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SCM FRAME WORK FOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN RETAIL SECTOR**DR. S. SARAVANAN****HEAD****DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES****ANNA UNIVERSITY (BIT CAMPUS)****TIRUCHIRAPPALLI****S. SARANYADEVI****STUDENT****DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES****ANNA UNIVERSITY (BIT CAMPUS)****TIRUCHIRAPPALLI****ABSTRACT**

The study aims at examining the existing supply chain practices and the level of supply chain responsiveness considered by the retail formats. Finally, the study concludes with a proposed model considering supply chain strategies and responsiveness as a building blocks for sustainable retail format (to achieve competitive advantage). The study is based on the data available from secondary sources (review of literature).

KEYWORDS

supply chain management, retail sector.

INTRODUCTION

In this information era, customers are expecting not only products for their money spent, in turn more from the firms. So it becomes mandatory for the firms to consider the needs and wants of the customer to enhance the customer satisfaction level. Retailing in India is one of the fastest growing sectors to support its economy. As per the record of "Associated chamber of commerce and industry" (ASSOCHAM) in 2012-2013, the contribution of both organized and unorganized retail sector to GDP was 22%. They also estimated that retail sector has yearly growth rate of 15%. It leads to an estimation of INR 34trillion in the year 2016 as the share of retail sector to GDP in India. High consumer spending over the years by the young population (more than 31% of the country is below 14 years) and sharp rise (improved lifestyle) in disposable income are driving the Indian organized retail sectors growth. So in order to sustain in the retail industry the retail firms should add value to the customer by making merchandise available under one roof and provide time, place and possession utility to customers. To achieve this objective of the retail sectors should adopt supply chain management practices as this finds cheaper suppliers, low cost manufacturing facilities, strategically located distribution centers and highly profitable or high – volume customer markets (Goldratt and Cox 2004). Hence, it is the total responsibility of supply chain management to make retail business a successful one.

Christopher (1994) defined supply chain management as, the flow of goods from supplier through manufacturing and distribution chains to the end user. In today's competitive world supply chain management plays a vital role in ensuring the product availability to customer and also the possible value additions, the sustainability of the firms in the markets were mainly attributable to the supply chains strategies adopted by them. (Dennis Minnich et al) defined Supply chain responsiveness as, the ability to react purposefully and within an appropriate time-scale to customer demand or changes in the market place, to bring about or maintain competitive advantage. The effect of supply chain strategies can be assessed through supply chain responsiveness and hence the firms can make use of the concept of supply chain responsiveness to assess the value addition along with to the products supplied by them. This value addition helps the sustainability of the firms in the market.

Thus the supply practices and supply chain responsiveness are considered as tools for competitive advantage in retail forms. Hence the study deals with these two factors to build a framework towards competitive advantage in retail sector. The competitive advantage considered as output variable (dependent variable) and supply chain strategies and responsiveness considered as input variable. Supply chain responsiveness is based on the strategies adopted by the firm.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Xiang Li (2014), discussed in his paper, organizations adopt numerous business improvement methodologies to improve business performance. Logistics and supply chain management has been regarded to be the crucial factor for the companies to obtain competitive advantage.

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Bhattacharya et al., (1996) Supply chain management is seen as a key to delivering higher customer satisfaction with reduced lead time and cost. Bowersox, (1997) Supply chain management is a collaborative-based strategy to link cross-enterprise business operations to achieve a shared vision of market opportunity. Bowersox and Closs, (1996) The basic notion of supply chain management is grounded on the belief that efficiency can be improved by sharing information and by joint planning an overall supply chain focusing on integrated management of all logistics operation from original supplier to final consumer acceptance. Canvinato, (1991) Supply chains are popular inter firm linkages to attain joint cost savings, product enhancements, and competitive services. Christopher, (1994) Supply chain management covers the flow of goods from supplier through manufacturing and distribution chains to the end user. Cooper, Lambert and pagh, (1997) the integration of all key business processes across the supply chain is what we are calling supply chain management. Ellarm and Cooper, (1993) Supply chain management has been characterized as across between traditional, open market relationship and full vertical integration. As such, supply chain management represents an innovative way to compete in today's ever changing global economy. Jones and Riley, (1985) Supply chain management deals with the total flow of materials from supplier to end users. The global supply chain forum, 1998 Supply chain management is the integration of business processes from end user through original suppliers that provides products, services, and information that add value for customers.

SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGIES

The supply chain strategy determines the methodology adopted by an organization, the pattern of the customer demand is taken as a crucial element while formulating efficient supply chain strategies. S.M.S Rana et al., (2016) define supply chain strategy as a set of inter- related issues employed to incorporate suppliers, manufacturers, warehouses and stores so that products are made and distributed at the right quantities to the right location at the right time in orders lessen system-wide costs while satisfying service level requirements. Organizations are thinking supply chain strategies as a way of increasing their performance and achieving long term goals. The supply chain strategy helps the supply chain process in the movement and storage of raw materials, work-in-process inventory and finished goods from the point of origin to point of consumption. Somuyiwa et al., (2012) defined SCM practices as the set of activities undertaken by an organization to promote effective management of its supply chain. Identified strategic supplier partnership, customer relationship and information sharing as key SCM practices.

PRODUCT TYPES

The products are generally classified into two categories such as functional product and innovative products. Madhu bala et al., discussed that the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) (2005) defines the FMCG industry as one of the largest industries in the world. It comprises consumer non-durable goods and caters to the everyday needs of the consumer. The product characteristics are unique to the industry as they are non-durable, branded, packaged and consumed every month directly by the end consumer. The main segments of the FMCG industry are: personal care, packaged food and beverage, household care, spirits and tobacco. They have taken two product segments in common, i.e. 'dairy' and 'packaged food'.

SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY BASED ON PRODUCT TYPE

Make to stock strategy generally adopted for functional products as they have stable demand pattern, make to order strategy adopted for innovative products usually these products have irregular demand pattern. In spite of these two let us consider some more such as, Ruth Banomyong et al discussed about lean strategy and agile strategy.

LEAN STRATEGY

Leanness means developing a value stream to eliminate all waste, including time, and to enable a level schedule. When demand is smooth, the concept of lean can be used to eliminate waste by aiming to maximize profit through the minimizing of physical costs.

AGILE STRATEGY

Agility means using market knowledge and a virtual corporation to exploit profitable opportunities in a volatile market place." Agility will allow businesses not to cope with, but exploit this volatility to their strategic advantage. agile manufacturing is on the other hand a strategy for rapidly entering niche markets and being able to serve the specific needs of customers on an individual basis.

Experimented taken an aquarium manufacturing firm and compared the effect of lean and agile strategy on the manufacturing process.

S.M.S. Rana et al discussed about lean, agile and strategy as, agile strategy concentrates on meeting customer's needs on demand. These are most appropriate for products having uncertain demand. Lean strategy focuses on the elimination of waste with a bias towards pulling goods through the system based on demand. In retailing, lean strategy employed to diminish costs and wastages. This strategy requires the retailers to anticipate the market demand and assemble the products so that customers get maximum value at reasonable cost. Hybrid or leagile strategy where both lean and agile strategies are used.

SUPPLY CHAIN PRACTICES

Supplier partnership, customer relationship, and information sharing are identified as key SCM practices.

Strategic supplier partnership is defined as "the long term relationship between the organization and its suppliers. It is designed to leverage the strategic and operational capabilities of individual participating organizations to help them achieve significant ongoing benefits" (Li et al.). Some of the advantages of including suppliers early in the product-design process as mentioned by Tan, Lyman and Wisner (2002) are that suppliers can offer cost effective design alternatives, assist in selecting better components and technologies, and aid in design assessment. Long-term relationship does not refer to any specific period of time, but rather, to the intention that the arrangement is not going to be temporary Chen & Paulraj, (2004). Through close relationships supply chain partners are willing to share risks and reward and (2) maintain the relationship on a long term basis Landeros & Monczka, (1989); Cooper & Ellram, (1993); Stuart, (1993).

