



Positioning the journal of purchasing and supply management in supply chain research: Perspectives from the outgoing editors

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ABSTRACT

Supply chain management and purchasing and supply management scholarship has witnessed a significant increase in published research during the last several years. In our final editorial, we provide some insights on these evolving disciplines, and discuss our perspectives of how the *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management* serves as an important source for disseminating new knowledge in this field of study. Further, in this editorial we acknowledge the work of many individuals and associations that have been critical to the growth and development of the journal, and envision future success for the journal moving forward.

1. Introduction

The academic disciplines of supply chain management (SCM) and purchasing and supply management (PSM) have seen significant growth and greater acceptance in recent years, although their roots can be traced back for over two centuries. As editors of the *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management* (JPSM) during the past six years we have directly observed this growth in the context of submitted research papers and acceptance with regard to journal performance metrics. The purpose of this editorial is to provide a perspective of the development of supply chain scholarship, and, from an outgoing editor perspective, how JPSM has and continues to contribute towards advancing new knowledge in this domain. The next section will provide a backdrop of this evolving field of supply chain management, followed by a discussion describing the history and orientation of JPSM within the sub-discipline of purchasing and supply management. Within this context we provide our perspectives of why the fields of SCM and PSM have rapidly grown, and how JPSM has and continues to serve as an important contributor to advancing knowledge in this domain.

2. JPSM and the evolving discipline of supply chain management

The *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, as with almost every academic journal, occupies a space in the nomological network of knowledge. During our tenure as scholars, and more recently as editors, we have noticed a rapidly changing evolution in the academic discipline of supply chain management, and its various related sub-disciplines, to include purchasing and supply management. This section will describe our viewpoint of SCM, PSM, and its evolution, discuss how the JPSM contributes new

knowledge in this domain, and speculate reasons for the field's rapid growth and development globally.

2.1. Examining the disciplines of supply chain management and purchasing and supply management

The field of supply chain management, at least as a term describing a business function, is still rather new, although the practices involved have been in existence arguably for millennia. There have been numerous research articles (Mentzer et al., 2001; Cooper et al., 1997; Gibson et al., 2005; Stock and Boyer, 2009) defining supply chain management as a business practice and academic area of inquiry. We further believe that the discipline is still somewhat fragmented, especially in relation to many other fields of business scholarship such as finance, marketing, and management. This may be due to the challenge that supply chain management, according to the definition of Mentzer et al. (2001), can be viewed as a “meta-discipline” that incorporates, or at least directly interacts with, just about every business function in a firm, though often with a greater focus on logistics, marketing, production (Mentzer et al., 2008), and supply management (Larson and Halldorsson, 2002). The “roots” of supply chain management can be argued to originate from various areas, such as economics with theories presented by Adam Smith with regard to the division of labor and the “invisible hand of the marketplace.” Supply chain management can likewise be thought of as a manifestation from management science, originating with the work of Fredrick Taylor in scientific management. This line of inquiry stems more from understanding systems and industrial engineering, and eventually the various modeling and mathematical techniques used to understand production systems, both within the firm, and from a supply chain view linking the input and output systems of multiple organizations. A third view of supply chain management comes from marketing with regard to the four “Ps”—Product, Price,

Promotion, and Place. This view emanates from the logistics perspective of “place,” which often connotes the supply chain practices of channel design, distribution, transportation, inventory management, and logistics. A fourth viewpoint can be argued to derive from the management discipline, and in particular, the theoretical frameworks and empirical examinations that scholars have employed for understanding human behavior within and among organizations.

Purchasing and supply management, which is often touted as a sub-discipline of supply chain management (Larson and Hall-dorsson, 2002), has its own respective historical roots that influence how it is studied today. Fearon (1968) contends that the greatest interest in and development of purchasing after 1850 occurred with the growth of American railroads, with the organizations involved in its construction considering the purchasing function a major contributor to their performance. Since the turn of the 20th century and until the beginning of World War II, there was growing interest for the need for qualified purchasing personnel and the development of materials specifications. However, he further argued that the heightened awareness of purchasing did not carry over to the postwar years, when purchasing was a neglected function in most organizations because executives did not envision the potential to make their organizations more successful than competitors through their purchasing practices.

