CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

Col. Eng.
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CONCEPTUALISING, DEFINING, AND MODELLING SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT: AN OBJECTIVE-ORIENTED APPROACH

CRANFIELD DEFENCE AND SECURITY

PhD
Academic Year: 2017 - 2022

Supervisors:
Dr Robert Allen
Prof. Amer Hameed

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ABSTRACT

Although it has been more than three decades since the term Supply Chain Management (SCM) was first introduced, there are still divergent views and different interpretations amongst scholars and practitioners about its meaning. The literature lacks consensus on a precise definition of SCM and presents a plethora of different perspectives. A unified conceptual or theoretical model has not yet been acknowledged, and the existing frameworks lack the call for a holistic model that encompasses the essence of the concept.

With this disagreement on what SCM is, there are repeated calls to achieve consensus on a unified definition, a unified understanding, a unified conceptual model, and a unified framework of SCM. The argument in the literature is that achieving consensus among scholars and practitioners will improve research and practice and the SCM discipline.

The literature revealed that the prevalent and the most recommended approach of conceptualising SCM is the process orientation. However, there is no evidence in the literature that an objective-oriented approach was investigated in resolving those theoretical issues, and neither has a Grounded Theory research method been applied to that end.

Through an objective-orientated approach and applying the grounded theory method, it is found that the majority of the theory behind SCM is about managing business activities and achieving business goals through the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms in a supply chain or network. The proposed name of the identified theory is 'Business Relations Management Theory.' The theory states that *individuals, organisations, societies and nations achieve better performance and outcomes through communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration.*

A literature-based thematic analysis showed that SCM is being used as a synonym for Supply Management, Business Relations Management (BRM), or a combination of both. Also, an assessment survey that included more than 200

managers and employees from different countries showed unclear or limited understanding of the identified theory and perspective of BRM.

Accordingly, this research presents the theory and perspective of BRM and asserts that the term Supply Chain Management (SCM) should be replaced with Business Relations Management (BRM). SCM, as a term, limits the benefits of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration to a chain or network of firms and enterprises within the production sector. In contrast, the Business Relations Management (BRM) concept generalises the benefits to all sectors and all stakeholders, including the final customers, consumers, and services recipients. In addition, universities or business schools are advised to replace SCM with 'Supply Management' or another name that combines supply and demand management fields.

A Feedback survey included a group of managers and employees from different sectors in Bahrain showed a high level of satisfaction and acceptance of the outcomes of this research, the researcher's argument, and recommendations. The feedback survey outcomes led to the conclusion that the objective orientation was an effective approach to conceptualise SCM, and there is a probability of higher acceptance of the outcomes of this research and, consequently, achieving consensus among academics and practitioners.

Keywords:

Business Relations Management, Business Relations Management Theory, Human Purposeful Action Theory, Grounded Theory, Objective-Oriented Approach, Supply Chain Management, Supply Chain Management Definition, Supply Chain Management Theory, Supply Chain Management Framework.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APICS	American Production and Inventory Control Society
ASCM	Association of Supply Chain Management
B2B	Business to Business relationship
B2C	Business to Customer relationship
BCM	Business Continuity Management
BDF	Bahrain Defence Force
BRM	Business Relations Management
BRMO	Business Relations Management Orientation
CIPS	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply
CPFR	Collaboration, Planning, Forecasting, and Replenishment
CPI	Continuous Process Improvement
CRM	Customer Relations Management
CSCMP	Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CURES	Cranfield University Research Ethics System
DCOR	Design Chain Operations Reference
ERP	Enterprise Resources Planning
GSCF	Global Supply Chain Forum
GT	Grounded Theory
I2M	Integrated Inventory Management
JIT	Just-In-Time
SCC	Supply Chain Collaboration
SCI	Supply Chain Integration

SCM	Supply Chain Management
SCO	Supply Chain Orientation
SCOR	Supply Chain Operations Reference
SCR	Supply Chain Resilience
SRM	Supplier Relations Management
3PL	Third-Party logistics

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses four aspects. Firstly, it provides a background of the researcher's career and interests. This is important as it was from this career anchor that curiosity and observation increased and ultimately led to this thesis. To understand how the eventual contribution to theory and practice was made, it is useful to gain insight into the embryonic thoughts and incipient construction of that contribution. To that end, the second aspect of this introduction is to describe the grounding of knowledge and definitions that underpin the researcher's understanding. The third aspect illustrates the research problem, where the emergence of the primary research idea and its outcomes, the discovery of the research gap, the research problem statement, and the research's main assumption are presented. The fourth aspect is the research questions and thesis aim. Thereafter the introduction describes the scope of the work and provides a brief overview of the thesis structure and chapters.

1.1 Researcher's Background

As a supply officer serving for more than 25 years in Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), the researcher formed a general idea about the issues that firms and organisations might face in managing logistical and supply operations. Moreover, the researcher adopted continuous self-learning culture. Therefore, besides the professional knowledge of business administration and logistics management, the researcher gained general knowledge in other areas of interest such as Management Knowledge, Total Quality Management (TQM), Total Quality Assurance (TQA), frameworks of Organisational Excellence[1], Problem-Solving, Continuous Improvement, Risk and Business Continuity Management (BCM), and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The researcher's focus was on understanding what management is, what the best practices of management are, what is meant by value creation and continuous improvement, what is meant by strategic planning, what total quality management (TQM) is, and what organisational culture means. Based on the gained knowledge and experience,

[1] Such as the European Framework of Quality Management (EFQM).

the researcher realised that Management Knowledge is interlinked and intertwined by nature and should be viewed comprehensively. Achieving excellence in management requires learning different knowledge and skills and continuously updating one's knowledge. The integration of those different knowledge areas leads to better business management, better management practices, better decisions, and better business policies and strategies for achieving business objectives and goals.

In addition, the researcher was influenced by the national economic development and reform in the Kingdom of Bahrain; wherein 2008, the government of Bahrain launched its 2030 economic vision. The developed vision focuses on achieving and maintaining three goals: competitiveness, sustainability, and social justice. Also, the government of Bahrain established the Bahrain Centre of Excellence, the Economic Development Board, Bahrain Team, and the National Communication Centre. Also, the government of Bahrain initiated the Bahrain Government Forum, where all government organisations and institutions gather and discuss the general status of the government's performance and services in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Besides, as a member of the United Nations Organisation, the Kingdom of Bahrain adopted the 17 goals of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Initiative (Envision 2030 Agenda). This initiative "*aims to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere*" (United Nations, 2019). This orientation in the government of Bahrain captured the researcher's interest too.

1.2 Researcher's Knowledge

1.2.1 Researcher's Knowledge of Management[2]

1.2.1.1 The Meaning of Management: Researcher's Perspective

Management is about the efficient, effective, and optimal utilisation of available resources, capabilities, and skills to accomplish a mission or a task and to

[2] A key criterion in conducting qualitative study is the knowledge that researchers have. The value and the quality of such studies depends on the quality of the theoretical and analytical frameworks a researcher build, which are the outcome of researcher's knowledge and experience. Research scholars describe this phenomenon or process as 'reflexivity' or axiology. In this research, the researcher's knowledge of management represents the optic and the foundation that underpins

optimally achieve individual or organisational goals. This meaning of management can be determined from two definitions of management by Pearce and Robinson (1989, cited in Hannagan, 1995) and Mescon, Albert and Khedouri (1998, cited in Hannagan, 1995). Pearce and Robinson (1989, cited in Hannagan, 1995, p.4) see that "*management is the process of optimising human, material, and financial contributions for the achievement of organisational goals*". Similarly, Mescon, Albert and Khedouri (1988, cited in Hannagan, 1995) and others (e.g., Miles, 2012; Rohlander, 2014) suggest that "*management is the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the efforts of organisation members and of using all organisational resources to achieve stated organisational goals* " (Ibid, 1995, p.4).

Thus, business management and continuous improvement in any organisation should be oriented toward achieving business objectives and goals. In other words, business management is objective-oriented or goal-oriented. Moreover, management is applied knowledge, i.e., a knowledge-based and a belief/ conviction or theory-based practice; it depends on one's innovation and intelligence and requires continuous learning, assessment, and improvement. Therefore, the more one deliberately practices and learns, the better one becomes (Ericsson, 2004). In short, management aims to achieve the wisdom in utilising an organisation's available resources to accomplish its mission and optimally achieve and maintain its values, objectives, and goals.

1.2.1.2 Successful Business Management

Successful business management requires effective organisational and strategic planning (Steiner, 1979). In a classic definition of planning, Gulick (1937, p.13) notes it as "*working out in broad outline the things that need to be done and the methods for doing them to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise*." Strategic planning aims to assure the efficient, effective, and optimal utilisation of available organisational resources, capabilities, and skills to accomplish specific missions and tasks and optimally achieve the stated objective and goals. The

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the researcher's major analyses and discussions. Also, the researcher's perspective and understanding of management led to the discovery of the research gap.

outcomes of the planning process include, for instance, the strategies, policies, and decisions an organisation applies or follows.

Furthermore, successful and effective planning depends on the combination of organisations' knowledge, experience, capabilities, beliefs, and the information they have. Information includes, for example, the mission or task to be accomplished, the goals, objectives and values to be achieved and maintained, the available resources and capabilities, the real or forecasted demand, marketing plans, available suppliers and their capabilities, competitors, and the possible current or future threats and opportunities. Nevertheless, organisations may take improvised decisions when there is a lack of time or information for planning. These decisions entail risk and are often based on the decision-makers' knowledge, intuition, assumptions and experience.

1.2.1.3 Strategic Planning and Self-Assessment Tools and Frameworks

The planning processes are strategic by default as they aim to assure the optimal achievement of individuals' or organisations' goals and objectives. To assist these, management and strategic management scholars and practitioners have established different self-assessment and strategic planning tools and frameworks that enable organisations to achieve effective planning and decision-making processes. Indeed, those such as SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats), PESTLE analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal), TQM frameworks, Deming Cycle, 6 Sigma, and the Balanced-Score Card have become deeply engrained within management science and practice.

1.2.1.4 Management Fields

Management fields are the different areas an organisation should: consider, learn, plan, organise, monitor, control, supervise, improve, and assign resources for achieving what is dubbed here as total management. These fields are common to most organisations. Examples of these fields are managing business processes, managing resources and capabilities, quality management, risk and business continuity management, training and knowledge or information management, and research and continuous improvement management. The

common aspect of these different management areas is that they are all sub-missions or tasks that should be performed or accomplished by trained and qualified people. They are typically taught as management disciplines in educational institutions and business or management schools worldwide.

The essential point is that managing an organisation means accomplishing the organisation's mission efficiently, effectively, and professionally to achieve and maintain its goals. However, this raises questions about SCM as a concept and discipline: What is managed in SCM? What value is created through SCM? What knowledge or profession is gained through learning SCM? In short - what value has SCM added to business and management thought?

1.2.1.5 The Meaning of Value Creation

Creating value, in general, means the principles, practices, actions, behaviours, strategies, policies, or decisions an organisation applies, takes, and follows that positively contribute to achieving its goals and objectives. There are several types of value creation: financial value (Haksever et al., 2004), market value (McNaughton et al., 2002), economic value (Burksaitiene, 2009), social value (Tuan, 2008), environmental value (Gray,2006), and political value (McDonnel, 2014). Commonality is found across all by their provision of some benefit to people or organisations through their social or economic activity.

1.2.1.6 The Meaning of Continuous Improvement or Development

Continuous improvement was described by Deming (1986) as a series of initiatives that act to increase successes and reduce the number of failures. It aims to improve the optimisation process of achieving organisational goals. In essence, continuous improvement focuses on value creation. It encompasses any practice, innovation, idea, proposal, project, technology, or modification of regulations, rules, laws, procedures, processes, policies and strategies, or the adoption of new approaches or principles that enhance or positively contribute to improving the capabilities of an organisation, optimal achievement of organisational objectives and goals, and increasing the managerial effectiveness and efficiency in accomplishing missions and tasks and the delivery of better or more services or products. However, continuous improvement and development

require continuous learning, research, and assessment of self, products, and services. The most critical dimension an organisation should improve is the knowledge and the competency of human resources, which is the core capital of organisations.

1.2.1.7 The Meaning of Organisational Culture

Human thought or culture is the sum of one's knowledge, experience, traditions, beliefs, views, perspectives, assumptions, values, principles, tenets, and convictions. These mentioned constructs or elements, besides the human's needs, desires, and feelings, shape, govern, and influence one's interests, logic, philosophy, awareness, speech, intentions, motives, goals, actions, interactions, attitudes, behaviour, practices, and habits. Similarly, those constructs or elements shape an organisation's culture and managerial thought. Therefore, the researcher's definition of organisational culture states:

> *'Organisational Culture is the sum of the knowledge, experiences, social and business and management traditions, views, perspectives, assumptions, values, principles, beliefs, tenets, and convictions that shape, govern, and influence the managerial behaviour/ practices of an organisation, its interests, its goals and objectives, its ethical and social behaviour, its social actions/interactions, its business strategies and policies, and its business decisions.'*

1.2.1.8 Summary

Management Knowledge is an essential discipline in all business sectors. It is about the efficient, effective, and optimal utilisation of available resources, capabilities, and skills to accomplish organisational missions and tasks and optimally achieve business objectives and goals. Business management and improvement in any organisation are supposed to be objective-oriented or goal-oriented. Effective and successful business management requires effective strategic planning that depends on organisations' knowledge, experience, capabilities, beliefs, and available information. Organisational culture shapes and influences organisations' managerial behaviour and social practices, actions/ interactions.

1.2.2 Researcher's Preliminary Knowledge of Supply Chain Management

In 2005, the researcher studied Supply Chain Management (SCM) as part of an MBA program. This discipline and other disciplines, such as logistics engineering, purchasing, transportation, warehousing, and inventory management, are the major disciplines that were being taught to gain basic knowledge and profession in supply and logistics management.

However, the main idea which was taught in the syllabus was that SCM is about managing the inventory flow across a supply chain and reducing inventory costs. The key covered topics in the syllabus were the lean production concept, the Just-In-Time (JIT) strategy, the impact of inventory stock-out, the bullwhip effect, and third-party logistics (3PL). Also, one of the learning aids, which was used to simulate the inventory flow in a supply chain, was the 'Beer Game' experiment which aims at visualising and realising what happens in reality across a supply chain, such as stock-out, inventory accumulation, and inventory fluctuation (bullwhip phenomenon/effect).

The course introduction stated that the main objective of SCM is "*to deliver the right products at the right time to the right place at the right cost"* (Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2015, p.62*).* The course content also noted that there is a difference between logistics management and SCM. Logistics management focuses on the downstream flow of materials from the factory. In contrast, "*SCM looks at the entire network, both up and downstream*" and emphasises information flow through the network (Naval Postgraduate School, 2021).

The introduced definition of a supply chain in the course was that it "*is a network of organisations that supply and transform materials and distribute the final product to customers*". Hence, SCM was defined as "*the analysis and improvement of the flows of materials, information, and money through a network of suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and customers*" (Naval Postgraduate School, 2021).

Based on what was introduced in the course, the researcher then, as a supply officer (Logistician), saw no difference between SCM and logistics management. Accordingly, the researcher determined that applying the SCM concept is not essential to the armed forces as it focuses on managing the inventory flow and cost reduction across a network of suppliers and distributors who form a supply chain and are involved in producing and delivering products to the market. By contrast, managing the acquisition of military supplies, accurate demand management and forecasting of consumption rates, and effective and efficient logistics management in the armed forces is what matters. Also, the researcher saw that the aim of both SCM and logistics management is inventory management and cost reduction, and both concepts depend on information management. That is why the researcher considered SCM as a synonym for logistics management. However, it is worth noting, as will be introduced in chapter 2, that a substantial number of authors suggest that the objective of SCM is "*to deliver the right products at the right time to the right place at the right cost*" (Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2015, p.62) and that SCM is perceived as a synonym for logistics management (Lambert, 2014).

1.3 The Discovery of the Research Gap

This section gives thorough details on how the research problem and the main research assumption were discovered and established. It presents the researcher's observations through work experience, the emergence of the initial research idea and its outcomes, the discovery of the research gap, the research problem statement, and the main research assumption.

1.3.1 Researcher's Observations

Many issues that might affect firms' performance and customer satisfaction were observed through the researcher's work experience. One of those issues was the lack of commitment to quality measures by some suppliers. For instance, there were many cases of receiving defective or incomplete equipment accessories and even receiving equipment without essential inner components. These types of issues negatively affect the level of confidence and reliance on suppliers.

Also, other cases revealed inaccurate information management or insufficient attention to packaging and shipping standards, such as receiving the wrong type of equipment or ammunition other than what was purchased. Also, some suppliers do not provide enough information, which causes delays and waste of efforts at the warehouse level, besides delays in the payment processes. Moreover, there were some cases of receiving materials with unfavourable packing that occupies more storage area and reduces the warehouses' capacity. Furthermore, the design of some products ignores health and safety and ease of handling standards. These observations reveal a lack of accuracy and awareness by some suppliers to meet customers' expectations, an absence of effective communication and information sharing, and a lack of commitment to logistical standards.

1.3.2 The Emergence of the Initial Research Idea: Developing a Continuous Process Improvement Framework in SCM

The researcher's knowledge of management, preliminary knowledge of SCM, organisational excellence frameworks, experiences, interests, and observations were behind an idea to develop a 'Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) Framework' in SCM. The purpose was to develop a framework that guides business managers to improve their business processes and strategies in achieving their business objectives and goals through SCM. However, developing a continuous improvement framework in SCM requires an in-depth review of the literature to establish whether any such frameworks or other models were developed to this end.

1.3.2.1 The Focus in the Initial Literature Review

Conducting a literature review to find out about existing SCM frameworks was not the first objective; rather, focusing on the topics that form the foundation of SCM to develop the desired framework. The topics that were posited as a starting point were the definition and the objectives of SCM. The reason for focusing on SCM's definition was to revise and update the meaning of SCM and its conceptual foundation. Revising and understanding the concept's meaning was adjudged to be the best way to enable the researcher to have a solid theoretical ground to

consider the concept and, consequently, facilitate developing a relevant continuous improvement framework. Secondly, the reason for focusing on SCM's objectives was the researcher's understanding of the meaning of management and continuous improvement as introduced.

1.3.2.2 Initial Literature Review Findings: Lack of Consensus on SCM Definition, Perspective, and Theory

The first keywords used in the literature review were Supply Chain Management, SCM definition, and SCM objectives. The first references that appeared were Mentzer et al. (2001) work entitled 'Defining Supply Chain Management' and a paper by Stock and Boyer (2009) entitled 'Developing a consensus definition of supply chain management: a qualitative study'.

The preparatory literature review showed that various SCM definitions were offered to define the term (Stock and Boyer, 2009). Despite that, the authors of those two papers, as well as many other academics, mentioned that there is no general agreement on the meaning of SCM among academics and practitioners (Mentzer et al., 2001; Gibson, Mentzer and Cook, 2005; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Moberg et al., 2008; Sweeney, 2011; Kozlenkova et al., 2015; LeMay et al., 2017; Grant and Mangan, 2018). Accordingly, some academics highlighted the need for explicit "*definitional constructs*" (Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68) and called for achieving consensus on a unified definition of the concept (Mentzer et al., 2001; Larson and Halldorsson, 2004; Stock and Boyer, 2009; Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2018).

The main arguments among the academics who discussed the definition issue were typified by Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005, p.18), who noted: "a *clear definition of SCM is imperative for understanding the concept…SCM definition research efforts must continue…Existing definitions do not portray SCM consistently"*.

Another prominent issue that is addressed in the literature is that there are many perspectives of SCM. For example, Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997,p.1), Storey et al. (2006), Kozlenkova et al. (2015), and Lambert and Enz (2015) mentioned that many writings and talks, even seminars, were using the SCM

concept as a synonym for logistics management, "*operations management, procurement, or a combination of the three*" (Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton, 2005, p.25; Lambert, 2014, p.1). However, this is not surprising since many definitions were offered. Also, these findings advocate the researcher's initial understanding of SCM that there is no discernible difference between SCM and logistics management.

Furthermore, some authors emphasised the importance of theory development in SCM. Up-to-date, scholars of SCM have not acknowledged or agreed on an underpinning theory of SCM (Lambert, Cooper, and Pagh, 1998; Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Mentzer et al., 2001; Chen and Paulraj, 2004a; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Carter, 2011; Halldorsson, Kotzab and Mikkola, 2015; Carter, Rogers and Choi, 2015; Lambert and Enz, 2017; LeMay et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, Burgess, Singh and Koroglu (2006) suggested that unification was not feasible. Later, Halldorsson et al. (2007, p.284) concluded "*that there is no such thing as a unified theory of SCM*" and "*that building a unified theory of SCM might be difficult*" (Ibid, 2007, p.293). As a result, borrowing theories from other disciplines "*has become an important part of theorising SCM*" (Halldorsson, Kotzab and Mikkola, 2015, p.575). Furthermore, other academics see that "*SCM discipline has largely failed to develop its own theoretical bases"* (Carter, 2011,p.3), and the SCM scholars "*have failed to develop a theory of what*" they are managing (Carter, Rogers and Choi, 2015, p.89).

Therefore, these issues constituted a barrier to continuing with the initial research idea[3]. The main concern is how one improves a concept's implementation without a clear understanding of that concept's meaning and theoretical foundation. It also left another important question: who can a researcher trust to gain that understanding?

[3] To develop a continuous process improvement framework.

1.3.2.3 The Importance of Conducting Theoretical Research

The literature, as will be introduced in chapter 2, showed that the term SCM was defined and perceived differently among scholars and practitioners, which led to the absence of common language and understanding among them. Many academics called for a unified SCM definition and emphasised its importance in advancing SCM understanding, practice, and research efforts. Furthermore, some academics see that developing a unified understanding of SCM will be the outcome of identifying its theoretical foundation and believe that the definition of the concept is the starting point to achieving the desired consensus (LeMay et al., 2017).

Therefore, there is a need to conduct theoretical research. The continuity of the argument about SCM definition, the theoretical confusion and the overlapping between SCM and other concepts (logistics, procurement, and operations management) trigger the necessity to radically investigate and trace the tenets and approaches through which SCM was conceptualised, defined, or framed and modelled.

1.3.2.4 Researcher's Attempt to Develop a Definition of SCM

The call for consensus on a unified definition of SCM by some academics and other researchers' attempts encouraged the researcher to develop a new definition. For this purpose, a literature review was conducted by focusing on what firms are trying to achieve through SCM implementation. Also, the focus was on the business practices that fall under the SCM concept. Customers' satisfaction, cost reduction for the whole supply chain, effectiveness, coordination of business functions, "*integration of business processes across firms in*" a supply chain (Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton, 2005, p.25), firms' competitive advantage, and information sharing were the most mentioned objectives and practices (Lambert, Cooper and Pagh, 1998; Mentzer et al., 2001; Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton, 2005; Naslund and Williamson, 2010; Lambert, 2014; Christopher, 2016).

Based on the identified objectives and practices in the literature, the researcher's understanding of management, the core management process (planning), the

context of SCM discipline[4], and the importance of information management in the planning process[5], it is established that SCM is about the planning of providing a product or service and achieving business goals through information management within and across firms. Accordingly, the following definition of SCM was developed:

> *'Supply chain management is the planning of providing a product or service efficiently and effectively to satisfy the customers and other stakeholders and achieving competitive advantage through an integrative information management syste*m.'

1.3.2.5 Implications of the Researcher's Initial Definition and Perspective of SCM

As introduced in section 1.2.1.2, successful and effective planning depends on organisations' knowledge, experience, capabilities, beliefs, and the information they have. Information management and sharing across business functions in any organisation or the 'Informative Integration' is the key to coordinating, scheduling, and synchronising supply, production, logistics, and sales operations and processes. Similarly, sharing information across a supply chain's members will reduce demand uncertainty across the supply chain. An example of the value that could be created or the outcomes of such business practice would be better production planning, reduced inventory cost, minimum stock-out risk or inventory accumulation, and better competitiveness for the entire supply chain.

1.3.2.6 Initial Continuous Process Improvement Framework of SCM

The researcher's developed definition acted as a catalyst to developing an initial CPI framework of SCM (Figure 1). The framework details the main supply functions as procurement, operations, and logistics and the key SCM objectives that were derived from the researcher's definition as Efficiency, Effectiveness, Satisfaction, Competitiveness, and Integration.

[4] Supply and inventory management
[5] Section 1.2.1.3

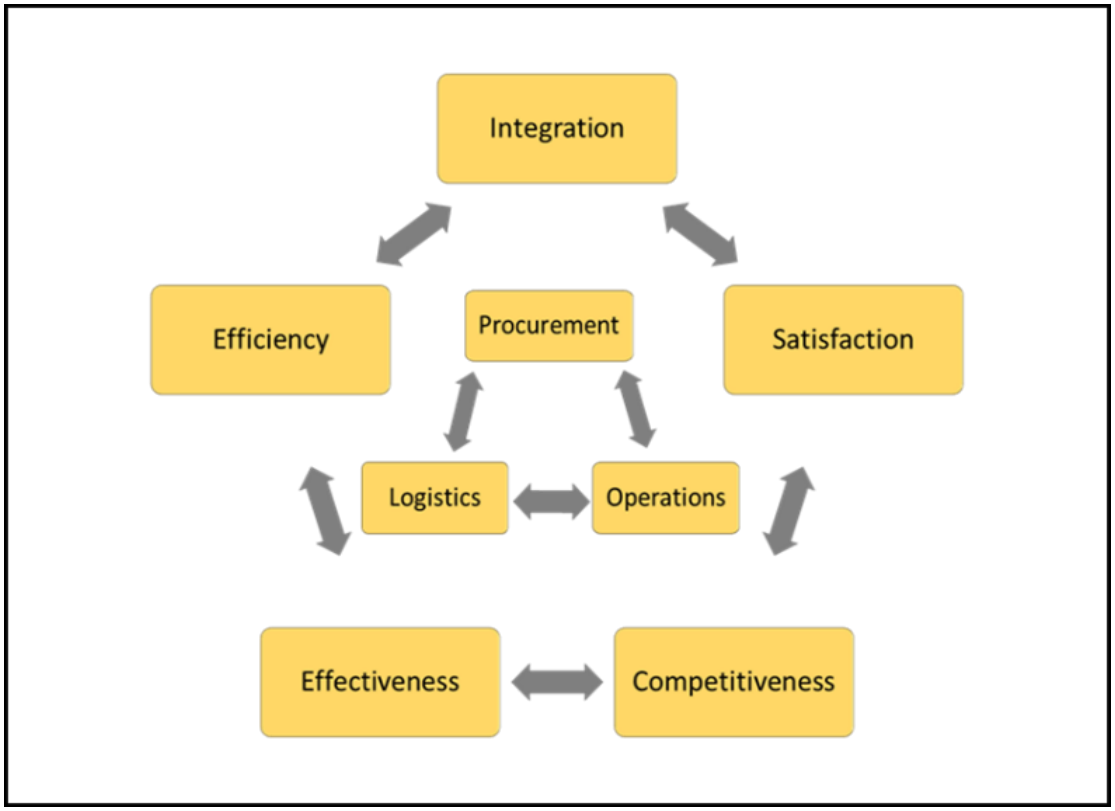


Figure 1 The Researcher's Initial Continuous Process Improvement Framework of Supply Chain Management

The idea of the developed framework is that any improvement in procurement, operations, and logistics processes or adoption and implementation of new policies and strategies within these areas of management should add value to those objectives.

1.3.3 The Discovery of the Research Gap and Novelty

1.3.3.1 Comparing the Researcher's Framework with Existing SCM Frameworks

To evaluate the developed framework, the researcher's first step was to compare it with existing SCM frameworks. An additional literature review revealed two main popular frameworks of SCM; these frameworks were the Supply Chain

Operations Reference (SCOR) and the Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) Framework (Lambert and Enz, 2017) [6].

Through studying these two frameworks and comparing them to the researcher's, it was found that both SCOR and the GSCF frameworks were process-oriented (Lambert and Enz, 2017), while the researcher's framework was objective-oriented. That means the researcher's framework focuses on the objectives that should be achieved and maintained through SCM, whereas the SCOR and the GSCF frameworks focus on the managed processes in a supply chain.

This discovery raised a 'what-if' question: what if the objective-orientation approach is used in conceptualising, defining, and modelling SCM? Will this approach make a difference? Will this approach be effective? Will this approach lead to developing a unified theory of SCM and identifying its theoretical foundation? Will the developed theory and perspective eliminate the confusion among academics and practitioners? Finally, will this approach lead to future consensus among SCM scholars and practitioners on one perspective?

1.3.3.2 Development of the Initial Theoretical Model and Statement

The researcher's discovery that the developed framework was objective-oriented encouraged the researcher to conduct a further literature review to add more objectives to the framework. In this phase, the literature showed that many authors mentioned that the 'Collaboration' among supply chain members is essential for information sharing across a supply chain. Also, other authors mentioned 'Responsiveness' as an important objective that increases customers' satisfaction (e.g., Christopher, 2016).

Accordingly, these two objectives (Collaboration and Responsiveness) were added to the five mentioned objectives (Efficiency, Effectiveness, Satisfaction, Competitiveness, and Integration). The literature also emphasised the importance of integration and collaboration in SCM. Accordingly, these identified objectives were classified into three categories and linked through a model. based on the developed model, it was established that SCM is about achieving

[6] Further information about these two frameworks is provided in Chapter 2

competitive advantage and enhancing customer satisfaction by improving efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness through collaboration and integration (information sharing) across a supply chain's members. Figure 2 illustrates the developed model.

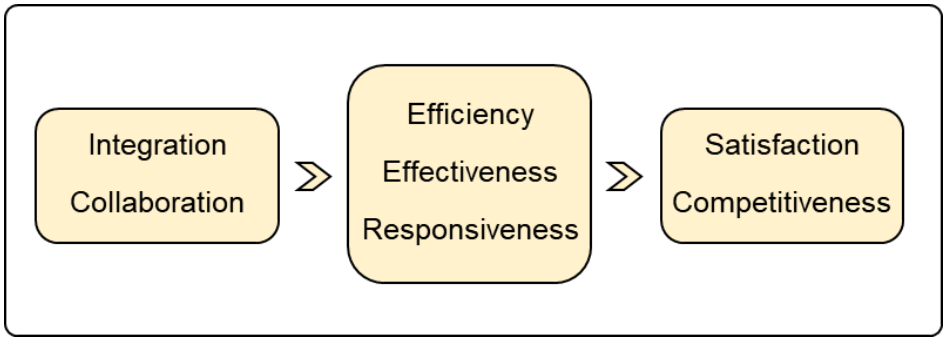


Figure 2 Initial SCM Theoretical Model

1.3.3.3 Studying Qualitative Research Methods

The researcher's knowledge of conducting research was based on self-study. However, the researcher's decision was that using a qualitative approach would be more appropriate as the initial developed definition and theoretical model were the outcomes of a literature review analysis, i.e., analysing textual data.

In this stage, the researcher learned about the grounded theory (GT) research method, which captured the researcher's interest. Further reading about the method led to the discovery that the method was followed through the researcher's attempt to define SCM and the development of the initial theoretical model (Figure 2). Accordingly, the method was used as the main strategy in this research.

Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the grounded theory research method studies people's actions/interactions, and its original purpose is to develop social theories that aim at interpreting, explaining, and understanding social phenomena (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015). The main interest in this research is to understand the meaning of SCM and discover its underpinning theory. Through considering SCM as a social

phenomenon across businesses, as many authors mentioned (e.g., Chandra and Kumar, 2000; Mentzer et al., 2001; Chen and Paulraj, 2004a; Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2018), then, the use of the grounded theory method would be an appropriate strategy.

1.3.3.4 Exhaustive Literature Review Findings

Based on the above discoveries (the objective orientation and the use of the grounded theory method), a further intensive literature review was conducted to determine the used research methods toward conceptualising or modelling SCM. The intensive literature review indicated that the process orientation was the prevailing used and recommended approach by many authors and thought leaders (e.g., Lambert, 2014; Lambert and Enz, 2017). However, there is a lack of evidence in the literature that an objective-orientated approach has been investigated to solve the definition issue or identify the theory behind SCM. Also, there is a lack of evidence that this approach was used in conceptualising, modelling, or implementing SCM.

Furthermore, some authors suggested that using the grounded theory research method could be a proper approach to conceptualising and theorising the concept (Stock, Boyer and Harmon, 2010; Denk, Kaufmann and Carter, 2012; Randall and Mello, 2012; Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2015,2018). Nonetheless, the intensive literature review also revealed that there is no sign in the literature that the grounded theory research method was used to identify the theory of SCM. These two findings also encouraged the researcher to continue using the method.

Accordingly, it is determined that the discovered research gap and the implementation of the grounded theory research method represent a promising opportunity to investigate the effectiveness of the objective-orientated grounded theory approach toward understanding, conceptualising and identifying SCM's theoretical foundation. It is believed that through the objective-orientated grounded theory approach, the theoretical foundation of SCM would be identified, and the consensus among SCM scholars and practitioners could be achieved.

1.3.4 Research Problem (Opportunity) Statement

In spite of the diversity of used methodologies and approaches to solve the theoretical issues of SCM, there is no sign in the literature that a study has examined an objective-oriented approach or used the grounded theory strategy to this end. This research gap represents an opportunity to investigate the effectiveness of this approach. Thus, and based on the identified research gap, it is established that:

> *'Despite the diversity of methodologies and approaches used in tackling the issues of conceptualising, defining, and modelling SCM, there is no evidence in the literature that a study has investigated the effectiveness of an Objective-Oriented grounded theory approach to that end. Therefore, there is an opportunity to investigate the effectiveness of this approach in conceptualising, defining, and modelling SCM*.'

1.3.5 Research Main Assumption

According to Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.17), a research assumption is the "*working axioms that lie behind*" the research methodology, while the methodology is the "*way of thinking about and studying social phenomena*". In this research, the main assumption is that using the grounded theory method through the objective-orientated approach will lead to identifying SCM theoretical foundation and, consequently, developing a conceptual model and precise definition and perspective of SCM that refine and crystallise practising, educating, and continuous research and improvement of SCM (Figure 3 refers).

