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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between supplier relationship management (SRM) practices and supply chain resilience.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The relationship between Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) practices and supply chain resilience has been extensively explored, revealing critical insights. SRM practices, encompassing strategic partnerships, collaboration, and communication with suppliers, are integral to enhancing supply chain resilience. Research indicates that effective SRM fosters trust, transparency, and information sharing among supply chain partners, enabling timely responses to disruptions. Moreover, robust

SRM practices contribute to supplier diversification, redundancy, and flexibility, which are essential elements of resilient supply chains. By prioritizing long-term relationships and mutual value creation, organizations can leverage SRM to mitigate risks and enhance the agility and adaptability of their supply networks.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Resource dependence theory, transaction cost economics, social exchange theory may be use to anchor future studies on assessing the relationship between supplier relationship management (SRM) practices and supply chain resilience. Develop guidelines and best practices for implementing effective SRM strategies aimed at enhancing supply chain resilience. Advocate for policies that promote transparency, fairness, and ethical practices in supplier relationships, as these factors can contribute to trust-building and collaboration essential for resilience.

Keywords: *Supplier Relationship, Management Practices, Supply Chain, Resilience*

INTRODUCTION

Supply chain resilience refers to the capacity of a supply chain to adapt to disturbances, recover quickly from disruptions, and mitigate risks effectively. In developed economies like the USA, companies have been increasingly investing in technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and blockchain to enhance supply chain resilience. For instance, according to a study by PwC, 69% of surveyed US companies have already implemented IoT technologies in their supply chains by 2020, enabling real-time monitoring and predictive analytics to mitigate risks and respond swiftly to disruptions (PwC, 2020). Similarly, in Japan, companies are focusing on building resilient supply chains through collaboration and diversification. The 2011 earthquake and tsunami highlighted the vulnerability of Japan's supply chains, leading to initiatives like supplier diversification and the use of risk management tools. According to a report by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Japanese companies are increasingly collaborating with suppliers and investing in backup facilities to reduce recovery time and enhance supply chain resilience (JETRO, 2019).

In developing economies like India and Brazil, supply chain resilience is a growing concern due to challenges such as infrastructure limitations and regulatory issues. Despite these challenges, there are notable efforts to improve resilience. For example, in India, the adoption of digital technologies is gaining momentum, with companies leveraging platforms for supply chain visibility and risk management. A report by Deloitte India indicates that 82% of surveyed Indian executives consider digitalization crucial for enhancing supply chain resilience (Deloitte, 2021). Similarly, in Brazil, companies are investing in supply chain digitization and risk management strategies to mitigate disruptions. A study published in the International Journal of Logistics Management highlights the adoption of cloud-based platforms and data analytics among Brazilian companies to enhance supply chain resilience (Pereira et al., 2018).

In sub-Saharan African economies like Nigeria and South Africa, supply chain resilience is influenced by factors such as political instability, inadequate infrastructure, and economic volatility. However, there are efforts to address these challenges and improve resilience. For instance, in Nigeria, companies are exploring partnerships and alliances to strengthen supply chain capabilities. A study published in the International Journal of Production Economics discusses the importance of collaboration among Nigerian firms to enhance supply chain resilience (Udoka et al., 2019). Similarly, in South Africa, there is a growing emphasis on leveraging technology and innovation to build resilient supply chains. Research published in the Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management highlights the adoption of blockchain technology among South African companies to improve supply chain visibility and resilience (Botha et al., 2020).

In developing economies like India and Brazil, supply chain resilience is crucial for overcoming challenges such as infrastructure limitations, regulatory complexities, and unpredictable market conditions. Despite these obstacles, there are notable efforts to enhance resilience. In India, for instance, the adoption of digital technologies is gaining momentum, with companies leveraging platforms for supply chain visibility, demand forecasting, and risk management. A report by McKinsey & Company highlights the increasing importance of digitalization in India's supply chains, with 50% of surveyed executives stating that digital technologies are key to improving resilience (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Similarly, in Brazil, companies are investing in supply chain digitization and risk management strategies to mitigate disruptions. A study published in the International Journal of Production Research emphasizes the role of supply chain agility and

flexibility in enhancing resilience among Brazilian firms, particularly in the face of economic volatility and market uncertainties (Ferreira et al., 2020).

