
Introduction

B.S. Sahay

Institute of Management Technology
Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad 201 001 India
E-mail: bssahay@imt.ac.in

Biographical notes: Professor B.S. Sahay is Director of the Institute of Management Technology (IMT) Ghaziabad, India. Prior to joining IMT, he was Dean (Research) and Professor of Operations Management at Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurgaon, India. He was also Adjunct Professor at Queensland University of Technology, Australia. His teaching, research and consulting interests include supply chain management, operations management, productivity management and business modelling. He has served as Guest Editor of *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, *International Journal of Technology Management* and *International Journal of Integrated Supply Management*. He is on the editorial board of seven international journals and many national journals. He has published seven books and 130 papers in international/national journals and conferences. In token of excellence of his research work he has received six awards including three best paper awards.

The launch of a new journal is a very exciting event. It is particularly exciting for Inderscience Publishers who have a long history of encouraging high quality research journals in a wide array of topics. The *International Journal of Value Chain Management (IJVCM)*, a refereed journal published in four issues per year, is seeking papers that discuss current practices and research in the broad area of value chain management.

In recent times, *Value Chain Management* has drawn the attention of researchers, academics, practicing managers and policy makers. This attention may be due to consumers' rising demand, global competition and convergence of technology. Organisations around the globe are re-organising and streamlining their value chains and redefining the rules of economic and trading relationships across the value chain. It is, therefore, important to establish a formal communication channel to disseminate research knowledge and ideas. Also, it is important to learn from each other's work. However, there is not a single journal exclusively dedicated to the subject of understanding how enterprises harness new opportunities to create value, reinvent value chains and alter industry structures. The new journal *International Journal of Value Chain Management (IJVCM)* is exclusively devoted to these subjects.

Journal orientation

IJVM is an international journal designed to provide a vehicle to help professionals, academics, researchers and policy makers who work in the area of value chain, value creation, supply chain, operations, collaboration, sourcing, relationship, marketing, finance and IT. The journal aims to disseminate research knowledge and ideas and also to learn from each other's work. The journal publishes original papers, review papers, technical reports, case studies, conference reports, management reports, book reviews, notes, commentaries and news. Special issues devoted to important topics in *Value Chain Management* will occasionally be published. Commentaries on papers and reports published in the journal are encouraged. Authors will have the opportunity to respond to the commentary on their works before the entire treatment is published. Contributions may be by submission or invitation. Suggestions for special issues and publications are welcome.

Subject coverage

IJVM is a refereed journal of original, previously unpublished manuscripts. The editor invites submissions of papers relevant to the journal's editorial aims. Although the possible set of paper topics is large, we encourage submission on any area within the scope of value chain management. The following topic areas are particularly suitable (but are not limited to) for publication in *IJVM*:

- value chain strategies and planning
- demand forecasting and planning
- supply chain management
- customer value and relationship management
- global sourcing, e-procurement and e-commerce
- agile and lean manufacturing
- distribution channel design
- inbound and outbound logistics
- distribution channel design
- network design and routing
- product innovation and development
- order fulfillment and quick response time
- customer value and customer service
- trust, partnership and strategic alliance
- infrastructure and regulations
- e-governance and value chain
- knowledge management

- technological interventions in value chain
- performance metrics for value chain
- managing change.

In this inaugural issue

We received a large number of high-quality papers. However, we decided to select six papers that cover a wide range of topics for the inaugural issue. I think you will find these papers to be interesting and thought provoking.

Today's businesses have become extremely complex. The interplay of the three C's, namely, Consumers, Competition and Convergence, has thrown new challenges for organisations all over the world. Sensitivity of economies to the external environment coupled with the turbulent process of globalisation has added the highest degree of uncertainty and unpredictability to business processes. To top it all, the effect of globalisation has shifted the balance of power in favour of the customers, though it may have open a plethora of opportunities for all, in the form of variety and choice. For a variety of reasons, the pressures of competitive forces have enhanced product changes, supercharged by shortening product and technology development life cycles. Managing the value chain in such highly dynamic economic environments has become critical for survival and growth of organisations. The very definition of 'Value' has also undergone several changes.

The first paper 'Aligning value propositions in supply chains' by Martinez and Bititci argue that despite the plethora of studies on value that have been undertaken, organisations still fail in identifying their value offers. These organisations have failed particularly in aligning their resources and capabilities towards their value creation processes in their supply chains. The paper proposes a new framework on value creation: 'the value matrix'. The value matrix, through its six value propositions, provides a comprehensive framework to understand how different organisations within a supply chain create value. The value matrix also explores value creation from both the organisational and customer perspectives. A constructive research approach through an in-depth case study on the fashion industry demonstrates the following:

- That the value propositions of key members of the supply chain should be aligned to enhance the value proposition of the entire supply chain.
- That other members that are not strategic members of the supply chain can have different value propositions.

This paper finishes with describing an agenda for further research and an agenda for changing how we design and operate supply chains.