Customer relationship is defined as "the entire array of practices that are employed for the purpose of managing customer complaints, building long-term relationships with customers, and improving customer satisfaction" (Li et al.). Successful SCM involves customer integration at the downstream and supplier integration at the upstream, considering that each entity in a supply chain is a supplier as well as a customer Tan et al., (1999). Close customer relationship allows product differentiation from competitors, helps sustain customer loyalty, and elevates the value provided to customers Magretta, (1998). Immediate customer relationship activities have played a crucial role in developing effective SCM strategies Wisner, (2003).

Information sharing refers to "the extent to which critical and proprietary information is communicated to one's supply chain partner" (Li et al.). Simatupang and Sridharan (2005) bring forth some of the elements that comprise information sharing, including data acquisition, processing, storage, presentation, retrieval, and broadcasting of demand and forecast data, inventory status and locations, order status, cost-related data, and performance status. However, there is the reluctance on the part of organizations in the supply chain to share information with each other. Information is generally viewed as providing an advantage over competitors, and organizations resist sharing with their partners Vokurka & Lummus, (2000) due to the fear of giving away competitive and sensitive information such as inventory levels, production schedules Lancioni, Smith & Oliva, (2000); Ballou, Gillbert & Mukherjee, (2000); Croom, Romano & Giannakis, (2000).

SUPPLY CHAIN RESPONSIVENESS

S.M.S. Rana et al., (2016) defined in his paper supply chain responsiveness as the promptness and the degree to which supply chain can address variation in customer demand. Firm need to know what strategies are important to respond changing customer needs so as today's uncertain environment. Dennis Minnich et al., defined responsiveness as, the ability to react purposefully and within an appropriate time-scale to customer demand or changes in the market place, to bring about or maintain competitive advantage. In contrast, a supply chain would be considered efficient if the focus is on cost reduction and no resources are wasted on non-value added activities. Somuyiwa et al., (2012) discussed in his paper, the supply chain responsiveness increases as the level of speed and flexibility increases, low cost, high quality and improved responsiveness are the three main strategic imperatives to stay competitive in the market. Advocated the need for the organization to be responsive when the penalties associated with uncertainty are higher. These penalties for an organization could include costs of stocking out or carrying the wrong inventory and which can be mitigated through a responsive system, by adopting effective supply chain practices. Inda sukati et al., by addressing supply chain management practices that can lead responsiveness, will make better understanding the scope and activities related with supply chain management practices that create enhance level of supply chain responsiveness in today's competitive market place.

A firm's ability to satisfy customer requirements in a timely manner is referred to as supply chain responsiveness.

The construct of supply chain responsiveness identified are:

Operations system responsiveness is defined as the ability of a firm's manufacturing system to address changes in customer demand. Duclos et al. and Lummus et al. in a conceptual study, emphasize that operation responsiveness at each node of the chain is an integral component of supply chain responsiveness. They further argue that in order to meet the end customer's needs, each entity in the supply chain must deliver the product or service in a timely and reliable manner.

Logistics process responsiveness is defined as the ability of a firm's outbound transportation, distribution, and warehousing system (including 3PL/4PL) to address changes in customer demand. The responsiveness in the logistic processes is a vital component in the success of a responsive supply chain strategy (Fawcett, 1992).

Supplier network responsiveness is defined as the ability of a firm's major suppliers to address changes in the firm's demand. A key to responsiveness is the presence of responsive and flexible partner upstream and downstream of the focal firm Christopher & Peck, (2004). The ability of firms to react quickly to customer demand is dependent on the reaction time of suppliers to make volume changes. Whenever disruptive causes such new technology, terrorist threats Walker, (2005) or cut-throat competition tend to throw the supply chain haywire, the supply chain networks must be ready to react to any ripple effect. Slack (1991) argues that supplier networks are the essential building blocks of a flexible system.

Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is defined as the "capability of an organization to create a defensible position over its competitors" (Li et al.). Tracey, Vonderembse and Lim (1999) argue that competitive advantage comprises of distinctive competencies that sets an organization apart from competitors, thus giving them an edge in the marketplace. They further add that it is an outcome of critical management decisions.