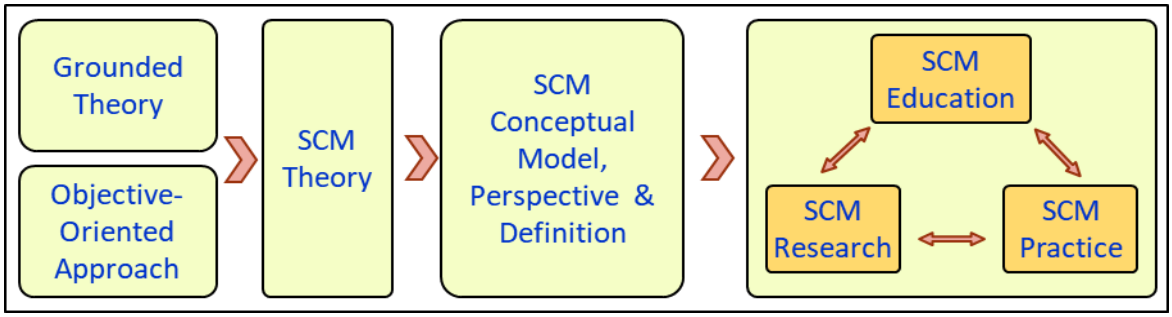


Figure 3 Research Assumption

1.4 Research Question

The primary goal of conducting this research is to investigate whether an objective-oriented approach is effective in conceptualising SCM and identifying its theory. In other words, developing a unified theory and perspective of SCM is feasible through an objective-oriented grounded theory approach. Thus, the primary question in this research states that:

> *Will an objective-oriented grounded theory approach in conceptualising, modelling, and defining supply chain management be effective? In other words: Is developing a unified theory and perspective of SCM feasible through an objective-oriented approach?*

Hence, the primary question leads to the following questions:

RQ1. What are the primary goals and objectives of SCM?

RQ2. What are the main actions/interactions or practices within and across firms in a supply chain to achieve those objectives and goals?

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

This research responds to the existing calls for achieving consensus on a unified understanding of SCM, theory development, and remodelling of SCM through the objective-oriented approach using the grounded theory research method. Accordingly, the main objectives of this research are:

1. Grounded theory development toward achieving a better understanding and meaning of SCM through an objective-oriented data coding approach,
2. Comparing the developed theory and perspective with the extant literature through theoretical and comparative analyses,
3. Evaluating the level of acceptance of the developed theory and perspective among some academics and practitioners.

Based on these objectives, this research is investigative research that combines problem-solving research with theory development that has valuable and

practical relevance, which consequently advances business and management thought. Figure 4 illustrates the research objectives Framework.

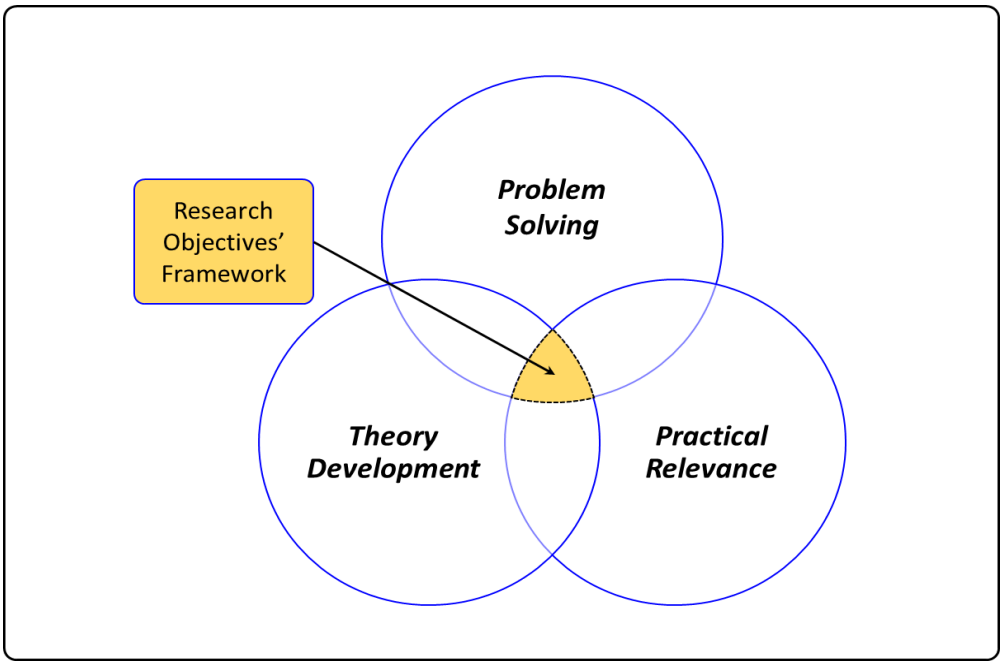


Figure 4 Research Objectives Framework

It is worth noting that Maxwell (2012, p.24) classified qualitative research goals into three general types; these are "*personal goals, practical goals, and intellectual goals."* Personal goals "*are those that motivate*" and drive a researcher to do a study such as "*curiosity about a specific issue*" (Ibid, 2012, p.24); practical goals focus "*on accomplishing something—meeting some need, changing some situation, or achieving some objective*." (Ibid, 2012, p.28); while intellectual goals focus "*on understanding something—gaining insight into what is going on and why this is happening or answering some question that previous research has not adequately addressed"* (Ibid, 2012, p.28). Therefore, it is believed that this research combines all these goals.

1.6 Scope of Research

This research covers four main areas: theory development toward achieving a better understanding and meaning of SCM, developing SCM perspective based on the developed theory, comparing the developed theory and perspective with the extant literature, and evaluating the quality and the level of acceptance of the developed theory and perspective among some academics and practitioners, which in return will determine the effectiveness of the objective-orientation approach in a contribution for achieving consensus among academics and practitioners.

1.7 Researcher's Argument

Based on the outcomes of this study, the main argument of this thesis is that the term SCM was not an appropriate term to refer to or emphasise the value of the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration (C3&I) forms or practices between top management and subordinates or across business functions in any organisation, across organisations in a supply chain or network, with other stakeholders, or with the final consumers or customers. Also, as a discipline, the term SCM was not appropriate to teach the principles of supply operations (such as purchasing and logistics) and acquire professional knowledge in these areas. Business Relations Management (BRM) is a more accurate term and a discipline that focuses on the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration (C3&I) practices. Also, the term 'Supply Management' or 'Production Management' would be more appropriate as an overarching term that combines supply disciplines (such as purchasing, logistics, transportation, and inventory management) that aim at providing basic knowledge and profession in supply and demand management. Finally, if the term BRM were used instead of SCM, there would not be such discussions or confusion among academics or practitioners.

1.8 Thesis Content and Structure

This research consists of several processes, including conducting the literature review for different purposes. The research processes are the grounded theory

process, pilot study, assessment survey, and feedback survey. Also, thematic and comparative analyses were conducted. However, in GT research, the literature review can be conducted for three purposes. The first purpose is to advocate the significance of a research project in a specific field by reporting the existing issues and research gaps in the literature (Charmaz, 2015). The second purpose is to use the literature as primary data for theory development (Thornberg, 2012, Charmaz, 2014). The last purpose is to critically review the literature and compare the extant theories with the discovered, or developed theory as suggested by the GT thought leaders (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015). The details and the sequence of these processes are shown in chapter 4 in a detailed research processes map. However, this thesis consists of seven chapters in addition to seven appendices. The purpose and content of these chapters are presented herein.

Chapter 1 Introduction:

This chapter presented a detailed background about the researcher's knowledge of management, the researcher's knowledge of SCM, the researcher's observations, the evolution of the research idea and how the research gap was discovered. Also the research problem statement, assumptions, questions, and aims and objectives were also introduced. Finally, this chapter introduced the research scope and the researcher's argument, followed by the thesis content and structure outline.

Chapter 2 Literature Review:

In this chapter, primary literature is conducted. Besides contextualising this "*research within existing knowledge*" (Ramalho et al., 2015, para.1), the purpose of the primary literature review, as suggested by Charmaz (2014), is to enhance the significance of this research and the importance of conducting further theoretical research besides emphasising the need to investigate the objective-orientation approach toward theory building. The chapter clarifies the strategy of conducting the literature review and its structure. Then, a detailed overview of the SCM concept, its origin and major objectives, the definition and the structure of a supply chain, and how it is viewed are presented. This overview is followed by the researcher's observation and criticism of the common definition of a supply

chain and the view of managing a supply chain as a single entity. Accordingly, an argument and proposed definitions of a supply chain and supply network are presented. Thereafter, the major theoretical issues of SCM that advocate the importance of this research are reported, followed by addressing how the research gap was identified. Finally, the relevant SCM frameworks are noted and discussed, followed by a chapter summary.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology:

This chapter presents the researcher's understanding and perspective of conducting research with the researcher's definition and perspective of theory. Grounded Theory is discussed as a method, its main processes, its different versions, and the researcher's viewpoint about those versions. Thereafter, the research methodology is introduced, which includes the researcher's ontological and epistemological stance, followed philosophy, the researcher's approach to conducting grounded theory as well as his developed data coding model, and the data collection methodology for the grounded theory process besides justifying the followed version of the method. Then, the pilot study purpose and design are introduced. The conceptual framework is then presented, and a statement on ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 Research Processes Details and Outcomes:

This chapter presents the research process map, pilot study findings, the Grounded Theory processes details, the developed theoretical model, and how the researcher's understanding and perspective of BRM evolved. In addition, the chapter presents an overview of the implications of the developed theory and introduces the proposed definition of Business Relations Management, followed by a chapter summary.

Chapter 5 Theoretical and Comparative Literature Analysis:

This chapter presents, at first, a theoretical summary of the developed theory and perspective of BRM. Thereafter, thematic analysis and a discussion of the major SCM definitions and perspectives are introduced. Based on the outcomes of the thematic analysis and developed theory and perspective, the Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) perspective is analysed and compared. Then, the developed theory in this research is compared with the relevant theories related

to SCM. Last, the chapter introduces the researcher's major argument, followed by the chapter summary.

Chapter 6 Assessment and Feedback Survey Design and Results:

This chapter presents the assessment survey and the feedback survey design and results. The details include the purposes of these two surveys, the design, the survey sample selection approach, the data collection methods, the data analysis approach, the results, and the researcher's conclusion.

Chapter 7 Conclusion:

This chapter presents a summary of this research, research outcomes, conclusion, contribution, implications, limitations, future research, and recommendations.

2 Literature Review

Despite the popularity of SCM as a concept and an academic discipline, the primary literature review showed that the concept still lacks consensus among SCM scholars and practitioners on its meaning. Plenty of divergent definitions were offered, and different perspectives were identified. There is confusion and overlap between the concept and other disciplines, such as purchasing, operations, and logistics management. Also, the literature showed that SCM scholars have not yet acknowledged or agreed on the theoretical foundation of the concept. Moreover, the literature showed that SCM discipline was also criticised. Some researchers found it lacks the criteria and standards of academic disciplines. Also, many names were offered to replace the term, where some scholars did not like it. In addition, many different frameworks were offered. Yet, some authors believed that those different frameworks contributed to the confusion among academics and caused ambiguity to the concept implementation.

These mentioned issues led to the emergence of many calls to achieving consensus on SCM definition, conducting further research toward theory development, and remodelling. Accordingly, many academics tackled these issues using different methodologies and approaches. Despite that, no consensus was achieved.

Nonetheless, an intensive literature review showed that the process orientation was the prevailing used or recommended approach by many authors and thought leaders toward conceptualising, modelling, or implementing SCM. In contrast, there is no evidence in the literature that an objective-oriented approach was investigated to solve the definition issue or identify the theory behind SCM. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the GT research method was used to tackle these issues. These findings, as introduced in chapter 1, are the methodological foundation of this research.

Accordingly, this chapter gives an overview of SCM, its main theoretical issues and discussions, addresses the identified research gaps, reports the used

approaches toward tackling or discussing the mentioned issues, and gives an overview of some of the existing SCM frameworks and the identified discussions around those frameworks followed by the chapter summary. However, the followed strategy in conducting this literature review and its general structure are presented first.

2.1 Literature Review Strategy and Structure

2.1.1 Literature Review Strategy

Conducting a literature review, in general, is like conducting a semi-structured interview with authors. Any researcher has a specific enquiry or question in his/her mind that drives and directs the literature review[7]. Bryman and Bell (2015) classify the literature review into systematic and narrative literature reviews. A systematic literature review requires explicit and systematic inclusion criteria or exclusion of studies. In contrast, the narrative literature review tends *"to be less focused and more wide-ranging in scope"* (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p.110). In another view, Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) classified the literature review into traditional and systematic. According to the authors, the systematic literature review considers *"peer-reviewed articles only*," while traditional literature reviews "*are defined by what the reviewer considers to be the most interesting or most relevant sources*" (Ibid, 2018, p.23).

Nonetheless, a narrative or traditional literature review approach was followed in this research. The main interest was how academics and scholars define SCM, how they perceive it, and how they implement it. Also, the focus was on how the mentioned issues were tackled or discussed. The used strategy in conducting the literature review was topic-oriented regardless of the source or reference type. Also, the adopted philosophy was that any published book or article by any author(s) in any journal should be considered as long it adds significant value to this research. However, the focus was on gathering data from the most cited peer-reviewed journal articles and known thought leaders of SCM[8]. Moreover,

[7] Researcher's viewpoint
[8] Citing thought leaders was based on authors biography.

snowballing and backwards tracing techniques were used to find relevant articles for any topic (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018).

2.1.2 Literature Review Structure

The literature review consists of four main parts. First, a detailed overview of the SCM concept is introduced, which includes the origin of the term, the definition of a supply chain, how the structure of a supply chain is viewed, and the researcher's observations on these topics[9]. Second, the major theoretical issues of SCM are presented. Then the identified research gap is presented where the prevailed and used approaches, the used research methods/approaches toward tackling/discussing SCM theoretical issues, and the calls for using GT strategy are reported. The final part touches on some existing SCM frameworks and addresses the identified discussions about those frameworks. However, in compliance with the grounded theory research design[10], the used or the offered theories of SCM are presented in chapter 5 for the comparison purpose.

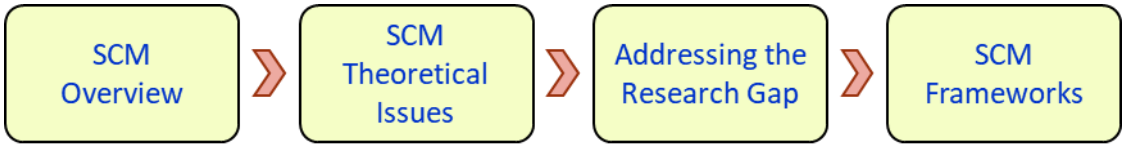


Figure 5 Literature Review Content and Structure

2.2 Supply Chain Management Overview

2.2.1 The Origin of Supply Chain Management Notion

Supply chain management (SCM) is a widespread term in the business and management field, particularly in the manufacturing and production sectors (Lummus and Vokurka, 1999; Mentzer et al., 2001; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Naslund and Williamson, 2010; Sople, 2011; Lambert, 2014). The first appearance of the term was in the early 1980s in a white paper published by two

[9] The researcher intentionally postponed addressing SCM objectives as it will be addressed in chapter 4.

[10] Grounded theory thought leaders (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 2015; Charmaz, 2014) suggest that once a grounded theory is developed, researchers should consult the literature to compare the developed theory with the extant theories.

consultants: Oliver, R. Keith and Michael D. Webber (Svensson, 2003; Gibson, Mentzer and Cook, 2005; Sweeney, 2010; Ivanov and Sokolov, 2010; Miocevic, 2011; Soni and Kodali, 2013; Lambert, 2014; Ellram and Cooper, 2014; Christopher, 2016; LeMay et al., 2017; Swanson et al., 2018). In their paper, Oliver and Webber (1982, cited in Christopher, 2016, p.3) wrote:

> *"We found that the traditional approach of seeking trade-offs among the various conflicting objectives of key functions – purchasing, production, distribution and sales-along with the supply chain no longer worked very well. We needed a new perspective and, following from it, a new approach: Supply Chain Management."*
>
> (Christopher, 2016, p.3; Svensson, 2003, p.304).

Nevertheless, some scholars (e.g., Mentzer et al., 2001; Svensson, 2002; Ivanov and Sokolov, 2010) have attributed the idea of SCM to the work of J. Forrester (1958) and others. Mentzer et al. (2001) stated that:

> *"Forrester (1958, p.52) proposed that … 'there will come general recognition of the advantage enjoyed by the pioneering management who have been the first to improve their understanding of the interrelationships between separate company functions and between the company and its markets, its industry, and the national economy.' Though his article is more than forty years old, it appears that Forrester identified key management issues and illustrated the dynamics of factors associated with the phenomenon referred to in contemporary business literature as Supply Chain Management (SCM)."*
>
> (Mentzer et al., 2001, p.2).

Likewise, Ivanov and Sokolov (2010) stated that:

> *"The origins of SCM can also be seen in early works on postponement (Alderson 1950), system dynamics and the bullwhip effect (Forrester 1961), inter-firm cooperation (Bowersox 1969), optimal multi-echelon inventory management (Geoffrion and Graves 1974), just-in-time (JIT), and lean production."*
>
> (Ibid, 2010, p.5).

2.2.2 The Spread of the Notion

Since the emergence of the SCM notion, academics and researchers have been eager to explain its meaning and practical implementation through developing definitions, models, and frameworks and identify the theories behind the concept or offer new views and research guidance (e.g., Cooper, Lambert and Pagh, 1997; New, 1997; Dyer and Singh, 1998; Mentzer et al., 2001; Ho, Au and Newton, 2002; Chen and Paulraj, 2004a; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Sweeney, 2011; Nilsson and Gammelgaard, 2012; Lambert, 2014; LeMay et al., 2017). Not only, but also offering new names to describe its appropriate meaning (Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2006).

Therefore, numerous definitions (Mentzer et al., 2001; Stock and Boyer, 2009; LeMay et al., 2017), different perspectives, various models and frameworks, and alternative names of SCM were developed, offered, and introduced in the literature (Cooper, Lambert and Pagh, 1997; Mentzer et al., 2001; Moberg et al., 2008; Naslund and Williamson, 2010; Ellram and Cooper, 2014; Lambert and Enz, 2017). Moreover, many academics linked the concept to many of the extant management theories and views (e.g. Mentzer et al., 2001; Svensson, 2002; Mathews, 2003; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Defee et al., 2010; Hitt, 2011; Fayezi, O'Loughlin and Zutshi, 2012; Wu, Chuang and Hsu, 2014) besides offering new views (e.g. Dyer and Singh, 1998; Carter, Kosmol and Kaufmann, 2017) and proposing guidelines toward SCM implementation, theory development, and research efforts (e.g. Ho, Au and Newton, 2002; Chen and Paulraj, 2004a; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Sweeney, 2011; Nilsson and Gammelgaard, 2012; Randall and Mello, 2012; Lambert and Enz, 2017; Min, Zacharia and Smith, 2019).

Moreover, universities and business schools worldwide established SCM departments and many organisations and centres were established or renamed to offer SCM guidance and education (Lambert and Enz, 2017). Examples of such organisations are the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP), the Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) at Ohio State University, and the Supply Chain Council by the American Production and Inventory Control

Society (APICS)[11] (Ellram and Cooper, 2014; Lambert and Enz, 2017). In addition, many academic journals were launched to refer to SCM, such as the 'Supply Chain Management: An International Journal' and the 'Journal of Supply Chain Management (Larson and Halldorsson, 2004).

Today, according to many authors, the SCM concept is very popular (Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Naslund and Williamson, 2010) and is globally practised (Lambert, 2014). According to Mentzer et al. (2001), one reason behind the popularity of SCM is the rapid and quality-based competitive global market which contributed to higher environmental uncertainty. As a result, firms were forced "*to invest and focus on their supply chains*" (Simchi-Levi, Simchi-Levi and Kaminsky, 2008, p.3). The Council of SCM professionals' website note that the SCM concept is considered "*an integral part of most businesses and is essential to*" their success (CSCMP, 2021b). Also, the CSCMP website mentioned that SCM has an essential societal role for humanity as it ensures human survival, improves the quality of life, and protects cultural freedom and development (CSCMP, 2021b).

2.2.3 The 'Supply Chain' Definition

Regardless of some odd definitions, a supply chain or network is commonly defined in the literature as a group of companies or firms within the production/manufacturing sector (Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006) involved in manufacturing/producing and delivering a product or multiple products. The main connector of these organisations is the flow of inventory, and its associated forward or reverse (downstream and upstream) flow of information, services, and finance from the ultimate supplier(s) to the ultimate customer(s) (Mentzer et al., 2001; Christopher, 2016).

For instance, Mentzer et al. (2001, p.3) mentioned that "*the definition of 'supply chain' seems to be more common across authors*" and suggest that a supply chain is:

[11] Recently, APICS changed its name to 'Association for Supply Chain Management' (ASCM).

"A set of three or more entities (organisations or individuals) directly involved in the upstream and downstream flows of products, services, finances, and/or information from a source to a customer."

(Mentzer et al., 2001, p.4).

Also, Christopher (2016) stated that the supply chain is:

"The network of organisations that are involved, through upstream and downstream linkages, in the different processes and activities that produce value in the form of products and services in the hands of the ultimate customers."

(Christopher, 2016, p.13).

Besides his definition, Christopher (2016) also suggested that a supply chain is:

"A network of connected and independent organisations mutually and co-operatively working together to control, manage and improve the flow of materials and information from suppliers to end users."

(Christopher, 2016, p.13).

A definition by the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS) states that a supply chain is:

"The global network used to deliver products and services from raw material to end customers through an engineered flow of information, physical distribution, and cash."

(APICS Dictionary, 2020).

However, other scholars suggest that a supply chain is not just the organisations within a supply chain but also includes the business functions and activities within and across those organisations (Chen and Paulraj, 2004a).

For example, the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) defines a supply chain as:

> "*A network of individuals, organisations, technology, activities and resources working together to make sure goods or services reach the end-user.*"
>
> (Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply, 2020).

Similarly, Quinn (1997, cited in Lummus and Vokurka, 1999) defines the supply chain as:

> *"All of those activities associated with moving goods from the raw-materials stage through to the end user. This includes sourcing and procurement, production scheduling, order processing, inventory management, transportation, warehousing, and customer service. Importantly, it also embodies the information systems so necessary to monitor all of those activities."*
>
> (Lummus and Vokurka, 1999, p.11).

However, CIPS's definition of a supply chain implies a nonlogical meaning. It raises the question of how a "*network of individuals, organisations, technology, activities, and resources*" work together "*to make sure*" a product reached the end-user. Also, the APICS organisation states that "*a supply chain is a global network*". This raises yet another question about whether a supply chain or network must be global in order to be managed.

Further examples of supply chain definitions and the corresponding references are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Definition of a Supply Chain

Reference	Supply Chain Definition
(La Londe and Masters, 1994, cited in Mentzer et al., 2001, p.3).	*"A supply chain is a set of firms that pass materials forward."*
(Beamon, 1998 cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.194).	"*A structured manufacturing process wherein raw materials are transformed into finished goods, then delivered to end customers.*"

Reference	Supply Chain Definition
(Tecc.com.au, 2002, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	"*A chain starting with raw materials and finishing with the sale of the finished good.*"
(Bridgefield Group, 2006, Cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	"*A connected set of resources and processes that starts with the raw materials sourcing and expands through the delivery of finished goods to the end consumer.*"
(Pienaar, 2009, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	"*A general description of the process integration involving organizations to transform raw materials into finished goods and to transport them to the end-user.*" Note: it is more likely an SCM definition.
(Little,1999, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	"*The combined and coordinated flows of goods from origin to the final destination, also the information flows that are linked with it.*"
(Chow and Heaver, 1999, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"The group of manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, retailers and transportation, information and other logistics management service providers that are engaged in providing goods to consumers. A Supply Chain comprises both the external and internal associates for the corporate."*
(Ayers, 2001, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	The "*life cycle processes involving physical goods, information, and financial flows whose objective is to satisfy end consumer requisites with goods and services from diverse, connected suppliers."*

Reference	Supply Chain Definition
(Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	"*Various systems of distribution organized to work through transport connections and nodes."*
(Christopher, 1998, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	"*The organizations' network that is involved in the diverse processes and activities that generate value in the form of goods and services in the hands of the end customer."*
(Kenton, 2019).	"*A network between a company and its suppliers to produce and distribute a specific product to the final buyer."*
(The Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply, 2020).	"*A supply chain is the activities required by the organisation to deliver goods or services to the consumer"; "is a focus on the core activities within our organisation required to convert raw materials or component parts through to finished products or services.*"

2.2.4 Supply Chain Structure and Scope

Many scholars posited an imaginary view regarding a typical supply chain or network structure. There are different envisions of how such a structure might be.

For example, Lambert (2014) and Christopher (2016) see that a typical supply chain is a network of firms/enterprises consists of a focal company with multiple tiers of suppliers and customers. Figures 6, 7, and 8 show how a typical supply chain or network is envisioned by Lambert (2014) and Christopher (2016).

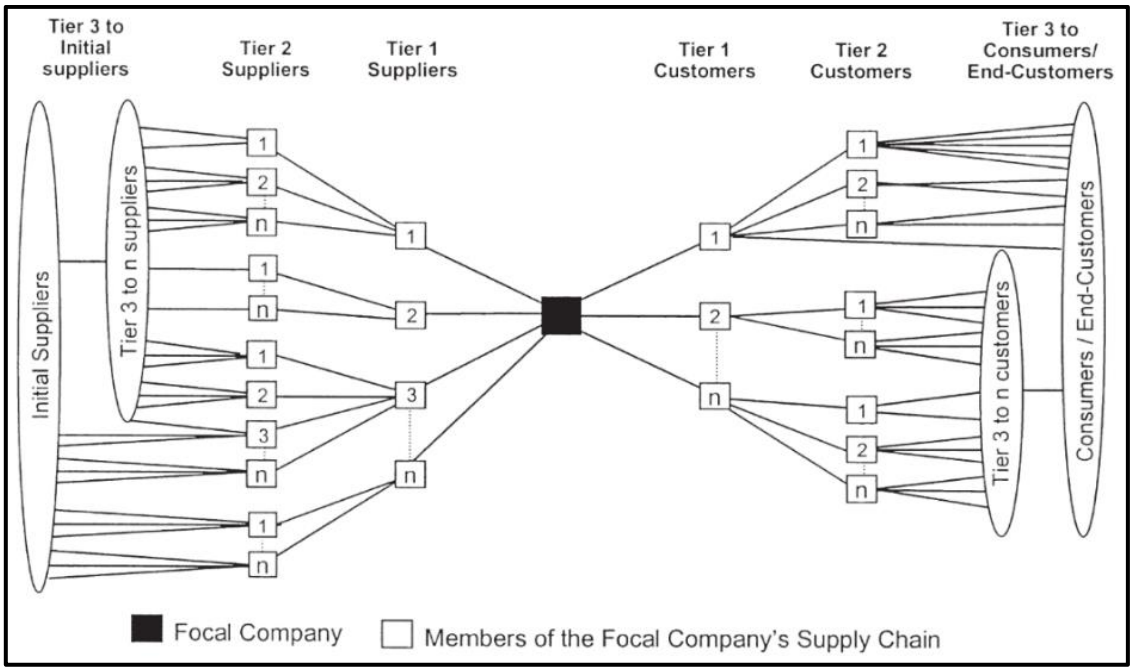


Figure 6 Supply Chain Network Structure

Source: (Lambert, 2014, p.6).

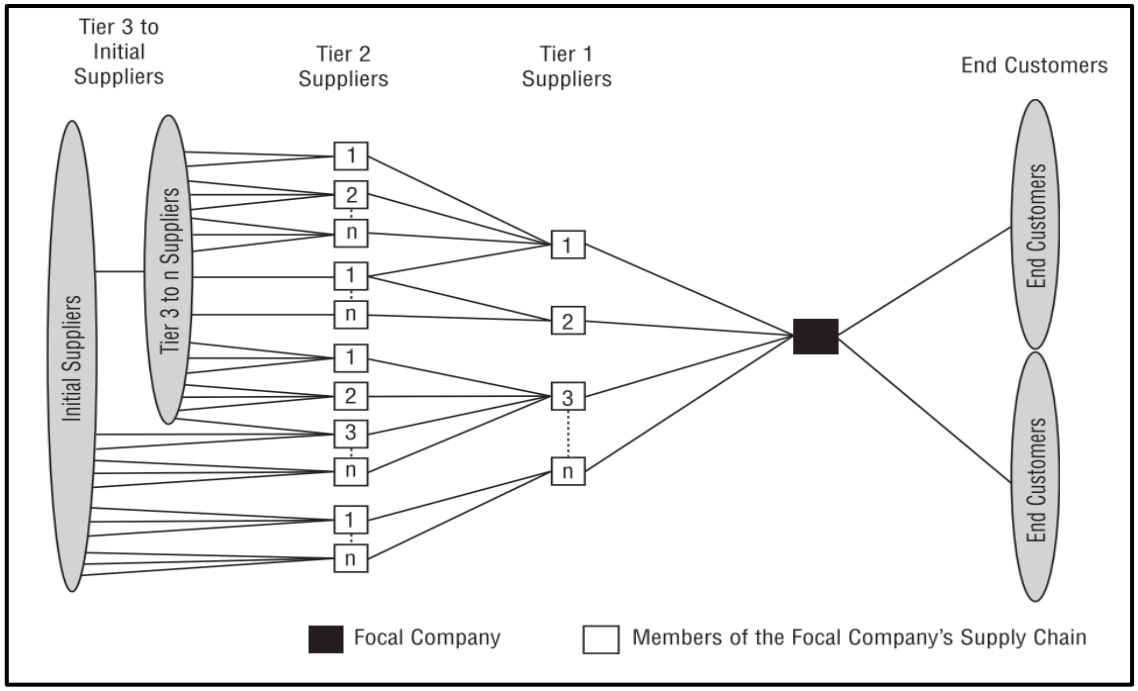


Figure 7 Supply Chain Network Structure for Retailer

Source: (Lambert, 2014, p.6).

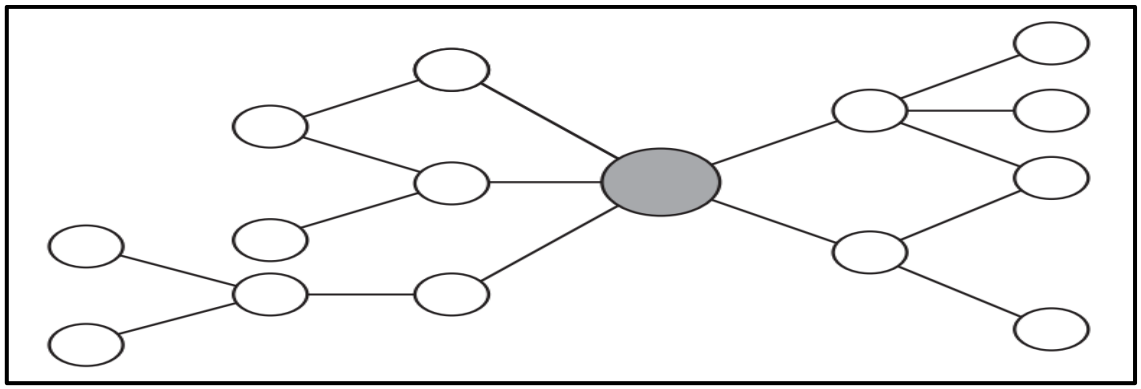


Figure 8 A Supply Chain Network

Source: (Christopher, 2016, p.4).

Others, such as Mentzer et al. (2001) and Hugos (2018), see that a supply chain is literally a chain of firms/enterprises. As Mentzer et al. (2001) envision, these supply chains range from simple to complex supply chains that include services providers such as a third-party logistics supplier, financial provider, and market research firm. According to Mentzer et al. (2001), this perspective adds complexity to the supply chain. Figure 9 shows how Mentzer et al. (2001) view a typical supply chain.

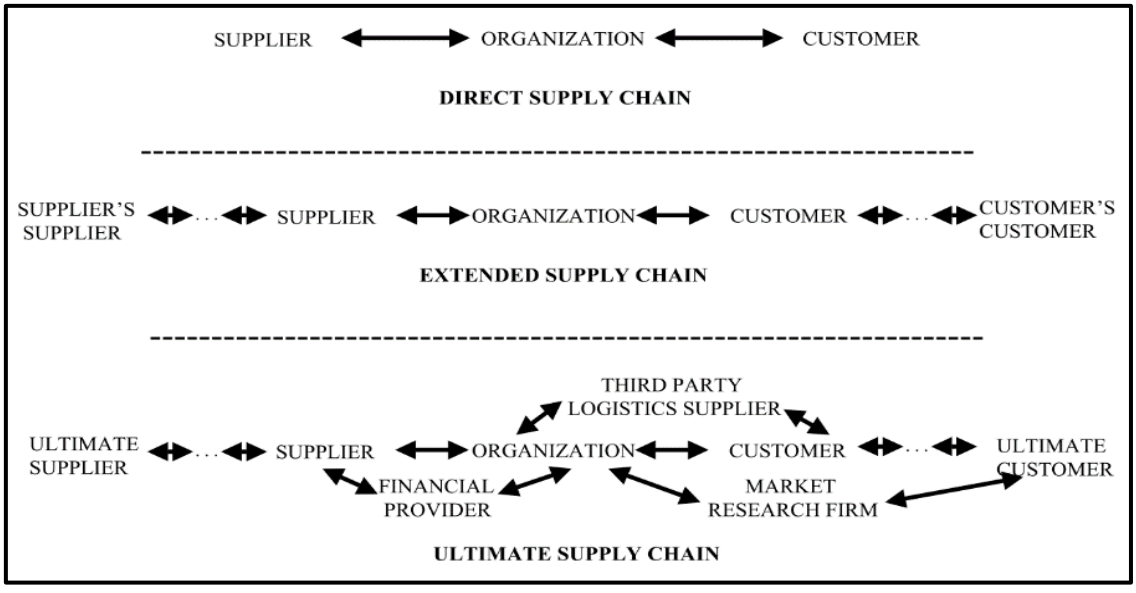


Figure 9 Types of Supply Chains (Channel Relations)

Source: (Mentzer et al., 2001, p.5).

Moreover, many academics describe companies' internal business functions as an internal supply chain (e.g., Chen and Paulraj, 2004a; Christopher, 2016, p.15). Figure 10 illustrates this view.