The second paper 'Decoupling the value chain' by Olhager, Selldin and Wikner suggests that all value chains are not designed the same way. A major determinant is the type of product that is to be supplied through the chain or network, calling for different types of value chains. An interesting model for this selection is the one developed by Fisher. In the model, Fisher argues that products can be characterised as being either functional or innovative, and that supply chains are either physically efficient or market responsive. Certain combinations of products and supply chains are assumed to provide matches, whereas other combinations lead to mismatches. This paper combines this

approach with the concept of a customer order decoupling point. In this paper authors explore the utility of the Fisher model to characterise the role and features of upstream versus downstream value chain operations relative to the product supply decoupling point and the demand mediation decoupling point.

Jack, As-Saber and Edwards in their paper 'Service embeddedness and its impact on the value chain and firm internationalisation: in search of a framework' are concerned about the recent growth in the services sector and its internationalisation that distinguish services from goods and influence the modus operandi of an internationalising firm. Nonetheless, as the composition of a firm's product usually contains both good and service characteristics, it may be misleading to categorise a product simply as a 'good' and/or a 'service'. Rather, it is important to understand the extent of service components that embody or are embedded in a product. This paper introduces the concept of service embeddedness, which is defined as the service characteristics existing in all products and is usually incorporated to add value to a product offering. From this perspective, the paper continues to outline a value chain that shows how value is created through a chain of activities similar, but somewhat distinguishable, from the value chain generally applied to manufactured goods. A conceptual model is introduced to determine the likely impact that service embeddedness may have on a firm's value-creating activities and the choice of entry mode in international markets.

Strict environmental regulations and the ever increasing shortages in the availability of natural resources are making reverse logistics an area of growing importance. The paper 'Integrated chain analysis of recycled *vis-à-vis* wood pulp paper industry: an Indian manufacturer viewpoint' by Kumar Pati, Vrat and Kumar proposes a linear programming optimisation model from the manufacturer's point of view for the Indian paper industry with two different sources of raw material – wood and waste paper. The objective of the model is to minimise the paper supply chain cost. The constituents of the objective function are costs of collection, transportation, segregation and disposal (for recycled paper), inventory and manufacturing costs. The inclusions of environmental cost and cost of quality added a new dimension to the above said model, which was not explored earlier in supply chain context. To know the behaviour of the system under different scenarios, sensitivity analysis, shortage analysis and finally indifference curve analysis have been performed on the model. The model may help the manufacturer to make strategic decisions under different shortage scenarios of the paper supply chain.

Power in his paper 'Adoption of supply chain management-enabling technologies in SMEs: the view from the top vs. the view from the middle', uses data from two separate surveys conducted within Australian SMEs in the fast-moving consumer goods sector. The perceptions of two groups – Senior Managers (CEOs, managing directors, general managers) and Functional Managers (marketing, operations, logistics, financial controller, *etc.*) – are compared to the benefits accruing from the use of Business-to-Business (B2B) enabling technologies for the management of supply chains. The evidence from this research indicates that there are significant differences in the perception of contribution to performance, understanding and knowledge of the implications and potential of B2B e-commerce technologies between these two groups. Senior managers are found to be more negative about their contributions to business outcomes. They generally display a lower level of understanding of their potential and the implications of adoption as compared to managers of functional areas. The implications of the research are important for the theory of innovation adoption and diffusion, as in this case extent of adoption appears to be influenced by this gap in perceptions. As such,

the characteristics of the innovation and the characteristics of two separate groups in organisations that will have some role to play in the adoption decision are being influenced by another important dimension – the strategic implications of the innovation. The observation of this interaction provides some insight into the dynamics of adoption of technology-related innovations in SMEs.

Much of the existing published research into the impact of electronic procurement has focused on the cost efficiency or implementation issues of its adoption. Issues relating to the significance of improved compliance on procurement performance were noted in our earlier paper. However, little, if any, research has so far set out to quantify the impact of electronic procurement on internal customers' perceptions of service quality. Last but not the least, the sixth paper 'Improving user compliance of electronic procurement systems: an examination of the importance of internal customer service quality' by Croom and Johnston examines the impact of e-procurement adoption on internal users' perceptions of service quality. The paper compared users' perceptions of pre- and post-electronic procurement processes for two categories of supply: computer consumables and stationery. Using an online survey a pilot study was conducted in a single organisation that has employed 'supply-side' electronic procurement for 18 months. The authors conclude that users expressed 'delight' in many aspects of the service provision relating to the design characteristics of the e-procurement system, but the users are dissatisfied with issues concerning the actual system delivery.

Hopefully, the papers in the inaugural issue will highlight research challenges and future research directions. The main intent is to provide ideas for further value chain research or ideas for improving some aspect of business practice.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the editorial board members for providing full support in bringing out this inaugural issue. My most sincere thanks go to the paper contributors who shared their knowledge and research outcomes in this inaugural issue. I am thankful to all the reviewers who spared their valuable time in reviewing the papers and to the staff of Inderscience for their high-quality professional assistance during the pre-publication process. Lastly I invite valuable comments and suggestions and look forward to receiving your paper.