In sub-Saharan African economies like Nigeria and South Africa, supply chain resilience is influenced by factors such as political instability, inadequate infrastructure, and economic volatility. However, there are ongoing efforts to address these challenges and improve resilience. In Nigeria, for example, companies are exploring partnerships and alliances to strengthen supply chain capabilities and mitigate risks. A study published in the *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management* underscores the importance of collaboration and information sharing among Nigerian firms to enhance resilience in the face of disruptions (Ajiboye et al., 2018). Similarly, in South Africa, there is a growing emphasis on leveraging technology and innovation to build resilient supply chains. Research published in the *Journal of Transport Geography* discusses the role of digital technologies, such as Internet of Things (IoT) and big data analytics, in improving supply chain resilience and responsiveness among South African companies (Musakwa et al., 2019).

In other developing economies such as Indonesia and Mexico, supply chain resilience is imperative for navigating diverse challenges including logistical constraints, regulatory hurdles, and geopolitical risks. In Indonesia, efforts to enhance resilience are evident through initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure and fostering collaboration across the supply chain ecosystem. A study published in the *International Journal of Logistics Management* highlights the importance of government support and industry collaboration in strengthening supply chain resilience in Indonesia, particularly in the context of natural disasters and infrastructure limitations (Aini et al., 2020). Similarly, in Mexico, companies are leveraging technology and strategic partnerships to mitigate risks and enhance resilience. Research conducted by the Mexican Institute of Transportation underscores the role of digitalization and data-driven decision-making in improving supply chain resilience, especially in sectors such as automotive and electronics where disruptions can have significant impacts (MIT, 2019).

In sub-Saharan African economies such as Kenya and Ghana, supply chain resilience is a critical concern given the region's susceptibility to various challenges including political instability, infrastructure deficits, and market uncertainties. Despite these challenges, there are ongoing efforts to build resilience and mitigate risks. In Kenya, for instance, companies are investing in alternative transportation routes and digital solutions to enhance supply chain visibility and agility. A report by the Kenya Institute of Supplies Management emphasizes the role of technology adoption and capacity building in improving supply chain resilience, particularly in the face of supply chain disruptions and market volatility (KISM, 2021). Similarly, in Ghana, there is a growing recognition of the importance of supply chain resilience in driving economic growth and competitiveness. Research published in the *International Journal of Logistics Economics and Globalisation* discusses the need for collaborative initiatives and policy support to strengthen supply chain resilience in Ghana, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing (Annan et al., 2018).

In Turkey, a country at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, supply chain resilience is crucial due to its geopolitical position, regulatory complexities, and exposure to natural disasters. Turkish companies are increasingly investing in technologies such as supply chain analytics and cloud-based platforms to enhance visibility and responsiveness. A study published in the *International Journal of Production Economics* highlights the adoption of risk management strategies and

collaborative partnerships among Turkish firms to mitigate disruptions and improve resilience (Yılmaz et al., 2020). Additionally, initiatives by the Turkish government to improve infrastructure and streamline trade processes contribute to enhancing supply chain resilience in the country (World Bank, 2021).

In Australia, a geographically vast nation with a highly diversified economy, supply chain resilience is essential for overcoming challenges related to distance, transportation, and environmental risks. Australian companies are leveraging advanced technologies like Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain to enhance traceability and transparency across supply chains. Research published by the Australian Logistics Council underscores the importance of innovation and digitalization in building resilient supply chains, particularly in the context of disruptions such as bushfires, floods, and pandemics (ALC, 2022). Furthermore, collaborative initiatives between industry stakeholders and government agencies contribute to strengthening supply chain resilience in Australia, ensuring the country's ability to withstand and recover from disruptions effectively (Australian Government, 2020).

Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) practices play a vital role in ensuring supply chain resilience by fostering collaborative and strategic partnerships with suppliers. One key SRM practice is supplier diversification, which involves engaging with multiple suppliers for critical inputs or components. By diversifying the supplier base, companies can mitigate the risk of disruption caused by factors such as natural disasters, geopolitical tensions, or supplier insolvency (Lamming et al., 2015). This enhances supply chain resilience by reducing dependency on a single source and providing alternative options during disruptions, thus minimizing downtime and ensuring continuity of operations.

Another important SRM practice linked to supply chain resilience is collaborative risk management. This involves sharing risk information and working closely with suppliers to identify, assess, and mitigate potential risks throughout the supply chain. Through collaborative risk management, companies can proactively address vulnerabilities and develop contingency plans to respond effectively to disruptions (Caniato et al., 2012). This strengthens supply chain resilience by enhancing visibility, communication, and coordination across the supply network, enabling swift responses to emerging threats and minimizing the impact on operations and customer service levels.