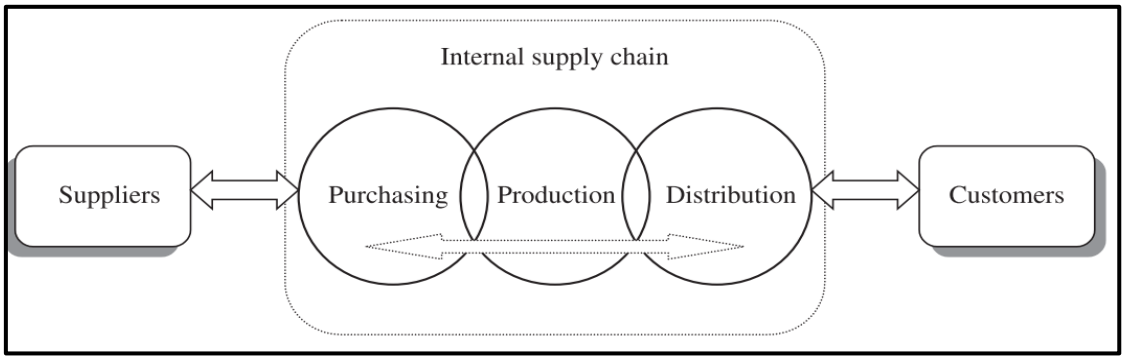


Figure 10 Company's Supply Chain

Source: (Chen and Paulraj, 2004a, p.120).

2.2.5 The Original Philosophy of SCM

Those such as Oliver and Webber (1982, cited in Holmberg, 2000), Houlihan (1985), Jones and Riley (1985), Stevens (1989), Cooper and Ellram (1993), Tan (2001), Svensson (2003), Sandberg (2007), Wong et al. (2012), Lambert (2014), Lambert and Enz (2015), and Hugos (2018), view *"the supply chain and the organisations in it as a single entity*". This single entity view promotes SCM as the management of a network of organisations as a whole, from the ultimate suppliers to the ultimate customers. On this basis, Lambert (2014, p.4) argues that "*before we can determine how to manage something, it is important to define what it is. So, what is a supply chain?"* Additionally, Lambert (2014, p.4) suggests that as a supply chain "*is a network of companies, then the management of that network is supply chain management*."

Based on the single entity view, many academics (e.g., New, 1997; Mentzer et al., 2001; Ho, Au and Newton, 2002; Caddy and Helou, 2007; Randall, Pohlen and Hanna, 2010; Miocevic, 2011; Randall and Mello, 2012) related SCM or the "*single entity view*" (Hugos, 2018, p.3) to the systems approach (e.g., Ellram and

Cooper 1990; Mentzer et al., 2001; Nilsson and Gammelgaard, 2012; Hugos, 2018) or the "*systems' theory of the firm*" (e.g., Caddy and Helou, 2007; Randall and Mello, 2012, p.864). The system perspective views an organisation or a firm as a system that is dependent on its functional departments (Svensson, 2002; Teeboom, 2018). Accordingly, the firms or companies who are part of a supply chain represent a supply chain's subsystems. Consequently, the supply chain is considered a System Of Systems (SOS) (Randall and Mello, 2012).

The system of systems view can be found in the definition of a supply chain by Kozlenkova et al. (2015, p.3), where the authors stated that a supply chain is "*a system of organisations and functions that form a fully orchestrated effort of upstream and downstream process-based activities.*"

It seems that the single entity view of supply chains is behind the belief of many academics that the contemporary competition among businesses is "*supply chain versus supply chain*" (Lambert, 2014, p.7), and the traditional competition between firms no longer exists (Macbeth and Ferguson, 1994, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000; Monczka and Morgan, 1997, cited in Lummus and Vokurka, 1999; Drucker, 1998, cited in Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Lummus and Vokurka, 1999; Cetindamar, Çatay and Basmaci, 2005; Gripsrud, Jahre and Persson, 2006; Monczka and Morgan, 1996, cited in Rao Tummala, Phillips and Johnson, 2006; Li et al., 2006; Grubic and Fan, 2010; Lu, 2011; Skjøtt-Larsen et al., 2007 cited in Nilsson and Gammelgaard, 2012; Wu, Chuang and Hsu, 2014; Lambert, 2014; Enz and Lambert, 2015; Christopher, 2016). However, Lambert and Enz (2017, p.5) rethought this belief where the authors stated:

> *"It had become common to say that competition is no longer between companies, but it is 'supply chain versus supply chain' … we have changed our minds about this …, it is not technically correct."*

2.2.6 Researcher's Observations and Analysis

This section presents the researcher's major observations and discusses the definition of a supply chain and how its structure is viewed. Accordingly, the suggested definitions of a supply chain and a supply network are introduced.

Then, the section presents the researcher's viewpoint about governance and control in a supply chain, besides what Forrester's statement implies.

2.2.6.1 Analysis of Supply Chain Definitions and Structures

The many definitions of a supply chain and the different views about its structure, as introduced in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4, reveal two issues. The first issue is excluding the final consumer or the end-user from a supply chain or SCM definition; the second issue is the overlap between four different views regarding the meaning of a supply chain and a supply network. Furthermore, there is a debate[12] and discussion among SCM scholars that SCM should be renamed 'Supply Network Management' (e.g., Lambert, 2014) or 'Demand Network Management' (Christopher, 2016). Therefore, there is a need to redefine what a supply chain and a supply network are. The following subtitles illustrate these two issues and present the researcher's proposed definitions of a supply chain and a supply network.

2.2.6.1.1 Exclusion of Final Consumer/End User

Although the final user or consumer is considered part of the supply chain, as many authors mentioned (e.g., Mentzer et al., 2001), the single entity view and the common definitions of a supply chain exclude the final consumers from the supply chain. Using words such as 'organisations', 'companies', 'involved', 'ends at the point of sales', and 'working together' limit the meaning of a supply chain to those companies or organisations.

Mentzer et al. (2001, p.4) have implicitly[13] touched on the researcher's observation by mentioning that their definition of a supply chain considers the final consumer as a member of a supply chain. The authors stated that "*within our definition of supply chain, the final consumer is considered a member of the supply chain."* Despite that, the authors' developed definition[14] of SCM, as will be introduced, excludes the final user or consumer from the chain.

[12] The details of this debate are presented in section 2.3.4
[13] The authors did not raise this observation in their paper, they only mentioned that their definition considers the end user as part of the supply chain.
[14] Will be introduced in section 2.3.1.3.7

Ignoring the final user or consumer from the definitions excludes the importance and the value that could be added through the communication with the final users or the value of their cooperation, collaboration and integration. It is known that practices such as end-users' involvement in a product design phase or receiving feedback about products or services' quality are examples of the value of communication with and the cooperation of the end-users. These practices improve the quality of products or services and, consequently, improve customer satisfaction and firms' competitiveness. For instance, Huo et al. (2016, p.3) suggest that "*customer quality integration practices include close contact, timely feedback about quality, certification, and active involvement in new product development processes*." The authors add that "*communication with and feedback from customers is critical to the availability of timely and accurate quality information*" (Ibid, 2016, p.3).

It is worth noting that Lambert and Cooper (2000, p.70-71) suggest that "*the members of a supply chain include all companies/ organizations with whom the focal company interacts directly or indirectly through its suppliers or customers, from point of origin to point of consumption."* According to the authors, "*the point of consumption"* in the supply chain structure "*is where no further value is added, and the product and/or service is consumed."* It can be argued that the authors overlooked the added value of communicating with the end-user to evaluate or improve product or service quality and, consequently, customers' satisfaction and the suppliers' competitive advantage.

2.2.6.1.2 Overlapping Views of SCM

There seems to be an overlap between four views in defining a supply chain: the chain view, the network view, the supply base view, and describing business functions in production or manufacturing firms as an internal supply chain. The chain viewers use the term literary to manage the inventory flow across a chain of suppliers and their customers, from the ultimate supplier to the ultimate customer. In contrast, the network viewers use the term to manage a group of suppliers and their agents or distributors as one entity. On the other hand, some academics use the term SCM as a synonym for a group of suppliers or a supply

base. For example, Huo et al. (2019, p.236), while talking about Boeing Company, stated:

> *"Boeing fell behind on the production of its 787 Dreamliner, resulting in deliveries three years behind schedule, order losses, and budget overruns of USD10 billion. The problems were blamed on a hasty strategic decision to increase the proportion of outsourcing, which added great challenges to Boeing's supply chain management. As Boeing spread its supply chains worldwide, it became increasingly difficult to coordinate different cultures, strategies, processes, and material parts."*

Also, the conducted pilot study in this research showed that some participants used this meaning while talking about their suppliers. For example, one manager said: "*Our supply chain consists of twelve manufacturers; our group owns them all; they work for us as well as selling for other companies*."[15]

Finally, many authors use the term (supply chain) and SCM to refer to managing the internal business functions, mainly purchasing, manufacturing, and logistics. However, describing business functions in production or manufacturing firms and enterprises as an internal supply chain might be one of the reasons behind the confusion among academics and practitioners between managing and controlling internal supply operations and managing business relationships across a supply chain.

2.2.6.1.3 Researcher's Proposed Definition of a Supply Chain and a Supply Network

Supply chains and supply networks exist in the real world. These supply chains and networks intersect with each other and are everchanging (dynamic). As it is mentioned in section 2.2.3, there are many proposed definitions of a supply chain. Mentzer et al. (2001) see that a supply chain is "*a set of three or more entities (organisations or individuals) directly involved in the upstream and downstream flows of products, services, finances, and/or information from a source to a customer*"; Lambert (2014, p.4) mentioned that there is an "*agreement that a*

[15] This statement was noted through an informal interview as the participant did not agree on recording the interview for security reasons.

supply chain is a network of companies/organisations"; Christopher (2016, p.13) sees that a supply chain is "*the network of organisations that are involved, through upstream and downstream linkages, in the different processes and activities that produce value in the form of products and services in the hands of the ultimate customers*"; the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS) sees that a supply chain is "*the global network used to deliver products and services from raw material to end customers through an engineered flow of information, physical distribution, and cash.*"

As it is noticed, all the definitions mentioned above exclude the final consumer from the supply chain and limit value creation to those organisations. Moreover, section 2.2.4 showed that the structure of a supply chain was viewed as a chain of suppliers (Figure 9) and a network of suppliers and customers (Figures 6,7 and 8).

Accordingly, the following definition of a supply chain is suggested:

> *'A supply chain (SC) is the path, the stream, or the channel through which tangible products are produced, stored, transported, and delivered. This path or stream starts from the ultimate supplier (source) of raw material to the ultimate user or consumer (destination) of the final product*.'

This definition complies with Mentzer et al. (2001) view of a supply chain structure (Figure 9 refers). Nonetheless, production or manufacturing firms often, if not always, require or depend on more than a supplier or a supply chain or channel to produce their products.

On the other hand, the suggested definition of a supply network is that:

> *'A Supply Network is a group of enterprises/ companies who are involved in designing, manufacturing/ producing, and distributing a specific product or a portfolio of products and its associated services. The network may consist of a focal company, its suppliers (supply base) and its distributors or agents (demand base).'*

The proposed definition of a supply network complies with Lambert's (2014) and Christopher's (2016) views of the structure of a supply network (Figures 6, 7, & 8 refer). Nonetheless, an example of a supply network is an auto-manufacturing company, its suppliers, and its agents or distributors. The focal company, its suppliers, and agents should work in a collaborative and integrative environment of business relations to benefit the entire supply network. Through these business relationships, they plan and work as one entity, as one system. The entire system's success depends on the focal company's success and the performance of its suppliers and agents. Also, the business practices of each member of this network will positively or negatively impact the performance of the entire system. For example, if an agent in any country provides poor maintenance or unsatisfactory after-sale services, the focal company may lose its global market share in that country, which reduces the total demand. Also, if one supplier provides low-quality components for the focal company, the focal company's reputation will be affected. Significantly, the reader may imagine the cost of return or compensation procedures.

2.2.6.2 Researcher's Argument about the Governance and Control in the Supply Chain

The core mission of any manufacturer or producer is to provide specific products to society. This mission in major firms and enterprises is accomplished through an integrated system of different departments or business functions (Mentzer et al., 2001). All those departments perform different tasks to accomplish that mission (Ibid, 2001). They follow and execute the established purchasing, production, distribution, marketing, and sales plans. These plans are contingent (Shou et al., 2018) and are governed by the top management, the board of directors, or the production or supply managers. For example, in the manufacturing sector, the plans or the decisions of (what-when- how many- how much- where) to purchase, produce, and distribute are governed by the available resources and capabilities, the projected sales, and the actual or the forecasted demand. In other words, the plans and the decision-making processes of purchasing, production and distributing are centralised and controlled. None of those departments or their managers will make his/her own decision. This is

logical and is supposed to be practised in any manufacturing firm. Moreover, as introduced in section 1.2.1.2, management is about planning, organising, leading, monitoring, and controlling (Mescon, Albert and Khedouri (1998, cited in Hannagan, 1995, p.4; Miles, 2012; Rohlander, 2014).

However, these mentioned premises raise many questions: who monitors or controls a supply chain? Is managing and controlling a whole supply chain, which may consist of tens of local or global independent firms or enterprises, from end to end realistic? Is the philosophy of managing a whole supply chain as a single entity feasible? The literature showed that some scholars who adopted managing the supply chain as a single entity acknowledged that this view is very difficult. For example, Lambert (2014, p.4), as mentioned earlier, stated that "*before we can determine how to manage something, it is important to define what it is. So, what is a supply chain?"* In his answer, Lambert (2014) mentioned that "*there is agreement that a supply chain is a network of companies/organizations.*" Accordingly, Lambert (2014, p.4) argued that since a supply chain "*is a network of companies, then the management of that network is supply chain management*", though the author in 2000 stated that "*managing all tier-1 suppliers' networks to the point of origin is an enormous undertaking. Managing the entire supply chain is a very difficult and challenging task*"[16] (Lambert and Cooper, 2000, p.68). As the reader notices, Lambert (2014, p.4), who and his co-authors focused on the supply chain structure, admits that managing the entire supply chain is a challenging task.

Furthermore, Storey et al. (2006), who spent three years studying "*six supply chains which encompassed 72 companies in Europe*", stated that "*Supply chain theory would suggest that the supply chain should be managed from end-to-end. Our research found very few examples of this"* (Ibid, 2006, p.763). Fawcett and Magnan (2002, cited in Naslund and Williamson, 2010, p.19) "*found that true collaboration beyond the first-tier in upstream and downstream direction is rare.*" Also, Kemppainen and Vepsäläinen (2007, cited in Naslund and Williamson,

[16] Some academics mentioned the issue of arm's length and opportunism (e.g., Carter and Roger, 2008; Paula et al., 2019). The researcher also raises the issue of spam of control.

2010, p.19) found that "*firms prefer dyadic relations only with some selected partners and that collaboration is limited to order processing and operational scheduling."*

Nonetheless, the philosophy of managing a supply network as one entity is only feasible in companies/ enterprises owned by a holding company or family-owned companies that comprise a limited supply chain or a network of organisations that provide certain products and services. The philosophy is feasible among organisations that are willing to partner, cooperate and work together as one entity, as one system. The success of such businesses or systems depends on the communication, information sharing, collaboration, and integration among the network members. It depends on the mutual and integrated planning[17] and decision-making besides the shared business policies and strategies through which business activities and processes are coordinated and synchronised, and the business objectives of each of those firms or enterprises could be achieved, maintained, or enhanced.

2.2.6.3 Forrester's Statement

Forrester (1958, cited in Mentzer et al., 2001, p.2) stated that:

> "*There will come general recognition of the advantage enjoyed by the pioneering management who have been the first to improve their understanding of the interrelationships between separate company functions and between the company and its markets, its industry, and the national economy."*

In his statement, Forrester (1958) referred to the value of interrelationships within and across all stakeholders, i.e., the value of business relationship management, the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among all stakeholders toward better economic development. However, Mentzer et al. (2001) were right when they related SCM to Forrester's (1958) statement as they stated: "*Forrester identified key management issues and illustrated the dynamics*

[17] Integrated planning: when the whole departments or organisation plan together to achieve and optimise their objectives and goals.

of factors associated with the phenomenon referred to in contemporary business literature as Supply Chain Management" (Ibid, 2001, p.2), though, the authors adopted the SCM term instead of managing business relations. Furthermore, besides SCM, Mentzer et al. (2001) suggested an additional concept called 'Supply Chain Orientation' (SCO)[18].

2.3 Supply Chain Management Major Discussions and Theoretical Issues

In this section, the discussions and studies about the theoretical issues of SCM are reported and discussed. The covered topics are the discussions and the studies about SCM definition and its different perspectives, the conceptual and theoretical issues, SCM discipline, and SCM terminology. The identified studies and discussions reveal the different perspectives and understanding among academics and highlight the importance of conducting theoretical research. However, there are also some discussions around the existing frameworks of SCM. Those discussions are presented in section (2.5).

2.3.1 The Supply Chain Management Definition and Perspective Issues

The literature, as presented in chapter 1, showed that since the appearance of the SCM notion, numerous divergent definitions have been developed to explain the meaning of the term (Gibson, Mentzer and Cook, 2005; Stock and Boyer, 2009; Janvier-James, 2012; LeMay et al., 2017). Also, the literature showed different perspectives regarding the meaning of the concept and its implementation. Accordingly, many academics called for a unified SCM definition and perspective and emphasised its importance in advancing SCM understanding, practice, and research efforts.

Therefore, this section reports the existing discussions and studies around the definition of SCM and how it is perceived. The purpose is to demonstrate the general agreement among those authors that there is no consensus among SCM academics on a unified perspective and definition. Also, this section gives a brief

[18] Will be introduced in section 2.3.1.2.1.

analysis of some SCM definitions. However, this section does not aim to compare or repeat existing studies already noted in sections 2.3.2 and 2.4.

2.3.1.1 SCM Definition

The definition of SCM has gained a noticeable interest among many scholars and researchers for more than two decades. Many papers have put forward this topic and discussed it through different approaches. The dominant discussion in the literature is the importance of achieving consensus among SCM scholars and practitioners on a unified and precise definition that captures the essence of SCM and leads to a unified understanding and perspective (Mentzer et al., 2001; Gibson, Mentzer and Cook, 2005; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Moberg et al., 2008; Stock and Boyer, 2009; Sweeney, 2011; Ellram and Cooper, 2014; Kozlenkova et al., 2015; LeMay et al., 2017). The major agreement is that adopting a single definition of SCM will improve research and practice (Mentzer et al., 2001), eliminate the confusion about the concept's meaning (Stock and Boyer, 2009), and lead to further theoretical development in the field (Kozlenkova et al., 2015) and successful "*adoption of SCM thinking"* (Sweeney, 2011, p.45).

However, the literature showed different responses to this issue among academics. Some researchers, who emphasised the importance of achieving consensus among scholars, developed and proposed a definition based on analysing many existing definitions (e.g., Mentzer et al., 2001; Stock and Boyer, 2009; LeMay et al., 2017), some academics often address the issue in the introductory part of their articles or books as a rationale to list some of the definitions of the concept or to introduce a proposed or adopted definition (e.g., Lummus and Vokurka, 1999), while others implicitly touched on this issue through introducing their preferred or adopted definition of SCM (e.g., Wilding, 2011; Christopher, 2016).

Interestingly, Saunders (1995, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68) warned that the pursuit of a global definition of SCM *"may lead to unnecessary frustration and conflict*", while others avoided discussing the issue despite their confession that many academics and practitioners are confused about the meaning of the concept, as they are likely claiming that their definition

and understanding of SCM is the right one (e.g., Lambert, Cooper and Pagh, 1997; Lambert, 2014; Lambert and Enz, 2015; Lambert and Enz, 2017). In contrast, some academics see that it is not the definition that matters, rather the theory behind the concept through which a precise, unified and holistic definition of SCM could be phrased and acknowledged (e.g., Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000; LeMay et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, some authors who touched on the definition issue attributed the lack of consensus on the definition of SCM to the different existing conceptions and perspectives about the notion as well as the number of developed frameworks in the literature (e.g., Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Moberg et al., 2008; Naslund and Williamson, 2010).

The following subheadings report the most prominent of those discussions to provide an insight into the extent to which academics and researchers have emphasised the importance of the subject matter.

2.3.1.1.1 A Call for Consensus by Mentzer et al. (2001)[19]

In their paper '*Defining Supply Chain Management',* Mentzer et al. (2001, p.3) analysed many definitions of SCM. The authors noted that there is confusion about the meaning of SCM despite its academic and practice popularity. Furthermore, the authors cited that the "*discussions of supply chain management*" notably "*use complicated terminology*", thus restraining management's comprehension "*of the concept and its practical application*". They argue that: "*research and practise would be improved if a single definition were adopted*" (Ibid, 2001, p.5). Also, the authors added: "*without a clear understanding of SCM, we cannot expect wide application of SCM in practice or research*." (Ibid, 2001, p.19).

In addition, Mentzer et al. (2001, p.5) argued that "*the term supply chain management presents a source of confusion for those involved in researching*

[19] It worth to note that John A. Mentzer was a past president of the CSCMP (Esper, Defee and Mentzer, 2010). Also, seven authors from seven universities participated in this paper including Mentzer.

the phenomena, as well as those attempting to establish a supply chain approach to management."[20] Also, the authors stated that they "*believe it is possible to develop a single, encompassing definition of SCM*" (Mentzer et al., 2001, p.18), where the authors proposed a new definition, as will be introduced later.

2.3.1.1.2 Inconsistency in Portraying SCM

In asserting the necessity of achieving consensus on SCM understanding, Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005) proffer that: "*Supply chain management (SCM) is a discipline in the early stages of evolution*" (Ibid, 2005, p.17). Based on that, they offer that "*the lack of SCM definition consensus is not surprising given the age of the discipline*" (Ibid, 2005, p.18).

In discussing this issue, Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005) note inconsistency in portraying SCM, which has led to different and disparate definitions of SCM. The authors see some definitions as narrow while others are too broad. The authors also mentioned that there had been many attempts to structure SCM and to offer complete "*definitions that include scope, functions, and relationships*" (Ibid, 2005, p.17); nevertheless, "*no consensus has been reached*" (Ibid, 2005, p.18). Moreover, the authors believe that more "*examination of SCM definitions and boundaries is needed*", and academics and practitioners should participate in this process (Ibid, 2005, p.22). The authors also see that practitioners have an important role in the evolution of SCM as "*they bring an important, pragmatic perspective that is vital to the establishment and corroboration of a consensus depiction of SCM and its boundaries*" (Ibid, 2005, p.18).

It is worth noting that Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005) recommended that "*academics should continue to publish different theoretical models of SCM and its impact on firm performance".* Also, the authors see that "*practitioners should*" have "*an active voice*" … "*through adding their experiences to the body of SCM knowledge*" (Ibid, 2005, p.23). In concluding their paper, Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005) stated that:

[20] This statement brings back the researcher's inquiry: what is managed in SCM? What SCM added to management thought?

"A consensus definition of SCM should provide clarity regarding what SCM is and what it is not. A clear definition of SCM is imperative for understanding the concept, achieving acceptance of key elemental functions, and applying SCM in practice and research" … "therefore, SCM definition research efforts must continue."

(Gibson, Mentzer and Cook, 2005, p.18).

2.3.1.1.3 Lack of Consensus and Poor Definitions

Burgess, Singh and Koroglu (2006), through a structured literature review[21], found that SCM lacked consensus on its definition and cited that the concept "*has been poorly defined and there is a high degree of variability in people's minds about what is meant*" (Kathawala and Abdou, 2003, cited in ibid, 2006, p.704).

However, the authors concluded "*that, If SCM were well developed in conceptual and research methodological terms, it would be reasonable to anticipate a 'clear line of sight' from definitions all the way through to theory and research methods*" (Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006, p.718).

2.3.1.1.4 A Failure to Develop Clear Definitions

In an article entitled 'Time to Remodel'[22], Moberg et al. (2008) mentioned that there were a debate and confusion among academics and practitioners as an aftermath of renaming the Council of Logistics Management (CLM) to the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP). As mentioned by the authors, the main issues were the definition, the scope, and the conceptualisation of SCM.

According to Moberg et al. (2008), the fundamental concern was "*the failure to develop clear and consistent definitions and terminology for SCM*." The authors mentioned that "*many practitioners and academics define supply chain terms differently, and they are still trying to sort out how SCM differs from logistics*." The debate, as stated by Moberg et al. (2008), is "*which definitions accurately capture*

[21] 100 journal articles were randomly selected; 23 definitions were analysed in those articles
[22] Published in the Supply Chain Quarterly magazine online magazine by the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP).

the realities of" SCM philosophy. Finally, Moberg et al. (2008) introduced the definition of SCM by the CSCMP where they came up with two conclusions out of the definition; the first is "*that SCM is a strategy*", and the second is that SCM "*modifies behaviours at the functional level in order to reach organizational goals*."

In concluding their article, which calls for developing a new framework in SCM, the authors stated, "*In our view, an effective supply chain framework must support the CSCMP definition of supply chain management*."

However, the statement of Moberg et al. (2008) contradicts what they mentioned about the debate around the SCM definition. The authors' statement implies a sort of bias toward their organisation since they see that an effective SCM framework 'must' support the definition of the CSCMP.

2.3.1.1.5 Further Call for Consensus: Stock and Boyer (2009)

Stock and Boyer (2009), in their paper, '*Developing a consensus definition of supply chain management: a quality study*', mentioned that there had been a great deal of confusion amongst supply chain researchers since the 1990s and referred to the numerous proposed definitions of supply chain management in the literature. The authors found 173 unique definitions[23] of SCM in the literature that were published in the period between 1990 and 2008. However, the following excerpts highlight why Stock and Boyer (2009) believe that the absence of a comprehensive SCM definition is significant; where the authors state:

> "*Without an inclusive or encompassing definition, it will be difficult for researchers to develop supply chain theory, define and test relationships between components of SCM, and develop a consistent stream of research that 'builds' on what has gone before"; "Without the adoption of a uniform definition accepted by researchers, confusion will continue to hinder the study and further development of SCM; and research will extend in various directions, rather than build upon itself"; "For practitioners, the absence of a*

[23] The researcher observed that the authors mentioned two different numbers of the identified definitions in their article: 166 in the abstract and 173 in the article's body.

comprehensive SCM definition makes it more difficult for supply chain executives to claim authority and responsibility for the 'right' combination of functions and processes"; "It is impossible to develop sound SCM theory until valid constructs and generally accepted definitions of terms are developed"; "The absence of a consensus SCM definition will lead to theoretical ambiguity"; "A consensus definition of SCM is of significant importance in the advancement of SCM theory and practice."

(Stock and Boyer, 2009, pp.690-691).

Even though Stock and Boyer (2009) present their viewpoints logically and thoroughly, some of the stated points are exaggerated or dramatically stated with words such as 'impossible' or 'difficult'. It is no surprise that their preamble is a prelude to the conclusion where they propose an additional SCM definition (see paragraph (2.3.1.3.8).

2.3.1.1.6 An Assertion of the Need for a Unified Definition

Sweeney (2011) [24], in a paper entitled '*Towards a Unified Definition of Supply Chain Managemen*', mentioned that numerous definitions of SCM had been developed since the concept was introduced. The author stated that "*there is increasing recognition among scholars and practitioners of the need for common definitions*" (Ibid, 2011, p.31); despite that, *"there is still no universally accepted definition on what SCM is (and, indeed, is not)"* (Ibid, 2011, p.30).

Additionally, Sweeney (2011) mentioned that SCM has become more complicated due to the surge in its terminology, which can limit its understanding and its effective practical implementation, and added that "*there is evidence of differences in emphasis and approach between different industrial sectors, geographical areas and functional backgrounds*" (Ibid, 2011, p.30).

Sweeney (2011) asserted that "*the development of common definitions and understandings between supply chain partners is a critical success factor*" and

[24] "*Edward Sweeney is Director of Learning at the National Institute for Transport and Logistics (NITL), based at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). He has held full-time academic posts at the University of Warwick (UK) and the University of Technology, Malaysia, as well as visiting positions in several Asian universities and institutes*" (Sweeney, 2011, p.48).

contended that the consequence of such an issue ("*lack of definitional consistency and a common understanding*") is a barrier to the successful "*adoption of SCM thinking*" in practice, and thus, there is a need for a unified definition (Ibid, 2011, p.45).

2.3.1.1.7 A Barrier to Theoretical Development of Supply Chain Management

Kozlenkova et al. (2015), in their paper 'The Role of Marketing Channels in Supply Chain Management, note that although 30 years have passed since the conception of SCM, no consensus exists on its definition among scholars or practitioners. The authors also stated that "*the lack of agreement on the definition and scope of SCM" … "has hindered the theoretical development of SCM"* (Ibid, 2015, p.2).

Also, Kozlenkova et al. (2015, p.3) mentioned that "*more troublesome*" is due to "*different perspectives of what constitutes SCM*" that "*have developed over time*" and argued that the "*diverse frameworks of what constitutes the core of SCM had created tension and competition among schools of thought and functional disciplines within SCM researchers and practitioners*."

2.3.1.1.8 Supply Chain Management is an Elusive Concept

Remarkably, LeMay et al. (2017, p.1425), in their article 'Supply chain management: the elusive concept and definition', mentioned that the definition issue is a significant concern to many researchers. In their paper, the authors stated:

> "*We accept the notion that a consensus definition of SCM is necessary"; "We at least need a systematic approach to defining the term for each circumstance"; "A consensus definition of SCM is unlikely as long as we continue offering and accepting definitions that are technically unsound"; "Many of the current definitions violate several principles of good definitions,"…"they are either empty, too restrictive, or too expansive"; "Until we come across or develop a definition that overcomes these limitations and agree on it, we will still search for 'the' definition without finding it"; "The relationship between theory and definition is complex"; "How does one develop*

a theory of something that has not been defined?"; "How does one develop a definition without implying something about an underlying theory?"; "For most of these definitions, there was no underlying theory because no theory had been developed"; "Theories are necessary to explain facts or events and are required for a common understanding to advance a field"; "The definition of the field is the starting point."[25]

(LeMay et al., 2017, pp.1425-1427,1446).

2.3.1.2 Perspectives of Supply Chain Management

The intensive literature review showed that there are different perspectives regarding the meaning of SCM and its implementation, as noted by a substantial number of writers (e.g., Cooper, Lambert and Pagh,1997; Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Mentzer et al., 2001; Larson and Halldorsson, 2004; Giannakis and Croom, 2004; Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton, 2005; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Nazali, Noor and Pitt, 2009; Rossetti and Dooley, 2010; Esper, Defee and Mentzer, 2010; Sweeney, 2011; Ellram and Cooper, 2014; Zacharia, Sanders and Fugate, 2014; Lambert, 2014; Lambert and Enz, 2015; Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2015; Mangan and Lalwani, 2016; Lambert and Enz, 2017; LeMay et al., 2017; Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2018; Swanson et al., 2018; Gligor et al., 2019). Indeed, the existence of these different perspectives is not surprising since the definitions of SCM are the outcomes of how the concept was perceived and conceptualised.

One of the earliest views of SCM, as the literature revealed, is that the concept is about managing and controlling the inventory flow and its associated flow of information, services, and finance across an entire supply chain (e.g., Ellram and Cooper, 1993; Ellram, 1991; Copacino, 1997, cited in LeMay et al., 2017; Quinn, 1997, cited in LeMay et al., 2017; Zsidisin et al. (2000, cited in Stock and Boyer, 2009). For instance, Ellram (1991, p.13) stated that "*Supply chain management is defined here as an integrative approach to dealing with the planning and*

[25] As it is noticed, LeMay et al. (2017) suggest that the focus should be on theory development. The authors also suggest that the definition is the starting point. That is why the researcher started this research by focusing on the definition issue.

control[26] *of the materials flow from suppliers to end-users*"; Copacino (1997, cited in LeMay et al., 2017) see that SCM is "*the art of managing the flow of materials and products from source to user";* Quinn (1997, cited in LeMay et al., 2017) see that SCM is "*all of those activities associated with moving goods from the raw materials stage through to the end user";* while Zsidisin et al. (2000, cited in Stock and Boyer, 2009, p.702) "*describe the primary goal of SCM as "effectively managing the flow of materials and information from supply sources to the final point of sale."* It is worth to note that Stock and Boyer (2009) affirmed that "*most of the SCM definitions cited material/physical, finances, services and/or information flow as key concepts of activities"* (Ibid, 2009, p.702).

Furthermore, the literature showed that a substantial number of authors suggest that the objective of SCM is "*to deliver the right products at the right time to the right place at the right cost*"[27] (e.g., Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2015, p.62; Lummus and Vokurka, 1999; Williams, Maull, and Ellis, 2002; Rao Tummala, Phillips, and Johnson, 2006; Li et al., 2006; Griffin and Trinrud, 2007; Simchi-Levi, Simchi-Levi, and Kaminsky, 2008; Habib, 2010; Qrunfleh and Tarafdar, 2013; Ramanathan and Gunasekaran, 2014; Azfar, Khan, and Gabriel, 2014; Anand and Grover, 2015; Brusset, 2016; Singh and Singh, 2018). For instance, Habib (2010) stated that:

> *"SCM has gradually been embraced as a proven managerial approach to achieving sustainable profits and growth. This is accomplished primarily by focusing on the whole SCM process to deliver the right products or services, in the right quantity, to the right place, at the right time and with the maximum benefits."*
>
> (Habib, 2010, p.79).

In addition, Christopher and Towill (2000, cited in Azfar, Khan, and Gabriel, 2014, p.805) see supply chain objectives more as *"delivering the right product, in the*

[26] Planning and control are the core tasks of management as the researcher introduced in his perspective of management.
[27] This is the idea the researcher learned in 2004 while studying SCM in the MBA program which accordingly, the researcher inferred that there is no difference between SCM and logistics management.

right quantity, in the right condition, to the right place, at the right time, for the right cost." Likewise, Anand and Grover (2015, p.149) offer*: "To have the right product at the right time and in the right place at all the nodal points of retail supply chain is a huge challenge for retailers."*

Nonetheless, other researchers and academics suggest that SCM is about "*the integration of business processes across*" a supply chain (Cooper and Lambert, 1997, p.2), managing the relationships in a supply chain "*using key cross-functional business processes*" (Lambert, 2014, p.2; Lambert and Enz, 2017), the management of relationships to reduce the total cost for the entire supply chain and to create value (Wilding, 2011; Miocevic, 2011; Christopher, 2016), the coordination of business functions within a firm and across a supply chain (Mentzer et al., 2001; Sople, 2011), and the management of "*relationships and flows of material, information and resources*" across a supply chain (Mangan and Lalwani, 2016, p.11).

However, the following subtitles illustrate some of the existing analyses and discussions regarding the different perspectives of SCM.

