business

depends on its operational performance, which has qualitative, as well as quantitative indicators. These two indicators tend to determine whether the businesses can sustain in this contemporary and composite market or industry for a longer time. It is the top-management level officials of the respective companies, who need to monitor such indicators periodically so that their predetermined targets can be fulfilled easily without facing any sort of issue [2]. There are several instances, wherein it is observed that the business firms have not been able to maintain their competitive positions in their respective operating market(s) or industry(s) due to weak operational performance. Apart from this, some of the other reasons include the involvement of high product/service costs and low production level cannot be ignored as well. Emphasizing these points, today's contemporary firms look forward to developing their respective networks of the supply chain for attaining long-term success [8].

Concerning the function of supply chain management, companies operating in this present-day context, aim at ensuring optimum utilization of adequate resources and capabilities [19].

The businesses of this modern-day context can attain a superior degree of competitive position by managing their respective supply chain practices through the maintenance of effective communication with each supply chain partner. Supply chains that are well-functioning are likely to support modern business corporations to accomplish their predetermined objectives in various ways. A few of these ways include identifying obligatory cost constraints, preserving the smooth flow of products or services, maintaining easy information flow, and ensuring fuller execution of the accessible resource materials [29].

By taking into concern the traditional Situation Theory, past studies have had already pointed out that the operational functions and the overall business performances of the respective companies are deeply influenced through Supply Chain Integration. However, on a different note, this particular research holds the objective of determining the impact of state-of-the-art supply chain management practices, specifically on the business firms' operational performances.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Supply Chain

From a theoretical perspective, Supply Chain is regarded as such a framework, which is being utilized by modern business firms to develop their respective operational performances in varied ways. A few of these ways can be noticed as maintaining smooth coordination amidst the potential suppliers and the end-users, thereby ensuring adequate along with the better flow of suitable information, conducting internal operational functions most effectively, and maximizing product values from the standpoints of the customers along with business proprietors [5].

Useful supply chains are found to be strongly linked with an organization's planning and management activities. These activities mainly look after the tasks related to procurement, logistics, and supply chain among others. Such activities also embrace a greater degree of harmonization, as well as teamwork with varied channel partners that entail suppliers, service providers, brokers, and end-users. These mentioned channel partners ensure immense business growth by decreasing overall product expenses and thereby maximizing user satisfaction to the maximum possible degree [29].

Businesses operating in this highly competitive landscape reap several major benefits through their supply chain practices, such as attracting numerous customers worldwide, raising product or service sales, thereby earning huge profits by the end of every fiscal year [14].

According to Flynn, et al. [11], it was noticed that Consumer Integration, Internal Integration, and Supply Chain Integration were the main elements

of Supply Chain Integration. The study findings being presented by Flynn, et al. [11] eventually made it apparent that Supply Chain Integration has a strong linkage with the operational performances of contemporary organizations.

The research conducted by Gligor, et al. [13] emphasized measuring and investigating the crucial function(s) play by logistics capabilities in maintaining operational flexibility and workflow within the supply chain mechanism of a business firm. Gligor, et al. [13] undertook an imaginary and systematic appraisal of all pertinent studies with the consideration of an imaginary outline based on supply chain relations. Gligor, et al. [13], in their studies categorized the necessary business capabilities of an organization into three kinds that embraced Logistics Capabilities, Organizational Capabilities, and Technical Capabilities. Based on these research studies, it is clear that a business can attain a higher degree of internal integration when it could coordinate with the capabilities quite well and maintain strong communication with every potential channel partner.

2.2. Operational performance and Supply Chain Integration

Operational Performance is viewed to be one of the chief success factors of the modern business firms that are presently operating in a composite and competitive setting. A company can maintain a strong as well as a positive operational performance and likewise attain huge success in the future by offering quality products or services to the customers with low prices and fulfilling end-users' requirements [16].

Operational Performance is broadly featured by two particular constituents of supply chain management practice that comprise End-User Service and Business Efficiency [23].

