Comprehensive literature review on stakeholder prospects, responsibilities, and quality performance measurement in sustainable supply chain governance

Jiya Wadhwa | Prem Colaco | Pujari Sudharsana Reddy | Manjula Jain

Abstract The sustainable Governance of supply chains has become essential for businesses trying to balance economic success and ecological and ethical imperatives in an era of increased environmental awareness and social responsibility. Many stakeholders are pressuring companies to integrate sustainability into their supply chains as environmental degradation and social inequality worsen. Therefore, it is essential to include non-traditional supply chain stakeholders, such as competitors and non-governmental organizations, in supply chain operations to produce an SSCG. This comprehensive literature review synthesizes and examines the current body of information on stakeholder prospects, responsibilities, and measuring quality performance in sustainable supply chain governance. Therefore, this study’s primary objective is to clearly show how SCC practices are related to stakeholder roles and responsibilities. A thorough literature examination was conducted, and 40 peer-reviewed journal publications from 2019 to 2023 were included. In this work, expectations, as stated in scholarly literature, are methodically categorized, and any gaps are reviewed critically. A reasonable explanation for stakeholders’ discontent with the sustainability performance measurement and evaluation methods used nowadays is that, as the literature review demonstrates, stakeholder expectations have yet to be considered. The findings indicate that many external and internal supply chain stakeholders drive, enable, or check the application of sustainable supply chain Governance techniques. While governments and non-governmental organizations are essential drivers of sustainable supply chain Governance techniques, research can also help with their implementation. Furthermore, proactive interaction with external supply chain stakeholders improves organizational learning by boosting understanding and awareness of sustainability and developing knowledge.

Keywords Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Supply Chain Governance

1. Introduction

A fundamental reorientation is occurring in the intricate web of contemporary global trade, signaling the arrival of sustainable supply chain regulation. This innovative strategy goes beyond traditional business models, skillfully tying together the complex strands of environmental care, economic prudence, and social conscience. Sustainable supply chain governance is fundamentally a critical framework that prioritizes the wellbeing of stakeholders and communities, rewriting the story of ethical business behavior in an era of unparalleled interconnectedness (Rengarajan et al 2022). This paradigm aims to integrate a moral compass into modern supply chain operations Governance by stressing the importance of human wellbeing and ethical concerns over and above the necessity of only addressing environmental consequences (Böhm et al 2022). A proactive culture at its core, organizations can take on a wide range of urgent problems head-on, from the specter of resource depletion and labor rights violations to the creeping threat of rising carbon emissions and the vital requirement of ethical sourcing (Karam et al 2023). Businesses can create a path toward not only improving their corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), but also developing a strong sense of resilience, a culture of unrelenting innovation, and a position of unmatched market competitiveness by implementing sustainable supply chain governance (FallahShayan et al 2022). This ethical strategy encourages the development of a more equitable and environmentally conscious corporate environment, which is supported by the implementation of robust regulatory frameworks, the opening up of an open and transparent operational background, and the development of cooperative relationships with suppliers and industry allies (Sang and Han 2023). The ultimate objective of sustainable supply chain governance is to establish a stable and harmonious cohabitation between the delicate
ecology and the intricate operations of corporate organizations (Traskevich and Fontanari 2023). It seeks to lay the groundwork for a time when the pursuit of profit-driven objectives and the requirement of safeguarding our planet’s precious resources for future generations are carefully balanced to establish a future in which commercial purposes and ecological preservation are inextricably linked (Kiran et al 2023). A thorough literature review on the prospects, responsibilities, and quality performance measurement of stakeholders in sustainable supply chain governance is presented in this paper.