The importance assigned to materials management witnessed a noticeable growth since the 1960s when purchasing managers started to emphasize multiple sourcing through competitive bid pricing and maintaining arm's-length relationships with suppliers (Ammer, 1974). During the last thirty years of the 20th century, and into the 21st century, competition further intensified. It is during this time that purchasing, often traditionally viewed as a tactical business activity, was starting to shift towards supply management, which serves as a strategic business function critical for firm success (Kraljic, 1983). Firms also began to take a more coordinated view beyond the traditional purchasing function by globally managing the flow of goods, services, and information from suppliers through end customers, and hence, through today, forming one of the critical bases for supply chain management.

The various origins, which encompass what we understand today as SCM and PSM, may have had an influence on the perspectives that we take in our research, the methodologies that we employ in its study, and the theories (Amundson, 1998) that we rely on for developing, framing, and eventually testing our hypotheses. Academic journals, which currently serve as the primary vehicle for new knowledge dissemination in most business disciplines, are a reflection of our disparate discipline today. There are journals that focus on logistics and distribution processes, transportation, purchasing and supply management phenomenon, production and operations systems, defense supply chains, mathematical approaches for optimizing processes, and other facets or sub-areas of supply chain management. It seems that most journals work toward filling a specific “gap” in understanding parts of a supply chain, depending on supply chain orientation (i.e. logistics, operations, and supply management) and/or methodological approach.

2.2. A brief history of JPSM

Within this context, and advancing the initial guidelines and focus of the journal, as editors we have worked toward continuing to position JPSM as a leading source of new knowledge in the domain of purchasing and supply management. As described by Lamming (1994) in the journal's first editorial, its objectives are “to provide an outlet for publication of research in purchasing and supply and related fields from authors around the world; to encourage collaboration between practitioners and academics

Table 1
Submissions by Region.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Americas						
US	8	10	8	17	20	21
Brazil		2	5	1	5	5
Canada	3	3	5	2	3	2
Others			1	1	2	5
Americas total	11	15	19	21	30	33
Asia						
China	3	4	9	18	22	28
India	11	14	15	15	33	22
Iran	5	17	20	12	21	26
Hong Kong		1	2	3	1	14
Taiwan	1	2	2	10	6	3
Korea		3		5	3	4
Malaysia	3	1	2	2	8	5
Others		2	6	3	10	17
Asia total	23	44	56	68	104	119
Europe						
Finland	3	6	5	2	6	14
France	5	3	2	6	7	4
Germany	9	13	7	3	10	9
Italy	6	6	7	11	7	11
Netherlands	3	6	4	10	13	8
Norway	2	3	4	3	2	3
Spain		3	4	5	5	6
Sweden	3	5	5	7	6	5
Turkey			2	4	8	8
UK	7	9	9	10	15	5
Others	5	7	13	15	12	12
Europe total	43	61	62	76	91	85
Oceania						
Australia	1	1	2	3	2	2
New Zealand			1	1	3	
Oceania total	1	1	3	4	5	2
Africa						
Egypt		3			3	2
Uganda			2	1	1	
Kenya				1	2	3
Others	2	3		9	8	4
Africa total	2	6	2	11	14	9
Total Submissions	80	127	142	180	244	248

(through joint authorship for example); to appeal to a mixed readership of managers, researchers and educators; and to raise the level of conceptual debate on purchasing and supply issues by publishing the results of work that develops knowledge in the field” (p. 4).

In the over 20 years since the journal's inception, we believe that the prior editors, including ourselves, have worked toward achieving those objectives initially set forth by Professor Lamming. With regard to the first point of world-wide scholarship, we have seen a significant increase in the number of submissions from researchers outside Europe during the past six years, as evidenced in the metrics shown in Table 1. Although the great majority of accepted manuscripts have come from scholars in Europe and North America, there has been a substantial increase in the number of submissions from researchers in locations such as Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle-East, as shown in Table 1. This is further exemplified with reference to journal leadership. In 2007 the journal had its first non-European Associate Editor, and in 2010, the first non-European co-Editor (Professor Zsidisin). Several of the more recent Associate Editors come from universities outside of Europe, and the second North American co-Editor (Professor Tate), begins her tenure with Professor Knight in this issue.

The global evolution of JPSM can also be witnessed by analyzing authorship affiliation trends of published papers. Table 2

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