Supply chain integration denotes a planned resource or theory, which ensures greater access, as well as transfer and larger execution of matching resources, along with capabilities within the supply chain networks of a company. It also ensures a higher level of enhanced communication amid the individuals being involved in supply chain procedures. It also contributes to sharing effective knowledge among them to the maximum possible

extent. As per this specific theory, successful supply chain integration results in a smoother transfer of high-quality raw materials from the potential suppliers to the respective organizations and the end-consumers as well. This certainly imposes a positive influence on a firm's operational performance at large [8].

It is worth mentioning that with better integration of the supply chain as a form of management practice, today's business firms can maintain a greater degree of transparency in their operational information and knowledge management mechanisms. Moreover, such integration is expected to boost the capacity of the firms to react quickly and successfully towards the altering business market conditions, product or service demands, and customers' tastes along with preferences [4].

Huang, et al. [17] intended to find out how the performance of the potential suppliers and Supply Chain Integration is interlinked with modern know-how and insecurity in product demand. In this particular study of Huang, et al. [17], a sample size of 164 Taiwanese suppliers has been selected to collect suitable data and thereby address the identified issue. The research findings revealed that the performance of the potential suppliers and Supply Chain Integration is optimistically linked with one another. This linkage often gets modified due to the two already mentioned underlying factors namely modern know-how and insecurity in product demand.

The research conducted by Xu, et al. [36] emphasized investigating the impact(s) imposed by internal resources including Information Technology (IT) and Top Management Assistance on External Supply Chain Integration. It also assessed the influence of External Supply Chain Integration, specifically on institutional performance from a comprehensive resource-based perspective. In this particular study of Xu, et al. [36], an aggregate of 176 Chinese manufacturing firms have been duly considered as the sample size. As per the findings being retrieved for this study, it was found that External Supply Chain Integration is largely influenced by the mentioned internal resources.

The research of Beheshti, et al. [5] also stressed appraising the influence of Supply Chain Integration along with its distinct levels on the overall performance of the business corporations. The sample size of the study was near about 271 that mainly comprised some industrial companies being operating in Sweden. The findings of the study conducted by Beheshti, et al. [5] highlighted that the different integration levels of supply chain management certainly posed an impact on institutional performance. More specifically, as per these findings, it became evident that the organizations with total supply chain integration posed significant impacts on institutional performance.

Danese, et al. [9] conducted a study wherein the influence of internal as well as external integration and the modified function being played by the global supply network for generating favorable or positive outcomes had been examined. The research considered the sample size of 266 factories that are located in distinct regions throughout the globe. As per the overall outcomes being generated from the study conducted by Danese, et al. [9], it was found that internal along with external integration practices posed a modified impact on the connection persisting amid external integration and response in the context of the international supply network.

Conversely, Zhao, et al. [38] researched with the sole aim of evaluating the relationship prevailing among three significant factors. These factors fundamentally embraced Supply Chain Integration, Institutional Performance, and Supply Chain Risk. This particular study considered the sample size and the sample population of 317 manufacturing plants that represented ten (10) particular nations of the world. These nations encompassed Korea, Spain, Japan, the USA, Italy, Austria, China, Finland, Germany, South Sweden, and. As per the obtained findings, it was apparent that Institutional Performance is negatively influenced by Supply Chain Integration.

With regards to the study conducted by Huo [18], an endeavor had been made to identify along with analyzing the ways through which the operational performances of the firms are affected by Supply Chain Integration. Thus, the authors considered a sample of 617 Chinese industrial firms. This

particular research of Huo [18] was typically based on the estimation theory, which tends to analyze the impacts of internal integration from suppliers' along with consumers' perspectives. As per the study results being presented by Huo [18], it was evident that External Integration based on which operational along with institutional performances of the companies get enhanced as per the desired levels.