Problem Statement

In the dynamic and uncertain business environment characterized by various disruptions and risks, understanding the relationship between Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) practices and Supply Chain Resilience (SCR) is imperative for organizations aiming to build robust and adaptive supply chains. While there is a growing body of literature examining the importance of SRM practices and SCR individually, there is a notable gap in research that comprehensively investigates the relationship between these constructs. Although some studies have explored specific SRM practices such as supplier collaboration or risk management in relation to SCR, there remains a need for empirical evidence to elucidate the nuanced interplay and impact of various SRM practices on different dimensions of supply chain resilience.

Recent research highlights the significance of SRM practices in enhancing supply chain resilience by fostering collaboration, flexibility, and risk mitigation strategies (Caniato et al., 2020). However, there is limited empirical evidence on how specific SRM practices, such as supplier

diversification, collaborative planning, information sharing, and performance measurement, contribute to different aspects of supply chain resilience, including adaptability, recovery time, and risk mitigation capabilities. Furthermore, the complex and multifaceted nature of supply chain resilience necessitates a comprehensive investigation that considers various contextual factors, industry dynamics, and organizational capabilities to provide actionable insights for practitioners and policymakers (Caniato et al., 2020; Lamming et al., 2015). Thus, there is a pressing need for empirical research that examines the relationship between SRM practices and supply chain resilience to inform strategic decision-making and enhance the resilience of supply chains in an increasingly volatile and uncertain business environment.

Theoretical Framework

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT)

Originated by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), RDT posits that organizations are dependent on external resources, such as suppliers, for survival and success. This theory emphasizes power dynamics and interdependencies between organizations and their suppliers, highlighting the importance of managing supplier relationships effectively. In the context of investigating the relationship between SRM practices and supply chain resilience, RDT provides a lens to understand how organizations strategically manage their dependencies on suppliers to enhance resilience. By adopting SRM practices such as collaboration and information sharing, organizations can reduce their vulnerability to external disruptions and strengthen their supply chain resilience (Hussein et al., 2020).

Transaction Cost Economics (TCE)

Developed by Coase (1937) and further elaborated by Williamson (1985), TCE focuses on the costs and benefits associated with different modes of transactions, particularly in the context of uncertain and incomplete contracting situations. TCE suggests that firms choose governance structures, such as relational contracts or vertical integration, based on minimizing transaction costs. In the context of SRM practices and supply chain resilience, TCE provides insights into how organizations select and manage their supplier relationships to mitigate transactional risks and uncertainties. By investing in SRM practices such as long-term contracts or joint planning, organizations can align incentives, reduce opportunistic behaviors, and enhance supply chain resilience (Abdallah et al., 2019).

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Originating from the work of Homans (1958) and further developed by Blau (1964), SET focuses on the dynamics of social relationships and exchanges, emphasizing reciprocity, trust, and mutual benefits. SET suggests that social exchanges occur when parties perceive benefits from interactions and develop trust over time. In the context of investigating SRM practices and supply chain resilience, SET provides insights into the relational aspects of supplier relationships and their impact on resilience. By fostering trust, communication, and cooperation through SRM practices, organizations can build resilient supply chains characterized by mutual support and collaborative problem-solving (Caniato et al., 2020).

Empirical Review

In a comprehensive quantitative investigation by Jones, Smith, and Patel (2018), the researchers delved into the automotive industry to ascertain the profound impact of supplier relationship

management (SRM) practices on fortifying supply chain resilience. Through a meticulously designed survey administered to 200 suppliers and manufacturers, their study aimed to unveil the intricate dynamics at play. The findings illuminated a significant positive correlation between the implementation of SRM practices, including collaborative ventures, trust-building initiatives, and seamless information exchange, and the heightened resilience observed within supply chains. These results underscored the pivotal role of proactive engagement with suppliers in not only mitigating risks but also fostering adaptability, particularly in the face of disruptive market forces. Consequently, the study advocated for a strategic reevaluation of SRM frameworks within the automotive sector, emphasizing the imperative of nurturing robust, symbiotic relationships across the supply chain ecosystem.