2.3.1.2.1 An Analysis by Mentzer et al. (2001)

Mentzer et al. (2001), who called for a unified definition and understanding of SCM, analyzed many definitions of SCM. Based on their analysis, the authors inferred that the SCM concept was perceived and defined as "*a management philosophy, an implementation of a management philosophy, or a set of management processes*" (Ibid, 2001, p.5). The authors mentioned that SCM as a management philosophy implies viewing the whole supply chain as a single entity or a system. Defining SCM as an implementation of management philosophy suggests that the supply chain members should adopt some practices and activities to achieve a single entity view. According to Mentzer et al. (2001), those activities are integrated behaviour, sharing information, sharing risk and reward, cooperation, focusing on serving the customer, integration of processes, and partnership. Finally, Mentzer et al. (2001) mentioned that SCM was perceived as a set of management processes where there was a focus by many academics on this perspective. According to the authors, the process approach

shifts the focus from managing business functions to managing business processes toward meeting customers' demands.

In addition, the authors mentioned that these mentioned perspectives indicate that academics are "*trying to define two concepts with one term," i.e., SCM*" (Ibid, 2001, p.11). Based on that, the authors suggest a need to adopt what they call Supply Chain Orientation (SCO) philosophy in addition to SCM. According to the authors, SCO philosophy is "*the recognition by an organization of the systemic, strategic implications of the tactical activities involved in managing the various flows in a supply chain"* (Ibid, 2001, p.11). The authors believe that companies "*must first have*" and adopt the SCO philosophy and its related activities (integrated behaviour, sharing information, …) to implement SCM. Furthermore, the authors mentioned that activities such as trust, commitment, and shared vision across firms are the antecedents that "*enhance or impede the implementation*" of SCO (Ibid, 2001, p.12).

Furthermore, Mentzer et al. (2001, p.16) see that the scope of SCM is "*functional and organisational"*. The authors explained that "*the functional scope of SCM*" is all business functions that should be included in SCM on the one hand. On the other hand, the organisational scope is the systemic and strategic management of the activities (integrated behaviour, sharing information, sharing risk and reward, cooperation, focusing on serving the customer, integration of processes, and partnership). Also, the authors mentioned that "*the consequences of SCM are lower costs and improved customer value and satisfaction to achieve competitive advantage*" (Ibid, 2001, p.15). Accordingly, Mentzer et al. (2001) developed a definition and a framework of SCM, proposing that SCM is:

> *"the systemic, strategic coordination of the traditional business functions and the tactics across these business functions within a particular company and across businesses within the supply chain, for the purposes of improving the long-term performance of the individual companies and the supply chain as a whole."*
>
> (Ibid 2001, p.18).

However, as noticed, Mentzer et al. (2001) suggest that companies must first have and adopt the supply chain orientation (SCO) philosophy and its related activities to implement SCM. Here, many questions are raised: what philosophy and beliefs influence these business practices?[28] What philosophy emphasises the value of cooperation, integration, and partnership among a supply chain's members? Does managing a supply chain from end to end as a single entity create value for those organizations, or is it the cooperation and integration among them? Also, is SCO, as a notion, an appropriate description to refer to those business practices?

Therefore, it is not adopting SCO that firms and organisations must have but rather adopting what is dubbed here as 'Business Relations Management Orientation' (BRMO) or thought or culture, that is, the awareness of business managers as well as everyone else about the importance and the benefits of managing relationships, the importance of planning and managing business activities through the effective communication, cooperation, collaboration and integration within and across firms toward achieving business objective and goals.

2.3.1.2.2 A Systematic Literature Review by Ellram and Cooper (2014)

Ellram and Cooper (2014, p.17) acknowledge that there is inconsistency in how SCM is viewed where the authors stated: "*the debate in the academic world still continued regarding answers to such questions as What is supply chain management? What should it be? Is supply chain management a fad, or here to stay?"*

Having conducted a systematic literature review, the authors identified five perspectives of how SCM is conceptualised. The five perspectives are: SCM is a process, SCM is a discipline, SCM is a philosophy, SCM is a governance structure, and SCM is a functional area. The in-depth details of these perspectives are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is worth noting that

[28] As the researcher introduced in his management perspective, business practices are shaped by organisational culture.

Ellram and Cooper (2014) see that these five perspectives collectively create "*the domain of SCM*" (Ibid, 2014, p.17).

In their general findings, Ellram and Cooper (2014) offer the following:

> *Oliver and Weber (1982) "viewed supply chain management as a way to better manage resources and assets"; "many names for supply chain management are still offered"[29]; "the broad perspective and coverage of supply chain management that makes the concept so difficult to study"; "companies kept implementing SCM practices as they saw fit, despite the academic conundrum surrounding SCM"; there is "some consensus that SCM entails collaboration, but very little agreement about new product development being part of SCM"; "Is supply chain management truly a separate domain or area of study in its own right?"; Is SCM "a functional area in its own right"?; "A large number of authors have taken a process orientation"[30]; "Integration of activities is considered a process"; "Theories that take a process perspective of SCM include the resource-based view … or resource advantage theory"[31]; "Chen, Daugherty, and Roath (2009) found a lack of consistency in the way that the literature has dealt with supply chain process integration"; "SCM will become increasingly multidisciplinary in its nature"; "A great deal of the literature on supply chain relationships and collaboration falls into the general area of governance issues, drawing on the industrial organization literature … , conceptualization …, and theory building"; "The governance perspective has been heavily grounded in both economic and relational theory"; "testing and studying the entire supply chain to apply the concept of supply chain management is very complex"; "It is unlikely that society or academia will move away from the term 'supply chain management'"; "The process perspective of SCM is critical to supply chain efficiency"; "The process perspective provides both managerial and theoretical insights by asking: how can supply chain*

[29] As will be introduced, many names were offered to replace the term.
[30] This a further support to the researcher's claim that the process-orientation is prevailing.
[31] This statement shows that many authors used the RBV as a theoretical foundation for SCM. Further discussion is introduced in comparing this theory with the researcher's discovered theory.

activities be linked and integrated, generally for improved performance? It looks at activities or processes versus the relationships in supply chains."

(Ellram and Cooper, 2014, pp.8-11,14-15,17).

Of significance to this thesis are Ellram and Cooper's (2014, p.10) sentences that there is *"some consensus that SCM entails collaboration"* and *"the process perspective" … "looks at activities or processes versus the relationships in supply chains.".* However, keeping in mind the article's publication date and that it was published in the Journal of Supply Chain Management, this implies that neither the authors nor many academics realised the holistic meaning and the theory of managing business relations which were discovered through this study.

2.3.1.2.3 Overlap and Confusion Between Supply Chain Management and Logistics Management

Many papers discussed the confusion between SCM and Logistics Management; notably: Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997); Larson and Rogers (1998); Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton (2005); Stock and Boyer (2009); Lambert and Enz (2015); LeMay et al., (2017); and Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, (2018). The following paragraphs highlight this issue.

Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997) touched on several issues related to SCM and attributed that to the confusion of many academics between the concept of SCM and the concept of logistics management. The authors mentioned that many writers, talks, and seminars use the SCM concept as a synonym for logistics management. The authors cited a sample definition of SCM, which had implied the close meaning of logistics management as it is viewed by the Council of Logistics (CLM), which is recently the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP).

Similarly, LeMay et al. (2017) brought an example of the confusion between SCM and logistics where the authors narrated:

"*In 2008, the late Dr Don Bowersox dressed down an audience of academics at a conference in Pensacola, FL, for failing to come together on a common understanding of the field. He was preceded on the stage by another*

academician who closed his part of the program with '... logistics, supply chain management, or whatever this is we're talking about,' or words to that effect. Instead of his planned talk, Bowersox delivered a strong message, summed up as this: 'If you, as the academic leaders of this field, don't know what you're talking about, how is anyone else supposed to know?"

(LeMay et al., 2017, p.1426).

From the quotation above, the sentence "*failing to come together on a common understanding*" describes the level of disagreement among academics.

Another example of viewing SCM as a synonym for logistics management can be noticed in figure 11 by Harrison, Hoek and Skipworth (2014), which shows that the authors consider SCM as managing inbound, internal, and outbound logistics.

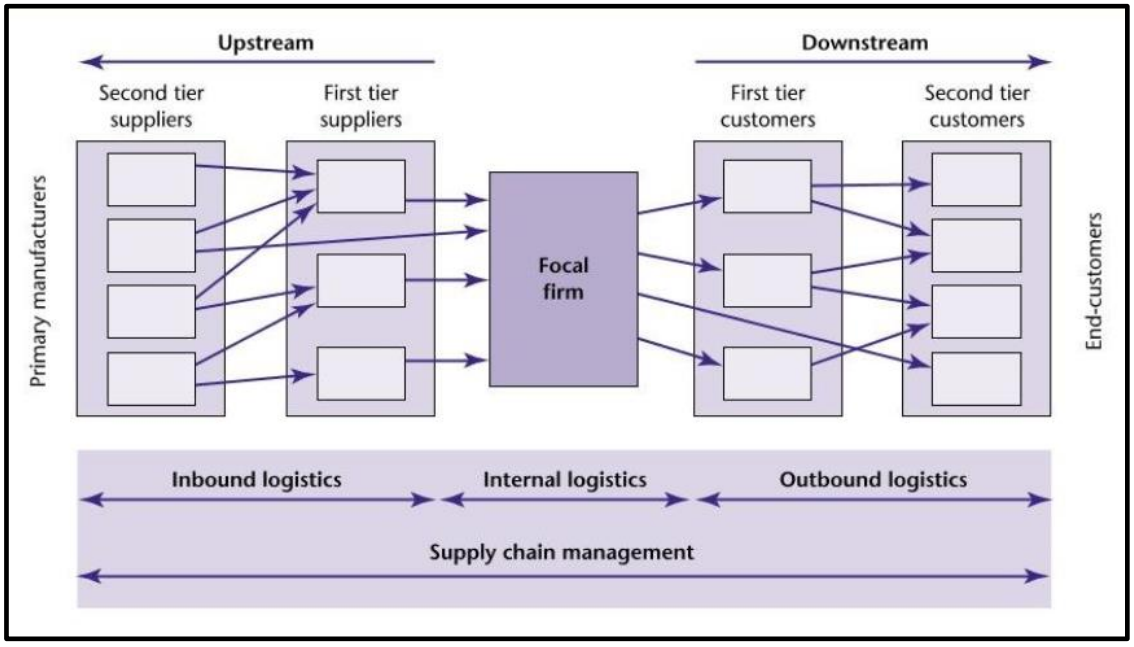


Figure 11 Supply Chain Management

Source: (Harrison, Hoek and Skipworth, 2014, p.11).

Lambert and Cooper (2000) have also mentioned this understanding of the concept, where the authors cited that SCM had not been viewed differently from logistics management by most academics, consultants and practitioners; it "*was*

viewed as logistics outside the firm to include customers and suppliers" (Ibid, 2000, p.67).

Further significant proof of the existence of the different perspectives of SCM and logistics management was identified by a literature review and an international survey by Larson and Halldorsson (2004). In their study, Larson and Halldorsson (2004) aimed to identify how "*logistics educators, researchers and practitioners*" (Ibid, 2004, p.17) view the relationship between SCM and logistics. Larson and Halldorsson (2004, p.17) identified "*four perspectives on logistics versus SCM".* As labelled by the authors, the four perspectives are "*relabelling, traditionalist, unionist, and intersectionist*" (Ibid, 2004, p.17). According to the authors, the traditionalist perspective considers SCM as "*one small part of logistics*" (Ibid, 2004, p.18). "*The relabelling perspective simply renames logistics", i.e.,* "*what was logistics is now SCM*" (Ibid, 2004, p.19). The union "*perspective treats logistics as a part of SCM*" (Ibid, 2004, p.20). Last, "*the intersection concept suggests SCM is not the union of logistics, marketing, operations management, purchasing and other functional areas. Rather, it includes strategic, integrative elements from all of these disciplines* (Ibid, 2004, p.21).

Accordingly, Larson and Halldorsson (2004) conducted an international survey to support their findings. The authors faxed two hundred questionnaires "*to leading logistics educators in North America, Europe, South America and Asia."* A cluster analysis of the survey responses confirmed the four different perspectives describing this relationship. The results showed that 51% of the participants see SCM as a synonym for logistics, i.e., relabellers, 22% were unionists, 16% were traditionalists, and 6% were intersectionist (Figure 12 refers).

Based on these results, Larson and Halldorsson (2004) suggest that "*relabellers are likely to teach the same old logistics management course under a new name: SCM"; "unionists might remove logistics management from the curriculum—and cover the essentials of logistics in a new SCM course"* that combines "*marketing, purchasing and operations management*" (Ibid,2004, p.26)*;* or *"restructure (and rename) the College of Business Administration as the 'College of SCM'"* (Ibid,2004, p.27)*.* Furthermore, the authors see that "*Inter-sectionists would*

champion an interdisciplinary SCM major, perhaps with team-taught, cross-functional SCM courses split into modules" (Ibid,2004, p.27). Last, the authors suggest that "*traditionalists would either do nothing at all or simply add a SCM lecture to the logistics management course*" (Ibid,2004, p.27).

In 2007, Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2018) mentioned that Larson, Poist and Halldorsson (2007, cited in ibid, 2018) repeated the same survey in the United States. Six hundred surveys were sent to SCM practitioners; all were members of the CSCMP. The results showed that the majority of the CSCMP members adopt the unionist perspective. Also, Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2018) mentioned that Halldorsson, Larson and Poist (2008, cited in ibid, 2018) repeated the survey in Scandinavia, where 91 surveys were sent to supply chain professionals. The authors found almost similar results. In 2017, Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2018) also repeated the survey in Ireland. The authors found that 88% of the participant followed the unionist perspective. However, figure 12 illustrates these perspectives and shows the level of ambiguity and dispute about the meaning of the SCM concept.

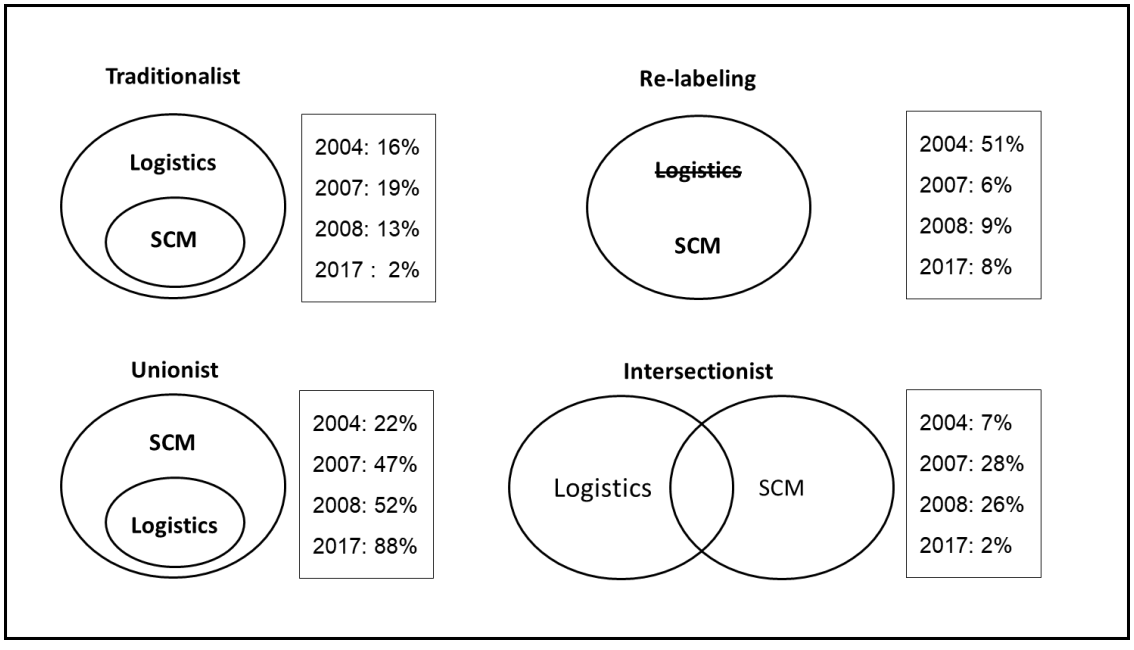


Figure 12 Perspectives on Logistics versus Supply Chain Management

Source: Modified from Larson and Halldorsson (2004, p.19).

2.3.1.2.4 Collective Literature Analysis by Lambert and Co-Authors

Lambert and his co-authors have continuously discussed the confusion among scholars about the meaning of supply chain management (Cooper, Lambert and Pagh, 1997; Lambert, Cooper and Pagh, 1998; Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton, 2005; Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton, 2008; Lambert, 2014; Lambert and Enz, 2015; Lambert and Enz, 2017). For example, in his book, Lambert (2014, p.1) mentioned that *"there is a great deal of confusion regarding what SCM involves*". Also, the author mentioned that many scholars view SCM as a synonym or new name for logistics, operations, purchasing, or a combination of the three concepts.

In another recent article by Lambert and Enz (2017) entitled '*Issues in Supply Chain Management: Progress and Potential'*, the authors reviewed the progress and the potential related to Lambert and Cooper's (2000) paper.

The authors cited that: "*there is still not a consensus view of what SCM involves or how it should be implemented*." Also, the authors mentioned that: "*The nature of logistics and SCM as functional silos within companies remained unchallenged, which created confusion for managers and academics*." Moreover, the authors added that many academics see that "*confusion continues to exist*" (Ibid, 2017, p. 2).

GSCF members appear to claim that their understanding of SCM and their developed SCM framework is the most appropriate, and all business schools should follow their view. For instance, in an article entitled 'We must find the courage to change', Lambert and Enz (2015) reviewed four out of five articles published in the Journal of Business Logistics in the March 2014 issue. Through their review, the authors established that "*major changes are required in both Logistics and Supply Chain Management programs and indeed in business schools*" (Ibid, 2015, p.9). Also, it looks like the authors were somewhat dissatisfied with what they read in those articles where they stated: "*the articles provided further evidence of how ill-advised metrics in the hands of fools not only result in a misuse of financial resources but also squander 'the efforts of some of the world's best minds*" (Ibid, 2015, p.9). Generally, using words such as 'fools'

in peer-reviewed journals should be avoided as it is incompatible with academic and scientific professionality.

Nevertheless, an example of the criticisms that Lambert and Enz (2015) addressed was against an article by Christopher and Ryals (2014) entitled 'The Supply Chain Becomes the Demand Chain'. The following paragraphs highlight some of those critiques.

Lambert and Enz (2015, p.10) stated that *"Christopher and Ryals (2014) appear to use logistics and supply chain management as synonyms referring to an organizational function."* Here, as the reader may notice, the issue of using SCM and logistics management as synonyms, which Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997) have mentioned, continues. In his book, Christopher (2016, p.14) affirmed what Lambert and Enz (2015) had stated, where the former wrote*: "It must be recognised that the concept of the supply chain management, whilst relatively new, is in fact no more than an extension of the logic of logistics."*

Christopher and Ryals (2014, cited in Lambert and Enz, 2015, p.10) stated*: "we need a new response to a changing business environment, which we term demand chain management".* Based on this statement, Lambert and Enz (2015, p.10) criticised that and stated*: "with no support from the literature, they claim that the name supply chain management has 'tended to encourage a supply-focused viewpoint' rather than a focus on demand."*

Lambert and Enz (2015, p.10) also mentioned that Christopher and Ryals (2014) viewed the "*integration of Marketing and Supply Chain Management as the cornerstone for business performance*" and ignored the "*other business functions*" like operations, sales, research and development and purchasing. Accordingly, Lambert and Enz (2015, p.10) argued that: "*how can one reasonably expect that a network of companies can be managed with fewer business functions than are to needed to manage a single company?*"

Furthermore, Lambert and Enz (2015, p.14) also argued that for more than two decades, there have been continuous attempts by some authors who rename SCM seeking academic argument and "*claiming to have breakthrough thinking*."

The authors added that many '*culprits',* as described by the authors, are "a*cademics who want to appear leading edge by using new terminology for old ideas*" or "*consultants who try to differentiate their service offerings by the name of the service rather than how well they help clients implement the concepts*." Again, as the reader notices, the authors used an impolite word 'culprits' and accused other scholars of seeking a breaking through thinking which does not comply with the ethics of academic argument.

In summarising their analysis, Lambert and Enz (2015, p.10) stated: "*Four of the five 'thought-leader' pieces unwittingly support the conclusion that we are in desperate need of change. Will we find the courage to do so, or will we destroy ourselves from within?*" In supporting their argument, the authors mentioned that "*a call for change is not new",* where they quoted a statement from the 1980s by Lester Thurow, the Dean of the Sloan School of Management at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, where the dean said, "*If our B-Schools are doing so well, why are American companies doing so badly*?" (Businessweek 1988, cited in ibid,2015, p.10).

Moreover, Lambert and Enz (2015, p.10) added that "*the problem has been described widely in the management field … but little has changed"'* Also, the authors "*argued that the situation continues to get worse with time."*

In concluding their article, Lambert and Enz (2015, p.15) presented many recommendations for the thought leaders of logistics and SCM, where the authors stated:

- "*Refrain from using logistics and supply chain management as synonyms."*
- *"Use the name logistics to describe logistics activities in the supply chain."*
- *"Understand that supply chain management is not a business function but the management of relationships across the supply chain implementing cross-functional, cross-firm business processes."*

However, it is worth noting again that both Christopher and Lambert co-founded the International Journal of Logistics Management and were joint editors of the

journal for 18 years. Also, it is worth mentioning that the book of professor Christopher entitled ‘Logistics and Supply Chain Management, which was published in 2016, is a course-recommended book at the School of Management at Cranfield University. The purpose of mentioning this information is to recall the researcher's question (section 1.3.3.2): ‘whom to trust in understanding SCM's meaning when a thought leader criticises another thought leader?

2.3.1.3 Examples of Supply Chain Management Definitions

The following subtitles highlight and report some of the identified definitions of SCM. The presented definitions show the different perspectives and meanings of SCM, as presented earlier in section 2.3.1.2.

2.3.1.3.1 The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals’ Definition

According to Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.13), the CSCMP “*refers to itself as the preeminent worldwide professional association of supply chain management professionals with a vision to lead the evolving supply chain management profession by developing, advancing, and disseminating supply chain knowledge and research.*” However, Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005) note that the definition of SCM by the CSCMP was the outcome of 744 responses to a survey conducted among the council members in 2004. The survey aimed to discover how the council members view SCM in order to adopt an official definition by the council. The developed definition states that:

> *“Supply chain management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities. Importantly, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third-party service providers, and customers. In essence, supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies.”*
>
> (CSCMP, 2021).

Furthermore, the CSCMP suggests that *SCM:*

> "*is an integrating function with primary responsibility for linking major business functions and business processes within and across companies into a cohesive and high-performing business model. It includes all of the Logistics Management activities …, as well as manufacturing operations, and it drives coordination of processes and activities with and across marketing, sales, product design, finance and information technology."*
>
> (CSCMP, 2021a; Stock and Boyer, 2009, p.693).

Generally, the CSCMP's definition and view imply that: 1) SCM is the management of supply activities (procurement, operations, and logistics); 2) SCM entails coordination and collaboration; 3) SCM integrates demand management within companies and across the supply chain, 4) SCM is a business function that is responsible for integrating and coordinating business processes across business functions and across companies for the purpose of high performance.

Accordingly, the definition of SCM by the CSCMP implies that SCM is all about planning and managing supply activities, managing relationships, and meeting market demand. In other words, the members of the CSCMP use the term SCM as a synonym for 'Business management'[32] within the production sector.

At this point, it is prudent to return to an earlier question: What value has SCM added to business and management knowledge? It could be argued that companies were already planning and managing their supply activities and business relations to meet the dynamic market demand. Therefore, SCM, as a term, has not added value to business management knowledge, to supply management profession or business practices.

2.3.1.3.2 The Global Supply Chain Forum's Definition

Another definition was developed by the Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) of Ohio State University. According to their website, the GSCF, "*directed by Dr*

[32] It is worth noting that the term 'Business Management' has been offered by Lu (2011, p.13) as a meaning for SCM where the author stated: "*SCM is simply and ultimately the business management*."

Douglas M. Lambert, provides the opportunity for leading practitioners and academics to pursue the critical issues related to customer satisfaction and operational excellence independent of specific functional expertise" (GSCF, 2019). Nonetheless, Lambert (2014) mentioned that the GSCF's definition states:

> "*Supply Chain Management is the management of relationships in the network of organisations, from end customers through original suppliers, using key cross-functional business processes to create value for customers and other stakeholders*."
>
> (Lambert, 2014, p.2).

In this, the GSCF suggests that SCM is: 1) managing business relations and business processes across companies; 2) SCM aims to create value for customers and other stakeholders.

However, this is a change in the GSCF's members' perspective where their original definition of SCM was:

> "*…the integration of business processes from end-user through original suppliers that provides products, services and information that add value for customers.*"
>
> (Cooper, Lambert and Pagh, 1997, p.2).

According to Lambert and Enz (2017, p.5), the GSCF modified and updated its definition in 2013 because the original definition "*did not mention: relationships, network of organisations or that the processes were cross-functional."* However, it seems that the GSCF had modified the definition after publishing an article by Lambert and Enz (2012) entitled '*Managing and measuring value co-creation in business-to-business relationships.'*

2.3.1.3.3 Supply Chain Management Definition by American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS)

The APICS definition of supply chain management states that SCM is:

> "*The design, planning, execution, control, and monitoring of supply chain activities, with the objective of creating net value, building a competitive*

infrastructure, leveraging worldwide logistics, synchronizing supply with demand, and measuring performance globally."

(APICS, 2020; Explore SCM, 2020).

The APICS organisation considers managing a supply chain as managing one global organisation. Accordingly, it views SCM as managing all business activities of supply and demand of a global supply chain. The main objectives of managing that supply chain are value creation, competitiveness, enhanced logistics management, synchronising supply with demand, and organisational performance. Based on that, APICS uses the term SCM as a synonym for business management. An issue could also be taken with the words "*measuring performance globally*" by asking whether a supply chain or network must be global in order to be managed.

2.3.1.3.4 Supply Chain Management Definition by the Chartered Institute of Production and Supply (CIPS)

According to the CIPS website, Supply Chain Management (SCM) is:

"The handling of the flow of goods and services from the raw manufacturing of the product through to the consumption by the consumer. This process requires an organisation to have a network of suppliers (that serve as links in the chain) to move the product through each stage."

(CIPS, 2020).

Based on the stated definition by the CIPS foundation, SCM is about managing inventory flow through a network of suppliers. Figure 13 shows how CIPS views this meaning.

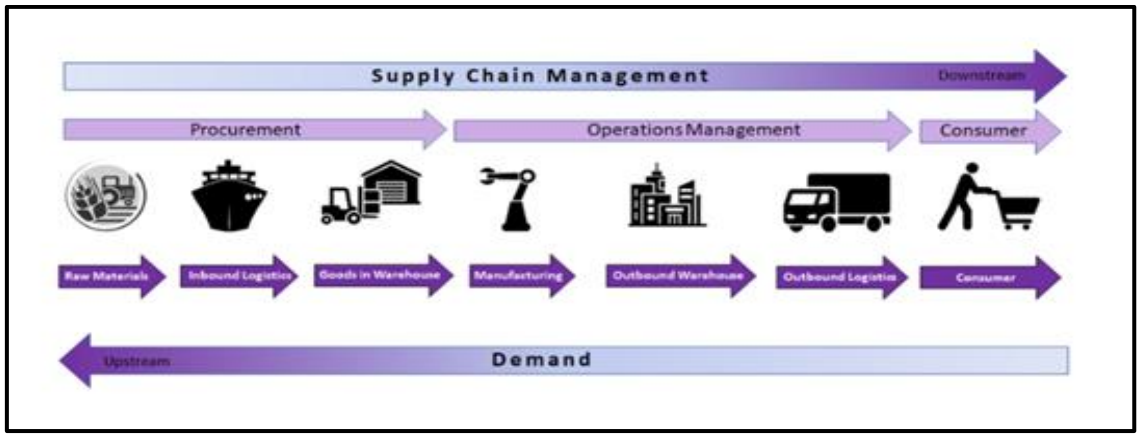


Figure 13: SCM as Viewed by CIPS

Source: (CIPS, 2020).

According to CIPS (2020), SCM plays an important role in the "*financial position of an organisation*" and its customers' satisfaction. However, CIPS sees that SCM "*has a lesser publicised societal role*" through "*ensuring that the basics necessities humans depend on like, food, energy, medicine and modern infrastructure are flowing and available."*

2.3.1.3.5 Supply Chain Management Definition by IBM

On its website, IBM company views SCM as "*the handling of the entire production flow of a good or service to maximize quality, delivery, the customer experience and profitability."* It also suggests that SCM starts "*from the raw components all the way to delivering the final product to the consumer"* and requires companies to "*create a network of suppliers … that move the product along from the suppliers of raw materials to the organizations who deal directly with users*." IBM (2021) also added that SCM aims at minimizing "*cost, waste and time in the production cycle*." As it is noticed, IBM (2021) regards SCM as being about managing the inventory flow across a network of companies.

2.3.1.3.6 -SCM Definition by Wilding (2011) and Christopher (2016)

An important definition that is worth mentioning is adopted by Christopher (2016) in his book '*Logistics & Supply Chain Management'* which states that SCM is:

"The management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers in order to deliver superior customer value at less cost to the supply chain as a whole."

(Christopher, 2016, p.3).

Similarly, Wilding (2011)[33] stated that:

"Supply Chain Management is the management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers in order to create enhanced value in the final marketplace at less cost to the supply chain as a whole."

(Wilding, 2011).

It should be noted that, in 1991, both Christopher and Lambert *"co-founded the International Journal of Logistics Management*" and were "*its joint editors for 18 years*" (Cranfield University, 2019a; Emerald Publishing, 2019). Moreover, Christopher was the first to publish a book on SCM (Ivanov and Sokolov, 2010) and is considered "*one of the key thought leaders in logistics and SCM*" (Mangan and Lalwani, 2016, p.10). Wilding is also "*recognised globally for his thought leadership in logistics and supply chain management*" (Cranfield University, 2021b).

Nonetheless, based on the definitions by Wilding (2011) and Christopher (2016), SCM is about: 1) managing relationships across the supply chain; 2) SCM aims to create value for customers and to reduce the total cost for the entire supply chain as a whole.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that Christopher (2016, p.3), in his book, introduced the definition of SCM by the phrase: "*The definition of supply chain management that is adopted in this book is the management of … .*". Furthermore, Wilding (2011), in his podcast, stated that the definition that he (loves) is "*Supply Chain Management is the management of … .*" The aim of stating these phrases is to highlight the words 'Adopted', and 'Love' which

[33] An iTunes broadcast by Cranfield University.

implies that the authors acknowledge that the definition of SCM still does not have a worldwide agreement on its nature and scope.

2.3.1.3.7 Supply Chain Management Definition by Mentzer et al. (2001)

Mentzer et al. (2001), who called for achieving consensus on SCM definition as presented in section (2.3.1.2.1), studied and analysed more than 20 definitions (Gibson, Mentzer and Cook, 2005). Based on their analysis, the authors established that SCM is:

> *"The systemic, strategic coordination of the traditional business functions and the tactics across these business functions within a particular company and across businesses within the supply chain, to improve the long-term performance of the individual companies and the supply chain as a whole."*
>
> (Mentzer et al., 2001, p.18).

The presented definition by Mentzer et al. (2001) suggests that SCM: 1) involves the coordination of the strategies and tactics of business functions within a particular company and across a supply chain; 2) SCM aims at improving the performance of the companies and consequently, the performance of the supply chain as a whole.

Although Mentzer et al. (2001) claim that their definition of a supply chain includes the final user or consumer in the supply chain[34], their definition of SCM excludes the end-user or consumer.

2.3.1.3.8 Supply Chain Management Definition by Stock and Boyer (2009)

Stock and Boyer (2009, p.690), as mentioned in section 2.3.1, highlighted the importance of developing a uniform definition where they stated that "*an integrated definition of SCM would greatly benefit researchers' efforts to study the phenomenon of SCM and those practitioners attempting to implement SCM."* Based on their analysis of 173 definitions, they proposed that SCM is:

> *"The management of a network of relationships within a firm and between interdependent organisations and business units consisting of material*

[34] See paragraph (2.2.6.1.1)

suppliers, purchasing, production facilities, logistics, marketing, and related systems that facilitate the forward and reverse flow of materials, services, finances and information from the original producer to final customer with the benefits of adding value, maximising profitability through efficiencies, and achieving customer satisfaction."

(Stock and Boyer 2009, p.706).

According to the authors, their definition entails many virtues. The authors believe that their definition is inclusive and is more encompasses as "*it combines the collective thinking and wisdom of numerous individuals with varying perspectives and viewpoints";* it *"is better than those previously published because it is representative of the conceptualizations of both academicians and practitioners and relates to earlier definitions of SCM";* and *"it serves to synthesize SCM thought by taking into account the most agree upon aspects of SCM while yielding a consensus definition of SCM generated from previously published research"* (Ibid, 2009, p.706).

However, the definition of SCM by Stock and Boyer (2009) implies that SCM is: 1) managing relationships and business activities among all business functions within firms and across a network of organisations (firms or enterprises); 2) SCM aims at facilitating the various flows to add economic value and to satisfy the customer. However, this raises yet another question: What is left to be managed if SCM manages everything? Stock and Boyer (2009) are clearly using the term SCM as a synonym for business management in the production sector. Nevertheless, it is worth repeating the question: what value the term SCM has added to business and management knowledge?

2.3.1.3.9 Supply Chain Management Definition by Mangan and Lalwani (2016)

Mangan and Lalwani (2016), in their book '*Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management'* state that:

"Supply chain management (SCM) is the management, across and within a network of upstream and downstream organisations, of both relationships and

flows of material, information and resources. The purposes of SCM are to create value, enhance efficiency, and satisfy customers."

(Mangan and Lalwani, 2016, p.11).

The authors claim that their definition of SCM "*largely concurs with what can be regarded as a consensus definition of SCM*" (Ibid, 2016, p.11). Also, it is worth noting that Lalwani is an "*emeritus professor of SCM at the University of Hull*" and "*is editor emeritus of the International Journal of Logistics management*". Also, Mangan was a "*founding director of the University of Hull Logistics Institute, and is currently, a professor of Marine Transport and Logistics at Newcastle University"* (Ibid, 2016).

However, the meaning of SCM within this definition is that SCM is: 1) managing relationships and the flow of material, information, and resources within organisations and across the supply chain: 2) SCM aims to create value, enhance efficiency, and satisfy the customers.