The study carried out by Srinivasan, et al. [31] focused on evaluating the adjusted influence of demand, as well as supply risks and ecological insecurity on the affiliation amid supplier-buyer quality and performance of supply chain. The study considered the sample size and sample population of 127 business firms that perform their businesses in the United States. Based on the study outcomes being retrieved from Srinivasan, et al. [31], it was clear that Partnership Quality and Supply Chain Performance are related to one another and this relationship is negatively driven by ecological ambiguity. In contrast, these outcomes also pointed out that better addressal along with mitigation of demand-supply hazards imposes optimistic influence on the linkage persisting amid Partnership Quality and Supply Chain Performance.

As observed in the study carried out by Wong, et al. [34], Supply Chain Integration and business or operational performances of the companies are interlinked and get influenced by one another. This particular research of Wong, et al. [34] also focused on assessing the moderating influences of ecological improbability onto such link. In terms of sample size and population, Wong, et al. [34] considered a total of 151 automotive manufacturing plants being operating in Thailand. As per the study outcomes of Wong, et al. [34], the factors including internal, consumer, and supplier integration impose optimistic influence on the companies' operational performances. These performances are duly measured in the forms of product or service quality as well as cost, operational flexibility, and product or service delivery. The research of Wong, et al. [34] also revealed the fact that environmental uncertainty has reasonable impacts on internal integration concerning cost along with quality, flexibility, and delivery.

The study of Danese, et al. [7] levied utmost attention on determining whether Supply Chain Integration and effectiveness in operational performance of the firms are related to one another. This effectiveness mainly depends on how well the businesses communicate with their respective traders along with end-users. Danese, et al. [7] performed a field study by taking into concern 200 big industrial firms that already possessed a greater degree of operational performance in the manufacturing domain. These firms were identified to operate in varied nations throughout the globe that embraced Sweden, Spain, Japan, USA, Germany, and Finland among others. Such firms of different nations were chosen on a random basis to obtain relevant data and thereby draw valid conclusions. Some statistical methods, such as correlation and regression analysis were considered and applied by Wong, et al. [34] to analyze the overall data being collected for this research. The study findings retrieved for this research showcased that the operational performances of the manufacturing companies are positively impacted by Supply Chain Integration.

2.3. Relationship between supply chain and operational performance

Several types of research that had been conducted earlier portrayed the linkage of the supply chain with operational performances of the companies being operating in distinct sectors throughout the globe. Some of these sectors can be related to manufacturing, healthcare, and retailing among others. One of these researches can be identified as Koh, et al. [21], wherein the authors recognized that operational performances of the business corporations are positively influenced by successful practices of the supply chain. Another research carried out by Lee [22] can be duly taken into concern in this regard, whose obtained findings showcased an optimistic linkage existing amid the management practice of supply chain and the operational performances of the companies operating in diverse sectors based on customer, internal business procedure and supplier perspectives.

Based on the observation made by Miguel, et al. [26], the operational performances of the firms are positively influenced by Supply Chain Practices. Most significantly, the study findings of Prajogo, et

al. [27] highlighted that there are three (3) distinct attributes of supply chain practice, which certainly impose significant influences on any firm's operational performance. As per the research conducted by Prajogo, et al. [27], these three (3) attributes were noticed as 'supplier relations', 'internal business mechanisms', and 'customer affiliations'. On an overall basis, this particular research pointed out that operational performances are positively influenced by only two (2) factors, namely 'supplier relations' and 'internal business procedures'. However, on the other hand, the research of Miguel, et al. [26] showcased no association between customer relations and firms' operational performances.

The study findings of Hallavo [15] pointed out that Supply Chain and Manufacturing Responses influenced the companies' operational performances. As per these findings, in the domain of Supply Chain Management Practice, performances of the individual organizations are positively driven via Manufacturing Responses.

According to Koh, et al. [21], an optimal supply chain management aims at supporting the modern business corporations to develop their respective operational functions in several ways, if it is being practiced effectively. Some of these ways fundamentally embraced lowering product or service costs, preserving operational reliability, thereby maximizing huge revenues. The below described are certain major aspects of supply chain management that impose significant impacts on the operational performances of the companies;

2.3.1 Flexibility

In the context of supply chain management practice, Flexibility denotes the aptitude of the respective business organizations to react towards the changing business setting and market conditions. Establishing, developing, and maintaining a greater degree of trust amid varied participants such as suppliers and end-users play a major part in maintaining flexibility. This eventually develops a firm's operational performance, as per the expectation level in the long run.