Hsu et al (2022) evaluated whether a company’s CSR initiatives affect the value added by its suppliers. They developed a production function that delineated the processes that are vulnerable to errors committed by any one of multiple suppliers within production networks, building on the theoretical underpinnings of the O-ring theory of economic development. Additionally, they explored the potential influence of CSR on creating value. Toussaint et al (2021) included in-depth interviews with decision-makers of the culinary industry’s many links. The article proposed to shed light on the relationship. According to the findings, although consumers are aware of instances of social abuse, they have trouble finding the information they need to make informed judgments. Kuwornu et al (2023) investigated the impact that SSCM approaches had on the assurance of safe and nutritious meals and long-term effectiveness of food enterprises in Thailand, and Bangkok. The source material came from a survey sent out to 126 food producers in Bangkok. Zhang and Ahmad (2021) demonstrated, in the context of Pakistan, how CSR initiatives impact customers’ propensity to buy. Furthermore, research has examined the role that consumer knowledge plays in mediating the relationship between purchase intention and corporate social responsibility. To do this, the study used structural equation modeling to assess survey data and replies from Pakistani clients. Bubicz et al (2021) provided qualitative inquiry that uses software and text review to comprehend the fundamental dynamics guiding social sustainability Governance and to pinpoint the key players and organizational structure within the supply chain. Lu et al (2021) explored the problems associated with CSR assessment and offered a CSR assessment model considering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research not only established the foundation for a new CSR evaluation model but also examined the benefits and limitations of existing models concerning the Sustainable Development Goals. It was founded upon an exhaustive review of the literature. Abbas and Dogan (2022) examined how workers’ responsible conduct toward society (ERBS) outside of their companies is impacted by OGC and CSR initiatives using the operant conditioning theory. They employed personnel from both public and private manufacturing and service companies to gather data, which they reviewed using the structural equation modeling (SEM) method. Research indicates that CSR and OGC programs have a significant influence on how employees behave, which in turn affects society’s tendency toward socially conscious behavior. Sheng et al (2021) assessed the developments in extensive data analytics research techniques and talked about how to use these developments better to review contemporary organizational issues. They offer suggestions for using descriptive/diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive analytics techniques to comprehend rare yet catastrophic events, such as the ensuing Governance and policy ramifications. Alavi et al (2022) presented a new model for CSR drivers and a new holistic CSR model. The benefits of combining the SDGs and CSR into a new framework are then highlighted. The suggested framework includes CSR and the SDGs, provides a more realistic roadmap with quantifiable results, and fulfills both present and future aspirations. Dai et al (2022) investigated the driving forces behind sustainable supply chain Governance strategies. The study examined the variables influencing sustainable supply chain Governance techniques, drawing on the resource-based approach and institutional theory. It focuses on the interplay between institutional pressures like Governance, consumer demand, competitive pressure, and internal sustainability qualities like technical capability and top Governance leadership.

2. Sustainable supply chain governance (SSCG)

The principles and applications of sustainable supply chain Governance have piqued the interest of several academics and business experts in recent decades. Demands connected to sustainability are driving companies to use SSCG (Abdalla et al 2022). Ensuring that each stage and action in the supply chain benefits the economy, society, and environment is known as supply chain continuity Governance or SSCG. This is achieved by managing the flows of capital, information, and materials and working together within the supply chain to achieve goals from all three dimensions of sustainable development (Kaur et al 2022). Stakeholder theory and triple-bottom-line (TBL) serve as the foundation for this concept. It is asserted that for businesses to use SSCG, collaboration between suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders is required. Moreover, SSCG includes the strategies that companies employ for their internal and external stakeholders, making sure that the chain develops in a way that is consistent with the social, environmental, and economic aspects of sustainability (Farooq et al 2021). Academics and professionals have studied numerous SSCG components in various settings, including the sharing and circular economies. Two types of internal and exterior SSCG techniques that the research recently provided are SSM and SPM. Some authors claim that putting SPM into practice aids companies in successfully balancing their goals, which affects SSM (Hazen et al 2021). The establishment of a rapport with suppliers, however, is the bedrock of such endeavors, demonstrating the need for swift adoption of innovative technologies to boost internal efforts (Faruque et al 2021). For example, suppliers play a significant role in an organization’s manufacturing activities, and SSM is the driving force behind SPM. It is crucial to examine the connection between these two SSCG activities to determine whether one genuinely helps the other to increase the use of SSCG (Akershi et al 2021). Sustainable practices have expanded beyond enterprises to include the whole supply chain as a result of businesses increasingly depending on their stakeholders to achieve sustainable supply chain Governance. Selecting top-notch
suppliers is one of the most essential SSCG procedures. Yamane and Kaneko (2022) Stated that collaborating with suppliers that utilize SSCG may help businesses enhance supply chain performance. SSCG can requires enterprises to figure out ways to lower their uncertainty about the working conditions in their supply chain networks. This is demonstrated by improper behavior about sustainability at supplier sites. The degree businesses use TBL in their supply chain Governance is correlated with SSM. Stated differently, SSCG, or SSM, is how a company uses the TBL idea to choose, evaluate, and manage its suppliers (Hartmann 2021). Data gathered over five years demonstrates a dynamic system exemplified by ethical supply chain practices and continuing inquiry. Recent theoretical, practical, and academic advances in the field of sustainable supply chain Governance are summarized in this timeline, which draws on a wide range of sources. Managing the complexities of sustainability, environmental stewardship, and ethical opportunities throughout the supply chain highlights the need to keep up with the latest research and technologies. Table 1 and Figure 1 display the quantitative findings of Time allocation in selected literature.