2.3.1.3.10 Supply Chain Management Definition by LeMay et al. (2017)

LeMay et al. (2017) offered what they believe as a "*unified theory definition*" (Ibid, 2017, p.1439) of SCM which states that:

"*Supply chain management is the design and coordination of a network through which organisations and individuals get, use, deliver, and dispose of material goods; acquire and distribute services; and make their offerings available to markets, customers, and clients*".

(Ibid, 2017, p.1446).

LeMay et al. (2017) see that their definition *"suggests that SCM is a philosophy that infuses a discipline; a discipline that influences a governance structure; governance structure that authorizes and designs a functional area; and a functional area that implements a process based on the philosophy*" (Ibid, 2017. P.1446). The authors also explained their definition where they mentioned:

"If it is impossible in many instances to coordinate the complete "dirt-to-dirt" supply chain, then the concept of design allows for cutting off a segment of that larger chain, a segment that is subject to some form of management."

(Ibid, 2017, p.1447).

As it seems, LeMay et al. (2017) focused on the structure of a supply chain and saw that SCM is a process-based philosophy that aims at coordinating business processes among a selected (designed) network of suppliers.

2.3.1.4 Section Summary

It is evident that the issue of SCM definition has gained extensive attention among many academics and researchers over the past two decades. Many literature-based studies raised the importance of achieving consensus among SCM scholars on a unified definition and perspective. The major agreement in those studies is that SCM is an elusive concept (LeMay et al., 2017), a source of confusion (Mentzer et al., 2001), and lacks a unified definition and perspective. Many systematic or traditional literature reviews found that the concept was viewed as managing and controlling the inventory flow and its associated flow of information, services, and finance across an entire supply chain. Ellram and Cooper identified five perspectives about the concept, Mentzer et al. (2001, p.5) found that the concept was perceived as "*a management philosophy, an implementation of a management philosophy, or a set of management processes*", while Lambert (2014) mentioned that the concept was viewed as a synonym or new name for logistics, operations, purchasing, or a combination of the three concepts. The impact of such divergence among academics constitutes a barrier to the theoretical development of the concept (Kozlenkova et al., 2015) and its effective practical implementation (Sweeney, 2011). Hence, there is an imperative need to develop a unified definition (Mentzer et al., 2001; Gibson, Mentzer and Cook, 2005; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Moberg et al., 2008; Stock and Boyer, 2009; Sweeney, 2011; Ellram and Cooper, 2014; Kozlenkova et al., 2015; LeMay et al., 2017). Remarkably, some authors warned that SCM might become another management fad "*unless a reliable conceptual basis is developed"* (Chen and Paulraj, 2004b, p.132).

Therefore, it can be said that there is a consensus among SCM scholars that there is no consensus on SCM definition. These mentioned discussions, as introduced in chapter 1, were behind the researcher's interest in developing a new definition and led to the discovery of the research gap. However, Appendix E lists further examples of SCM definitions and demonstrates the extent to which the concept's understanding varies among academics.

2.3.2 The Conceptual Model and the Theoretical Basis of Supply Chain Management

The conceptual model and the underpinning theory(s) of SCM have captured many researchers' interests. SCM scholars have not yet acknowledged and agreed on a universal underpinning theory(s) of SCM, nor has a theoretical model been developed for this end (Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Mentzer et al., 2001; Chen and Paulraj, 2004a; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Defee et al., 2010; Carter, 2011; Sweeney, 2011; Carter, Rogers and Choi, 2015; Randall and Mello, 2012; Halldorsson, Kotzab and Mikkola, 2015; LeMay et al., 2017; Lambert and Enz, 2017; Swanson et al., 2018).

The literature showed that some scholars called for theory development as they concluded that SCM lacks a theoretical foundation (e.g., Carter, 2011; Sweeney, 2011), and some scholars related SCM to existing theories (e.g., Mentzer et al., 2001; Svensson, 2002; Mathews, 2003; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Defee et al., 2010; Hitt, 2011; Fayezi, O'Loughlin and Zutshi, 2012; Wu, Chuang and Hsu, 2014), while others introduced their own theories and views (e.g. Dyer and Singh, 1998; Carter, Kosmol and Kaufmann, 2017). However, in compliance with the grounded theory research design[35], as mentioned in the literature review introduction, some of the extant used or the offered theories of SCM are presented in chapter 5 for the comparison purpose. The following subheadings shed light on the identified discussions around this issue and its importance to SCM implementation. These discussions are chronologically arranged.

[35] Grounded theory thought leaders (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 2015; Charmaz, 2014) suggest that once a grounded theory is developed, researchers should consult the literature to compare the developed theory with the extant theories.

2.3.2.1 A Theoretical Model is Required

Mentzer et al. (2001), in their paper, proposed a definition of SCM; a diagram that highlights the antecedents and consequences of SCM implementation and a conceptual framework of SCM, which according to them, "*provides an integrative framework of the phenomenon called SCM*"; "s*hould help practitioners, as well as researchers, understand SCM*"; "*give guidance to what SCM is, its prerequisites, and potential effects on business and supply chain performance*"; "*serve as a guide and reminder to practitioners to include all the typical business functions in supply chain management planning, organization, and processes*"; "*reminds practitioners to stay focused on the ultimate goals of supply chain management—lower costs; increased customer value and satisfaction, and ultimately competitive advantage*"; Finally, it "*provides a wealth of research questions*" (Mentzer et al., 2001, p.19). Despite all these benefits, the authors stated that their paper "*highlights the need for rigour to further develop a theoretical framework of SCM*" (Ibid, 2001, p.20).

Similarly, Lambert and Cooper (2000) introduced the GSCF framework of SCM; despite that, the authors mentioned that: "*a top priority should be research to develop a normative model that can guide managers in their efforts to develop and manage their supply chains*" (Lambert and Cooper, 2000, p.80). Seventeen years later, Lambert and Enz (2017, p.14) affirmed that: "*the research centre members continue to be focused on the original goal*", where the authors refer to the original call "*to develop a normative model"* by Lambert and Cooper (2000, p.80). This statement by Lambert and Enz (2017, p.14) implies that the call for developing a conceptual or theoretical model for SCM was, according to the authors, has not been settled yet since it was raised by Lambert and Cooper (2000).

In another paper by Croom, Romano and Giannakis (2000), the authors see that: "*any development of a cognate SCM discipline requires more rigorous and structured research in the topic.*" The authors continued and argued that: "*theoretical development is critical to the establishment and development of supply chain management study*" (Ibid, 2000, p.75).

The authors also argued that "*the scientific development of a coherent supply chain management discipline requires that advancements be made in the development of theoretical models to inform our understanding of supply chain phenomena*" (Ibid, 2000, p.68).

2.3.2.2 SCM Discipline Devoid A Clear Theory and is in Danger of Collapsing into a Management Fad

In two articles by Chen and Paulraj (2004a, 2004b), the authors cited that SCM "*is in danger of collapsing into a discredited management fad unless a reliable conceptual basis is developed*" (Ibid, 2004b, p.132). Also, the authors mentioned that "*the area is devoid of clear theory*" (Ibid, 2004b, p.151), and there is a "*pressing need to clearly defined constructs and conceptual frameworks to advance the field*" (Ibid, 2004a, p.120).

In their work, the authors proposed a framework of SCM, as will be introduced later. The authors mentioned that their framework could be "*refined or expanded*", and researchers can test its validity and "*impact on supply chain performance, and ultimately to create a coherent theory of SCM*" (Ibid, 2004b, p.151).

2.3.2.3 Doubt about Developing a Unified Theory

Some authors are in doubt about the feasibility of developing a coherent or unified theory of SCM. For example, Cousins, Lawson and Squire (2006, p.701) stated: "*there is not yet the coherence and depth to call SCM a discipline in its own right*." Also, the authors stated: "*Although we doubt whether a unifying theory of SCM will emerge*, *debate about the boundaries and nature of the discipline can only help provide the direction necessary for coherent theory building and accumulation in the area"*; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu (2006, p.703) mentioned: "*From a conceptualization perspective, the definition of the term is unclear, and the impact of theoretical diversity is such that it is doubtful SCM is based on a coherent theory*"; while Chen, Daugherty and Landry (2009, pp.31,38) see that *"the complexity of today's supply chain systems means that it is almost impossible to thoroughly explain a supply chain phenomenon with a single theory*"; "*A single theory may have very limited explanatory power. Instead,*

combining the tenets from multiple theories can generate a thorough understanding and a more complete scheme."

2.3.2.4 SCM lacks a Socio-Economic Theoretical Basis

Halldorsson et al. (2007), in a paper entitled 'Complementary theories to supply chain Management', mentioned that "s*ince supply chain thinking emerged, researchers from different disciplines have been in search of a theoretical foundation for the phenomenon."* According to Halldorsson et al. (2007), many authors "*have pointed to different bodies of literature and management problems relating to supply chain management."* Despite that, "*none of these authors have presented a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon SCM"* (Ibid, 2007, p.291).

The authors also mentioned that some authors "*introduce the theory of SCM as an extension of logistics"* while others "*recognize the customer orientation as one important ingredient as well as the simultaneous integration of upstream, downstream and internal performance systems"* (Ibid, 20078, p.284).

Through employment economic, socio-economic, and strategic perspectives in their literature analysis, Halldorsson et al. (2007) observed and inferred that SCM "*still lacks a socio-economic theoretical basis that may be used to explain and understand this particular form of inter-organizational arrangement* (Ibid, 2007, p.286).

In addition, Halldorsson et al. (2007) stated that SCM, as a practical field, "*is constantly changing as the competitiveness of international companies is more and more dependent on their capability to produce and deliver customized products and services fast and efficiently all over the world*". The authors also mentioned that there is an emphasis on value creation outside the boundaries of firms, which according to the authors, "*induces higher complexity and diversity into management decisions regarding the structure of the operations, the positioning of activities and processes, the role and power of the participants, and the most efficient forms of collaboration between all members"* (Ibid, 2007, p.384). Based on their observation and analysis, the authors presumed *"the necessity of*

presenting and discussing organisational theories for managing supply chains" (Ibid, 2007, p.284).

2.3.2.5 A Need for Internal Theory Development

In an article entitled 'An inventory of theory in logistics and SCM research', Defee et al. (2010) conducted "*an extensive literature review of logistics and SCM research published in major journals for the six-year period, 2004-2009*" (Ibid, 2010, p.405). The authors' purpose was to identify the used theories in these two areas. From 683 articles, the authors mentioned that they identified "*181 unique theories in the sample"* (Ibid, 2010, p.407). The authors also found that "*the vast majority of theories used in"… " logistics and SCM research originated in other disciplines*" (Ibid, 2010, p.404).

Another finding that Defee et al. (2010, pp.416-417) have highlighted is that the used "*frameworks in logistics and SCM research*" in those articles were often process-oriented[36]. Moreover, the authors stated that: "*while each framework furthers our understanding in specific areas of the discipline, none could pass the test of theory, in that they cannot be used to explain and predict phenomena*" (Ibid, 2010, p.419). Accordingly, Defee et al. (2010) suggest that the "*growth in the discipline dictates the need for greater internal theory development*" (Ibid, 2010, p.404).

2.3.2.6 A Call and Guidance for Conceptual Theory Development

In an article entitled 'A Call for Theory', Carter (2011, p.3) mentioned that the purpose of his paper was to set guidelines for SCM scholars in "*conducting conceptual theory development research*". The author stated that "*SCM discipline has largely failed to develop its own theoretical bases*". The author mentioned that SCM scholars have instead integrated and borrowed other theories from other disciplines such as economics, management, "*psychology and sociology.*" Carter (2011) justified that the SCM discipline is in an early stage of empirical research as compared to other management fields. Also, Carter (2011)

[36] The process-orientation was the prevailing used approach in those 683 frameworks. This study affirms the identified gap in this thesis.

mentioned that "*most doctoral programs*" of SCM have a lesser focus on qualitative data analysis. The last reason, as the author mentioned, was that the reviewers and editors of SCM were not trained enough "*in the conceptual theory development approach*"[37] (Ibid, 2011, p.3).

2.3.2.7 Divergence Between Theory and Practice

Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015, p.56) mentioned that "*there is significant evidence of a divergence between theory and practice in terms of SCM understanding and Practice.*" Also, the authors mentioned "*that there is a lack of agreement in relation to how SCM is defined",* and the literature *"points to the need for a new and unified definition"* (Ibid, 2015, p.56). The authors also touched on the "*plethora of SCM definitions*" and the different emphasises and approaches between practitioners. Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015) related the difference to the diverse "*functional backgrounds, level of seniority, business sector and geographical location*" (Ibid, 2015, p.57).

Furthermore, Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015) mentioned that "*embarking on a literature review in the field of SCM is fraught with difficult"* as they cited that:

> *"SCM suffers (or benefits) from being studied from a wide range of academic disciplines and diverse theoretical perspectives. On the one hand, this encourages a rich and lively debate, but it may also lead to a fragmented literature, with overlapping constructs and a failure to produce consistent findings."*
>
> (Ibid, 2015, p.57).

2.3.2.8 Failure to Develop a Theory

In an article entitled 'Toward a Theory of the Supply Chain', published in the Journal of Supply Chain Management, Carter, Rogers, and Choi (2015, p.89) stated that they, the SCM scholars, "*have failed to develop a theory of what*" they are managing. The authors mentioned that they had seen "*increasing calls for*

[37] This is the main challenge the researcher had faced while conducting this study. It is the main reason behind the researcher's decision to explain and present in detail the Grounded Theory method.

developing theories within the SCM discipline"…"*rather than relying on theories from other disciplines*" (Carter, Rogers and Choi, 2015, p.89). It is worth mentioning that the authors see that the term SCM "*has helped to unite procurement, operations, and distribution into one discipline of SCM"* (Ibid, 2015, p.89). This statement is what Lambert and Enz (2015) have criticised. Also, this statement supports the researcher's argument that teaching these mentioned disciplines under the name SCM is not appropriate. Students need to gain knowledge in these areas to become supply management professionals or supply managers, not supply chain management professionals.

2.3.2.9 An Argument by LeMay et al. (2017)

LeMay et al. (2017), in their attempt to develop a unified definition of SCM; mentioned that there is no underlying theory of SCM, where the authors stated:

> *"How does one develop a definition without implying something about an underlying theory?"; "For most of these definitions, there was no underlying theory because no theory had been developed"; "Theories are necessary to explain facts or events and are required for a common understanding to advance a field"; "The definition of the field is the starting point"* (Ibid, 2017, pp.1427,1446).

It is notable that LeMay et al. (2017) affirmed the importance of theory building toward the common understanding of SCM, where the authors believe that the definition issue is the starting point.

2.3.2.10 Academics are Angst about Finding a Unified Theory of SCM

In another study by Sweeney, Grant, and Mangan (2018, p.852), the authors mentioned that "*logistics and SCM academics maintain angst about finding a relevant and unified theory of SCM*." In their study, the authors repeated the work of Larson and Halldorsson (2004)[38]. The authors found that there is still "*a divergence between the understanding and adoption of logistics and SCM principles and concepts at a strategic level in firms.*"

[38] The international survey through which Larson and Halldorsson (2004) identified and confirmed 4 views of the relations between SCM and logistics.

2.3.2.11 Section Summary

The intensive literature review showed that SCM scholars have not yet acknowledged and agreed on a universal underpinning theory(s) of SCM, nor has a theoretical model been developed for this end (Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Mentzer et al., 2001; Chen and Paulraj, 2004a; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Defee et al., 2010; Carter, 2011; Sweeney, 2011; Carter, Rogers and Choi, 2015; Randall and Mello, 2012; Halldorsson, Kotzab and Mikkola, 2015; LeMay et al., 2017; Lambert and Enz, 2017; Swanson et al., 2018). Accordingly, some academics and researchers called for theory development as they concluded that SCM lacks a theoretical foundation (e.g., Carter, 2011; Sweeney, 2011). Nonetheless, some scholars related SCM to existing theories (e.g., Mentzer et al., 2001; Svensson, 2002; Mathews, 2003; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Defee et al., 2010; Hitt, 2011; Fayezi, O'Loughlin and Zutshi, 2012; Wu, Chuang and Hsu, 2014), while others proposed their own theories and views (e.g. Dyer and Singh, 1998; Carter, Kosmol and Kaufmann, 2017). Remarkably, some academics are in doubt about developing a unified theory in SCM (e.g., Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2006); some called for developing a unified theory (e.g., Soni and Kodali, 2013), while others see that developing a unified theory is difficult (Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006). However, it is not surprising to find such discussions in the literature as those different views and perspectives of SCM were behind the lack of agreement and the divergent views about the theoretical foundation of SCM.

2.3.3 The Discussions Around Supply Chain Management Discipline

SCM discipline was not excluded from criticism. Some researchers discussed its rigour and investigated its compliance with academic discipline criteria and standards. For example, Ellram and Cooper (2014, p.17) concluded that "*SCM probably does not yet meet the definition of a discipline in the stricter scientific sense."* However, the following subtitles address four papers that have discussed this issue.

2.3.3.1 SCM is in its Infancy and does not Meet the Definition of a Discipline

Halldorsson, Kotzab and Mikkola (2015, p.575) cited that SCM lacks "*'quality of theoretical development and that it could be regarded as an 'emerging discipline' rather than a discipline itself."* Also, the authors cited that the SCM discipline "*is still in its infancy and is currently a segregated discipline*". Furthermore, the authors cited that "*despite SCM being multifunctional in nature, it probably does not yet meet the definition of a discipline in the stricter scientific sense*." The authors concluded that "*It is fair to say that SCM suffers from a conceptual slack*" (Ibid, 2015, p.574) and "*can be seen as an evolving domain or a field that is yet to establish a position as a scientific discipline*" (Ibid, 2015, p. 576).

2.3.3.2 Supply Chain Management is not a Discipline

In a systematic literature review of 1,113 articles published over 16 years, Chicksand et al. (2012) investigated the extent to which purchasing an SCM "*meets the test of coherence, breadth and depth, and quality necessary to make it a scientific discipline*" (Ibid, 2012, p.455). Through their analysis, the authors found that SCM lacks coherence as it lacks "*rich and robust theoretical ground*", lacks breadth and depth due to a "*low level of inductive research*", and lacks quality as it lacks "*clear research norms*" (Ellram and Cooper, 2014, p.15). Based on their analysis, Chicksand et al. (2012) concluded that SCM is not a discipline.

2.3.3.3 Lack of Coherent Discipline and Theory

In *"a special issue of the International Journal of Operations and Production Management*", which focused on questioning whether the SCM is "*an emerging academic discipline*", Cousins, Lawson and Squire (2006, p.697) mentioned that three papers in the journal examined "*the theoretical development of the SCM discipline*" including their paper.

The authors, in their introduction, mentioned that although "*SCM has continued to grow in prominence within the field of operations management and also within the broader discipline of management*" (Ibid, 2006, p.697), several authors did not "*like the term*", where there were "*several attempts to advance the debate and offer new terms such as pipeline management, network sourcing, demand*

management and value stream management (Christopher, 1992; Farmer and van Amstel, 1991; Hines et al., 1999; Lamming, 1993)." Despite that, "*SCM has been adopted by the global academic community*" (Ibid, 2006, p.698).

In concluding their paper, Cousins, Lawson and Squire (2006, p.701) stated: "*there is not yet the coherence and depth to call SCM a discipline in its own right*." Also, as mentioned, the authors stated: "*Although we doubt whether a unifying theory of SCM will emerge, debate about the boundaries and nature of the discipline can only help provide the direction necessary for coherent theory building and accumulation in the area*" (Ibid, 2006, p.701).

2.3.3.4 A Literature Analysis and a Viewpoint by Croom, Romano and Giannakis (2000)

Croom, Romano and Giannakis (2000) cited that "*many authors have highlighted the necessity of clear definitional constructs and conceptual frameworks on SCM*." On the contrary, the authors mentioned that Saunders (1995, cited in ibid, (2000) had warned that the "*pursuit of a universal definition may lead to unnecessary frustration and conflict*" (Ibid, 2000, p.68).

In their paper, Croom, Romano and Giannakis (2000) aimed to contribute to developing "*a discipline in SCM*" as they, in that period, argued that the concept "*should begin to be seen as a discipline*." Through a "*critical literature review*" approach, the authors found that SCM has evolved as a multidisciplinary concept. Accordingly, the authors attributed "*the lack of a universal definition of*" SCM to "*the multidisciplinary origin and evolution of the concept*" (Ibid, 2000, p.68).

2.3.4 Supply Chain Management Terminology

The last theoretical issue is the terminology used to rename SCM or refer to SCM practices. The literature showed that different names were used and offered since the concept was first introduced and began to "*receive serious attention*" among academics (Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2006, p.698). However, the following subtitles highlight this issue.

2.3.4.1 Many Labels were Offred; Many Authors Dislike the Term

According to Croom, Romano and Giannakis (2000,p.68), "*there is a confusing profusion of overlapping terminology and meanings*" found in the literature where many "*labels*" were used to refer to the concepts of supply chain and SCM activities. Tan (2001, cited in Sweeney, 2011, p.33) mentioned that "*the literature is replete with buzzwords.*" In addition, Larson and Rogers (1998, p.2) mentioned that the term "*has been criticised*" and "*many authors did not like it*". Cousins, Lawson and Squire (2006, p.698) also affirmed that "*many authors do not like the term*", and many terms were offered.

2.3.4.2 Christopher's (2016) Argument

One of the main arguments, as mentioned earlier, was by professor Christopher. Christopher (2016) argues that the term SCM should be replaced with the term 'Demand Chain Management'. The author argued that the term "*demand chain management would be more appropriate, to reflect the fact that the chain should be driven by the market, not by suppliers*" (Ibid, 2016, p.3). Christopher (2016) also added that "*equally the word chain should be replaced by network"* so that the term becomes 'Supply Network Management' (Ibid, 2016, p.3). Moreover, Christopher and Ryals (2014, p.29) affirmed that where they stated: "*we need a new response to a changing business environment, which we term demand chain management.*" Christopher and Ryals (2014, p.29) justified their argument that the term SCM "*tended to encourage a supply-focused viewpoint' rather than a focus on demand."*

In contrast, as introduced, Lambert and Enz (2015, p.10) criticised Christopher and Ryals (2014) about their argument, where the formers stated, "*with no support from the literature, they claim that the name supply chain management has 'tended to encourage a supply-focused viewpoint' rather than a focus on demand."* Also, Lambert and Enz (2015, p.10) see that "*it is difficult to understand how a name change to demand chain management solves the problems of academic silos and lack of cross-functional integration in companies."*

2.3.4.3 The Used/ Suggested Terms Referring to Supply Chain and Supply Chain Management Practices

Table 2 shows some of the used labels and the suggested names in describing or referring to supply chain and SCM practices (Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000).

Table 2 The Used and Suggested Terms Referring to Supply Chain and Supply Chain Management Practices.

S	Used/Proposed Term/ Label	Author(s) View / Statements Reference	Researcher's Notes
1	*"Business Management"*	"*Defining the supply chain management can be both dead easy and extremely difficult*"; "*the definition must capture all what supply chain management in practice has reached far and wide"; "SCM is simply and ultimately the business management, whatever it may be in its specific context, which is perceived and enacted from relevant supply chain perspective"* (Lu, 2011, p.13).	SCM is regarded as a synonym for Business Management.
2	*"Buyer-Supplier Partnership"*	(Lamming, 1993, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	The work focuses on the partnership between a supplier and a customer.

S	Used/Proposed Term/ Label	Author(s) View / Statements Reference	Researcher's Notes
3	*"Demand Chain Management"*	"*From supply to demand chain management."* (Heikkilä, 2002, p.747).	This is the suggested name by Christopher (2016), as mentioned in paragraph 2.3.5.2.
4	*"Demand Network Management"*	*"It could be argued that demand chain management would be more appropriate"; "equally the word chain should be replaced by network"* (Christopher, 2016, p.3).	Note the alternative name that Christopher (2016) suggests.
5	*"Demand Flow Leadership"*	*"SCM is a misnomer and should be replaced with demand flow leadership"* (Tomkins and Jernigan, 1998, cited in Larson and Rogers, 1998, p.2).	The term SCM is regarded as a misnomer.
6	*"Integrated Inventory Management"*	"*Looking for a catchy phrase to describe the concept, the consulting team proposed the term integrated inventory management"* (I2M) (Stephens, 2007).	This is the original term by K. Oliver before Adopting the SCM term (Ibid, 2007).
7	*"Integrated Purchasing Strategy"*	(Burt, 1984, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	Of note is the focus on purchasing management, not

S	Used/Proposed Term/ Label	Author(s) View / Statements Reference	Researcher's Notes
			on supply management or BRM. Lambert (2014), as introduced, mentioned that some are using the term as a synonym for purchasing management.
8	*"Lean Chain Approach"*	(New and Ramsay, 1995, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	-
9	*"Network Sourcing"*	"*Whilst it is interesting to note that many authors do not like the term, SCM has been adopted by the global academic community, despite several attempts to advance the debate and offer new terms such as pipeline management, network sourcing, demand management and value stream management*" (Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2006, p.698).	This to focuses on purchasing.
10	*"Network supply chain"*	(Nassimbeni, 1998, cited in Croom et al., 2000, p.68).	

S	Used/Proposed Term/ Label	Author(s) View / Statements Reference	Researcher's Notes
11	*"Pipeline Management"*	(Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2006, p.698).	-
12	*"Seamless Demand Pipeline"*	(Bechtel and Jayaram, 1997, cited in Sweeney, 2011, p.32).	-
13	*"Strategic Supplier Alliances"*	(Lewis, 1995, cited Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	The term focus on the supply side of the chain and relationships.
14	*"Supplier Integration"*	(Dyer et al., 1998, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	-
15	*"Supply Base Management"*	(Lewis, 1995, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	-
16	*"Supply Chain Synchronisation"*	(Tan et al., 1998, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	-
17	*"Supply Pipeline Management"*	(Farmer and van Amstel, 1990, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	-
18	*"Value chain management"*	"*Traditionally, the supply side of the value chain has received more attention than the demand*	-

S	Used/Proposed Term/ Label	Author(s) View / Statements Reference	Researcher's Notes
		side" (Jeong and Hong, 2007, p.589).	
19	"*Value Stream Management*"	(Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2006, p.698).	-
20	"*Value Tree"* / "*Integrated Channel Management*."	(Cooper, Lambert and Pagh, 1997, p.10).	-
21	"*Value-Added Chain*"	(Lee and Billington, 1992, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68).	-

Notably, none of the suggested names explicitly capture the essence of managing business relationships except those who touched on alliance or partnership with the suppliers. The general implication is that the SCM concept was not an appropriate term as a discipline, a profession, a business function, or a business practice. Organisations or production firms need supply management and BRM professionals.

2.3.5 Further Excerpts

There are many other noteworthy statements and discussions in the literature about the mentioned issues of SCM. For instance, Lyall, Mercier and Gstettner (2018) believe that "*Within 5-10 years, the supply chain function may be obsolete, replaced by a smoothly running, self-regulating utility that optimally manages end-to-end workflows and requires extraordinarily little human intervention."*[39] Therefore, it is determined that highlighting and analysing some selected

[39] This article was published in Harvard Business Review magazine.

excerpts adds weight to the significance of this research. Appendix D presents analyses and further comments on some of those statements and phrases.

2.4 The Discovery of the Research Gap

The purpose of this section (2.4) is to present the discovery of the research gap through informing the reader about the identified observations in the literature that reveals four key elements. The first is that the process orientation is the most used/ recommended approach in conceptualising and implementing SCM. Secondly, it is important to note that there are also other orientations besides the process orientation that dominates the literature. Thirdly, there is no sign in the literature that an objective-orientated approach is followed or recommended to solve the definition issue, conceptualise, and implement SCM. Lastly, to show that there is no indication in the literature that the GT method is used to tackle the definition or theory development issues.

2.4.1 Introductory Review

Chapter 1 introduced the researcher's knowledge of management, interest in developing a continuous improvement framework of SCM, the discussions and the existing calls in the literature for achieving consensus on a unified definition of SCM. These were behind the researcher's attempt to define the concept. Through this attempt, a definition and a framework (Figure 1) of SCM were developed.

A comparison between the researcher's developed framework and the SCOR and GSCF frameworks showed that the researcher's framework of SCM (Figure 1) was objective-oriented, while SCOR and GSCF frameworks were process-oriented. Further intensive literature review revealed that the process orientation of SCM was the prevailing used and recommended approach toward conceptualising, defining, modelling/framing, and implementing SCM. Also, the literature revealed that other orientations, such as the business function or object orientation, were used. However, there is no sign in the literature that the objective orientation was used to conceptualise and implement SCM. This finding led to the discovery of the knowledge or the research gap. It also enabled the

researcher to develop an objective-oriented theoretical model of SCM (Figure 2) that links the collaboration and the integration within and across firms in a supply chain to the SCM goals and objectives.

Through studying qualitative research methods, it was discovered that the initially developed definition and theoretical model of SCM (Figure 2) were based on the grounded theory method. Another comparative literature review showed that none of those identified studies that tackled the definition and the theory development issues used the GT method in their analyses. The identified studies were based on thematic or content analysis of existing SCM definitions and perspectives, and there is no sign that the GT method was used for theory development. Moreover, some authors who touched on or addressed SCM theory development recommend the use of the method. Therefore, these findings represent a significant opportunity to conceptualise SCM and identify its theoretical foundation through an objective-oriented GT approach. The main assumption is that through this approach, a unified theory and understanding of SCM would be developed.

Accordingly, this section addresses three aspects. First, it addresses the prevailed and the used orientations by SCM scholars. Secondly, it reports the used methodologies by the authors who tackled the definition or the theoretical issues of SCM; last, it reports the authors who recommended the use of GT, followed by the section summary.

2.4.2 The Prevailed and Used Orientations of SCM

Since the emergence of the SCM concept, different orientations have been used to conceptualise, define, model, and implement SCM. Remarkably, the process orientation was the prevailing approach that was used or recommended by many authors and thought leaders (Mentzer et al., 2001; Ho, Au and Newton, 2002; Cigolini, Cozzi and Perona, 2004; Kotzab and Otto, 2004; Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton, 2005; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006; Sandberg, 2007; Chen, Daugherty and Landry, 2009; Melnyk et al. 2009; Naslund and Williamson, 2010; Rossetti and Dooley, 2010; Lambert, 2014; Christopher, 2016; Lambert and Enz, 2017). Many systematic and traditional literature review studies

and other peer-reviewed journal articles showed that the process orientation was prevalent. The literature showed that SCM thought leaders such as D. Lambert and M. Christopher (Cranfield University, 2021a) followed this approach; Lambert, Stock and Ellram (1998, cited in Mentzer, 2001, p.10) suggest "*that, to successfully implement SCM, all firms within a supply chain must overcome their own functional silos and adopt a process approach";* Ho, Au and Newton (2002, p.4415) mentioned that "*the dominant conceptual SCM models focus mainly on the practices-performance relationship*" (Ibid, 2002, p.4415). Accordingly, the authors suggest that "*a greater advance in theory development is possible if researchers adopt a process-based view of SCM*"; Cigolini, Cozzi, and Perona (2004, p.7) mentioned that "*SCM often refers either to a process-oriented management approach or the co-ordination of the various actors belonging to the same supply chain*"; Kotzab and Otto (2004), in their study, identified nine "*general process-oriented management principles that can be applied in order to manage a supply chain";* Burgess, Sigh, and Koroglu (2006, p.703), in their structured literature review, found that the "*process conceptual framing prevails*"; Sandberg (2007), who studied the concept of collaboration in logistics management in a supply chain, found that "*the massive amount of literature advocating a process approach over the past two decades"* (Ibid, 2007, p.279)*;* Chen, Daugherty and Landry (2009, p. 28) mentioned that "*two ideas that were prevalent in existing research on supply chain integration*", … "*an internal-external perspective and a process view"*; Melnyk et al. (2009, p.4642) believe that "*Supply chain activities are still often functionally-based. A process orientation is needed to fully extract the potential value of supply chain alignment*"; a job description analysis by Rossetti and Dooleys (2010) showed "*that industry views an SCM professional as a process manager*"; and Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.24) mentioned that the "*process management is, in many ways, mentioned as a prerequisite for supply chain management.*"

Moreover, the SCOR and GSCF frameworks, which are process-oriented, are the most popular and commonly cited (Naslund and Williamson, 2010). Lambert and Enz (2017, p.1) mentioned that these two frameworks are the only frameworks "*that can be, and have been, implemented in major corporations*". In addition to

the process orientation, other orientations were also used. Mentzer et al. (2001), in their developed definition and proposed framework of SCM, focused on the business functions that are managed in a supply chain, while Biswas and Narahari (2003) used an object-oriented modelling approach to develop a prototype of a supply chain decision support system.

However, there is no evidence in the literature that an objective-orientated approach has been used or investigated toward conceptualising SCM, solving the definition issue, identifying the theory behind SCM, or implementing SCM. The difference between the objective orientation and the other orientations is that the objective orientation focuses on the management objectives that could be achieved through SCM. In contrast, the process orientation and the business function orientation focus on the business processes or business functions that are managed within and across firms in a supply chain (Mentzer et al., 2001; Lambert, 2014).

The following subsections give further details of the identified studies and literature reviews that show the predominance of the process orientation.

2.4.2.1 Burgess, Singh, and Koroglu (2006) Analysis

Burgess, Sigh, and Koroglu (2006), who randomly selected and systematically analysed 100 journal articles and 42 definitions of SCM that were introduced in those articles, mentioned that the concept "*has been poorly defined and there is a high degree of variability in people's minds about what is meant.*" Also, the authors found that "*the definition of the term is unclear, and the impact of theoretical diversity is such that it is doubtful SCM is based on a coherent theory."* Based on their analysis, Burgess, Sigh, and Koroglu (2006) found that the "*process conceptual framing prevails; research methods employed are mostly analytical conceptual, empirical surveys or case studies; the positivist research paradigmatic stance is prevalent; and theories related to transaction cost economics and competitive advantage dominate"* (Ibid, 2006, p.703).

As it is noticed, Burgess, Sigh, and Koroglu's (2006) study showed that the process orientation was prevalent. Also, the focus on cost and competitiveness was also prevalent.

