
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Elkafi Hassini is an Associate Professor at the DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University. He holds a PhD and MASc Degrees in Management Sciences from the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Waterloo. In his research he uses mathematical models and optimisation techniques to solve business decision problems. His current research focuses on the logistics of e-tailing, joint pricing and inventory management, and supplier selection and procurement auctions.

1 Introduction

The Annual International Symposium on Supply Chain Management is held each fall to bring together researchers and practitioners from around the world. The highlights of the symposium include: a collection of high quality academic papers, practitioner white papers or presentations, keynotes by renowned practitioners and academics, and panel discussions on current topics. This special issue is drawn from the academic papers that were presented during the fifth symposium held from 17 October to 19 October, 2007 in Toronto, Canada.

One key aspect of the symposium is its goal to bring together academics and practitioners in one forum where they can share ideas and contribute to the advancement of the theory and practice of supply chain management. The papers in this special issue are selected to highlight this aspect. The issue includes a mixture of case studies on the application of supply chain management programs as well as a selection of supply chain models that look at supply chain decisions from the strategic to the operational.

2 The papers

This special issue includes eight papers. Table 1 provides a summary of the key features of the papers along four dimensions: methodology, conceptual issues, practical issues and contributions. Five papers present supply chain management models that are either based on existing literature, empirical work or a combination of the two. The other three papers discuss case studies: one case looks at implementing a conceptual framework in real supply chains and the other two cases deal with current supply chain practices within global supply chains.

Table 1 Summary of key paper features

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Conceptual Issues</i>	<i>Practical Issues</i>	<i>Contribution</i>
Walters	Conceptual framework based on interactions theory	How can Information Communication Technology be used to help in creating learning organisations	Help information providers in a supply chain to identify the roles of interactions in decision makers activities to develop and maintain organisations in strong substantial competitive positions	Presents a framework for designing value chain processes that starts from demand chain analysis and then identifies the key customer expectations and value drivers
Fantazy, Kumar and Kumar	Survey of 175 Canadian manufacturing SMEs and confirmatory factor analysis	Which supply chain strategies are employed by manufacturing SMEs?	Verification of conceptual models in a Canadian supply chain context	Looked at supply chain strategies within a Canadian context and contends that the taxonomy of strategies is country-dependent
Kersten, Hohrath, Böger and Singer	Empirical survey and existing literature	How do we measure risks in a supply chain and do we manage them?	What are the hurdles to the implementation of risk management tools?	Proposes an integrated risk management process and discusses implementation issues
McLaren and Manatsa	Centering theory and influence analysis applied to software package documentation using text mining techniques	How to use the software documentation literature to help in software selection process	Use software documentations to uncover major similarities and differences between different packages	Applying text mining and clustering techniques to software documentation to aid in package selections
Hong and Hwang	Conceptual framework and case study	Understanding the impact of environmental changes on manufacturing and services industries	How did the Korean manufacturing and services industries evolve into global supply chain players	Presented a topology of Korean manufacturing and services industries and how they evolved into global players through different supply chain patterns
Tummala and Schoenherr	Survey among supply chain managers of a large international manufacturing company	Translating a conceptual framework into practical implementation	Assessing relative importance of supply chain enablers and how their related operational plans	Assessing a supply chain implementation framework of best practices through a case study
Daine, Winnington and Head	Case study of a global retail supply chain	Push to pull conversion process and supply chain aggregate costing methods	A push to pull process map and related performance analysis for a global retail supply chain	Through appropriate data collection and analysis developed a theoretical and analytical framework for reducing supply chain operating costs
Lopes, Freitas, Bremer and Barreiros	Case study for a global meat, poultry and frozen food supply chain	What does it take to transform a supply chain from a traditional setting to a demand-driven value chain?	Planning and implementing a supply chain transformation strategy	Successful planning and implementation of a supply chain transformation process, including an advanced planning and scheduling system

In the paper ‘Using Rudyard Kipling to design value chain processes: an application of interactions theory’ Walters describes a framework for the application of Information Communication Technology (ICT) that is based on tacit, transactional and

transformational interactions theory. Walters argues that the role of ICT should not only be to facilitate strategic planning and operational monitoring but also to create learning organisations. This can be achieved by identifying the role of interactions in decision makers' activities. Given the state of improvement in ICT, such as its ease of availability and cost efficiency, they can now be employed to empower supply chains as a strong competitive advantage.