3. Qualitative content study of sustainable supply chain Governance stakeholder roles

Critique the literature, analyze the perspectives, and synthesize information on stakeholder involvement, impact, and responsibilities in promoting sustainability in supply chain practices by reviewing many papers on the stakeholder’s role in SSCG (Fobbe and Hilletofth 2021). To understand the dynamics, challenges, and contributions of stakeholders like government agencies, NGOs, customers, retailers, wholesalers, and others in promoting sustainable practices and positive supply chain network changes (Sydelko et al 2021). Qualitative data in Table 1 aligns with the debates on stakeholders, their roles, and SSCG practices, displaying stakeholder breakdowns based on job codes and specified parameters. Mio et al (2022) identified stakeholders are expanded inductively based on the results, only considering stakeholders when a direct correlation between function and SSCG concept exists, with societal stakeholders being the most prevalent term across all fields. Several studies confirm the crucial role of NGOs in strengthening the SC, facilitating the translation of customer needs into workable SC metrics, exerting pressure on companies through public exposure of unsustainable practices, and targeting the formative stages of the process. In contrast, government agencies and NGOs contribute significantly to promoting the SSCG practices; government actors create a coherent policy framework, and influential NGOs impact the entire sector through industry standards and benchmark studies (Wijewickrama et al 2022). Abban (2020) focused the primarily on merchants as downstream stakeholders, with an ongoing debate on retailers’ role in SSCG reform, no evidence indicating other driving, authorizing, or inspecting entities in SSCG activities, with wholesalers and logistical intermediaries potentially falling into this category, which highlights the lesser representation of the inspector role and questioning the reasons behind the limited adoption of inspector-related SSCG practices and stakeholder fulfillment, ultimately determining the frequency of each SSCG practice concerning the type of engaged stakeholders, accounting for potential discrepancies in frequency occurrence when items are assigned to multiple categories (Kitsis and Chen 2023). Table 2 depicts the downstream stakeholder articles, business customers, final end-users, retailers, supply chain initiators, inspectors, and drivers, both customers and end users pay for the finished product or service. Products may be purchased from shops. The supply chain begins with product designers. Inspectors monitor compliance with manufacturing and distribution. Supply chain drivers move commodities. Article volume implies cross-category stakeholder group content, interactions, and activities in Figure 2. Table 3 displays the number of market dynamics publications covering unions, rivals, industry organizations, and banks. Initiators, Inspectors, and Drivers are engaged. New market policies and initiatives are claimed by adopting entities. Inspectors enforce laws and industry standards for organizations. Consumer behavior and economic shifts influence market activity. Figure 3 shows how many articles are covered in every market stakeholder category. This may reflect coverage, analysis, or discussion of specific organizations. Table 4 and Figure 4 display
the percentage of coverage given to NGOs, universities, the media, and local communities. These individuals include creators, watchers, and operators. Advocacy for new policies and social initiatives are the seeds of a transformed society. Social norms are monitored and enforced by inspectors. Cultural shifts, technological development, and economics push forward community.

