

Exploring the relationship between marketing and supply chain management: introduction to the special issue

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Abstract Supply chains and supply chain management are important areas of business practice and scholarship that overlap with the discipline and practice of marketing and marketing management. The co-editors of the Journal's Special Issue "Exploring the Relationship Between Marketing and Supply Chain Management" provide an introduction to the special issue, overview its contents and extend their appreciation to the authors, reviewers, editor and staff whose contributions and efforts made it possible.

Keywords Supply chain · Supply chain management · Marketing · Special issue introduction

Introduction

Supply chains and supply chain management (SCM) have emerged as increasingly important areas of business practice and academic scholarship. Originally recognized in the 1980s, SCM has attracted growing interest and attention on the part of both academics and practitioners. Recent conceptions of SCM detail its expanding role within organizations to encompass activities associated with the integration of supply and demand management within and across companies, including coordination and collaboration with channel partners and customers, sourcing, procure-

ment, conversion, and logistics. As recently defined by the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals:

Supply Chain Management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all Logistics Management activities. Importantly, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third-party service providers, and customers. In essence, Supply Chain Management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies.

As developed, practiced and examined over time, supply chains and SCM include many phenomena and practices common to the discipline and practice of marketing and marketing management. Developments in marketing scholarship have increasingly recognized these commonalities and benefited from their presence. For example, marketing scholarship has gained from the knowledge that is obtained through consideration of an expanded unit of analysis that defines supply chains as well as the managerial goal and principles of integration that are at the core of SCM. At the same time, scholarship in SCM has benefited from the considerable knowledge that has developed within marketing concerning, for example, interfirm and interpersonal coordination and collaboration including that which has been obtained through the study of interorganizational relationships. Other benefits and influences may also be identified.

Despite these developments and benefits, the nature and implications of the interrelationships of marketing and SCM have not been explored at great length in the marketing literature. In recognition of the importance of supply chains, the emergence of SCM as an interdisciplinary field, and the important association of each with

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marketing and marketing management, this Special Issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* contains interdisciplinary contributions that explore the relationship between marketing and SCM.

Contents of the special issue

Each of the eight articles in the special issue contributes to our understanding of the relationship between marketing and supply chain management. The articles were selected from 66 submissions based upon an extensive editorial review process. We are grateful to the many individuals in the fields of marketing and supply chain management and related disciplines who provided expertise and input during the editorial process. We are also grateful to Editor David Stewart and the Editorial Review Board and the editorial staff of the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* for their support in publishing the special issue. The content of the special issue is briefly overviewed below.

Conceptual developments

As reflected in their definitions and other conceptual developments, the disciplines of both marketing and SCM have evolved over time. Three manuscripts in the special issue describe conceptual developments in and across the disciplines thereby advancing understanding of the interrelationship of marketing and SCM. As defined by the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals a foundational goal of SCM is the integration of supply (e.g., logistics and operations) and demand (e.g., marketing) management within and across companies. Historically, companies have more often invested to create differential advantages in one but not both of these domains, often resulting in their sub-optimal integration. In their article, addressing this strategic imperative, Esper et al. (2010) introduce a conceptual framework for overcoming this challenge. Focusing on the creation of customer value through implementation of knowledge management processes between firms they describe how successful integration may be achieved through the shared generation, dissemination, interpretation and application of real-time customer demand together with supply capacity restraints. Their framework provides guidance to scholars and practitioners interested in examining and applying these processes to achieve enhanced integration of supply and demand management.

In both marketing and SCM, thought pertaining to supply chains has steadily evolved from a narrow focus on tangible goods and their movement for the purposes of manufacturing to broadened consideration of (1) the nature of “goods” offered in the marketplace, and (2) the scope of

managerial architectures within and between firms for doing so. In marketing, this evolution has recently been captured most prominently through scholarship associated with the service-dominant (S-D) logic of marketing. Following on this work, Lusch, Vargo and Tanniru (2010) apply S-D thinking in an effort to move marketing and SCM further in this direction. They explain how emphasis on a firm’s resources and competencies facilitates understanding how the goods it produces may be better understood as the tools or “provisioning mechanisms” for serving customers. Together with consideration of its position, role and relationship within others in the larger “value networks” through which these offerings are provided to customers can advance both knowledge and practice in marketing and SCM.