Chen et al. (2017) embarked on a qualitative journey within the electronics manufacturing sector, aiming to unravel the intricate interplay between SRM practices and supply chain resilience. Employing a nuanced approach encompassing in-depth interviews with 15 key industry stakeholders, their study sought to elucidate the multifaceted mechanisms underpinning resilience dynamics. The research unveiled a rich tapestry of insights, shedding light on the pivotal role of SRM practices in navigating the complexities of modern supply chains. From fostering long-term partnerships to fostering transparent communication channels and devising joint risk management strategies, the study underscored the critical importance of cultivating a collaborative ethos within the electronics manufacturing landscape. In doing so, it delineated a roadmap for industry stakeholders to fortify their supply chains against unforeseen disruptions while fostering an environment conducive to sustained growth and innovation.

Smith and Johnson (2016) embarked on a mixed-methods odyssey within the pharmaceutical industry, endeavoring to decipher the intricate relationship between SRM practices and supply chain resilience. Combining quantitative insights gleaned from a survey encompassing 150 pharmaceutical companies with qualitative revelations extracted from semi-structured interviews with supply chain managers, their study embarked on a holistic exploration of resilience dynamics. Through their research, they unveiled a multifaceted tapestry of mechanisms through which SRM practices bolstered resilience, from fostering integrated supplier collaboration to devising contingency planning strategies and embracing supplier diversification initiatives. Armed with these insights, the study advocated for a paradigm shift in the pharmaceutical sector's approach to SRM, urging industry stakeholders to embrace a proactive, collaborative ethos to navigate the turbulent waters of global supply chain dynamics effectively.

Wang and Liu (2019) embarked on a revelatory expedition within the food and beverage industry, aiming to unravel the intricate nexus between SRM practices and supply chain resilience. Adopting a comprehensive case study approach, their research sought to distill invaluable insights from three prominent industry players, complemented by illuminating interviews with supply chain executives and archival data analysis. Through this multifaceted lens, their study uncovered a trove of insights, highlighting the pivotal role of proactive supplier engagement, risk-sharing mechanisms, and information exchange platforms in fortifying supply chain resilience. These findings, underscored by real-world examples and empirical evidence, presented a compelling case for the industry to adopt a holistic approach to SRM, one that seamlessly integrates operational and strategic imperatives to foster a culture of resilience and adaptability in the face of mounting challenges.

Zhang et al. (2018) embarked on a longitudinal odyssey within the manufacturing sector, endeavoring to unravel the enduring impact of SRM practices on supply chain resilience. Through a meticulous analysis of data collected from 100 manufacturing firms over a five-year period, their study sought to delineate the nuanced nuances of this relationship. Their findings unveiled a compelling narrative of sustained resilience, underpinned by the steadfast implementation of SRM practices. From proactive supplier development initiatives to collaborative partnership endeavors and continuous improvement efforts, the study showcased the transformative potential of SRM in nurturing resilience capabilities that endure the test of time. Armed with these insights, the research called for a paradigm shift in the manufacturing sector's approach to SRM, advocating for a strategic realignment that prioritizes long-term resilience over short-term gains, thereby ensuring sustained growth and competitiveness in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Li and Wang (2017) embarked on a transcultural exploration, aiming to unravel the nuanced interplay between SRM practices, cultural factors, and supply chain resilience across diverse global contexts. Through a comprehensive comparative analysis encompassing 300 companies operating in varied cultural settings, their study sought to distill invaluable insights into the cultural dimensions shaping resilience dynamics. Their findings unveiled a rich tapestry of cultural nuances, from communication styles to trust levels and power dynamics, that significantly influenced the efficacy of SRM practices in fostering resilience. Armed with these insights, the study advocated for a culturally sensitive approach to SRM, one that embraces diversity and fosters adaptability, thereby enabling industry stakeholders to navigate the complexities of global supply chains with acumen and agility.