2.3.2 Reduced Production Lead Time

Supply chain management practice results in decreased production lead time by lessening on-

time delivery and boosting customer responsiveness among others. These aspects eventually help the respective companies operating in any sector to accomplish a higher degree of competitive advantage in comparison with others.

2.3.3 Prediction

Another important facet of effective supply chain management practice is Prediction, which relates to accurate forecasting. This forecasting is generally made for the procurement of materials, production planning, and fulfilling the desired needs of the customers. Better prediction or precise forecasting might get developed through several ways that comprise ensuring strong coordination with the potential suppliers, as well as the end-users and promoting favorable information exchange amid them. These factors eventually support modern business corporations to develop their respective operational performances that largely reflect on their brand image, reputation, and long-term sustainability.

2.3.4 Resource planning and cost reduction

These are the other quality facets of effective supply chain management practice that drive the business firms of this present-day context to attain success in the long run. This success could be determined in the forms of increased product or service sales, enhanced operational productivity, and higher profit margins at the end of every fiscal year.

2.3.5 Reduced the store level

A company operating in any market or industry can follow an On-time supply mechanism to keep a constant check on the determined stock levels and thereby raise cash flows as per the expectation level. This particular mechanism seems to be quite beneficial for the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) that necessitate maintaining systematic cash flows for performing their operations smoothly on a steady basis. On a different note, Yu, et al. [37] performed researches, which focused on pointing out the obligatory supply chain flexibility for the business firms and their responses towards mitigating the issues that are mainly caused through indecisive ecological aspects. In the context of enhancing flexibility in supply chain management practice, the primary target of the study conducted by Yu, et al. [37] is to formulate a plan which can ensure a greater degree

of flexibility in supply chain management by taking into concern internal, as well as external information. By considering a section of 84 business firms operating in the food industry, the study findings of Yu, et al. [37] revealed that 'supply chain flexibility' is developed and maintained through external information instead of internal data, which further develops a company's operational performance at large.

The study of Prajogo, et al. [28] is typically based on the notion of successful operations management, which certainly poses an impact on the association between supply chain and companies' business performances operating in any specific business sector. More significantly, the research conducted by Prajogo, et al. [28] emphasized assessing the critical function of information management in enhancing the operational performance of contemporary business corporations. This particular research considered a dataset, which entailed the information about 202 Australia-based companies being operating in the industrial segment of Australia. The study of Prajogo, et al. [28] concluded the fact that a positive association exists amid internal, as well as external information management mechanisms, and internal along with external operations department of a particular industry-based company. In terms of recommendations, Prajogo, et al. [28] inferred that there lays the necessity to consider internal along with external operational performances due to their positive impacts being imposed over the long-term sustainability of the firms and their respective businesses.

The primary goal of the study conducted by Spina, et al. [30] was to assess whether there exists any sort of affiliation amid distinct supply chain management practices and the companies' operational performances. These mentioned practices entail 'demand planning' as well as 'forecasting', 'performance management', 'inventory', 'supply' along with 'distribution planning', 'detailed scheduling' and 'operations' along with 'sales planning' among others. With regards to the research of Spina, et al. [30], it was observed that the primary data collection instrument of the questionnaire had been used to retrieve suitable data from a total of 800 business organizations. As per the study outcomes being derived from this particular research, it certainly

became apparent that the mentioned practices of supply chain management impose a considerable level of impacts on varied operational indicators of the organizations, which certainly effect their competitive positions and long-term sustainability at large. A few of these operational indicators can be recognized as precise forecasting, quantity of storage days, well-timed delivery and the total costs involved in inventory management.

