

Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive market, there is clear pressure to provide customers with more added value. Many enterprises focus on offering products and services that are of greater value than the competition. Supply chain development aims to improve profitability, faster response to customer needs and the ability to flexibly deliver value to customers, as well as improve the interconnection and interdependence between participating companies. Supply chain management has been an important factor in accelerating the globalization of the world economy. It is a concept that covers the movement and storage of goods, managing stocks at various stages of the flow of goods, from the point of origin to the place of their consumption. Supply chains deliver products and services to end customers according to their needs. This book aims to evaluate and provide insight into best supply chain management practices, focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises.

The development of the world economy has accelerated, the population has grown significantly, and with it, the misuse of non-renewable resources in many areas. The cause of the current transformations of supply chains is the impact of environmental requirements related to environmental degradation, waste emission and global warming. Because of this, the quality of human life has deteriorated significantly. There has been an increase in ambient temperature, depletion of the ozone layer, and biodiversity decline. The uncontrolled development of the world economy also caused significant social problems, such as uneven increases in wealth in various social groups, a sense of injustice, and mass health problems. For these reasons, more and more often, sustainable development is a priority in the development of supply chains, as it enables full sustainability of all areas: social, environmental and economic. This situation benefits individual companies, supply chains, communities, and future generations more. There is certainly a need to engage sustainability in managing supply chains today. The interpenetration of the concepts of supply chain management and sustainable development can form the basis of an integrated strategy in which sustainable development is complementary or fully in line with supply chain management. In both approaches, the economic, social and environmental dimensions are equally recognized as the three pillars of sustainable development and are the basis for formulating the concept of sustainable supply chain management.

The supply chain and supply chain management literature show a strong research focus towards large enterprises and transnational corporations. Most of the research on supply chain management or sustainable development in supply chains has clearly omitted the discussion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A small sample of individual case studies or industry studies has dominated research on sustainable supply chain management to date. In previous publications in the area of the supply chain, the approach focused on the area of operations research had a clear advantage.

But here, too, more sustainable development was introduced as a leading topic in supply chain studies. Organizations have raised the need for analyses beyond the economic aspect, focusing on minimizing costs and operating profitability. The sustainability analysis shows that enterprises should be optimized according to three areas, such as economic, social and environmental. In addition, there is a need to take these three dimensions into account simultaneously in managerial decisions.

Many reputable companies have implemented aspects of sustainable development in their supply chains, mainly due to environmental problems and their public perception. Of course, the best-known cases described so far are examples of large corporations such as IBM, Hewlett-Packard, McDonald's and Wal-Mart. Incomparably less often are cases of small and medium-sized enterprises that have implemented aspects of sustainable development into the operation of their supply chains. Sustainable development of economic activities enables corporations and their supply chain partners to implement new ideas to help society, reduce energy waste and reduce material consumption. Sustainable development is considered an innovative approach, including, in particular, changes to existing processes, the involvement of new technologies, and the introduction of improved management methods and new production systems that can bring about changes in supply chain management. Consequently, sustainability is an important aspect of continuous improvement for any business, and it is very important to find the variables that can help implement your sustainability initiatives.

Numerous studies have explored the importance of integrating suppliers, manufacturers and customers for greater flexibility and speed in large organizations and their supply chains. Compared to large corporations, enterprises from the SME sector can quickly adapt to constant changes and thus meet the changing market demands. However, small and medium-sized enterprises have a chronic problem that makes their management specific. This problem is a lack of resources. This applies primarily to financial and all other resources – knowledge, human resources and skills. From this point of view, the management of small and medium-sized enterprises takes place in conditions of limited resources, including resources that determine supply chain management.

The aforementioned factors led to the intention to fill the research gap by examining the topic of supply chain management in small and medium-sized firms with a focus on the problem of sustainable development, using an approach based on observations and literature reviews. The examined studies are structured to analyze supply chain terminology and point out the causes and historical evolution of its management, which is carried out in line with the idea of sustainable development. This book sought to situate the role of supply chains in the global business environment by analyzing and evaluating supply chain management techniques in small and medium-sized businesses. While most businesses stay the same, transacting between a buyer and a seller, what has altered significantly because of advancements in technology is the processes between them, modes of communication, and methods of transfer of goods and services (logistics and supply).