The broadening consideration of thought within marketing and SCM has led to expansion of the breadth and scope of the disciplines over time. This expansion has been a critical source for SCM’s advancement but also led to some confusion. On the one hand it has enabled SCM to better address its integration goals, but on the other it has created challenges for its understanding and development. It has also resulted in perceived redundancies with other disciplines in some areas. In an effort to facilitate better understanding of the field, to clarify its development and to identify opportunities for future research, in their article Stock, Boyer and Harmon (2010) trace and qualitatively analyze 166 unique definitions of SCM that have emerged since SCM’s introduction in the 1980’s. They identify and elaborate on the major themes that have emerged over time to define SCM. In so doing they identify key research questions and issues pertaining to supply chains and SCM that would benefit from research including work by marketing scholars.

Information technology

The application of information technology to improve productivity is the focus of considerable scholarship ongoing in both marketing and SCM. However, the link between investment in IT and performance has not been firmly established in the literature, leading to what some have labeled the Information Technology productivity “paradox.” To account for this paradox, theoretical explanations that emphasize the mediating and moderating role of other variables between IT and performance have been advanced in the literature. Three articles in the special issue describe empirical studies of these variables and their role within supply chains. In their article, extending explanations that emphasize the strategic “fit” of resources and the environment, Davis-Sramek, Germain and Iyer (2010) posit and empirically investigate the role of environmental unpredictability on the implications of two forms of supply

chain IT for two levels of firm performance. Drawing on the resource-advantage theory of competition, Davis and Golicic (2010) develop and test a model that proposes market-oriented IT competence as a mediator of the effects of IT infrastructure on marketing information flow, which in turn yields comparative advantages in supply chain relationships. Finally, Richey, Tokman and Dalela (2010) empirically examine various interactions involving the use of collaborative supply chain technologies and other variables including relationship quality, resource complementarity, and retailer logistics service on financial performance and ultimately on the overall performance in the partnership. In each case, findings from the studies add to our understanding of the intervening effects of select variables on the link between IT and performance.

Impacting firm performance

Beyond insights for understanding the role and impact of information technology on supply chain performance, other variables are important to a firm's performance within a supply chain. Two articles in the special issue empirically examine additional variables of interest to marketing and SCM. Focusing on dependence, Scheer, Miao and Garrett (2010) examine whether the impact of suppliers' capabilities in terms of their core offering, communication and operations on various dimensions of customer loyalty are mediated by the customers' benefit and cost-based dependence. Their mixed findings suggest that adoption of a bi-dimensional model of dependence focusing on its benefits and costs may more fully capture the theoretical domain of dependence, thereby permitting researchers to better examine its role in supply chains and component relationships.

Waller et al. (2010) investigate the effects on a product's market share of different variables under the control of the supplier (e.g., case pack quantity), the retailer (e.g., shelf-facings) and variables controlled jointly by the supplier and retailer (e.g., price and shelf replenishment frequency). Their findings suggest that retailers and suppliers must work to integrate marketing activities and supply chain processes both within and across firms to most effectively serve consumers and enhance their performance.

Conclusions

Our intent in this special issue was to explore the "state of the theory and practice" in the places where marketing and SCM touch. Where do they interact? Where do they not? Are there gaps in the necessary interactions? And, finally, what theories can be brought to bear to better answer these questions? Contributors explored these questions from the perspective of the imperative for companies that properly

integrate demand and supply to understand this flow from demand to supply and back to demand from a service dominant logic, to explore the drive for a common definition of SCM that encompasses all of its many facets, to incorporate technology into the marketing-SCM interaction, and to assess the impact of all these on firm performance. From these endeavors we can move toward a more enhanced understanding of the fields of marketing and SCM.

Any good research endeavor generates more questions than it answers, and we hope this special issue is no exception. More empirical work is needed to test the concept of demand-supply integration. Scholarly disciplines often wrestle with competing definitions of concepts, constructs, and indeed, the scope and definition of the discipline itself. This is a normal evolution of any discipline. Further research to explore SCM from a service-dominant logic perspective should bring added insights to the many competing definitions reviewed in this issue. The idea of IT enhanced interactions between marketing and SCM is intriguing and will not end in the near future. As our concepts in both marketing and SCM evolve, and as IT continues to change at a breath-taking pace, these areas will remain ripe with research questions. Finally, the impact of different aspects of marketing and SCM on organization and supply chain performance is fundamental to what business management scholars do and should enjoy a healthy stream of future research.

Thanks to reviewers

We would be remiss if we did not end this overview of the special issue with heartfelt thanks to all of the reviewers who worked so hard to give constructive feedback to all of the authors of the submitted papers. Some of these reviewers serve on the JAMS Editorial Review Board, but many willingly served in an *ad hoc* reviewer capacity. Here is a list, with gratitude, of all the reviewers for the special issue.

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