Fantazy et al. investigate the different supply chain strategies that Manufacturing SMEs adopt. They use a conceptual framework that classifies supply chain strategies into four types: innovating, modularising, appending, and following. Based on a survey of 175 Canadian manufacturing companies they find that there is no evidence to support the claim that modularising and appending could be regarded as underlying supply chain strategies. They also found that in the Canadian context there is a fifth type of strategy that they call customer-oriented strategy.

In their work on 'A Supply Chain Risk Management process' Kresten et al. argue that the globalisation, inventory management sophistication and interdependencies of supply chains increases the risk exposure of companies within the supply chain. They propose an integrated risk management process that is based on findings from the literature as well as an empirical investigation. In addition they discuss the practical hurdles to the proper implementation of risk management tools. They find that the obstacles are similar to those for the implementation of other supply chain management tools: lack of transparency and insufficient trust.

In the paper 'Distinguishing the indistinguishable: exploring differences in supply chain software packages using centering resonance text analysis' McLaren and Manatsa use a text mining tool and cluster analysis to identify the key functionalities as well as similarities and differences among the major supply chain management software packages. They find that all packages share the same top 20 functionalities and differences appear only when one considers some of the more specialised functionalities. Their study can be useful in two ways:

- 1 as an aid for supply chain management software selection decisions
- 2 to help software makers design their documentation in a way that brings out the key differentiating feature of their software.

In their paper entitled 'Operational capabilities and performance toward global supply chain: an overview of Korean manufacturing and service firms' Hong and Hwang focus on Korean manufacturing and service industries to illustrate how they built their global supply chain capabilities. They present a research framework for studying the service and manufacturing industries and use it to study the Korean case. In the process they also discuss the different patterns of supply chains.

Tummala and Schoenherr discuss a case study that looks at implementing a framework for best practice supply chain initiatives. The framework, as described by Tummala and Schoenherr (2008), identified enablers, SCM initiatives and the related operational plans for best practice supply chain implementations. The authors conducted a survey among supply chain managers of a large international manufacturing company and found that while the managers agreed with all the identified supply chain enablers, they did not perceive some of the operational issues (such as postponement) with respect to some SCM initiatives useful in implementing SCM strategies. The authors duly note

the limitation due to the survey sample size and view the survey results from a case study descriptive perspective.

In their paper 'Transition from push to pull in the wholesale/retail sector: lessons to be learned from lean', Daine et al. study the effect of excessive inventory of the performance of a global retail supply chain. They then suggest converting a supply chain from a push system to a pull system to address the overstocking issues. They also highlight the importance of using aggregate performance measures to support supply decision making. The authors find that employing lean methodologies not only reduce the problem of excess inventories but they also improve the performance of the supply chain along several measures.

Freitas et al. present a case study of Perdigão, a global supply chain that specialises in the production and sale of meat, poultry and frozen food. They describe how the company successfully planned for and implemented a three-year transformation strategy that took its supply chain from a traditional framework to a demand-driven value chain. The case also recounts the company's successful implementation of SAP's advanced planning and scheduling systems.

Acknowledgements

The guest editor would like to thank the authors for their contributions. Without the expert advice and diligent reviews by the symposium organising committee and other reviewers this special issues would not have been possible. Finally, the Editor-in-Chief, Professor Gunasekaran, must be acknowledged for his involvement, advice, and patience in arranging for this special issue in the IJLSM.

Reference

- Tummala, V.M.R. and Schoenherr, T. (2008) 'Best practices for the implementation of supply chain management initiatives', *International Journal of Logistics Systems and Management*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp.391–410.