2.4.2.2 A Study by Sandberg (2007)

Sandberg (2007) studied the concept of collaboration in logistics management among firms in supply chains. The author focused on the relation between SCM theory and practice. According to the author, "*a new trend towards integration and collaboration instead of so-called arm's-length agreements between suppliers and customers has been recognised by researchers as well as business practitioners*" (Ibid, 2007, p.274) [40]. The author stated:

> *"According to the SCM literature, the transition towards a process view is without doubt one of the most important characteristics of SCM. A description and definition of the collaboration in terms of a process will lead to a better understanding of what activities are involved in the collaboration and how they are related to each other"; "the massive amount of literature advocating a process approach over the past two decades"; "A process approach to collaboration puts a natural focus on the coordination and integration of the activities involved."*
>
> (Sandberg, 2007, pp.274,277-279).

Although some of Sandberg's (2007) statements affirm the importance of managing business relations (collaboration, coordination, integration), the other statements affirm that the process orientation was the prevailing approach since the SCM concept's emergence. Also, the authors' statements show that the collaboration among firms was also process-oriented.

Moreover, through a descriptive analysis of 177 questionnaires sent to logistics managers and employees in manufacturing companies, Sandberg (2007) found that the main objectives of the process-oriented collaboration in logistics management across supply chains were total cost reduction, shorter lead times,

[40] This statement supports the researcher's claim that many academics were not aware of the developed theory and meaning of BRM in this research.

and improved service. Hence, end-customer satisfaction is increased, and more profit is achieved. These mentioned objectives, as will be seen in chapter 4, show the main limitation of the process orientation, which is the limited view of the management objectives that could be achieved through BRM within or across firms in a supply chain/network or with other stakeholders.

2.4.2.3 Naslund and Williamson's (2010) Review

In a third study, Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.24) reviewed three definitions and four frameworks of SCM. The reviewed definitions were the CSCMP's definition, the GSCF's definition, and the offered definition by Stock and Boyer (2009), while the reviewed frameworks were the SCOR, GSCF, the Collaborative Planning, Forecasting, and Replenishment (CPFR), and Mentzer's et al. (2001) frameworks. The authors stated that the "*process management is, in many ways, mentioned as a prerequisite for supply chain management*." Also, the authors mentioned that it is not surprising that SCM lacks a "*performance measurement system*" due to the difficulty faced by "*organisations to develop process-based performance measurement systems*." Moreover, Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.22) advocate the process-oriented approach. They believe that "*companies need to fully commit to process orientation and process management in order to succeed with SCM"* and "*should strive to develop process-based measurement systems*." Yet, the authors cited that "*organizations often measure outcomes or results against a predetermined set of targets for component units*", and "*this approach assumes that if all units achieve their targets, then the overall strategic goals will be met*" (Becker and Joroff, 2000, cited in Naslund and Williamson, 2010).

Moreover, through reviewing the four mentioned frameworks, Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.14) mentioned that the SCOR model was "*the most commonly cited SCM framework"*. Also, the authors mentioned that the GSCF's framework was "*the second most popular framework"* (Ibid, 2010, p.15). These two frameworks, as mentioned by the authors, are process-oriented. The SCOR framework, as will be introduced in section 2.5, is based on six business processes that are managed in SCM, while the GSCF is based on eight business

processes. According to Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.14), *"The SCOR-model captures the Council's consensus view of supply chain management".* Also, the authors mentioned that "*the GSCF framework identifies eight key processes that form the foundation for supply chain management"* (Ibid, 2010, p.15). This review, as it is noticed, also shows how the focus on the process orientation in SCM was dominant.

2.4.2.4 Rossetti's and Dooley's (2010) Analysis

As many other authors have mentioned, Rossetti and Dooley (2010) reported the lack of "*academic consensus on the definition of SCM*" besides " *what the term 'SCM' encompasses"* (Ibid, 2010, p.40). They mentioned that the term was either defined in a narrower manner which "*tends to distinguish between SCM and operations management*" through focusing on "*managing inbound and outbound logistics or material procurement"*, or in a broader manner that focuses on the integration of business *"activities from the beginning of the value chain through customer usage, including internal operations*" (Ibid, 2010, p.40). Also, the authors mentioned that the "*definitions of SCM have emerged from conceptual thinking rather than practice in part because the study of SCM practice has been too difficult*."

However, Rossetti and Dooley (2010) conducted an interesting study where the authors focused on existing SCM definitions and job descriptions[41] of an SCM professional. The authors' purpose was "*to compare existing definitions*" of SCM to practice through studying and analysing "*how companies define SCM through studying"* their advertised *"job descriptions* ("*skills, tasks, and responsibilities"*) *associated with the field of SCM using computerized text analysis*" (Ibid, 2010, p.40). Rossetti and Dooley (2010) justified their approach that "*defining what is part of and not part of a professional discipline clarifies the body of knowledge that should be mastered by individuals within the profession."* The authors also argued that "*Without a shared definition of the discipline, there is variation in the body of knowledge for which professionals are educated and continuously*

[41] The authors studied 546 job descriptions which were downloaded from Monster.com website. The authors used computerised content analysis method to analyse those job descriptions.

trained." Also, they cited that "*the definition of a professional discipline should define, or help define, the job types within that discipline."* Moreover, the authors cited that "*a discipline's definition helps create a bridge between academic researchers and practitioners by indicating both the scope and concepts that they can share in their discourse*" (Ibid, 2010, p.40).

Through their analysis, the authors found that the existing definitions of SCM "*suggest two archetypal job functions: functional integrator and process manager."* Functional integration focuses on the "*interfunctional and the interfirm integration of Sourcing, Operations and Logistics*" (Ibid, 2010, p.43), while process management focuses on "*improving supply chain processes often through improved information systems*" (Ibid, 2010, p.44). However, the authors' analysis of job descriptions showed "*tentative support that industry views an SCM professional as a process manager*."

Furthermore, Rossetti and Dooley (2010) found that "*SCM is most closely aligned with Sourcing and Operations Management"* (Ibid, 2010, p.40). Accordingly, the authors concluded that "*there are differences between how academics conceptualize the field and how it is practiced"* (Ibid, 2010, p.53), and therefore, "*SCM is not easily defined in concept and practice*"(Ibid, 2010, p.54). As it is also noticed, Rossetti and Dooley's (2010) findings show that the process orientation is also prevailing.

2.4.3 The Used Methodologies Toward Tackling/Discussing SCM Theoretical Issues

Some academics who discussed the SCM definition or its theoretical issues used different approaches and methodologies to tackle the definition issue or the theory of SCM. The following titles show the identified studies and approaches to tackling the definition and the theoretical issues.

2.4.3.1 Mentzer's et al. (2001) Approach

Mentzer et al. (2001), as discussed in detail in section 2.3.1.2.1, raised the importance of achieving consensus on a unified definition and offered their view about SCM. The authors' methodology, as it seems, was based on a literature

review and a thematic analysis of some of the existing supply chain and SCM definitions. However, the authors did not mention how many definitions were used in their analysis. The following statements explain Mentzer et al.'s (2001) approach:

> *"The purpose of this paper is to examine the existing research in an effort to understand the concept of "supply chain management." Various definitions of SCM and "supply chain" are reviewed, categorized, and synthesized. Definitions of supporting constructs of SCM and a framework are then offered to establish a consistent means to conceptualize SCM. Antecedents and consequences of SCM are identified, and the boundaries of SCM in terms of business functions and organizations are proposed. A conceptual model and definition of SCM are then presented that indicate the nature, antecedents, and consequences of the phenomena."*
>
> (Ibid, 2001, p.3).

Also, the authors stated that one of the sections in their paper is:

> "*dedicated to reviewing, classifying, and synthesizing some of the widely-used definitions of "supply chain" and "supply chain management" in both academia and practice. The goal of this discussion is the development of one, comprehensive definition upon which managers and future researchers can build."*
>
> (Ibid, 2001, p.3).

Based on their approach, the authors illustrated the general theme of SCM, where they stated:

> *"Reviewing the literature illustrated that supply chain management involves multiple firms, multiple business activities, and the coordination of those activities across functions and across firms in the supply chain."*
>
> *(Ibid, 2001, p.3).*

2.4.3.2 Kotzab and Otto's (2004) Approach

In a paper entitled "*General process-oriented management principles to manage supply chains: Theoretical identification and discussion"*[42]*,* Kotzab and Otto (2004) mentioned that "*academic discussion in the"* SCM "*field has focused on identifying a valid definition"* (Ibid, 2004, p.336) and added that "*the different uses of the term "supply chain" also lead to different understandings of SCM* (Ibid, 2004, p.338). The authors mentioned that their "*work is intended as a critique of the ongoing discussion in the field of supply chain management and an attempt to provide a comprehensive management-oriented overview*" (Ibid, 2004, p.345). Through a literature review, Kotzab and Otto (2004) identified nine "*general process-oriented management principles that can be applied in order to manage a supply chain"* (Ibid, 2004, p.337). These principles were 'Compress', 'Speed up', 'Collaborate and Co-operate', 'Integrate', 'Optimise', Differentiate and Customise', 'Modularise', 'Level', and 'Postpone'.

In their explanation of these principles, Kotzab and Otto (2004, p.341) mentioned that the 'Compress' principle aims at cost reduction through "*reducing the number of nodes, members or actors in the chain",* or "physical distance between any two nodes" while the "Speed up' principle "*applies to processes and aims at time*." The collaboration principle *"primarily applies to relationships, planning, scheduling, and execution, and aims to reduce costs and improve service*." Similarly, the 'Integration principle "*applies to processes, and aims to reduce times and costs."* Also, the aim of the 'Optimise', Differentiate and Customise', 'Modularise', and 'Level' principles is cost and time reduction, while the aim of the postpone principle is "*improving a supply chain by moving product differentiation closer to the time and locus of consumption*."

As it is noticed, Kotzab and Otto (2004) focused on managing a supply chain as a structure. Also, the authors used the process-orientation as a management approach. Furthermore, the authors' view about the objectives of managing a supply chain is limited as they focused only on cost, time, and improved services. Last, although the authors mentioned the collaboration and integration as

[42] The article was published in the 'Business Process Management Journal'.

principles to manage a supply chain, their perception of the two concepts is limited if compared to the findings of this research.

2.4.3.3 Gibson, Mentzer and Cook's (2005) Approach

An attempt by Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005) to define SCM was through an online questionnaire about how the members of the CSCMP perceive the role of SCM by the organisation[43]. The authors believed that it would help to frame the definition of the concept. Six thousand four hundred twenty-two members were invited to participate; only 744 responses were received. However, Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005) mentioned that their data analysis approach was through a statistical analysis using the Pearson chi-square test of independence and crosstab analysis. Based on their approach and analysis, the authors saw that any definition of SCM "*must include both strategic elements and key activities if it is to gain a consensus level of acceptance*" (Ibid, 2001, p.20).

Furthermore, six activities were identified about the role of SCM; these activities were "*Supplier and Customer Collaboration", "Information Technology", "Marketing*", "Finance", "Sales", and "Product Design" (Ibid, 2005, p.21). According to the authors, the "*collaboration was widely identified by the respondents as a key component of SCM*". Therefore, the authors see that "*collaboration with suppliers and customers should be included in any definition of SCM*" (Ibid, 2005, p.21).

Nevertheless, two definitions of SCM were proposed by the authors. Those two definitions were then sent back to the members of the CSCMP to be rated "*according to how well it depicted"* the members' *"perception of SCM using a seven-point Likert scale*" (Ibid, 2005, p.22). Although there was not *"an overwhelming preference among the CSCMP members*", one of those definitions is the currently used definition by the organisation (section 2.3.1.3.1 refers).

As it is noticed, the members of the CSCMS emphasised the value of collaboration in SCM and the value of collaborative relationships. Gibson,

[43] The CSCMP organisation raised an initiative "*to formalize their official definition of SCM"*. Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005) grasped this opprotuinity to conduct their servey and to propose a definition (Ibid, 2005).

Mentzer and Cook (2005) clearly stated that 'collaboration' should be included in any definition. Also, the authors emphasised the meaning of management in their proposed definitions ("*SCM encompasses the planning and management of all activities"*). Despite that, the meaning of SCM was not realised and was elusive to some academics (e.g., LeMay et al., 2017).

2.4.3.4 Stock and Boyer (2009) Approach.

Stock and Boyer's (2009) proposed definition of SCM (2.3.1.2.8) was based on a "*word-for-word content analysis*" (Ibid, 2009, p.697) of 173 unique definitions of SCM that were found in the literature. The authors justified their approach that "*content analysis is a form of conceptual analysis, whereby key concepts or terms are evaluated*" (Ibid, 2009, p.697). The authors used the NVivo qualitative analysis software for this purpose. Through their analysis, Stock and Boyer (2009) identified three major themes of SCM; these were activities, benefits, and constituents/components. Also, the authors identified six sub-themes within the major themes. These are shown in figure 14.

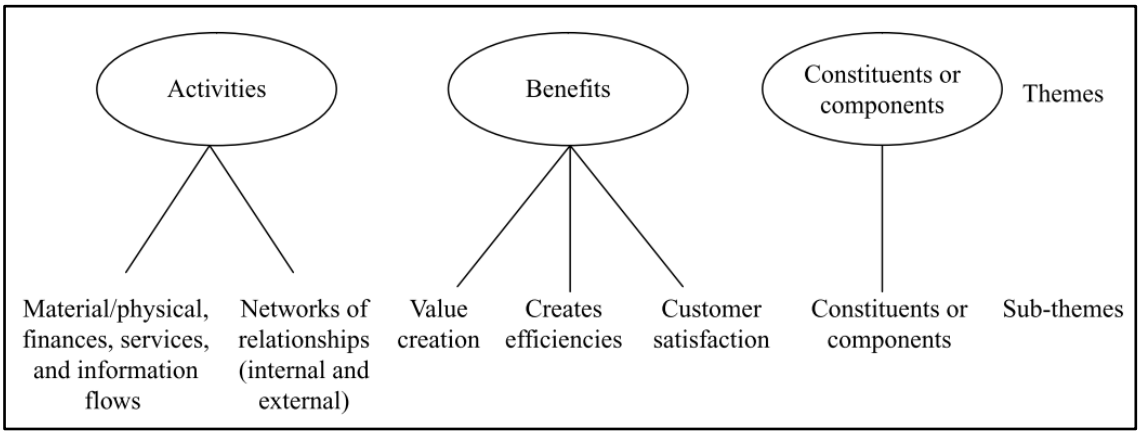


Figure 14 Major Themes and Sub-themes of a Consensus SCM Definition
Source: Ibid (2009, p.698).

Based on these mentioned themes, Stock and Boyer (2009) re-examined the studied definitions "*to discover if there were any trends evident from the definitions offered by authors over the years that could result in the creation of a*

consensus definition of SCM" (Ibid, 2009, p.698). Through their analysis, the authors found that the majority of the studied definitions included the activities of "*flows of materials and networks of external relationships with other supply chain firms"* (Ibid, 2009, p.699). Also, the authors found that the early proposed definitions of SCM focused on managing the inventory flow across a supply chain.

However, Stock and Boyer's (2009) findings support the researcher's analysis[44] that academics are using the term SCM to refer to managing business or supply activities (Supply Management) and managing external business relationships (BRM) across a supply chain.

2.4.3.5 LeMay et al. (2017) Analysis

LaMay et al. (2017) aimed to develop a new definition based on an analysis of existing definitions of SCM. The authors' research methodology was by gathering different definitions of SCM from different sources at first; secondly, by refining "*those definitions and"* incorporating *"them into a corpus for textual analysis*" (Ibid, 2017, p.1439), then using a software (Voyant) to analyse and "*isolate flaws in the definitions*", and finally, the authors used different concepts to offer a "*unified theory definition*" (Ibid, 2017, p.1439) of SCM as mentioned in section 2.3.1.3.10).

2.4.3.6 Halldorsson et al. (2007) Approach and Conclusion

Halldorsson et al. (2007), as introduced earlier, mentioned that SCM "*lacks a socio-economic theoretical basis"* (Ibid, 2007, p.285). Accordingly, the authors aimed to discuss and improve the SCM discipline by examining "*different theories from non-logistics area", through which the "inter-organisational phenomena"* could be explained (Ibid, 2007, p.285).

Halldorsson et al. (2007) focused on understanding and explaining the "*decision-making and practices in a complex network of collaborating firms*" by looking into "*how theories from other disciplines can be applied within SCM and ultimately used to develop SCM*". The authors introduced a classification of theories by Maaloee (1997, cited in ibid, 2007) that theories are classified into "*grand theories*", "*middle-range theories*", and "*small-scale theories*" (Ibid, 2007, p.285).

[44] See section 5.2.

Based on that, the authors adopted Maaloee's (1997, cited in ibid, 2007) suggestion "*that middle-range theories can be used to reflect connections between a set of concepts that represent key decisions of SCM*" (Ibid, 2007, p.285).

Accordingly, Halldorsson et al. (2007) selected and tested four middle-range theories "*that can be used to establish a theoretical framework of SCM*"; these theories were the Principal-Agent Theory (PAT), the Transaction Cost Analysis (TCA), the Network Perspective, and the Resource-Based View (RBV). In their justification for selecting these theories, the authors stated that they "*understand supply chains as interconnected socio-economic institutions.*" Hence, the authors "*argue that these theories are most useful to explain both structure and management issues of supply chains"* (Ibid, 2007, p.287).

Furthermore, the authors chose two SCM areas to examine the applicability of those four theories: third-party logistics (3PL) and new product development (NPD). The authors justified that these two areas entail strategic importance, "*are important elements in the SCM concept*", "both areas *"imply the creation of a long-term, inter-organizational arrangement*" that aims at promoting operative improvements and guide the strategic direction of companies, and these two areas are "*gaining increasing importance" … "within academia and companies*" (Ibid, 2007, p.285).

Through literature-based empirical evidence and discussion, Halldorsson et al. (2007) found those theories applicable in those two areas. Accordingly, the authors concluded "*that there is no such thing as a unified theory of SCM*" and "*building a unified theory of SCM might be difficult*" (Ibid, 2007, p.284). Nevertheless, the authors mentioned that "*one can choose one theory as a dominant explanatory theory*." Also, the authors stated that their "*main contribution is that one cannot rely on one theoretical explanation when analysing phenomena in SCM*" (Ibid, 2007, p.284). Furthermore, the authors proposed a middle-range theoretical framework of reference for SCM. This framework will be introduced in section (2.5). Nonetheless, analysing and discussing Halldorsson et al.'s (2007) work is beyond the thesis scope. Though, it can be argued that the

discovered theory in this research refutes the authors' conclusion that "*building a unified theory of SCM"* that explains the "*practices in a complex network of collaborating firms" "might be difficult"* (Ibid, 2007, pp.284-285).

2.4.3.7 Sweeney, Grant and Mangan's (2015) Approach

Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015) presented what they called "*the Four Fundamental Constructs*" or the "definitional construct" of SCM. According to the authors, the four constructs represent an attempt to "*comprehensively define the essence of SCM as opposed to providing yet another simple definition of SCM*" (Ibid, 2015, p.58). Moreover, the authors mentioned that their "*purpose is to provide deeper meaning to the phenomena*" that represents *"a unified definition without which it is difficult to develop robust theories that explain SCM phenomena and which facilitate a deeper and richer understanding of SCM principles and practices"* (Bid, 2015, p.58).

According to Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015), the "*Four Fundamental Constructs*" were "*developed based on the authors' review of the existing body of SCM knowledge*" (Ibid, 2015, p.59). These constructs are 1) 'Sitting SCM objective'; 2) 'SCM philosophy'; 3) 'Managing supply chain flows'; and 4) 'Supply chain relations' (Ibid, 2015, p.58). The authors mentioned that the key objectives of SCM are concerned with "*customer service and financial optimisation*." These objectives are meeting or exceeding "*the required or demanded customer service levels in targeted markets/segments"* and optimising the "*total supply chain cost and investment*" (Ibid, p.58). Also, the authors mentioned that SCM philosophy is largely "*based on the integration concept*." Last, the authors mentioned that "*managing supply chain flows*" includes managing "*materials, financial, and information flows*", while supply chain relations regard the creation and managing of those relations (Ibid, 2015, p.58).

In their empirical work to validate their four constructs, Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015) used focused interviews, a focus group, and a questionnaire survey to answer their research questions. The authors used their four identified constructs as a framework of reference.

Based on their work, the authors found that their "*empirical research supported the essence of the definitional construct and allowed it to be further developed and refined*" (Ibid, 2015, p.56). Furthermore, the authors stated that their construct "*supports a more cohesive approach to the development of a unified theory of SCM*", where they believe that the constructs *could … be further built upon with a view to contributing to the development of a new theory that facilitates deeper and richer understanding of SCM*" (Ibid, 2015, p.68). Also, Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015, p.68) recommended that their works could be expanded "*to incorporate grounded theory, case studies and action research.*"

Nonetheless, it can be noticed that the identified fundamental constructs by Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015) were very close to the findings of this research. The authors focused on setting SCM objectives, considered the integration among firms, and highlighted the importance of creating and managing business relations in the supply chain. Though, their perspective of those objectives was limited. The authors mentioned only two objectives: meeting customer demand and optimising the total cost for the supply chain. Also, the authors focused on managing the different flows in the supply chain. Moreover, the authors focused on the integration of business processes and informative integration across a supply chain. The most astonishing issue is that one of the survey respondents[45] stated that:

> "*Management of the supply chain is an aspirational and theoretical notion. It is about "end-to-end pipeline management", which is not practical. In practice, SCM is about managing relationships with key customers and suppliers*."
>
> (Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2015, p.62).

Despite that, Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015) did not realise the theory behind SCM.[46]

[45] A manufacturer.
[46] This observation shows the virtue of GT research.

2.4.4 The Call for Using Grounded Theory Research Method

The researcher's discovery that the grounded theory method was followed through the researcher's attempt to define SCM and the development of the initial theoretical model (Figure 2) encouraged the researcher to find out if any of the authors who discussed the SCM theoretical issues called for or suggested implementing the grounded theory method.[47] The literature showed that some academics suggest that applying the grounded theory research method could be the right approach toward understanding, conceptualising, and theorising the SCM concept (e.g., Mello and Flint, 2009; Stock, Boyer and Harmon, 2010; Denk, Kaufmann and Carter, 2012; Randall and Mello, 2012; Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2015). For instance, Randall and Mello (2012) stated:

> *"Development of theory remains an essential step in the evolution of supply chain management as an integrative business discipline. Supply chain research often involves phenomena possessing complex behavioural dimensions at both the individual and organizational levels. Such complexity can require the utilization of holistic and inductive approaches in order to more fully understand the behaviours associated with the phenomena."*
>
> (Ibid, 2012, p.863).

Accordingly, the authors suggested that the grounded theory is "*an appropriate method for studying emerging supply chain phenomena using an inductive, holistic approach*" (Ibid, 2012, p.863).

Likewise, Denk, Kaufmann and Carter (2012, p. 742) mentioned that grounded theory "*is an appropriate methodology for investigating behavioural and social aspects of organisations and inter-organisational relationships, and thus should be utilized more frequently in future SCM research*." The authors also mentioned that "*grounded theory is a powerful methodology for developing or extending theory from empirical data*" … "*and complements the conceptual theory*

[47] The grounded theory research method, as the researcher has mentioned, is mainly used in theory development, conceptualising, and understanding social phenomena (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015).

development approach which uses reasoning, logic, and extant, published works to develop theory."

Also, Stock, Boyer and Harmon (2010, p.38), in their paper "*Research opportunities in supply chain management",* mentioned that *"grounded theory and other approaches offer potential insights into the field",* while Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015) mentioned that their research methodology could be expanded "*to incorporate case studies, grounded theory and action research*" (Ibid, 2015, p.56).

2.4.5 Section Summary

The literature showed that the process orientation was the most used or recommended approach by SCM thought leaders and academics. Also, there is a lack of evidence that the objective orientation was used or recommended. These findings represent a research gap in SCM knowledge and previous studies. Furthermore, there is no sign that the GT method was used to tackle the SCM definition issue or identify its major theory. These findings represent a significant opportunity to conceptualise SCM and identify its theoretical foundation through an objective-oriented GT approach. The main assumption is that a unified theory and understanding of SCM could be achieved through this approach. Hence, the main research questions should aim at identifying what firms in a supply chain are aiming at and what their social actions/ interactions are.

2.5 Supply Chain Management Frameworks

2.5.1 Introduction

Since the popularity of SCM in academia, many frameworks and models have been introduced to describe and improve its implementation or to advance empirical and theoretical research (Moberg et al., 2008; Naslund and Williamson, 2010; Soni and Kodali, 2013; Azevedo, D'Amours and Rönnqvist, 2016; Lambert and Enz, 2017). Among the common frameworks and models of SCM are the Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) model and the Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) framework (Lambert and Enz, 2017). The literature, as

introduced, showed that the prevailing definitions, frameworks, and approaches toward conceptualising, defining, modelling, or implementing SCM were process-oriented. For example, the SCOR and GSCF frameworks are process-oriented (Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.1).

However, some studies discussed and assessed the strength and weaknesses of existing SCM frameworks, compared them, offered new frameworks or called for remodelling. Remarkably, Lambert and Enz (2017) called for additional process-oriented frameworks where they stated:

"*Given the number of university programs devoted to SCM (many with specialized research centres on the topic), it is startling there are only two cross-functional, cross-firm, process-based frameworks that can be, and have been, implemented in major corporations*."

(Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.1).

Nonetheless, this section gives an overview of some of those frameworks, reports the discussions that were found in the literature and gives a section summary.

2.5.2 Examples of SCM Models and Frameworks

2.5.2.1 The Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) Model

The SCOR model (Figure 15) was firstly developed in 1996 through the mutual efforts of the Supply chain Council (merged with APICS in 2014) in partnership with the Advanced Market Research (AMR)[48] (Naslund and Williamson, 2010; Lambert and Enz, 2017). The model is centred on the fundamental business processes within supply chains that are common in the manufacturing and production sectors.

[48] The researcher found different information about this organisation where some authors use the term Advance Manufacturing Research (Chandra and Kumar,2000). According to Ellinger et al. (2012), AMR is now part of Gartner Supply Chain Group.

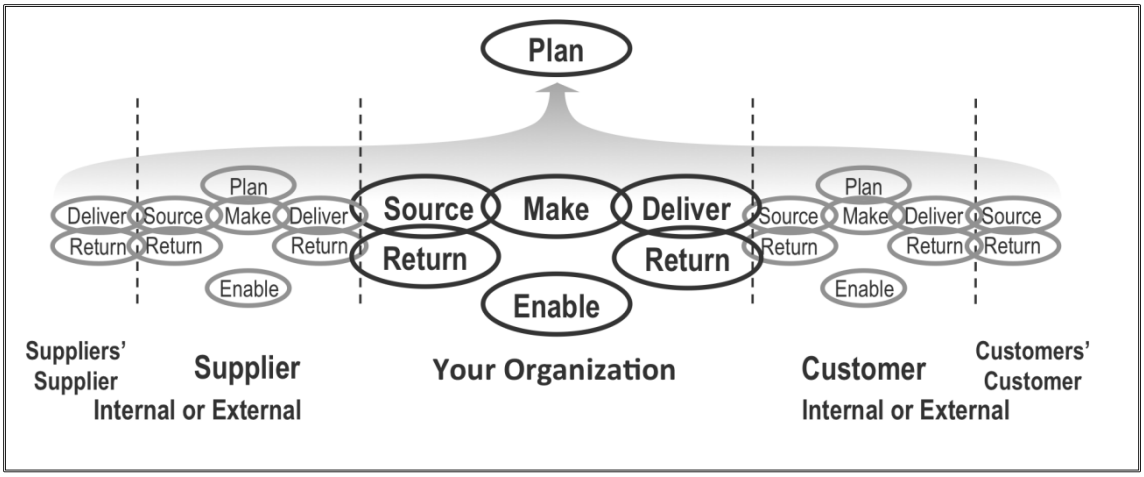


Figure 15 The Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) Framework
Source: (Lambert and Enz, 2017).

According to the founders, the model "*provides a unique framework that links business processes, metrics, best practices and technology features into a unified structure to support communication among supply chain partners and to improve the effectiveness of supply chain management and related supply chain improvement activities*" (Supply Chain Council, 2009, cited in Naslund and Williamson, 2010, p.14).

The model is process-oriented and is structured around six "Macro" business processes "*to be implemented*" in a focal firm and "a*cross firms in the supply chains*" (Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.11). The "Plan" process is the first and the most crucial step in the model. The planning and decision-making take place based on the available information on the demand, resources, capabilities, and suppliers. The outcome of the planning process, for example, will determine what to source, from whom, and when to source as well as the making and the delivery of the products.

The 'Return' process deals "*with the reverse flow of goods, including the identification of the need to return, the disposition decision making, the scheduling of the return, and the shipment and receipt of the returned goods*" (Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.11). Finally, the "Enable" process is related to supply chain management activities "*including management of business rules,*

performance management, data management, resource management, facilities management, contract management, supply chain network management, managing regulatory compliance and risk management" (Ibid, 2017, p.11).

The SCOR model, as it is noticed, is process-oriented. In other words, the model focuses on the fundamental processes that are performed by manufacturing or production organisations. Furthermore, the model does not include any management objectives. Nonetheless, five management objectives were introduced in the official document of the reference (SCOR, 2012). The developers of the SCOR called those objectives 'Performance Attributes' or strategic attributes. According to SCOR developers, these are: 'Reliability, Responsiveness, Agility, Cost, and Asset Management Efficiency.

However, the model, in fact, focuses on standardising business processes or the main supply operations within and across firms as well as standardising supply management practices, training, and performance assessment standards. The word 'Reference' illustrates the researcher's viewpoint.

2.5.2.2 The Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) Framework

The GSCF framework was initially developed by Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997) through a literature review. The authors found that the concept of SCM requires the coordination of business "*activities and processes within and between organisation*" (Ibid, 1997, p.1). Also, the authors stated that "*there is a need for the integration of business operations in the supply chain that goes beyond logistics*" (Ibid, 1997, p.1), as the authors found that many academics use the term as a synonym for logistics or the extension of logistics. Accordingly, Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997, p.2) stated that "*SCM is the integration of business processes from end-user through original suppliers that provides products, services and information that add value to the customers."*

The GSCF framework is centred around three key elements that construct the framework's structure. Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997, p.4) believe that the combination of the three key elements "*captures the essence of SCM*" (Figure

16). These three key elements are the supply chain network structure, the SCM processes, and the SCM components (Lambert, 2014).

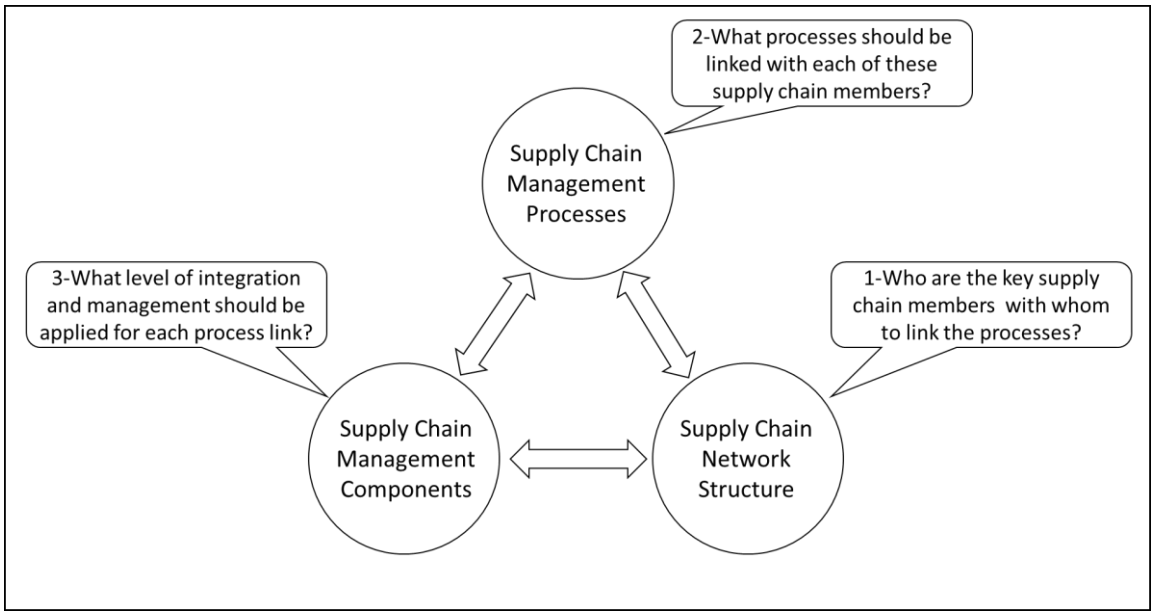


Figure 16: Elements of the GSCF Framework

Source: (Lambert, 2014, p.21).

According to Lambert (2014, p.20), the supply chain network structure comprises "*the member firms and the links between these firms*"; the SCM processes "*are the activities that produce a specific output of value to the customer"* (Lambert, 2014, p.20; Winter and Knemeyer, 2013) and "*form the foundation for supply chain management*" (Naslund and Williamson, 2010, p.15); while "*the management components"* … "*are the managerial methods by which the business processes are integrated and managed across the supply chain*" (Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.11).

Based on the process-oriented elements, Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997, p.5) identified seven SCM processes to manage and integrate within and across organisations. The processes were "*Customer Relationships Management, Customer Service Management, Demand Management, Order Fulfilment, Manufacturing Flow Management, Procurement",* and "*Product Development and*

Commercialisation." The processes were then modified to include eight processes, where the 'Return Management' process was added, and the 'Procurement' process was changed to "Suppliers Relationships Management.*"*

Accordingly, Lambert and his co-authors developed the GSCF framework, as shown in figure 17.

