GUEST EDITORS’ NOTE:
DON’T MISS THE BOAT: RESEARCH ON HRM AND SUPPLY CHAINS

SANDRA L. FISHER, MARY E. GRAHAM, STEPHAN VACHON, AND ANN VEREECKE

This paper provides an introduction to the special issue on human resource management (HRM) in supply chains. To this point, HRM researchers have paid little attention to the field of supply chain management (SCM) and how HRM practices may help firms manage their supply chains more effectively. We provide an overview of supply chain management (SCM) for readers new to this field. We conceptualize three potential applications of HRM in supply chains, and then use our framework to introduce and link the papers that comprise the special issue.

HR SCIENCE FORUM

SUPPORTING LONG-TERM WORKFORCE PLANNING WITH A DYNAMIC AGING CHAIN MODEL: A CASE STUDY FROM THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

ANDREAS GRÖSSLER AND ALEXANDER ZOCK

This study demonstrates how a dynamic, aging chain model can support strategic decisions in workforce planning. More specifically, we used a system dynamics model (a modeling and simulation technique originating from supply chain management) to improve the recruiting and training process in a large German service provider in the wider field of logistics. The key findings are that the aging chain of service operators within the company is affected by a variety of delays in, for example, recruiting, training, and promoting employees, and that the structure of the planning process generates cyclic phases of workforce surplus and shortage. The discussion is based on an in-depth case study conducted in the service industry in 2008. Implications are that planning processes must be fine-tuned to account for delays in the aging chain. The dynamic model provides a tool to gain insight into the problem and to improve the actual human resource planning process. The value of the paper lies in the idea of applying a well-known and quantitative method from supply chain management to a human resource management issue.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF GOVERNANCE IN THE INTRA-FIRM HUMAN RESOURCES SUPPLY CHAIN

ELAINE FARNDALE, JAAP PAAUWE, AND PAUL BOSELIE

The human resource management (HRM) literature has paid insufficient attention to supply chain management (SCM) when exploring the architecture of human resources (HR). Drawing on an SCM perspective, this study develops our understanding of (1) the intra-firm HR supply chain, and (2) how this HR supply chain influences corporate governance processes within large organizations. We argue that the HR function, represented as an internal professional service supply chain, needs appropriate governance principles as it operates through multiple delivery channels and with a wide variety of HRM practices. Exploratory findings from a qualitative empirical study of seven large organizations investigating governance and risk management in the HR supply chain are presented. These in-depth interviews uncover how formal governance is relatively easy for these organizations to achieve, supported by outcome-focused monitoring tools, but informal governance mechanisms can fail due to insufficient attention. Although standardized approaches to HR delivery can maximize the opportunity for HR governance, little evidence was found that the organizations were considering the related governance implications explicitly.
CEOs WITH A FUNCTIONAL BACKGROUND IN OPERATIONS; REVIEWING THEIR PERFORMANCE AND PREVALENCE IN THE TOP POST

BURAK KOYUNCU, SHAINAZ FIRFIRAY, BJÖRN CLAES, AND MONIKA HAMORI

With this study, we update research by Ocasio and Kim (1999) by testing whether the trends that favored the prevalence of CEOs with an operations background in the 1980s and early 1990s continued between 1992 and 2005. Given that supply chain management became a top business priority during this period, we expect a greater prevalence of CEOs with an operations background. This is because traditionally, executives belonging to the operations function have assumed responsibility for supply chain management issues. Our results, based on a sample of 437 CEOs who lead large-sized U.S. firms in eight industries, provide partial support for the hypothesis that CEOs with a functional background in operations attain higher post-succession performance than CEOs with other functional backgrounds. In addition, we find that the likelihood that newly appointed CEOs have a background in operations is greater in succession events that have taken place more recently and in situations that occurred in the face of poor firm financial performance.

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRATION

MICHAEL J. BRAUNScheidEL, NALLAN C. SulRESH, AND ALICIA D. BoiSNier

Supply chain integration constitutes the major thrust of supply chain management initiatives. In this study, we investigate the effects of organizational culture to determine the types of cultural characteristics that are strongly associated with efforts to integrate the supply chain and delivery performance. Previous researchers have theorized and demonstrated that organizational culture leads to adopting management practices consistent with the culture and that these practices are associated with firm performance. There has been a relative dearth of research, however, on the impact of organizational culture in operations management literature. Thus, this study investigates the effects of organizational culture, measured by the competing values framework (CVF), on two types of supply chain integration efforts: (1) internal integration and (2) external integration with key suppliers and key customers. Employing the CVF, we assess organizational culture along four dimensions—market, hierarchy, clan, and adhocracy. Results indicate that culture does influence firms to adopt internal and external integration practices. Our findings also provide evidence that a firm’s adhocracy culture score is positively associated with external integration, while a firm’s hierarchy culture score is negatively associated with both internal and external integration practices.

Evolving HR Practices in a Strategic Intra-Firm Supply Chain

MARIE KOUliKOFF-SOuvIRON AND ALAN HARRISON

While there are several studies on human resource management (HRM) at the inter-firm dyadic relationship level, the HR aspects of intra-firm strategic supply relationships have been largely ignored. Yet interdependence requires coordination among functions, sites, and stages of the internal supply chain (SC). Drawing on a case study of a large European pharmaceutical company, which we call Tyreco, we explore how HR practices evolve within the strategic intra-firm supply relationship. Our findings illustrate the disruptive effects of HR practices when they are focused on site-based objectives and the improved coordination that results from redesigning HR processes to achieve internal operational integration. We highlight the tension between site-based, financial controls and an emergent SC logic. Drawing on recent interest in cooperative approaches to HR practices, this study seeks to operationalize the need to align HR practices with end-to-end objectives at different stages of the intra-firm supply chain. Our findings have practical implications for designing HR practices within multinational corporations (MNCs) that are characterized by complex and fragmented internal environments.

Linking Human Capital to Competitive Advantages: Flexibility in a Manufacturing Firm’s Supply Chain

YAN JIN, MARGARET M. HOPKINS, AND JENELL L.S. WITTMeR

Flexibility in a manufacturing firm is a strategic choice that advances the firm’s superior performance. This is especially true in the emerging supply chain, which makes the firm’s environment particularly turbulent. This paper examines the critical relationships between a manufacturing firm’s human capital, the firm’s flexibility, suppliers’ flexibility, and the firm’s competitive advantages. Based on questionnaire responses from 201 senior supply chain
management professionals in several manufacturing industries, this study establishes direct links between a manufacturing firm's human capital and the firm's superior flexibility, and between a manufacturing firm's flexibility and its competitive advantages. In addition, this research finds that the firm's flexibility mediates the relationship between the firm's human capital and its competitive advantages, as does the connection between the suppliers' flexibility and the firm's competitive advantages.

BOOK REVIEWS


REVIEWED BY MATTHEW M. BODAH

JOHN GATTORNA AND FRIENDS (2009). DYNAMIC SUPPLY CHAIN ALIGNMENT - A NEW BUSINESS MODEL FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE IN ENTERPRISE SUPPLY CHAINS ACROSS ALL GEOGRAPHIES. FARNHAM, UK: GOWER PUBLISHING LIMITED. 420 PAGES.

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