Today, however, competition is considered a "war of movement" that depends on anticipating and quickly responding to changing market needs Stalk, Evans and Shulman, (1992). Competitive advantage emerges from the creation of superior competencies that are leveraged to create customer value and achieve cost and/or differentiation advantages, resulting in market share and profitability performance Barney, (1991); Coyne, (1986); Day and Wensley, (1988); Prahalad and Hamel, (1990). Sustaining competitive advantage requires that firms set up barriers that make imitation difficult through continual investment to improve the advantage, making this a long-run cyclical process Day and Wensley, (1988). Most managers agree that cost and quality will continue to remain the competitive advantage dimensions of a firm Souza and Williams, (2000). The five dimensions of competitive advantage construct used in this study are:

- i. Price/Cost-The ability of an organization to compete against major competitors based on low price.
- ii. Quality-The ability of an organization to offer product quality and performance that creates higher value for customers.
- iii. Deliver dependability-The ability of an organization to provide on time the type and volume of product required by customers
- iv. Product Innovation-The ability of an organization to introduce new products and features in the market place.
- v. Time to Market-The ability of an organization to introduce new products faster than major competitors.

RETAIL SUPPLY CHAIN

Leigh sparks in his paper discussed about the evolution of retail supply chain, In the first stage of evolution (pre-1980) the dominant method of distribution to stores was, by manufacturers that stored products at their factories or field warehouses for multiple drops to numerous small shops. As the retail multiples gained in prominence retailers invested in regional distribution centers (RDC) to consolidate deliveries from suppliers to delivery in stores. This was the first step to changing the supply of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) in that buying and distribution became a head office function in retailing and the logistical infrastructure created a market for third party logistics service providers. To all intents and purposes, this change marked the removal of manufacturers and suppliers from controlling the supply chain and reinforced the switch of power to the retail end of the channel. This period of centralization throughout the 1980s enabled retailers to reduce lead times, minimize inventory, and give greater product availability to customers in their stores. The 1990s witnessed a consolidation of this process. In many cases inventory had been shifted only from store to RDC. By implementing just-in-time (JIT) and flow principles, retailers began to focus on their primary distribution networks (from supplier to RDC) demanding more frequent deliveries of smaller quantities. Clearly this created a problem for many suppliers in that they could not deliver full vehicle loads of product. To ensure that vehicle utilization could be maximized, consolidation centers were created upstream of the RDC. Additionally, retailers had established supplier collection programmers to pick up products from supplier's factories on return trips from stores. In the first part of this century, retail networks have continued to be upgraded as efficient consumer response (ECR) initiatives were enacted and grocery retailers accommodated the increase in nonfood products through their distribution centers. Further, the greater sharing of information, especially through Internet exchanges, fostered collaborative, planning, forecasting, and replenishment (CPFR) initiatives to reduce supply chain response times.

RETAIL SUPPLY CHAIN IN INDIA

Jitendra Singh et al., (2014) discussed about the role of supply chain management in retail sector, India is witnessing changing life styles, increased incomes, the demographic variability and vibrant democracy. Retail industry is playing vital role in the economic growth of the country. The concept of shopping is moving in and around hypermarkets, supermarkets, and specialty stores and in other formats. Retail industry is one of the key upcoming sectors in India contributing major to employment generation. It offers huge potential for growth in coming years. India is becoming most favored retail destination in the world.

The role of supply chain in Indian organized retail is very significant. The Indian Supply Chain Council have been formed to explore the challenges that a retailer faces and to find possible solutions for India. The role of supply chain management in retail sector is self-centric. Means there is a mutual partnership between retailers and the manufactures. And this will indicate that they are loss free from the external hurdles and the response of that will give to growth to top and bottom management.

