

Investigating the Motivators, Barriers and Enablers Associated with the Implementation of Sustainable Supply Chain in Saudi Manufacturing Industry

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Abstract

Sustainable supply chain management (SSCM) can play a significant role in improving company sustainability performance by addressing the social, environmental and economic issues in the supply chain, including suppliers, in-house operations, distributors and customers. Achieving sustainability through SSCM is a challenge that requires understanding the complexity of developing efficient and effective SSCM. Limited empirical research has investigated that complexity in detail, especially in developing countries. The purpose of this study is to identify and discuss, in the context of certain Saudi manufacturing industries, the relevance of key motives, barriers and enabling factors, and their influence on the adoption of SSCM practices. Also, this study leads to the development of a roadmap for maintaining the key enabling factors and mitigating the main barriers to successful implementation of SSCM.

This research follows a case-study design, with in-depth analysis of six large companies working in different Saudi manufacturing sectors, as well as an expert focus group. Data-collection methods included in-depth interviews with top-level managers and documents obtained from company websites. In total, primary data was collected from ten managers and eight experts, and data from 224 secondary sources were analysed. A thematic-analysis approach was adopted to examine the data, and a template was developed to explore the overall view of the SSCM implementation process and show the differences and similarities among Saudi manufacturing companies and the focus group, with respect to the key motives, enablers and barriers.

The results reveal that large manufacturing companies acknowledge the importance of adopting sustainability in the supply chain to improve company sustainability performance. Two related motivators drive that adoption, namely, achieving benefits and responding to stakeholder pressures such as regulation, competition and corporate social responsibility (i.e. taking responsibility toward others, such as local community and employees). This study finds that external stakeholder barriers inhibit the development of SSCM more than internal barriers. Those external barriers include governments, suppliers, customers, and investors and cause negative economic, environmental and social impacts on company development of SSCM practices. Perhaps the most significant finding to emerge from the analysis is that stakeholder engagement plays critical roles in mitigating those barriers and advancing the adoption of SSCM. This study found that corporate understanding of engaging, developing and managing the positive contributions of external stakeholders and, more importantly, of internal stakeholders, is an essential enabling factor in the development of SSCM. Other significant enabling factors include the availability of technology, performance measurement, a sustainability culture and sustainability strategy. The study template can help Saudi manufacturers to follow guidelines that effectively enhance SSCM implementation.

Keywords

Sustainable supply chain management, Enablers, Barriers, Motivators, and Saudi Arabia.

Biography / Biographies

Abdulaziz Aljoghaiman is a PhD candidate at Bristol Business School in the University of the West of England. He earned B.S in Marketing from King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia and his Master of Science from Kettering University, the USA in Operation Management. Abdulaziz has worked since graduation from B.S at King Faisal University and taught management courses at the College of Business Administration. He obtained a full scholarship from his work to complete his PhD in the field of supply chain management. His research interests are supply chain management and sustainability.

Mohammed Saad is Professor of Innovation and Technology Management at the Bristol Business School. His research activity spans several fields. It includes innovation in procurement and sustainability, innovation and technology management and more global policy related issues of knowledge development, transfer and institutional collaborative learning. He is also investigating the crucial role of higher education institutions in the creation of knowledge as a basis for innovation with a greater emphasis placed on the insufficiently explored link between teaching/education and innovation.

Vikas Kumar is a Professor of Operations and Supply Chain Management at Bristol Business School, University of the West of England, UK. He holds a PhD degree in Management Studies from Exeter Business School, UK and a Bachelor of Technology degree in engineering from Ranchi University, India. He has published more than 170 articles in leading International journals and international conferences. He is a Co-Founder and Editor of the Int. J. of Supply Chain and Operations Resilience (Inderscience) and serves on the editorial board of several international journals. His current research interests include sustainability, short food supply chains, and operational excellence. He has secured research funding from various research agencies and generated income in excess of £1 million.