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Carmen Medina-Lopez



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# An analysis of the direct and mediated effects of employee commitment and supply chain integration on organisational performance

**Rafaela Alfalla-Luque<sup>a\*</sup>, Juan A. Marin-Garcia<sup>b</sup>, Carmen Medina-Lopez<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>University of Seville GIDEAO Research Group. Avda. Ramón y Cajal, 1. 41005.

Sevilla. Spain

<sup>b</sup>Polytechnic University of Valencia ROGLE- Dept. Organización de Empresas.

Camino de Vera s/n, 46022. Valencia, Spain

\*Corresponding author. Tel.: 00.34.954.556.456; fax: 00.34.954.557.570

Email: alfalla@us.es

Email: jamarin@omp.upv.es

Email: cmedina@us.es

## Abstract

This paper focuses on the interrelationships between the different dimensions of supply chain integration. Specifically, it examines the relationship between employee commitment and supply chain integration dimensions to explain several performance measures (flexibility, delivery, quality, inventory and customer satisfaction). Very little research has been conducted into this topic, since employee commitment is rarely included as an antecedent of the effect of supply chain integration on performance. Seven research models have been analysed with Structural Equation Models using a multiple-informant international sample of 266 mid-to-large-size manufacturing plants. The findings suggest that the relationship between employee commitment and operational performance is fully mediated by supply chain integration. Employee commitment contributes to improving internal integration, and internal integration affects performance both directly and indirectly. Moreover, obtaining internal integration helps to achieve supplier and customer integration. As a result, companies should strive to achieve both employee commitment and internal integration, as they mutually reinforce each other. Similarly, managers should achieve internal integration before external integration and include external integration at the strategic level in order to reap the greatest advantages from supply chain integration. Meanwhile, managers should promote employee commitment not only for better supply chain success, but also to mitigate the barriers of supply chain management implementation.

## Keywords

Supply Chain Integration, Commitment, Performance, Mediation

## 1. Introduction

Supply chain management (SCM) has strategic relevance because increased competitive pressures have pushed many firms to turn their supply chains into competitive weapons to enhance performance (Fine, 1998). Effective SCM is a source of potentially sustainable competitive advantage for organisations and supply chain integration (SCI) plays a crucial role in this (Van der Vaart & Van Donk, 2008). However, despite the potential benefits of SCI, the effective integration of value-added activities along the supply chain (SC) and the competitive influence of SCI have been questioned. Thus, more empirical research is needed in this topic (Leuschner et al., 2013).

Despite the fact that numerous studies have addressed SCI, it can be seen that it is not a well-defined concept (Fabbe-Costes & Jahre, 2008). SCI does not have a single, accepted definition or operationalisation (Pagell, 2004). SCI should consider the strategic, tactical and operational levels. SCI could be defined as the degree to which SC members achieve collaborative inter- and intra-organisational management on the strategic, tactical and operational levels of activities (and their corresponding physical and information flows) that, starting with raw materials suppliers, add value to the product to satisfy the needs of the final customer at the lowest cost and the greatest speed (Alfalla-Luque et al., 2013b).

SCI needs both intra and inter-company integration across the entire SC in order to work as a single entity (Alfalla-Luque & Medina-Lopez, 2009). In consequence, SCI research should take into account internal integration (INTI) and external integration (EI) with supplier (SI) and customer (CI), as well as the external integration orientation (EIO).

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