

## **SUPPLY CHAIN SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IMPLEMENTATION: A CONTINGENCY APPROACH**

Efficient and effective supply chains keep the world's economies in motion. However, recent history has shown the negative impact supply chains can have on the environment and society. To address some of these issues, researchers and practitioners alike have studied the effects of supply chains on environmental systems, and to a much lesser extent, social systems [1]. Overall, the application of socially sustainable practices has reduced some harm to society caused by supply chains, but harm has not been eliminated and more research in this area is warranted [2].

Some supply chain social sustainability (SCSS) best practices have been identified [3], but little research has focused on the implementation process of such practices. Supply chain leaders face multiple barriers to implementation, to include longstanding assumptions and cognitions focused on short term profit and goals. Additionally, selection and implementation of socially sustainable practices may be contingent upon a supply chain's strategy, stakeholders, internal characteristics, and the external environment [4]. Therefore, a list of best practices associated with some supply chains may not be appropriate for all supply chains, and the implementation process for best practices may vary across supply chain stakeholders, industry types, locations, and cultures, among other things.

Supply chain leaders and decision makers need to know how to select and successfully implement SCSS practices to eliminate societal harm. Specifically, leaders need to know how various factors (i.e., stakeholders, market forces, internal firm dynamics, and external pressures) drive SCSS practice selection, implementation, and outcomes. Leaders also need to know how to leverage this information to determine which SCSS initiatives to implement, and how to implement them, to meet supply chain objectives and eliminate societal harm.

### **METHOD**

We will utilize a case study approach. We will conduct case studies of selected supply chains to identify innovative ways to approach and meet social sustainability goals. Data will be collected from depth interviews, participant observation, and archival documents/websites. The data will be coded and triangulated to reveal how sustainable supply chains select and implement SCSS initiatives, and how the initiatives are being leveraged to simultaneously achieve strategic supply chain goals and eliminate harm to society.

### **FINDINGS AND EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION**

Ultimately, the research effort will result in a process model, process matrix, and propositions for selection and implementation of SCSS initiatives. The model will help supply chain leaders and decision makers determine how to select and implement effective SCSS initiatives across supply chain stakeholders and contexts and improve people's lives.

### **REFERENCES**

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