
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Elkafi Hassini¹ is an Associate Professor at the DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University. He received his PhD and MASc 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 joint pricing and inventory management, logistics of e-tailing 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 sixth symposium held from 15 October to 17 October 2008 and for the first time in Calgary, 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. In addition to the interaction between academics and practitioners in the presentation and discussion panels, the symposium papers include contributions that span the spectrum of operations management methodologies from case studies and empirical work to quantitative and analytical studies. The papers in this special issue, one of two issues to be withdrawn from the 2008 symposium, highlight the qualitative aspect of the symposium contributions. While they use different methodologies and investigate different contexts, all the papers share a common theme: They discuss important issues relating to performance measurement in supply chains.

Hassini (2008) has defined supply chain optimisation as “the most efficient use of resources that are involved in satisfying a customer order throughout a network of companies subject to restrictions and limitations on the use and flow of these resources.” Based on this definition, measurement of supply chain performance will necessarily involve measuring activities that span several companies. While well established performance measurement tools for fields like inventory management and logistics exist, they only focus on measuring operations performance within a single company. The

purpose of this special issue is to include studies on performance measurement in supply chains that look at operations and orders that extend beyond a single company. Gunasekaran and Kobu (2007) provide a review of related supply chain performance measurement literature in the period 1995–2004 and a more recent review is in Akyu and Erkan (2009). The latter review has only 38 references, thus highlighting the paucity of studies in this area, and its authors have called for more research on performance measurement frameworks, implementation and adoption.

2 The papers

There are five papers in this special issue. In the article ‘Supply chain assessment tool development in Thailand: an SME perspective’, Banomyong and Supatn argue that common performance measurement tools, such as the SCOR model, were not suitable for small-to-medium enterprises (SME) in Thailand and propose a new assessment tool that is designed specifically for the Thailand SME supply chain environment. They include three dimensions for measuring performance: time, cost and reliability. The new framework was piloted with 15 local SMEs and compared to leading benchmark supply chains. This testing uncovered the difficulty that companies faced in finding their logistics activity costs, largely because the companies do not have a practice of recording these costs.

In the paper entitled ‘Performance measurement in buyer-supplier collaboration programmes: implementing the common scorecard’, Barros et al. present the results of a case study about the use of a common scorecard to share performance measurements between buyers and suppliers. The study illustrated the benefits of the common scorecard when applied in a vendor-managed inventory environment where demand uncertainty is high, lead time long and there is a wide variety of products. The authors also include a review of the common performance measures that are employed by companies, both in the literature and in practice.

Fantazy et al. look at the role of information sharing on supply chain performance in their article entitled ‘The impact of information sharing on supply chain performance: an empirical study’. They argue that while analytically many papers have shown the merits of information sharing on reducing supply chain costs, not much has been done on empirically showing that information sharing does in fact bring the benefits that have been postulated in the analytical literature. They survey 110 companies in the automotive manufacturing industry in Canada and use structural equation modelling to investigate the relationship between integration (both internal and external), uncertainty, information sharing and the supply chain performance. They find that information sharing enhances supply chain performance and has a significant impact on both operational and financial performance measures.

In his paper ‘A multi-attribute approach to the modelling of human elements in electronic negotiation’, Sundarraj proposes an approach for adding human elements into electronic-agent negotiation systems. He uses the case of supply chain to illustrate the approach. In integrated supply chains, negotiations can arise in many links and notably in procurement activities. The author suggests that incorporating human elements into the computer negotiation agents, through modules for learning and reacting to the negotiating partner, can increase the performance of the agent and as a consequence the performance of the supply chain negotiations.

Larson and McLachlin address the not-for-profit supply chains in their work entitled 'Supply chain integration under chaotic conditions: not-for-profit food distribution'. Given the paucity of not-for-profit (NFT) supply chain studies, this paper provides a valuable addition to the literature. The authors highlight the major difference between a NFT supply chain and business supply chains. They also describe how some of the business based methodologies can be applied to the NFT sector given that the latter performance measures often stress social values rather economic objectives. They illustrate a typical NFT supply chain by detailing a case study of Winnipeg Harvest, a Canadian NFT humanitarian organisation that distributes food to the needy.

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References

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Notes

- 1 At the time of the writing of this editorial, the author was a Visiting Professor in the Systems Engineering Department at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in Saudi Arabia.