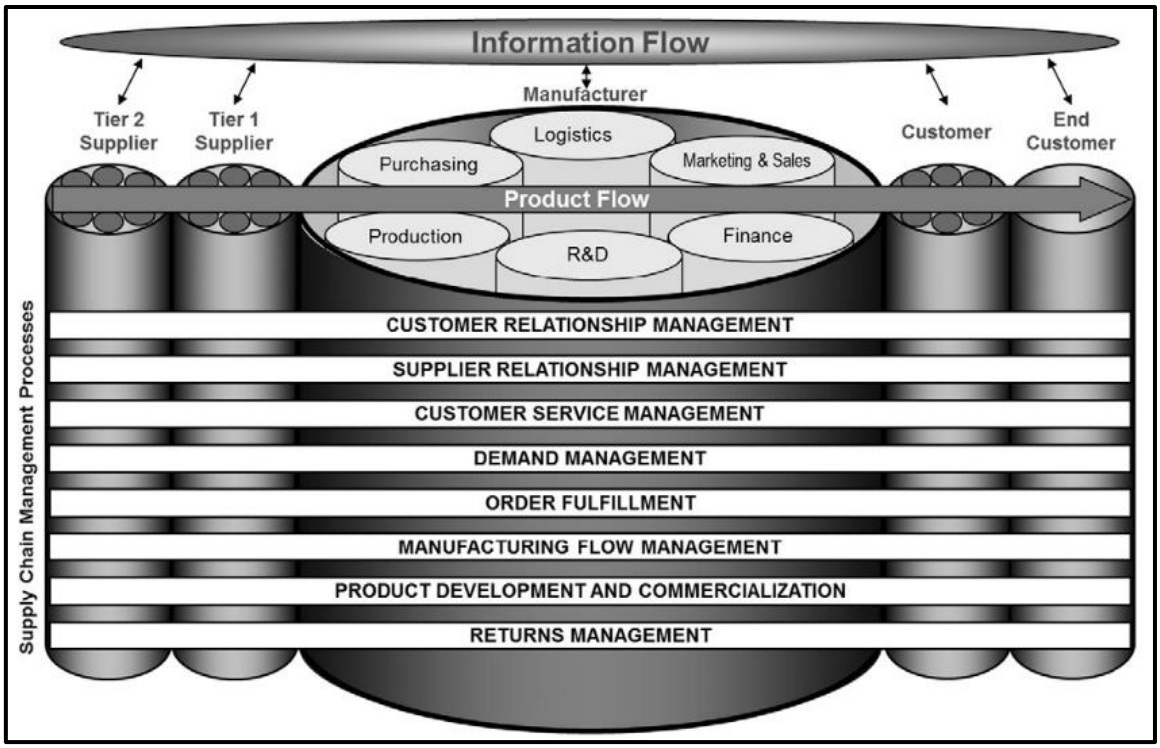


Figure 17: Global Supply Chain Forum Framework (GSCF)

Source: (Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.7).

Nonetheless, the GSCF framework, as described by Lambert and Enz (2017), is process-oriented too. The reader may also notice that the GSCM framework does not include any management objectives. However, there is an emphasis on the suppliers' and customers' relationships. This emphasis supports the researcher's argument that SCM was not an appropriate term to emphasise the value of managing business relations. Moreover, the processes framework (figure 17) overlooks the value of internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration across business functions and the realised value of managing external relationships with firms or organisations outside the supply chain. Furthermore, it

is worth noting that Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997, p.10) questioned whether SCM is the best term to describe the "*integrated management form*" of firms in a supply chain. However, chapter 5 presents a further theoretical analysis of the GSCF perspective.

2.5.2.3 The Collaborative Planning, Forecasting, and Replenishment Framework (CPFR)

According to Whipple and Russell (2007) and Naslund and Williamson (2010), the Collaborative Planning, Forecasting, and Replenishment framework (CPFR) (Figure 18) was developed by "*the Voluntary Inter-Industry Commerce Standards Association (VICS)*" in 1998 (Naslund and Williamson, 2010, p.16).

Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.16) mentioned that "*several companies have participated in the validation and testing of CPFR*" and "*as a result of these efforts"*, the authors cited that "*CPFR is the third most used methodology for improved supply chain collaboration*." Also, Whipple and Russel (2007, p.175) mentioned that the expected benefits of the CPER framework are accurate demand forecasting "*and replenishment plans within the supply chain"*.

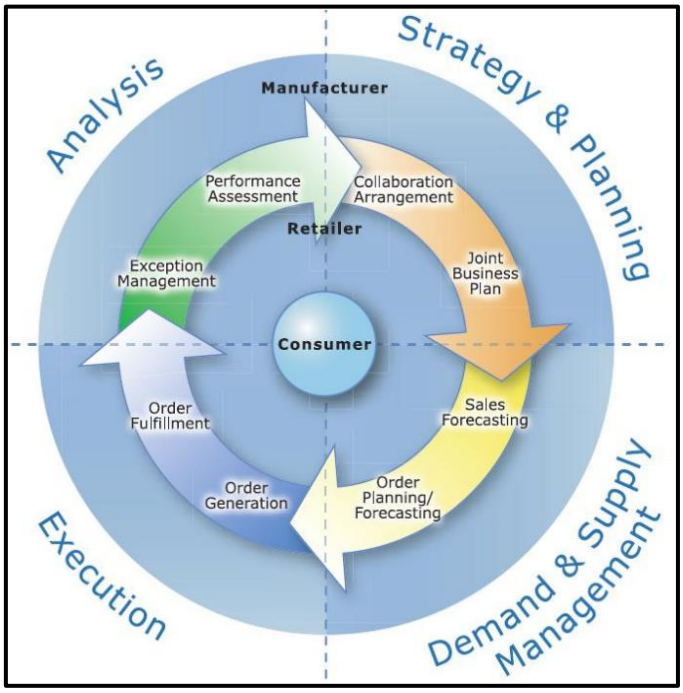


Figure 18: The Collaborative Planning, Forecasting, and Replenishment (CPFR) framework.

Source: (Liu and Sun, 2012).

Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.16) mentioned that "*to some extent, CPFR is more focused on information technologies than the process-oriented SCOR and GSCF frameworks*". In addition, the authors see "*that CPFR does not require a critical mass of users to function but enables a company to improve performance by having one single collaborative relationship with a supply chain partner*" (Ibid, 2010, p.16).

Obviously, the CPFR framework highlights the value of collaboration among firms or enterprises to manage, plan, and coordinate the inventory flow across a supply chain. Though, the term SCM was used to describe this practice.

2.5.2.4 The Mentzer et al. (2001) Framework

The Mentzer et al. (2001) framework was grounded in their proposed definition of SCM. According to Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.17), the definition implies that "*SCM involves multiple firms and multiple business activities, as well as process orientation to coordinate activities across functions and across firms within the supply chain*." Based on their perception and definition, Mentzer et al. (2001) developed a "*conceptual SCM model*" (Naslund and Williamson, 2010, p.17), as shown in figure 19.

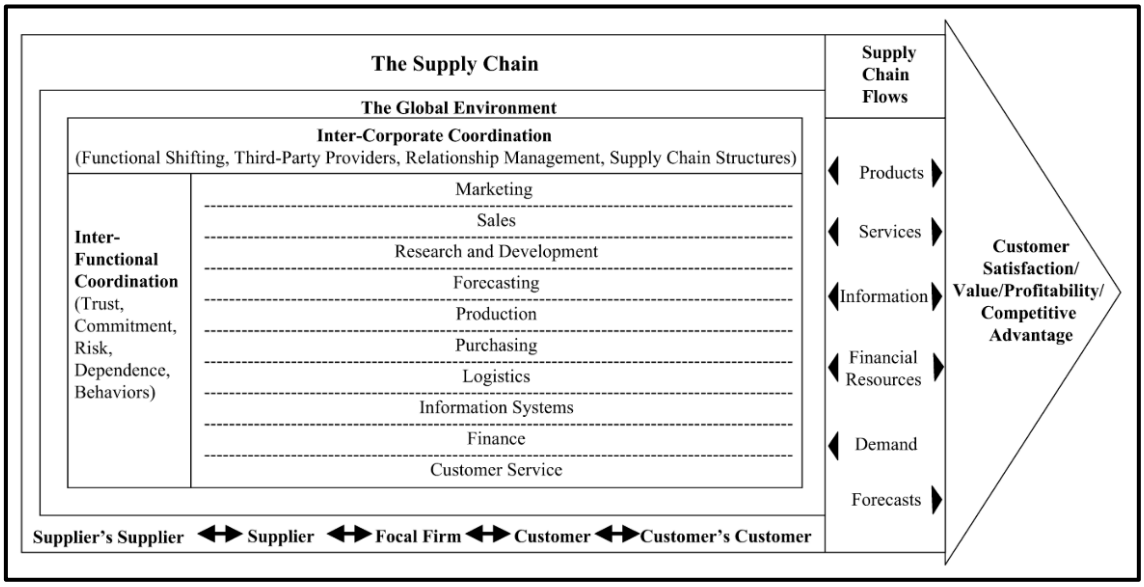


Figure 19: Mentzer et al. (2001) Framework

Source: (Mentzer et al., 2001).

According to Mentzer et al. (2001), the framework represents an "*integrative framework*" of SCM and "*should help practitioners, as well as researchers, understand*" the concept. Also, the framework "*gives guidance to what SCM is, its prerequisites, and potential effects on business and supply chain performance*" (Ibid, 2001, p.19).

However, the Mentzer et al. (2001) framework can be described as a business-function-oriented framework. It focuses on the business functions that are managed in production firms. Also, the framework highlights some of the management objectives and goals. These goals are customer satisfaction, profitability, competitiveness, and value creation. Furthermore, Mentzer et al. (2001) included managing relationships in their framework.

2.5.2.5 Chen and Paulraj's (2004b) Framework

Chen and Paulraj (2004b, p.131) developed a framework (Figure 20) that aimed to improve SCM understanding and to stimulate "*and facilitates researchers to undertake both theoretical and empirical investigation on the critical constructs of SCM*" and to explore the impact of those critical constructs "*on supply chain performance*".

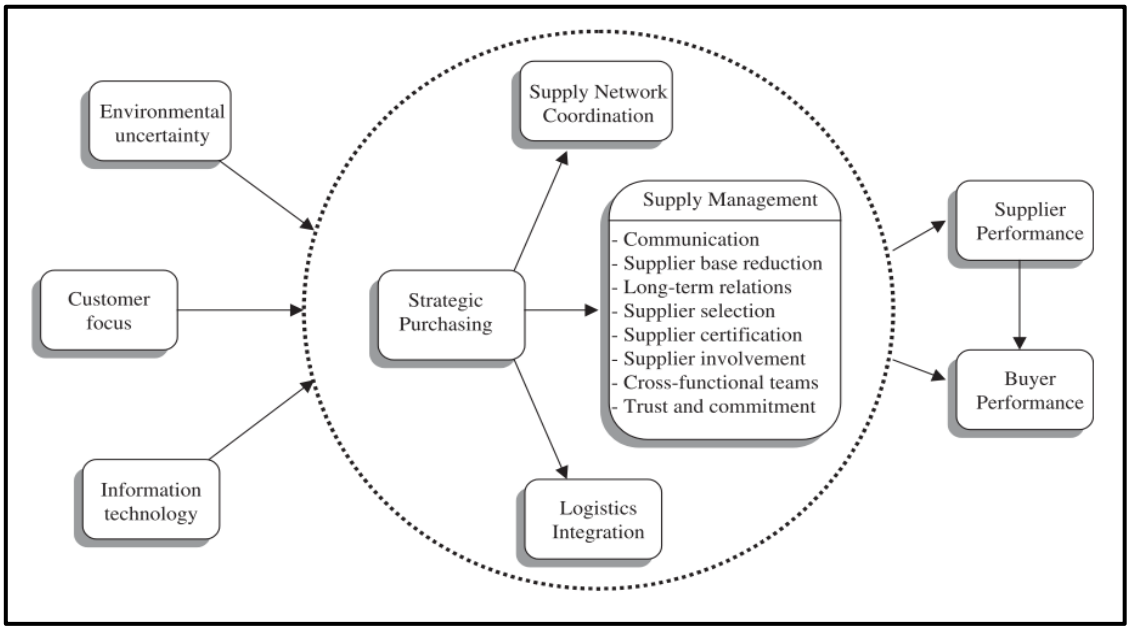


Figure 20 Theoretical Framework for Supply Chain Management Research
Source: (Chen and Paulraj, 2004b, p.133).

Chen and Paulraj (2004b, p136) encourage researchers to expand or refine the framework into different "*theoretical models*" and test the "*relationships among the critical constructs*" and their impact on the supply chain's performance toward coherent theory creation of SCM.

Notably, the Chen and Paulraj (2004b) framework is object-oriented as it highlights three areas: the management components[49] within a supply chain (Supply Network Coordination, Supply Management, Logistics integration, Strategic Purchasing), the antecedents of effectively managing these components (Customer focus, Environmental uncertainty, information technology), and the management goals (Supplier performance and Buyer performance).

2.5.2.6 Azevedo, D'Amours and Rönnqvist (2016) Model

In a study by Azevedo, D'Amours and Rönnqvist (2016), the authors aimed to develop a process-oriented framework that combines the SCOR model and the GSCF framework and focuses on what they call the core processes of the supply chain. Azevedo, D'Amours and Rönnqvist (2016, p.1) see that the process-oriented frameworks of SCM "*are of great importance for academics and practitioners*." It is worth mentioning that the authors used the 'Content Analysis' methodology to develop their process-oriented model, which they called the 'Supply Chain Core Processes Model' (Figure 21).

[49] Lambert (2014) used the term management components as presented in section figure 16, page 114.

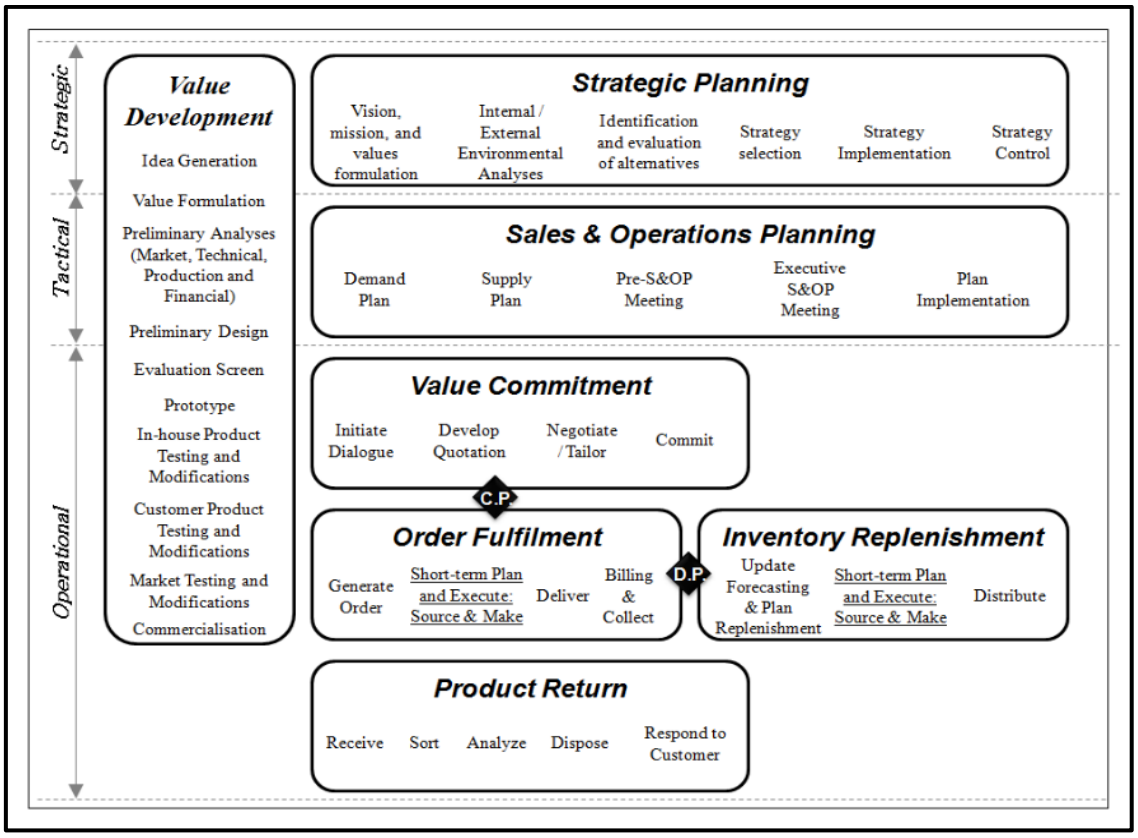


Figure 21: Supply Chain Core Processes Framework

Source: (Azevedo, D'Amours and Rönnqvist, 2016).

2.5.2.7 Halldorsson et al. (2007) Framework

Halldorsson et al. (2007), as introduced, investigated the applicability of four theories in SCM. Based on their analysis and view, the authors concluded "*that there is no such thing as a unified theory of SCM*" and "*building a unified theory of SCM might be difficult*" (Ibid, 2007, p.284). Accordingly, the authors developed a framework of SCM. The framework is shown in figure 22.

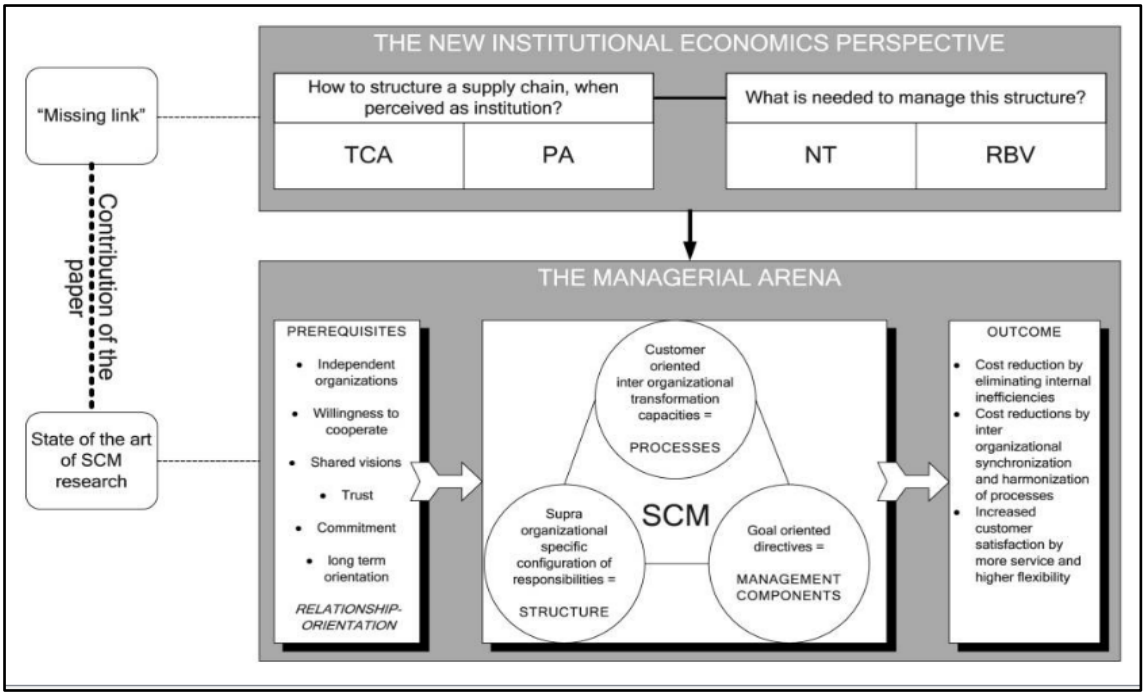


Figure 22 Halldorsson's et al. (2007) Middle-Range Theoretical Frame of Reference
Source: (Ibid, 2007, p.292).

Halldorsson et al. (2007) mentioned that their framework consists of two parts. The upper part represents the four theories that influence, as the authors mentioned, the "*decision-making and practices in a complex network of collaborating firms*", while the lower part "*illustrates the managerial arena of SCM, including the key elements, the prerequisites, and the outcome"* (Ibid, 2007, p.291). However, it is worth noting that the authors adopted and improved Lambert, Cooper and Pagh's (1998) SCM framework structure which focuses on three key elements and decisions: supply chain business processes, supply chain structure, and SCM management components (see figure 16).

Nevertheless, a key factor in Halldorsson's et al. (2007) framework, as it is noticed, is that it shows the role of managing business relationships among firms. Also, the framework highlights some of the SCM objectives or goals. Nevertheless, although the authors introduced the 'goal orientation in their framework, only three objectives or goals were mentioned: cost reduction, flexibility, and customer satisfaction. These three objectives are not the only ones that can be achieved through firms' collaboration or the integration of resources

(RBV); product quality is one of the key objectives that can be improved through communication with the end-users.

2.5.2.8 Other Proposed Frameworks

Besides the mentioned above, many other proposed frameworks exist in the literature (Soni and Kodali, 2013; Lambert and Enz, 2017). For example, the APICS organisation suggested another model besides the SCOR model. The model is called the 'Design Chain Operations reference' (DCOR). This model covers the research and design of products in the supply chains (APICS, 2014). The structure of the DCOR model is based on five main processes: Plan, Research, Design, Integrate, and Amend. The objectives of the SCOR and DCOR models, as mentioned earlier, are Reliability, Responsiveness, Agility, Cost, Flexibility, and Efficiency (APICS, 2014)

2.5.3 The Discussions Around Existing Supply Chain Management Frameworks

Some studies discussed and assessed the strength and weaknesses of existing SCM frameworks, compared them, offered new frameworks or called for remodelling. For example, Lambert and Enz (2017) compared their organisation's framework (the SCM framework by the GSCF) with the SCOR model and argued that the GSCF framework is more holistic than the SCOR model; Azevedo, D'Amours and Rönnqvist (2016) see that "*supply chain process-oriented frameworks are of great importance for academics and practitioner*" [50] (Ibid, 2016, p.1) and "*SCM literature still does not present any sign of convergence regarding supply chain processes nomenclatures and scopes*" (Ibid, 2016, p.2); Moberg et al. (2008) compared four frameworks and called for remodelling and developing a universal framework by proposing 12 criteria for such framework; Wu, Yeh and Fang (2007, p.211) see that the DCOR model "*only provides preliminary definitions, such as those for major design procedures, and lacks an example of best practices in the industry*"; while Soni and Kodali (2013) developed a new framework and argued that their proposed framework is more comprehensive

[50] The authors focused on the process orientation and see that such frameworks are important.

where the authors argued that there are "*inconsistencies in the present"* SCM "*frameworks and the constructs"* that form them (Ibid, 2013, p.264). However, in the following paragraphs, the identified discussions are reported.

2.5.3.1 Comparison Between the GSCF Framework and the SCOR Model

Lambert and Enz (2017), in their article '*Issues in Supply Chain Management: Progress and Potential*', reviewed the progress of the implementation and the development of the 2000 proposed framework of the GSCF. Also, the authors made a comparison between the GSCF framework and the SCOR framework.

In their introduction, the authors cited what (Lambert, García- Dastugue, and Croxton, 2005) have mentioned, where they stated: "*it is startling there are only two cross-functional, cross-firm, process-based frameworks that can be, and have been, implemented in major corporations*" (Ibid, 2017, p.1). In their comparison of the two frameworks, Lambert and Enz (2017) mentioned that "*each framework has strengths and weaknesses*" (Ibid, 2017, p.12). Table 3 illustrates the main differences between the two frameworks, as Lambert and Enz (2017, pp.12,14) introduced.

Table 3 Main Differences between the SCOR Model and the GSCM Framework

SCOR Model	GSCF - SCM Framework
"Focuses on transactional efficiency."	"*Focused on relationships management."*
"Processes are developed based on the operations strategy."	Processes are *"informed by corporate strategy.*"
Limited scope	Broad scope
"*Cross-functional involvement is pursued primarily within three functions: logistics, production and purchasing*."	"*All business functions are involved and a broader set of activities is included*."

SCOR Model	GSCF - SCM Framework
The linking processes in the supply chain are "*the deliver process of the supplier" and "the source process of the buyer."*	The linking processes in the supply chain are the customer relations management (CRM) process and the supplier relations management (SRM) process
Value creation focuses "*on cost reductions and improvements in asset utilization*" (operational efficiency)	Value creation focuses on cost reductions and improvements in asset utilization and on "*profitability reports for customers and suppliers*."

In concluding their comparison, Lambert and Enz (2017, p.14) see that their framework "*is more inclusive since all business functions are involved, and a broader set of activities is included*". Also, the authors believed that their framework focuses on relationship management which creates *"value and competitive advantage for the organisations that use it*" (Ibid, 2017, p.14).

2.5.3.2 A Call to Remodel

In an article entitled 'Time to Remodel' [51], Moberg et al. (2008) examined and compared four major SCM frameworks. The frameworks under study were the SCOR model, the GSCF framework, the Process Classification Framework (PCF) by the American Productivity & Quality Center, and the Supply Chain Best Practices Framework by the Supply Chain Consortium (Ibid, 2008).

The authors' primary purpose was to raise their perspective that there is a "*gap between SCM theory and actual practice*", which calls for the need to develop an effective, "*single, unifying SCM framework that both incorporates the best aspects of the existing, widely used frameworks and addresses their current limitations*" (Ibid, 2008).

[51] Published in the magazine of the Council of SCM Professionals (CSCMP): Supply Chain Quarterly.

Moberg et al. (2008) argued that those "*frameworks are not broad enough in scope to capture the systematic, process-oriented, boundary-spanning, and strategic nature of SCM*". Moreover, the authors added that these frameworks contribute to a sort of confusion in SCM implementation, where the authors see that "*each framework has its own terms, processes, and metrics that often compete with those of other models*." Based on their assessment, Moberg et al. (2008) identified the "*advantages and limitations*" of each framework under study. For instance, Moberg et al. (2008) see that the SCOR model does not describe all business processes like sales, marketing, research and development, product development and customer support. Therefore, SCOR is not holistic. Another 'downside', as mentioned by the authors, is the SCOR model complexity, where Moberg et al. (2008) argue that it needs a "*significant amount of training*." Finally, Moberg et al. (2008) see that the SCOR model is limited to improving internal processes' efficiency and does not support organisations' "*strategic partnerships and extended supply chain efficiency*."

On the other side, Moberg et al. (2008) see that the GSCF framework focuses "*on the integration of services across various partners*"; therefore, the "*framework is less clear than the other models about the measurement of internal performance*." Furthermore, the authors mentioned that the GSCF framework "*does not provide benchmarking information*." Last, the authors see that the GSCF framework "*works better*" when the customer's demand is visible and has low variability. Moberg et al. (2008) also added that the four models under evaluation "*neglect the issue of supply chain orientation*", where the authors cited the definition of 'Supply Chain Orientation (SCO) by Mentzer et al. (2001). As presented earlier, the SCO "*is the recognition by a company of the systemic, strategic implications of the activities and processes involved in managing the various flows in a supply chain*." (Mentzer et al., 2001).

In their discussion, Moberg et al. (2008) argued that "*none of the models specifically explains the relationship between SCM and corporate strategy, nor do they foster a workable understanding of the interactions between SCM and functional activities.*"

Based on their analysis, Moberg et al. (2008) suggest that SCM frameworks should establish a communication language that highlights supply chain concepts, methodologies, and activities and outline the processes across the supply chain that are connected to performance metrics through which SCM strategy is communicated to the decision-makers in any organisation.

In concluding their article, Moberg et al. (2008) see that "*an effective supply chain framework must support the CSCMP definition of supply chain manage*ment." However, the authors were somewhat biased as they see that an effective framework should support their organisation's definition of SCM.[52]

2.5.3.3 Soni and Kodali (2013) View

Soni and Kodali (2013, p.263) mentioned that *"SCM is burgeoning with frameworks but there has been no attempt in extant literature to highlight the inconsistencies present in existing SCM frameworks.*" Through analysing 57 existing frameworks, as mentioned earlier, the authors found a lack of "adapting existing frameworks" by researchers and a "*lack of significant participation of practitioners/consultants in development of SCM frameworks.*" The authors also touched on the importance of theory building in SCM, where they cited that "*if SCM is to mature as a discipline, then theory building must be assisted by drawing on the study of practice."*[53] Also, the authors added that "*the variability and uncertainty within supply (chain) management of its core concerns are one of the problems it faces"* (Ibid, 2013, p.264). Moreover, the authors mentioned that there was a lack of consensus about the meaning of a framework where they stated that it was defined as "*as a prescriptive set of things to do* "and "*the terms model and frameworks have been used interchangeably*" (Ibid, 2013, p.267). In addition, Soni and Kodali (2013) offered specific features of what a sound framework may entail. However, the authors see that "*further research in SCM should be directed towards finding a "unified theory of SCM" which must lead to a set of coherent elements (or constructs)"* (Ibid, 2013, p.263).

[52] This article was published in the CSCMP magazine.

[53] This is what the researcher coincidently followed in this research. The researcher focused on SCM practices and social interactions among firms in a supply chain.

2.5.4 Section Summary

As it is noticed, many frameworks of SCM were offered. Yet, different approaches were used with different scopes of coverage. Three of the introduced frameworks and models are process-orientated (SCOR, GSCM, Azevedo, D'Amours and Rönnqvist (2016)); the introduced framework by Mentzer et al. (2001) is business function-oriented; while Chen and Paulraj's (2004b, p.131) framework is object-oriented. In addition, the CPFR model focuses on the planning process of the supply operations through the collaboration and information sharing across a supply chain; while the developed framework by Halldorsson et al. (2007) illustrates the theories that influence the decision-making process in collaborating firms in a supply chain and links business management to limited objectives (cost reduction and customer satisfaction). However, the findings of this research revealed that the GSCF, as will be addressed in chapter 5, is the most logical framework that links business relations management to business process management despite its limitations.

Nonetheless, the existing studies about those frameworks concluded that there is a need to remodel and develop further frameworks as those "*frameworks are not broad enough,* contribute to a sort of confusion, do not describe all business processes, some are complex to implement, some do not provide benchmarking information, and do not "*explain "the relationship between SCM and corporate strategy"* (Moberg et al., 2008).

Furthermore, it is noticeable that a general limitation of the presented frameworks is that non of those frameworks is objective-oriented. The mentioned management objectives in some of those frameworks are very limited and do not encompass, for example, sustainability and quality management. Also, the business relations dimensions presented in the GSCF were limited to supplier and customer relationships and did not include internal relationships or relationships with other stakeholders. These mentioned outcomes suggest developing further frameworks. Accordingly, there is an opportunity to develop an objective-oriented framework that is based on the outcomes of this research.

2.6 Chapter Summary

The term SCM has gained wide-world popularity since its emergence in the 1980s. Academics and researchers were eager to develop definitions, models, and frameworks, identify the theories behind the concept or offer new views. Not only, but also offering new names to describe its appropriate meaning. Numerous definitions and frameworks were developed and introduced in the literature. Also, many organisations and centres were established or renamed to offer SCM guidance and education.

Despite that, the literature reveals that there is no consensus among SCM scholars on its definition, and there are many different perspectives about the meaning of a supply chain and SCM. The term is being used as a synonym for logistics, purchasing, or operations management. Also, the concept is perceived as a process, a discipline, a philosophy, a governance structure, and a functional area. Confusion is added further where different terms, sometimes with slight variation, are offered to replace the term. The literature also reveals that the definitions of a supply chain exclude the final user or consumer from the chain. An oversight that some have commented on but that the vast majority have not addressed. The literature also shows that SCM discipline was also evaluated. Some researchers found it lacks the criteria and standards of academic disciplines.

Researchers call for consensus among SCM scholars on a unified understanding and definition of the SCM concept in many works. There is an additional call for theorising SCM and investigating the feasibility of developing a unified theory. Also, there are calls for developing further frameworks and remodelling. Accordingly, many scholars and researchers responded to those calls. The literature showed that developing a unified definition gained wider interest than theory development and remodelling. Different approaches were used to tackle the definition and theory development issues.

However, the concentration within the literature on the process-heavy aspects of SCM means that the unification of theory and understanding will be impossible because it misses an essential ingredient that would make it possible.

Process orientation is the prevailing approach in conceptualising, implementing, framing, and modelling SCM. Although it appears to present benefits in terms of understanding across the supply chain, the literature is remarkably silent on conceptualising, defining, and modelling SCM through an objective-oriented approach. Furthermore, there is no sign that the grounded theory method was used to tackle the definition and theory development issues. It is then to this gap in the literature that this research project turns to contribute to theory and practice. The main assumption of this research is that a unified theory and understanding of SCM could be achieved through an objective-oriented grounded theory approach.

3 Research Methodology

This research, as introduced in chapter 1, consists of several research processes, including conducting a literature review for different purposes. These are the grounded theory process, a pilot study, an assessment survey, and a feedback survey. The used approach of grounded theory and the pilot study purpose and details are presented in this chapter. The purpose and the design of the assessment and feedback surveys are presented in chapter 6.

Nonetheless, this chapter consists of 8 sections. The first three sections (3.1-3.3) introduce the researcher's understanding and perspective of conducting research, the researcher's definition and perspective of theory, and addresses the researcher's knowledge of grounded theory, which includes an overview of the method, its main processes, its different versions, and the researcher's viewpoint about those versions. In section 3.4, the research methodology is introduced. It includes the researcher's ontological and epistemological stance, followed philosophy, the researcher's approach to conducting grounded theory as well as the researcher's developed data coding model, the data collection methodology for the grounded theory process besides justifying the followed version of the method, the purposes of the three conducted surveys in this research (pilot study, assessment survey, and feedback survey) and the details of the pilot study. Then, sections 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 present the conceptual framework of this research, state the ethical considerations and summarise this chapter.

3.1 Researcher's Knowledge and Perspective of Research

3.1.1 Preface

Research is an applied science conducted in all disciplines for different purposes through collecting, studying, and analysing two types of data, quantitative (numeric) and/or qualitative (textual) data. The common purpose of conducting research is knowledge creation or knowledge contribution. The type of research and the value of created knowledge vary and are based on the purpose of the research. Research scholars classified research into many types from different

aspects. They classified research according to its purpose or nature of the enquiry, nature of collected data, nature of data analysis, description of theory development, nature of data collection, and the nature of studied reality. Research could be theoretical or basic research, applied or practical research, evaluative or assessment research, descriptive, exploratory, and problem-solving or action research. For example, basic or theoretical research aims at theory development. It might include developing new theories, elaborating existing theories, testing existing theories and hypotheses, and refining or refuting existing ones. On the other hand, applied or practical research aims at developing knowledge that has practical relevance, while problem-solving or action research aims at solving existing problems, debates, or dilemmas.

Based on the nature of the studied reality, there are two main types of research: natural or scientific research and social research. Scientific research focuses on studying the physical aspects of the natural world, including people and living creatures. On the other hand, social research studies people's thoughts, behaviours, habits, traditions, interests, actions, reactions, interactions, and discourses, i.e., studying people's personal and social lives. Nonetheless, research also includes studying existing human knowledge and people's history and writings for scientific and social purposes. Conducting systematic literature review, content analysis, thematic analysis, discourse analysis, library (Goodman, 2011), or archival research are examples of such studies.

3.1.2 Definition of Research

The different types of research, different disciplines, different purposes, different data types, and the different researchers' interests were behind the emergence of different views, perspectives, and philosophies among scholars of research science. These views and philosophies led to drafting different definitions of the meaning of research, different classifications of research types, several research methods, different research logical stances, various data gathering and analysis approaches, and many research considerations[54] (Mauch and Park, 2003;

[54] Researcher's accumulated Knowledge from multiple resources.

