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Introduction to the Special Issue on “Supply Chain Decision Making in Times of Unrest, Instability and Change”

George Saridakis , Grammatoula Papaioannou , Samir Dani

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Introduction to the Special Issue on “Supply Chain Decision Making in Times of Unrest, Instability and Change”

George Saridakis

University of Kent, Kent Business School

G.Saridakis@kent.ac.uk

Grammatoula Papaioannou

Loughborough University, School of Business and Economics

G.Papaioannou@lboro.ac.uk

Samir Dani

University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield Business School

S.S.Dani@hud.ac.uk

The current socio-economic environment can be best characterised as complex, uncertain and vulnerable. For example, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, job losses and distress, labour disputes and strikes, and digital crime have become more frequent, and perhaps more intense, causing significant disruptions in the supply chain as well as losses for households, firms and governments. This raises challenges for supply chain (SC) and operations managers, business owners, policy makers and other stakeholders (e.g. Martha and Subbkrishna, 2002; Stauffer, 2003; Chopra and Sodhi, 2004; Christopher and Peck, 2004; Hendricks and Singhal, 2005; Tang, 2006; Chopra 2014; Snyder et al., 2016). To this end, supply chain and operations managers are required to respond with more realistic and efficient models in the decision making process and employ strategies for establishing a robust and well-designed supply chain that would enable businesses to deploy associated contingency plans efficiently and effectively when facing a disruption (Blackhurst et al., 2005; Craighead et al., 2007; Stecke and Kuman, 2009; Qi et al., 2010, Ambulkar et al., 2015; Ivanov et al., 2016). Additionally, governments and the wide public and private sectors need to adapt to logistic challenges and re-asses their strategic plans to ensure supply chain resiliency and sustainability to withstand external shocks, uncertainty and emerging threats and challenges.

It can be argued, for example, that efficient decisions related to the flow of material, information, and other resources need to be made in times of instability and oscillation.

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