Table 1: Time allocation in reviewed publications (n=40).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of articles</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>8</td>
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Figure 2: The involvement of downstream stakeholders in SSCG.

Table 2: Downstream stakeholder’s role in SSCG.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Downstream Stakeholders</th>
<th>No. of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiators</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspectors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Sustainability performance measurement and evaluation (SPME) stakeholder viewpoints

In the existing literature on SPME, there needs to be evidence of its application to investigate stakeholder expectations systematically. Stakeholders are a topic that has received a lot of attention in Governance literature (Zarzycka et al. 2021). While stakeholder theory has been used to analyze other facets of businesses’ long-term viability, it has not yet been integrated into research on stakeholders’ hopes for SPME. Considering stakeholder satisfaction from their point of view may shed further light on the topic. Due to the need for more studies focusing on stakeholder anticipations of SPME, academics have urged applying stakeholder theory to future studies of corporations’ sustainability records (Beck and Storopoli 2021). Multiple scholars have argued that while assessing sustainability performance. Boivie (2021) focused on the concept that different groups of individuals have other interests in a company and, hence, need a different actions from the company. Zhouet al. (2022) examined there is no unifying role theory. There are other ideas on the conflicts, behaviors, and stresses connected with various social positions. To create communities with shared expectations for the SPMA process, this article uses the responsibilities of many stakeholders. Stakeholder input is essential while enhancing SPMA, as shown by previous studies (Bunea and Nørbech 2023). Alatawi ET AL (2023) examined the outlines of prospective pathways for additional research on stakeholder roles and expectations by systematically analyzing the literature on corporate sustainability performance measurement systems up to 2010. Figueira et al. (2023) determined the studies have not taken into account the requirements of secondary stakeholders. In contrast, just a fraction of research has taken into account the needs of major stakeholders like consumers, managers, and workers. Recognize the importance of research on the role indicators may play in Governance. When addressing sustainability issues, businesses need to consider the demands of stakeholders and the significance of the problem from an academic perspective (Ahinful et al. 2022). Despite the importance of stakeholders in many aspects of corporate sustainability, it is unclear from the scattered literature what stakeholder expectations are in areas such as performance monitoring and evaluation. Zhang et al. (2021) provided the stats with a literature review on how various stakeholders have been preparing for

Table 3 Downstream stakeholder’s role in SSCG.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market Stakeholders</th>
<th>No. of articles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiators</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspectors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Figure 4 The Involvement of Societal Stakeholders in SSCG.


Table 4 Downstream stakeholder’s role in SSCG.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal Stakeholders</th>
<th>No. of articles</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiators</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspectors</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>24</td>
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the SPMA. The expectations are organized, discussed critically, and developed further. Brown et al. (2023) laid out the roles that stakeholders are expected to play during the SPMA process. Implications for future research and clinical practice are discussed and identified knowledge gaps.

5. Conclusions

Government agencies, NGOs, consumers, retailers, wholesalers, and others are essential in SSC governance, according to the comprehensive literature study on stakeholder prospects, duties, and quality performance assessment. The assessment highlights stakeholder participation in sustainable supply chain practices and the necessity for a comprehensive governance strategy that takes into account stakeholders' various expectations and contributions via a thorough literature review. The study examines a stakeholder's duties and opportunities to highlight sustainable supply chain Governance's complex dynamics and problems, setting the framework for future research and practical actions to enhance quality performance assessment and Governance.

5.1. Future scope

Supply chain governance must be sustainable for modern companies to decrease environmental impact, promote social responsibility, and assure long-term economic success. Numerous elements affect supply chain governance sustainability. Supply chain renewable energy, carbon reduction, and waste management are promoted first. 2. Ethics, fair labor, human rights, and supply chain child and forced labor elimination are essential. Thirdly, sustainable supply chain governance enhances product origin, production, and sustainability transparency. Sustainability and collaboration on environmental and social objectives are encouraged by suppliers and vendors. Sustainable supply chain governance evaluates environmental and social implications to adapt and generate sustainability solutions. Businesses must adopt all aspects of sustainable supply chain governance to fulfill growing regulatory requirements and establish resilient, responsible supply chains that benefit the environment, society, and long-term economic success.

Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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