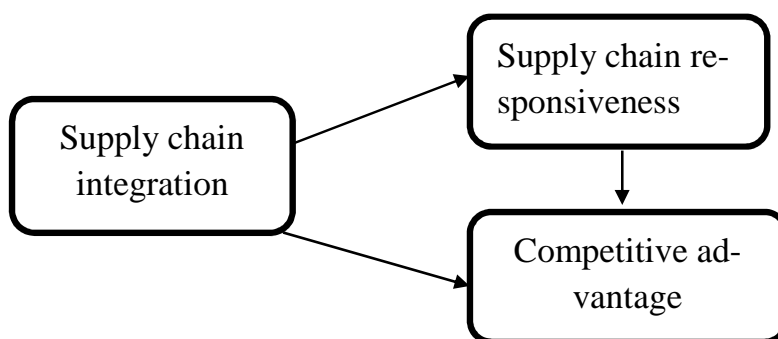
As we take the example of fresh products (vegetable and fruits) in the organized retail sector then definitely we find that is a less availability. This is so for the nature of supply chain is very fragmented. This shows the important role of supply chain in the organized retail sector. In the organized retail market in India the role of supply chain is very important for the Indian customer demands at affordable prices a variety of product mix. It is the supply chain that ensures to the customer in all the various offerings that a company decides for its customers, be it cost, service, or the quickness in responding to ever changing tastes of the customer.

The infrastructure in India in terms of road, rail, and air links are not sufficient. And so warehousing plays a major role as an aspect of supply chain operations. To overcome these problems, the Indian retailer is trying to reduce transportation costs and is investing in logistics through partnership or directly. The Indian organized retail sector is growing so the role of supply chain becomes more important. It should become more responsive and adaptive to customer's demand. There is also need for the supply chain to be more cost efficient and collaborative to win the immense competition in this sector. The role of supply chain in Indian organized retail has expanded over the years with the boom in this industry. The growth of the Indian retail industry to a large extent depends on supply chain. Thus supply chain is considered as important factor for competitive advantage.

EXISTING MODEL

Inda Sukati et al., (2012) discussed in his paper a model considering supply chain integration, supply chain responsiveness and competitive advantage, investigated the impact of supply chain integration, supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage. He made a conclusion that supply chain responsiveness and supply chain integration was positively associated with competitive advantage.

FIG. 1



ANALYSIS

Review has been made on 30 papers considering the aspects of supply chain strategies, responsiveness, and competitive advantage in retail sector. Among which 16 are foreign journals and 14 are Indian journals. Four authors made a study on retail sectors in India. All over the world various authors considered various retail sectors under study to examine the impact of supply chain strategy and responsiveness on retail performance. Supply chain practices around world are technologically well developed and it differs from country to country. In India still advancement in supply chain practices is needed to achieve world class level by adopting quick response (QR) practices such as implementation of CPFR, VMI and use of RFID Technology.

VARIABLES

The authors considered various variables such as price, quality, information sharing etc. to assess the impact of supply chain practices and responsiveness on competitive advantage. From the knowledge gained by the review of literature the variables selected for future study are, inventory level, lead time, replenishment order, demand forecasting method, quality, price, delivery dependability, delivery speed, customer satisfaction level. With use of these variables a real time data collection will be made to find the impact of supply chain practices and responsiveness on competitive advantage in a particular region in future.

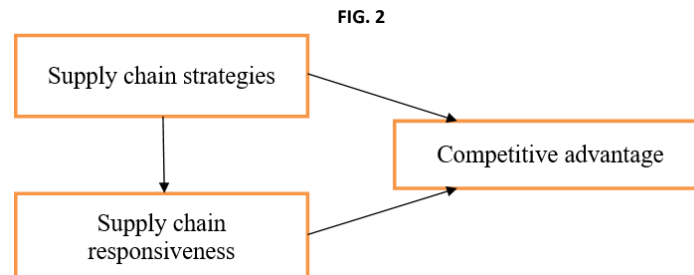
DISCUSSION

Based on the review of literature made, Somuyiwa et al (2012) made a study on firm's competitiveness through supply chain responsiveness and supply chain management practices in Nigeria. The result of his study revealed positive association between supply chain responsiveness, SCM practices and competitive advantage.

As the three terms has a close association with each other, a model has been proposed by gaining knowledge from the review made, and the model has been tested by collecting real time data in future in various retail sectors, then the association between them can be analyzed in Trichy region.

PROPOSED MODEL

From the review of literature, a model has been proposed and it has been taken for future research by collecting real time data from various retail sectors.



CONCLUSION

The study concludes with a proposed model considering supply chain strategies and responsiveness as a building blocks for sustainable retail format (to achieve competitive advantage). The study is based on the data available from secondary sources (review of literature).

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