Chapter one summarises the global supply chain paradigm and the developments and innovations heralding contemporary supply chain management. The chapter assesses energy, globalization, technological innovation, corporate governance, government policies and regulations, and how they play out in the supply chain management dynamics. The chapter also scrutinizes the characteristics and components of supply chains and other concepts important in the discourse about the supply chain.

Chapter two explores supply chain management from the aspect of sustainable development; issues such as assumptions of sustainable development in supply chain management; sustainable supply chain management, including its design, production, marketing, transportation, and purchasing, while incorporating sustainability in the supply chain value co-creation; and the significance of sustainability in supply chain management.

In chapter three, the customer service in the supply chain is thoroughly analyzed, highlighting processes in developing client relationships, service delivery effectiveness, and crafting a successful customer service plan for the effective supply chain management.

Chapter four presents the ethics of corporate social responsibility and corporate strategy in supply chain management. The issues presented here include managing risk in supply chain management and evaluating sustainable decisions and actions that affect supply chain management.

Chapter five looks at the international context of small and medium-scale enterprises, their significance in economic development, and the factors that inhibit SMEs' growth, such as infrastructure, the legal framework, and tax regime, business skills, access to working capital, characteristics of the entrepreneurs, and political and geographical factors. The chapter also discusses the significance of supply chain management in the operations of SMEs and the dynamics that are critical in the SCM-SME interplay. There are also addressed best practice policies for SMEs in terms of financing, technology, access to markets, and navigating tough business environments, and they end with important viewpoints on the application of supply chain management in SMEs.

Chapter six analyses the SMEs' performance in the context of supply chain management and sustainability approaches. The benefits of SCM in SMEs are presented. The author also uses specific examples to show the application of supply chain management in SMEs based on the international sample of countries from Europe, Asia and Africa.

CHAPTER ONE

Supply Chain Concept and Supply Chain Management

1.1 Guide to Supply Chain Management

For most organizations, particularly enterprises, the first decade of the twenty-first century was a period of tremendous transformation. Change has not paused, and the second decade has been more chaotic than the first. External forces of change push companies to become far more flexible and reactive; that is, companies need to be able to alter or reinvent rapidly to exist in today's highly spirited global marketplace. It can be explored how some companies have innovated to survive modern supply chain realities. By 2023, Adidas expects to shift approximately 20 % of its operations to a more automated assembly line, many of which will be proprietary (Schiavo, 2017; Thomasson, 2015). This technique could give the organization a competitive advantage by allowing it to get things into consumers' hands faster while decreasing the requirement for outsourced manufacturing. Following a successful 755,000-square-foot distribution facility that opened in 2019, Bed Bath & Beyond saved millions of dollars on freight during the next few years. The organization will be able to offer two-day shipping to the majority of the United States (around 90 %). Bed Bath & Beyond is likewise undertaking stocking reduction measures, with a goal of a 5 % annual reduction in the corresponding fiscal year (Aaslaid, 2019). To boost profitability, companies are turning to direct sourcing from producers, Stock Keeping Unit simplification and space reduction, "display more, carry less," and assisted-store ordering. Additionally, the company is concentrating on freight reductions by expanding its Transportation Management System to cover more locations and merchants, delivering more capacity via a central hub (rather than direct to store), and collaborating with suppliers on diverse cost-cutting initiatives (Aaslaid, 2019).

Belkin and Brightpoint in Australia signed a deal in 2011 to distribute Belkin's mobile accessories, including Apple and Samsung accessories. Belkin was able to take advantage of Brightpoint's contacts across both operator and retail channels, while Brightpoint enhanced its income by adding new product offers. Foxconn Interconnect Technology Ltd. purchased Belkin in 2018 to expand its portfolio of upscale consumer products and accelerate its entry into the smart home market. The acquisition was motivated by Belkin's well-known brand, solid sales channel visibility, and future growth, including its technologies and solutions. Furthermore, the organization's operational knowledge will allow for cost reductions in the long term. Coyote Logistics takes pride in its forward-thinking logistics and supply chain strategy. Coyote is committed to doing the right thing for its customers, operators, localities, the ecosystem, and workforce to improve the industry's experience. By integrating proprietary software, smart people, and a no-compromises ethos. Coyote became a UPS subsidiary firm in 2015 and had more