Dissimilar to the aforementioned studies, the research of Fouad, et al. [12] paid attention to evaluating the ways through which the business or operational performances of the Iraqi oil pipeline organizations are affected by the notion of Total Quality Management (TQM) and supply chain practices. Under this circumstance, Fouad, et al. [12] attempted to collect primary data by performing personal interviews, specifically with the business managers of such oil pipeline companies, who are likely to hold adequate idea about the TQM and the different practices of supply chain management that have a strong influence over the operational performances of the respective business firms. Following the study findings of Fouad, et al. [12], an optimistic influence of TQM and the practices being associated with supply chain management on the operational performances of the firms under study was witnessed.

The research of Abdallah, et al. [1] not only emphasized evaluating the effects of supply chain practices on the companies' operational performances but also focused on investigating the transitional function of intense market competition in the association amid supply chain practices and respective supply chain performance. To collect the suitable primary data, a questionnaire had been executed from a sample size of 104 industrial companies being operating in Jordan. The outcomes being retrieved from this particular study of Abdallah, et al. [1] portrayed that an organization's supply chain performance is positively influenced by three (3) particular practices of supply chain management. These included 'internal integration', 'information sharing', and 'rescheduling of supply chain practices'. These outcomes also elucidated the fact that the notion of intense business market competition intercede the linkage prevailing amid internal, supplier, as well as customer-integration

and supply chain performance (competence). Finally, Abdallah, et al. [1] noticed that supply chain performance (effectiveness) is optimistically influenced by internal as well as customer-integration.

It is worth mentioning that the association persisting amid the factors concerning TQM, supply chain management, and organizational performance has been well studied in the study conducted by Tan, et al. [33]. Justifiably, it was evident that the authors of this specific study considered certain effective TQM practices, which affect a business firm's operational performance. These practices fundamentally embraced Leadership, Customer Focus, Strategic Planning, Operations Management, Information Analysis, and Human Resources Management. Apart from these, Tan, et al. [33] considered three (3) sub-elements of supply chain management in their study that embraced Supply Chain Integration, Planning, and Strategy Implementation. More importantly, in this specific study form, one of the major factors, i.e. organizational performances was duly measured through HR, operational and monetary outputs. Finally, the research conducted by Tan, et al. [33] concluded the fact that greater focus of the companies and their respective businesses being operating in any market or industry segment on TQM is likely to develop their performances of the supply chain, which in turn, enhances organizational performances at large.

The principal aim of the research carried out by Mensah, et al. [25] was to recognize and assess supply chain management's impact on a firm's operational performance operating in the manufacturing market or industry of Ghana. Another aim of this research was identified to assess whether such practices of supply chain management have any sort of authority on the sales operations of that particular company being considered for the same. The authors regarded the end-users and the employees as the sample population group in their study, based on which relevant primary data was collected to fulfill the mentioned two aims and thereby draw pertinent conclusions. One of the data analysis software, i.e. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was considered in the study of Mensah, et al. [25] for finding out the link between supply chain management practices and business or operational

performance. The outcomes derived from this specific research highlighted that such practices is associated with supply chain management had a strong influence over the operational performance of the manufacturing firm being operated in Ghana. This was evident in the firm's sales performance during the fiscal period of 2004-2010.

The research of Liu, et al. [24] focused on appraising the influence of two (2) distinct elements of supply chain integration, particularly the two (2) performance aspects within the Chinese industrial enterprises. To collect a sufficient level of data and thereby draw valid conclusions, the authors considered 246 manufacturing and service companies as relevant sample sizes and sample population groups respectively. Based on the study conducted by Liu, et al. [24], the authors framed four (4) specific hypotheses by utilizing the data analytical instrument of Hierarchical Regression Analysis. As per the obtained study findings, it eventually became apparent that the coordination of operational or business performance of the Chinese industrial enterprises is correlated to one another. The authors concluded that operational performances and association of the same with Supply Chain Integration are positively influenced by 'information sharing' and 'market orientation'.