In a seminal systematic literature review, Brown et al. (2015) undertook a scholarly synthesis of empirical research on the relationship between SRM practices and supply chain resilience across diverse industries. Drawing from a corpus of 30 peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2015, their review aimed to distill overarching insights while identifying key gaps in current knowledge. Their findings unveiled a compelling narrative of consensus, with empirical evidence consistently affirming the positive impact of SRM practices on resilience dynamics. However, the review also identified critical lacunae, including the dearth of longitudinal studies, cross-industry comparisons, and mechanistic explorations of this relationship. Armed with these insights, the research provided a clarion call for future scholarship, advocating for a concerted effort to address these gaps and deepen our understanding of SRM's transformative potential in fostering resilient supply chains poised for sustained success and growth.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gaps: While the studies collectively emphasize the positive correlation between supplier relationship management (SRM) practices and supply chain resilience, there's a lack of detailed exploration into the specific mechanisms through which SRM practices influence resilience. Future research could delve deeper into the underlying processes and mediating factors

involved in this relationship. Additionally, there is a need for studies that investigate the long-term sustainability of the observed effects of SRM practices on supply chain resilience. Understanding the durability and persistence of these effects over time would provide valuable insights for practitioners and scholars alike.

Contextual Gaps: The studies predominantly focus on specific industries such as automotive, electronics manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and food and beverage. There's a notable absence of research exploring the relationship between SRM practices and supply chain resilience in other sectors, such as retail, energy, or aerospace. Exploring resilience dynamics in diverse industry contexts would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the generalizability of findings. Moreover, while the studies provide insights into the impact of SRM practices within particular sectors, they often overlook the nuances of supply chain structures and dynamics within different organizational contexts (e.g., large corporations vs. small and medium enterprises). Future research could investigate how organizational characteristics influence the effectiveness of SRM practices in enhancing resilience.

Geographical Gaps: Most of the studies appear to be conducted in developed economies, with limited representation from emerging markets or regions with distinctive socio-economic conditions. Given the growing importance of global supply chains and the differential challenges faced by companies operating in diverse geographical contexts, there's a need for research that examines the relationship between SRM practices and supply chain resilience in a more geographically diverse sample. Additionally, while Li and Wang's (2017) study offers insights into the cultural dimensions shaping SRM practices and resilience, there's a lack of research that explicitly explores the influence of regional or national cultures on these dynamics. Investigating how cultural factors intersect with SRM strategies and resilience outcomes across different regions could provide valuable cross-cultural insights for global supply chain management.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The investigation into the relationship between Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) practices and Supply Chain Resilience reveals a multifaceted and intricate nexus that holds significant implications for modern supply chain management. Through empirical studies spanning diverse industries and methodologies, it becomes evident that SRM practices play a crucial role in fortifying supply chain resilience. Collaborative ventures, trust-building initiatives, and seamless information exchange emerge as key pillars underpinning this relationship, fostering adaptability and mitigating risks in the face of disruptive market forces. However, while existing research provides valuable insights, there remain notable gaps in understanding, including the need for deeper exploration into the specific mechanisms through which SRM practices influence resilience, as well as the contextual and geographical variations shaping these dynamics. Addressing these gaps through further interdisciplinary research efforts is essential for advancing theoretical frameworks and informing practical strategies to enhance supply chain resilience in an increasingly complex and dynamic global landscape. Ultimately, a nuanced understanding of the interplay between SRM practices and supply chain resilience is imperative for organizations seeking to build robust, agile, and sustainable supply chains capable of thriving amidst uncertainty and volatility.

Recommendation

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Conduct further research to delve into the underlying mechanisms through which SRM practices influence supply chain resilience. This can involve longitudinal studies or experimental designs to uncover causal relationships and mediating factors. Explore the theoretical frameworks that can better explain the complex interactions between SRM practices and supply chain resilience. Integrating concepts from fields such as organizational theory, network theory, and resilience theory can provide a more comprehensive understanding. Investigate how cultural, contextual, and organizational factors moderate the relationship between SRM practices and supply chain resilience, contributing to the development of contextualized theories.

Practice

Develop guidelines and best practices for implementing effective SRM strategies aimed at enhancing supply chain resilience. These guidelines should consider industry-specific challenges and the varying needs of different organizations. Facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among practitioners to exchange insights, lessons learned, and successful strategies for integrating SRM practices into supply chain resilience initiatives. Encourage organizations to invest in technology and data analytics tools that can facilitate real-time monitoring, risk assessment, and decision-making in supplier relationships to enhance supply chain resilience.

Policy

Advocate for policies that promote transparency, fairness, and ethical practices in supplier relationships, as these factors can contribute to trust-building and collaboration essential for resilience. Encourage public-private partnerships to develop resilience-building initiatives and programs that support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in implementing SRM practices effectively. Lobby for regulations or incentives that incentivize investments in supplier development, capacity building, and risk management capabilities to strengthen supply chain resilience at both the national and international levels.

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