Concerning the study conducted by Sukati, et al. [32], the association persisting amid supply chain management strategy and supply chain management practices and its influence on the performance had been explored. The authors mainly considered Malaysia-based companies being operated in the industrial sector as the prime participants for obtaining relevant data through the help of a survey list. It was observed that 200 managers participated in this survey that was segregated based on their respective assigned duties and their response rate seemed to be quite outstanding. As per the study findings of Sukati, et al. [32], the supply chain performance of such Malaysian industrial business firms was largely affected by the practices of supply chain management. Nevertheless, the fact cannot be ignored in this regard that supply chain strategy does not contribute much in developing the performance of an organization's supply chain management.

Conversely, Miguel, et al. [26] aimed at determining whether there exists any sort of affiliation amid supply chain management and operational performance within the business corporations operating in Brazil. Thus, the authors considered a total sample size and population of 103 Brazilian companies. The findings being collected for this particular research showcased that supply chain management and operational performance of these companies were positively correlated to one another. Miguel, et al. [26] suggested that the firms are ought to develop their supply chain management practices in a way so that they can create a superior degree of competitive advantage and likewise enhance organizational performance in the most effective way possible.

In contrast, the study of Wong, et al. [35] focused on assessing the influence of supply chain practices on the firms' organizational performance under the liaison function being played by the knowledge management capabilities. The authors primarily utilized a descriptive approach and thereby acquired suitable information by conducting a questionnaire survey of 800 executives. These executives were found to get engaged in the industrial companies of Malaysia. The findings being retrieved from the research of Wong, et al. [35] showcased that organizational performances of such industrially-based Malaysian business firms are directly as well as indirectly influenced by knowledge management capabilities. Based on these findings, even though no significant linkage persists amid the structural as well as the cultural abilities of knowledge management and supply chain management practices, still these abilities have a undeviating decent impact on the organizational performance.

Baird, et al. [3], in their respective study, emphasized evaluating the affiliation amid organizational culture, TQM practices, and operational performance. A survey was performed in this particular study with 364 Australia-based business units that operated within manufacturing along with service-related industries. As per the study outcomes obtained by Baird, et al. [3], quality management practices of such business units can be promoted well by levying utmost attention on teamwork. Moreover, the research outcomes elucidated that a company operating in any industry can accomplish predetermined targets

of operational performance by focusing on three (3) major practices related to TQM. These practices embraced Operations Management, Data Quality and Reporting, and Supplier Quality Management.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this particular research has been framed by following two (2) significant steps, i.e. 1) undergoing current researches that relate to the identified study issue and 2) examining these researches from the base level. The mentioned current researches are related to the linkage persisting amid supply chain management and operational or business performance of the respective organizations. With regards to methodology, an endeavor has been made to use distinct terms that broadly relate to the research topic and issue. Some of these terms principally encompass Supply Chain, Operational Performance, and Supply Chain Management. Most importantly, several scientific databases including Science Direct, ProQuest, and Springer have been used in this particular research to obtain suitable data, to address the study issue identified, and thereby draw valid conclusions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Analysis of Related works

In previous studies, the respective authors emphasized determining the ways through which the supply chain management practices ascertain the long-term success of the firms. Nevertheless, none or fewer numbers of previous studies focused on appraising how a firm's operational performance is affected by the state-of-the-art supply chain management practices.

4.2. Results and Discussion

The below results have been presented after analyzing distinct studies related to this particular research:

- Supply Chain Integrations (Internal Integration, external Integration, and Strategic Integration) have a strong influence on Supply Chain Response, as these trigger the need to maintain a superior level of collaboration amid the potential suppliers and end-users. Moreover, it makes sure that successful information flow is maintained.
- Similar findings, as stated above, could be witnessed in the research conducted by Danese, et al. [7], Danese, et al. [9], Davies, et al. [10].

- Specifically, the overall acquired responses showcased that a firm's operational performance is largely affected by supply chain management practices.

5. New research directions

An experimental design can be adopted for testing whether supply chain practices impose any influence on the firms' operational performances. Apart from this, the application of qualitative or quantitative methods cannot also be ignored in this regard.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the high-tech supply chain management practices have a strong and direct impact on operational performance. The research suggested the requirement to go through distinct supply chain management constituents due to strong affiliations that remain within them.

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