Phillips and Pugh, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Greener, 2008; Goodman, 2011; Maxwell, 2012; Myers, 2013; Willig, 2014; Wilson, 2014; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018; Bryman and Bell, 2015; Zeegers and Barron, 2015; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016; Bell and Wilmott, 2017; Dudovskiy, 2018).

According to Wilson (2014), "*there is no consensus in the literature*" about how research should be defined. The author attributes that to different interpretations by different people. Wilson (2014) defines research as the "*step-by-step process that involves the collecting, recording, analysing and interpreting of information.*" The author also added that *"research is all about generating answers to questions – to advance knowledge."* Wilson's (2014) definition was based on three characteristics that were derived from many other definitions, where the author stated that:

- *"Research is a process of enquiry and investigation",*
- research "*is systematic and methodical",* and
- *"research increases knowledge."*

Similarly, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) mentioned that research contains three main characteristics: "*data are collected systematically*", "*Data are interpreted systematically*", and "*there is a clear purpose: to find things out*". Accordingly, the authors define research as the "*process that people undertake in a systematic way in order to find out things, thereby increasing their knowledge"* (Ibid, 2016, p.5).

Therefore, it can be said that research is conducted through a planned and systematic process of collecting and analysing one or two types of data, quantitative and qualitative data. This systematic process is known as the research methodology. However, whether research is scientific (natural) or social, it can be defined as studying reality for specific purposes. That study aims at investigating a research problem/opportunity. It requires gathering and analysing data about that reality. Both the data gathering and analysis must be systematic and logical and be based on a knowledge foundation and well-established theoretical, conceptual, or practical frameworks (Lester, 2005) and considerations. Hence, the researcher's definition of research states:

'Research is an investigative, systematic, logical, and analytical study of reality for specific purposes.'

3.1.3 Researcher's Definition of Reality

Reality can be defined and classified into two types. Both types of reality construct the foundation for conducting research. The first reality is the real world people see, observe, hear, sense, feel, or believe in. This reality can be classified into natural, social, artificial, and digital or virtual reality. Natural reality, for instance, includes people, living creatures, non-living things, and any observed natural phenomena or incidents. In contrast, social reality represents people's thoughts, culture, beliefs, values, convictions, behaviours, discourses, actions, and interactions. Social reality can also be classified into different realities, such as cultural, economic, and political.

The second type of reality is cognitive reality. It is the knowledge people have about the real world. It is what people know, learn, discover, develop, observe, or find about, whether it is true and accurate or not. That knowledge comes from two sources: a revelation from the almighty Allah to humanity and the legacy and efforts of humanity.

3.1.4 Elements of Research

There are several main elements of research. The first element is the reality which represents the real world and the existing knowledge (cognitive reality) to be studied. The second element is the research problem or opportunity. The research problem or opportunity is what a researcher observes, discovers in the real world or identifies in the existing knowledge. The third element is the theoretical or conceptual framework. The theoretical or conceptual framework represents a researcher's theoretical background (literature), knowledge, and research assumption that underpin the research. The fourth and fifth elements are the research question(s) and objectives. They are what a researcher is interested in, inquiring about, and aiming at. The sixth element is the research methodology. The research methodology is the "*general approach to studying*

research topics" (Willig, 2014, p.49)[55]. It addresses the selected research method and its appropriateness to the research aim. It demonstrates a researcher's logical stance[56] about the appropriate type and sources of data and the appropriate methods of systematically collecting and analysing or interpreting those data. In other words, the research methodology constructs the research process design or plan. Through the followed research methodology, researchers assume that their research questions will be answered, and the research aim will be achieved. The last elements are the research findings, conclusion, contribution, and implications. The research findings and conclusion are the results and outcomes of the research, while the research contribution is the knowledge gained or produced based on the findings and the conclusion of a research. Finally, research implications highlight the value of the research outcomes to academics, other researchers, professionals or practitioners, organisations, or society as a whole.

3.1.5 Aim of Business and Management Research

Business and management research aims to enhance and improve organisational culture, managerial effectiveness and efficiency, and the optimal achievement of business objectives that enable an organisation to deliver better products and services and achieve better performance and outcomes. In summary, business research aims at building practical knowledge and developing and improving organisations' management thought (Zikmund, 2003; Bryman and Bell, 2015; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018).

3.1.6 Researcher's Understanding of Qualitative Data Analysis

Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.81) mentioned three main outcomes when conducting qualitative research: description, conceptual ordering, and theory. According to the authors, a description is about depicting or telling a story "*without*

[55] "*Carla Willig is professor of psychology at City University London. Her publications are concerned with the theory and practice of qualitative research methodology. She is the author of Qualitative Interpretation and Analysis in Psychology and co-editor of the Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*" (Willig, 2014, p.32).
[56] Ontological and epistemological stances.

a lot of interpretation or attempt to explain why certain events occur and not others"; conceptual ordering focuses on "*classifying events and objects along various explicitly stated dimensions and often rating them in terms of importance*"; while theorising is about "*constructing an explanatory scheme that systematically relates concepts to each other around a core concept."*

However, the common process that all qualitative researchers follow in analysing qualitative data can be described as a 'Mining Process'[57]. For example, in social studies, researchers collect textual data through interviews, surveys, documents, or records (discourses, transcripts, writings, memos, notes, diaries, audios, and videos) to find, for instance, explicit and implicit concepts, meanings, actions, reactions, interactions, intentions, purposes, goals, outcomes, consequences, contexts, conditions, situations, incidents, personal characteristics, values, views, psychological status, emotions, and feelings. Based on the purposes of the studies, these mentioned objects could then be portrayed, categorised, compared, framed, or linked to each other to build hypotheses or theories grounded in data. The grounded theory method, thematic analysis, content analysis, and discourse analysis are some of the used methods in this type of research. However, researchers may need to construct new terms or descriptions of implicit social or psychological actions, behaviours, or phenomena. These descriptions add new concepts or terms to people's language through which people communicate and refer to the studied or observed phenomena. Therefore, it is important to construct clear and precise terms or descriptions that do not create confusion or duality of standards.

3.2 Researcher's Definition and Perspective of Theory

Many definitions of the meaning of theory are offered in the literature. According to Charmaz (2014), the meaning of theory is not clear to many grounded theory researchers; where the author stated that "*the term theory remains slippery in*

[57] The researcher discovered that Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.88) have used the same term while describing the data analysis process where the authors stated: "*a researcher can think of analysis as 'mining' the data, digging beneath the surface to discover the hidden treasures contained within."* However, the researcher argues that qualitative data analysis is indeed a mining process.

grounded theory discourse and mirrors ambiguities about what theory means through the social science and profession" (Ibid, 2014, p.228). Therefore, it is essential to look over the definition and the meaning of theory and the meaning of developing a unified theory before addressing the researcher's knowledge and approach of grounded theory.

3.2.1 Researcher's Definition of 'Theory'

Theories are postulated or built for different purposes[58]. Many authors have proposed various definitions of what a theory means. Cottrell (2017, p.131) mentioned that a theory is: "*A set of ideas that helps to explain why something happens or happened in a particular way, and to predict likely outcomes in the future*." According to the author, theories are developed through "*evidence and reasoning,*" yet, not proven "*conclusively*." Another definition by Kerlinger (1986, cited in Wilson, 2010, p.49 and Carter, 2011, p.4) states that theory is "*A set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena.*" Likewise, Zikmund (2003, p.41) sees that theory is "*a coherent set of general propositions used to explain the apparent relationships among certain observed phenomena."* The author also added that "*theories allow generalisations beyond individual facts or situations."* Also, Maxwell (2012, p.48) sees that a theory is "*a set of concepts and ideas and the proposed relationships among these, a structure that is intended to capture or model something about the world*". Moreover, Schwandt (2007, cited in Mills, Birks and Hoare, 2014, p.7) defines theory "*as an explanatory scheme comprising a set of concepts related to each other through logical patterns of connectivity*." Similarly, Bryman and Bell (2015, p.26) cited that theory is "*a set of propositional statements linking the key concepts in a theory to one another*." Finally, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.62) cited that a theory is:

> "*a set of well-developed categories that are systematically developed in terms of their properties and dimensions and interrelated through statements of*

[58] Researcher's understanding

relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains something about a phenomenon."

However, coining a common definition of theory requires understanding the common nature of theories regardless of their purposes. Moreover, the researcher observed that the term 'theory' is used as a synonym to describe beliefs about reality or proven facts by many academics[59]. In general, the researcher's definition of a theory states that:

> A theory is an abstract statement of a belief or an assumption/proposition about the reality that either interprets (Reasoning/ Justification) why, when, where, or how things occur (Understanding/ Explanation), predicts outcomes or happenings (Prediction), correlates between variables or concepts (Correlation) or posits and construct a perception about reality (Perception)[60].

Based on the mentioned definition, theories can be classified into three major types according to their purposes. These are interpretive theories (interpret/explain why, when, where, or how), correlational theories (correlate between variables), and envisioned theories/perspectives[61] (posit or construct a perception about reality). However, whether it is a scientific, social, or any other type of theory, a theory remains modifiable (Charmaz, 2014) and questionable. Once a theory is logically and systematically investigated, it becomes fact or law or a belief and conviction about reality unless it is disapproved or falsified by other investigations or observations.

However, as mentioned in the preface of this section (3.1.1), theoretical research might include discovering existing theories or social beliefs, constructing[62] or developing new theories, elaborating existing theories, testing existing theories and hypotheses, and refining or refuting existing ones. Therefore, there are two methodologies of theoretical research: the hypothesis testing approach and what

[59] Many authors use the term theory or view to describe scientific or logical facts or axioms. For example, the Resource-Based View or theory states that firms' sustainable competitive advantage is dependent on their resources (Defee et al., 2010). This is a logical and common-sense belief. However, the key issue is how those resources are used.
[60] As the reader may notice, the researcher's definition is purpose-oriented (objective-Oriented).
[61] Such as the time-space curvature.
[62] As Charmaz (2014) argued that theories are constructed.

is known as the grounded theory approach. Hypothesis testing is based on positing a proposition or an assumption about reality (positivism) and empirically investigating its validity through experiments or mathematical or statistical data analysis. On the other hand, the grounded theory method focuses on building or extracting theories from reality that explain or interpret why, when, where, and how things occur or explain and interpret people's actions/interactions (interpretivism).

3.2.2 The Meaning of Developing a Unified Theory of SCM

In chapter 1, the organisational culture was defined as:

> 'The sum of the social and business and management traditions, attitudes, views, values, principles, beliefs, tenets, convictions, interests, knowledge, lack of knowledge, and experiences that shape and influence the managerial behaviour of an organisation, its goals and objectives, its managerial practices, its business strategies and policies, and its business decisions.'

Therefore, and based on the researcher's definition of theory (an abstract statement of a belief), developing a unified theory of SCM means discovering the common belief among scholars and practitioners of SCM. That is to identify what they all have in common and what their shared conviction is. In other words, it is to discover the belief they all agreed on, whether they are aware of or realise it. However, the common belief among practitioners is supposed to inform their common social interaction and the business practices of SCM. Therefore, the major social and business practices of SCM should be determined.

3.3 Researcher's Knowledge of Grounded Theory Method and its Different Approaches

The issue of defining concepts is a common academic phenomenon. The absence of scholarly consensus, for example, on the definition of SCM, the meaning of research, and the meaning of theory were not the only cases. There are also some discussions about '*What is GT? "is it a method, a technique, a*

methodology, a framework, or a paradigm?" (Walsh et al., 2015, p.582)[63]. Moreover, Charmaz (2014, p.334) mentioned that "*grounded theorists across the globe*" and many viewers reported a common problem with their colleagues in US and UK. The problem is the "*outdated and limited views of GT*" among those colleagues. In addition, Easterby-Smith et al. (2018, p.119) mentioned that researchers "*should be aware that there are different versions of grounded theory and will need to articulate*" their "*own position when writing up the research*."

These mentioned issues were the main reasons behind the researcher's decision to give an overview of the grounded theory and its different approaches. Also, it is important to introduce the main three versions of the method besides addressing the differences among those versions in detail. Therefore, this section gives an overview of GT, illustrates its main processes, and reports the main disagreements among the thought leaders of the method. Furthermore, this section introduces the researcher's viewpoint of the different existing approaches. Last, a summary of the key points of GT is introduced. Nonetheless, Appendix F presents further details about the method.

3.3.1 Overview

Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative research method that aims at discovering (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 2016a) or constructing (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015) theories that are grounded in the data. The method was first introduced by two sociologists, Barney G, Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, in 1967 in their "*seminal book 'The Discovery of Grounded Theory"* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Willig, 2014; Charmaz, 2014, Strauss and Corbin, 2015; Walsh et al., 2015, p.582). Glaser and Strauss (1967) discovered that theories could be developed by systematically analysing qualitative data extracted from reality. Based on their view, the authors suggested the term 'Grounded Theory' to describe this process or strategy. According to Charmaz (2014, pp.6-7), "*qualitative research in sociology was losing ground*" in the 1960s, and the arrival

[63] This article is entitled '*What is Grounded Theory: A Critical Reflective Conversation Among Scholars'*, published in Organisational Research Methods. Six authors co-authored the article including B. Glasser.

of the method "*sparked growing interests in qualitative methods*" and "*offered systematic strategies for qualitative research*".

The use of the method has evolved and diverged into different versions or approaches. UpToDate, three main versions of the method are introduced in the literature (Charmaz, 2014; Willig, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015). The first version is known as the Classical grounded theory or the Glaserian Grounded theory (Silverman, 2010, p. 296; Ramalho et al., 2015). This version embodies the original idea of the method, which was mutually discovered and established by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In 1990, Strauss took another approach to GT, where he introduced a different version of the method. This version is known as the Straussian grounded theory (Silverman, 2010; Charmaz, 2014). The third version of grounded theory was introduced by sociologist Kathy Charmaz in 2000. The version is known as the Constructivist Grounded Theory. This version, as claimed by Charmaz (2014, p.13), "*answers numerous criticisms raised about earlier versions of grounded theory*" and "*highlights the flexibility of the method and resists the mechanical application of it.*" Also, Charmaz (2014, p.17) sees that "*any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it*."

3.3.2 The Main Processes of the Grounded Theory Method

The common agreement among the thought leaders of the GT method is that the method is a systematic qualitative data analysis process that consists of many stages (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015). The common processes are data coding and categorising, constant comparison, theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and memo-writing. These are explained below.

3.3.2.1 Data Coding and Categorising

3.3.2.1.1 Data Coding

Data coding is the core process of GT. According to Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.57), it is the process of "*denoting concepts to stand for meaning"* or "*stand for data"*. Concepts, as defined by the authors, are "*words used by the analysts to*

stand for interpreted meaning." Charmaz (2014, p.111) mentioned that "*coding is the process of defining what data are about."* It is the process of attaching "*labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about"* (Ibid, 2014, p.4). Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.68) mentioned that the level of data coding ranges from "*superficial to in-depth*" analysis." The authors mentioned that concepts derived from a superficial analysis are in-vivo codes. In-vivo coding, as defined by the authors, is "*using the actual words of research participants.*" On the other side, in-depth coding "*develops concepts in terms of their properties and dimensional variations*."

3.3.2.1.2 Data Coding Phases

GT thought leaders follow different phases of data coding; however, different terminologies were used to describe those coding phases. Glaser and Strauss (1967) rely on three coding phases: open, selective, and theoretical coding. Strauss and Corbin (2015) also use three different coding phases: open, axial, and selective coding, while Charmaz (2014) uses two phases of coding: initial and focused coding. According to Kaiser (2016, pp.86-87), who adopts Strauss and Corbin's (2015) coding phases, "*open coding is the part of data analysis that focuses on the conceptualisation and categorisation of phenomena through an intensive analysis of the data*." The main objective in this phase "*is to develop a wealth of codes."* The axial coding phase is where "*the emerging relationships between the elaborated concepts need to be integrated into an overarching framework with one core category*", while "*the goal of selective coding is to integrate the different categories that have been developed, elaborated, and mutually related during axial coding into one cohesive theory*." In this phase, "*categories are theoretically integrated into a consistent overarching theory as they are subsumed under a core category that is linked to all other categories that were established in axial coding.*" (Kaiser, 2016, p. 87).

3.3.2.1.3 Data Coding Approach

Besides the different labelling of the data coding phase, GT thought leaders followed different approaches in the coding process. In 1978, Glaser provided what is called 'Glaser's Coding Families' (Kelle, 2012), Strauss and Corbin

developed what they called the 'Coding Paradigm' and the 'Conditional/Consequential Matrix (Strauss and Corbin, 2015), while Charmaz (2014) did not offer any specific coding approach[64]. However, Glaser criticised Strauss's coding paradigm as the former sees that the coding paradigm forces theory on data and contradicts the emergence of theory. Appendix F presents more details about Glaser's Coding Families and Strauss and Corbin's (2015) Coding Paradigm and the 'Conditional/Consequential Matrix.

3.3.2.2 Constant Comparison

The constant comparison is the process of comparing data to data, codes with codes, concepts to concepts, and categories to categories based on their differences and similarities (Charmaz, 2014). Strauss and Corbin (2015) introduced two "*types of comparisons: constant comparison and theoretical comparison."* According to the authors, constant comparison is "the *analytic process of comparing different pieces of data against each other for similarities and differences".* In contrast*,* "*theoretical comparison is an analytic tool used to stimulate thinking about properties and dimensions of categories*" (Ibid, 2015, p.85).

The value that constant comparison adds to the data analysis is that it "*allows researchers to reduce data to concepts, to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, and to differentiate one concept from another*" (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.94). On the other hand, the purpose of theoretical comparison "*is to sensitise researchers to what to look for in data or to suggest ideas for theoretical sampling"* (Ibid, 2015, p.95).

3.3.2.3 Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling is the process of gathering additional data to verify and support the outcomes of the initial data coding process and the hypotheses a researcher develops. According to Strauss and Corbin (2015), theoretical sampling is "*a method of data collection based on concepts derived from data."* The authors mentioned that this process aims "*to collect data from places,*

[64] Based on studying Charmaz's (2014) book.

people, and events that will maximise opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations and identify relationships between concepts" (Ibid, 2015, p.134).

3.3.2.4 Theoretical Saturation

In this phase, researchers reach a state of confidence about their concepts and categories where further data gathering reveals no new concepts, categories, and properties, nor new theoretical insights to the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2014).

3.3.2.5 Memo-Writing

Memo writing is what a researcher writes during his/her data analysis. These memos are then used to analyse the data and stimulate the researcher's thinking (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz, 2015; Strauss and Corbin, 2015). However, those memos, according to Charmaz (2015), are considered as intellectual properties of the researchers, where Charmaz (2015) sees that it is the researcher's choice to share those memos or not. In contrast, Strauss and Corbin (2015) suggest that sharing those memos is part of the quality requirements in the GT study.

3.3.3 Type of Data Analysis in Grounded Theory

In grounded theory research, the data gathering and the data analysis is a simultaneous process where researchers use comparative analysis while collecting and coding the data; this process is called 'Constant Comparisons' (Strauss and Corbin, 2015). Figure 23 shows the relationship between data collection and analysis.

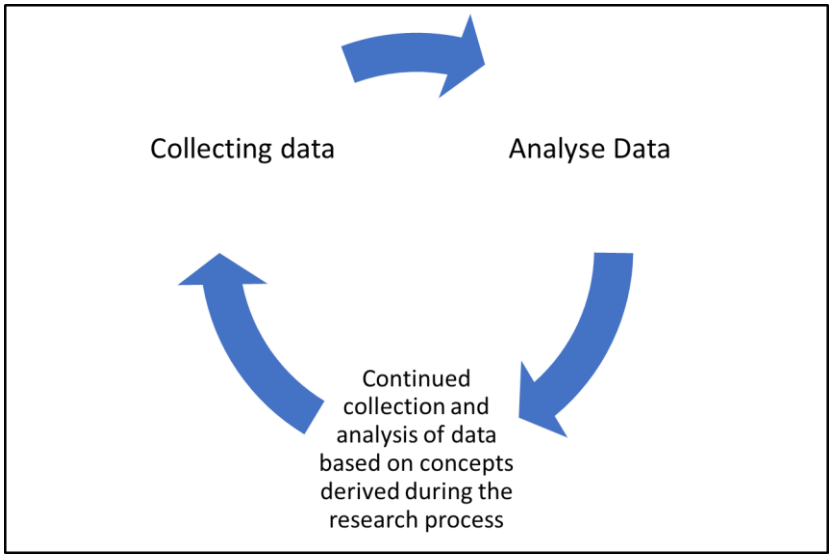


Figure 23 Interrelationship Between Data Collection and Analysis

Source: (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.8)

Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.85) define data analysis as "*the act of taking data, thinking about it, and denoting concepts to stand for the analyst's interpreting of the meaning intended by the participants.*" It means the act of interpreting data for meanings. Also, the authors mentioned that "*interpretating means assigning meaning to raw data in form of concepts*" (Ibid, 2015, p.66). However, there are three main types of data analysis in conducting research or knowledge creation: induction, deduction, and abduction. Also, using these types is called inductive, deductive, or abductive reasoning (Shank, 2008; Charmaz, 2014).

According to Charmaz (2014), Thornberg (2012), and Timmermans and Tavory (2012), GT is an abductive research method. Collins and Stockton (2018, p.2) cited that "*Abduction is the creative process of generating new theories based on surprising research evidence, which ultimately leads a researcher away from old ideas to new insights coded into theory."* Thornberg (2012, p.247) also mentioned that "*the general idea of abduction is to select or invent a hypothesis that explains a particular segment or set of data better than any other candidate hypotheses*." Similarly, Timmermans and Tavory (2012, p.167) stated that "*abduction refers to a creative inferential process aimed at producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence."* Moreover, Peirce (1934, cited in ibid,

2012) stated that *"abduction is the process of forming an explanatory hypothesis"* (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012, p.171). However, Charmaz (2014) explained the concept of abduction as follows:

> *"Abduction is a type of reasoning that begins with the researcher examining inductive data." … "After scrutinising these data, the researcher entertains all possible theoretical explanations for the observed data and then forms hypotheses and tests them to confirm or disconfirm each explanation until he or she arrives at the most plausible theoretical interpretation of the observed data."*
>
> (Charmaz, 2014, p.341).

3.3.4 Grounded Theory Process Models

Different models were used to represent the GT process. Charmaz (2014) illustrated the process's main elements, Strauss and Corbin (2015) illustrated the elements and the used strategies to enhance the process's rigour, while Bryman and Bell (2015) introduced a different model. Figures 24 shows Charmaz's (2014) model. However, the suggested models by Strauss and Corbin (2015) and Bryman and Bell (2015) are presented in Appendix F.

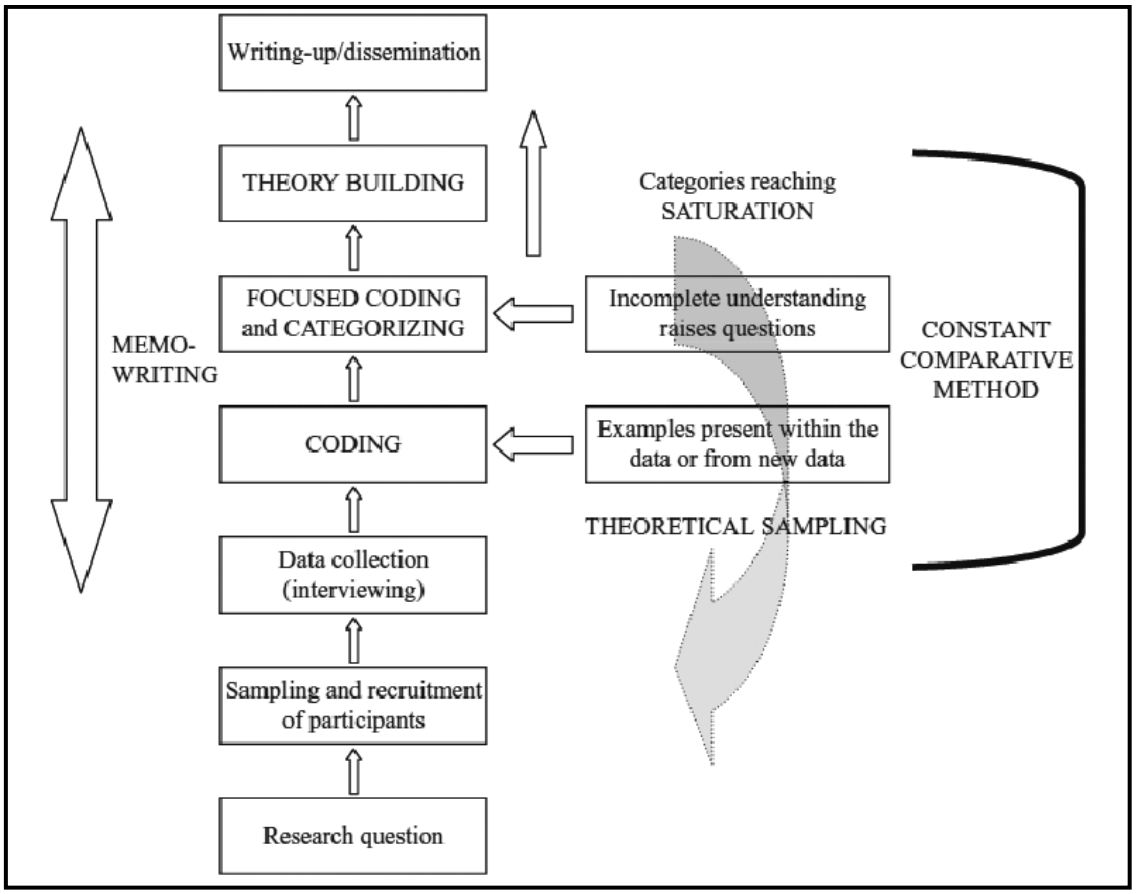


Figure 24 Grounded Theory Process

Source: (Tweed and Charmaz, 2012, p.133)[65]

3.3.5 The Main Disagreements and Differences of the three Grounded Theory Versions

The GT literature is replete with discussions about the differences between Glaser's, Strauss's, and Charmaz's versions of GT (Kelle, 2005; Denk, Kaufmann and Carter, 2012; Charmaz, 2014; Ramalho et al., 2015; Kaiser, 2016). The differences were presented and analysed in different ways. For instance, Jones and Noble (2007, cited in Denk, Kaufmann and Carter, 2012, p.744) identified five dimensions of difference between those approaches; these dimensions are *"emergence and researcher distance", "theory development", "specific, non-*

[65] In Charmaz (2014), the publishing date is 2011, while the accessed reference is 2012. Also, there is some difference in the model. The 'curved arrow' in the presented model in Charmaz (2014, p.18) is in an opposite direction (upward). Therefore, the researcher used the original model.

optional procedures", "core category", and the "coding procedures". Denk, Kaufmann and Carter (2012, p.744) added a sixth dimension which is the "*evaluation criteria."*

Nonetheless, the main disagreement among GT thought leaders is, in fact, no more than a philosophical debate. The researcher's viewpoint is supported by Mills, Birks and Hoare (2014) and Ramalho et al. (2015). According to Mills, Birks and Hoare (2014, p.4), "*the methodological schools of thought that shape the use of grounded theory methods are clearly divided on the question of reality*". Similarly, Ramalho et al. (2015, para. 24) described this difference as an "*epistemological assumption.*"

Nevertheless, six major disputes among GT thought leaders were identified in the literature review of GT; these are addressed herein.

3.3.5.1 Philosophical and Theoretical Dispute

Glaser sees that theories are discovered from the data, while Strauss, Corbin and Charmaz see that theories are constructed (Charmaz, 2014; Mills, Birks and Hoare, 2014). Charmaz (2014) argues that, in social research, theories are a construction of reality by the views of researchers besides the implicit meanings and the experiential views of their participants (Ibid, 2014, p.17). In contrast, Glaser (2012, p.28) criticised the constructivist approach, stating that "*constructivist grounded theory is a misnomer.*" Aside from these disagreements, Willig (2014, p.240) sees that the grounded theory method is based on *"a realist orientation."*

Another disagreement among GT thought leaders is the epistemological foundation of the method. Strauss and Corbin (2015), as well as Charmaz (2014), adopt the pragmatism research philosophy in their versions of GT, while according to Charmaz (2014), Glaser's version or approach of GT is based on the positivism research philosophy (Charmaz, 2014, p.231). Willig (2014, p.236) also mentioned that *"the grounded theory method subscribes to a positivist epistemology"*. In their book, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.18) mentioned that the GT epistemology evolved from *"both the tradition of Chicago interactionism and*

the philosophy of pragmatism." Furthermore, Charmaz (2014) classified grounded theories into positivist and interpretivist theories.

Regarding the theoretical foundation of the method, Strauss and Corbin (2015) touched on interactionism or, as described by Kelle (2019), the interactionist social theory. On her part, Charmaz (2014, p.261) mentioned that symbolic interactionism is "*the major theoretical perspective associated with grounded theory."* Also, Charmaz (2014, p.262) mentioned that the symbolic interactionism "*perspective recognises that"* people "*act in response to how"* they view their "*situations.*" Furthermore, the author mentioned that the symbolic interactionism "*perspective derives from the pragmatist tradition."* According to Charmaz (2014, p.263), "*pragmatism assumes that the value of theories or beliefs rests on effective practical application."* However, Charmaz (2014) acknowledges that "*symbolic interactionism is a perspective, not an explanatory theory that specifies variables, and predicts outcomes."* Accordingly, Charmaz (2014, p.262) sees that this perspective encourages learning "*about people and places, times and troubles, actions, and accomplishments."*

On the contrary, Glaser (2014, p.11) argues that "*the ontological and epistemological issues of varied theoretical perspectives, such as symbolic interaction, are not relevant for"* Classical Grounded Theory (CGT). Glaser (2014, p.11) also sees that *"just grounded conceptualisations of patterns in whatever data is used is relevant."* To conclude, Glaser (2014, p.11) believes that "*All is data in which the patterns are conceptualised for CGT*" and "*the contest between social versions of GT is empty."*

3.3.5.2 Grounded Theory vs Grounded Description

Glaser (2016b,2019) criticised Strauss's version of GT. He argues that the outcome of Strauss's version is not a grounded theory but rather a Grounded Description or Conceptual Description (Ibid, 2016). Glaser sees that Strauss changed the original purpose of GT, which is theory development. However, it is better to quote Glaser's arguments to report this issue. The following statements show Glaser's (2019, p.2) viewpoint.

- "*Grounded description is on the increase with the increase of grounded theory throughout the world. Much grounded description is jargonized as GT, and it is not GT.*"
- "*GT is the relation between concepts which emerged from the population by constant comparing and then are related to each other by a theoretical code."*
- "*Grounded description is trying to describe the population studied, like a qualitative data analysis (QDA) study requires, by describing all the interchangeable indicators that grounded the concept*."
- "*Grounded description is a step toward the discovery of a GT, not a GT. But many new to the GT methodology do not realize this.*"
- "*Grounded description is further supported by the simple fact that most people, including academics, cannot conceptualize*."
- "*There are many books written now on GT that are actually about grounded description*."
- "*GT's goal is to provide a conceptual explanation of general patterns of behaviour. It is not for verifying hypotheses like descriptive data is*."

3.3.5.3 Emergence vs Verification

According to Charmaz (2014, p.11), Glaser defines "*grounded theory as a method of discovery*", treats "*categories as emergent from the data*", relies "*on a direct and, often, narrow empiricism, developed a concept-indicator approach*", considers "*concepts to be variables, and"* emphasizes "*analysing a basic social process."* On the contrary, Strauss "*took a looser approach than Glaser and briefly linked grounded theory with verification*." Charmaz (2014) also mentioned that when J. Corbin co-authored Strauss's book, they "*further moved the method toward seeing grounded theory as a method of verification*." Therefore, "*Glaser (1992) contends that Strauss and Corbin's procedures force data and analysis into preconceived categories, ignore emergence, and result in 'full conceptual description,' not grounded theory"* (Ibid, 2014, p.11).

3.3.5.4 Objectivist vs Constructivist Grounded Theory

Charmaz (2014, p.234) classified grounded theories into two types: objectivist and constructivist. The author stated that: "*differences about where various authors stand vis-à-vis positivist and interpretive traditions surface in objectivist and constructivists grounded theory."* In discussing her view, Charmaz (2014, p.235) mentioned that "*Glaser's (1978,1992,1998,2001,2003,2009) treatment of theory contains strong positivist leanings*." Charmaz (2014, p.235) also mentioned that Glaser *" emphasises the development of theoretical categories that serve as variables*, *assumes an indicator-concept approach, seeks context-free but modifiable theoretical statements, and aims at achieving a parsimony and scope in explanatory power"*.

Charmaz (2014, p.237) believes that the "*objectivist grounded theory erases the social context from which data emerge, the influence of the researcher*", and "*the interaction between grounded theorists and their participants.*" Also, the author added that the "*objectivist grounded theorists remain separate and distant from research participants and their realities"* and "*may adopt observational methods*."

On the other hand, Charmaz (2014, p.239) believes that the constructivist grounded theory approach "*places a priority on the studied phenomenon and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data*." The author also added that "*constructivists study how participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations*" and conditions. The key point Charmaz (2014, p.239) mentioned is that the constructive approach is not just "*looking at how individuals view their situations*", not just "*theorising the interpretive work that research participants do, but also acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation*" and the developed "*theory depends on the researcher's view*." Table 4 shows Charmaz's (2014) comparison between the two traditions.

Table 4 Contrasting Objectivist vs Constructivist Grounded Theory Approaches

Source: (Charmaz, 2014, p.236)

Objectivist Grounded Theory	Constructivist Grounded Theory
Foundational assumptions • *"Assumes an external reality."* • *"Assumes discovery of data."* • *"Assumes conceptualisation emerges from data."* • *"Views representation of data as unproblematic."* • *"Assumes the neutrality, passivity, and authority of the observer."*	**Foundational assumptions** • *"Assumes multiple realities."* • *"Assumes mutual construction of data through interaction."* • *"Assumes researcher construct categories."* • *"Views representation of data as problematic, relativistic, situational, and partial."* • *"Assumes the observer's values, priorities, position, and action affect views*."
Objectives • *"Aims to achieve context-free generalisation."* • *"Aims for parsimonious, abstract, conceptualisation that transcends historical and situational locations."* • *"Aims to create theory that fits, works, has relevance, and is modifiable."*	***Objectives*** • *"Views generalisation as partial, conditional, and situated in time, space, position, action, and interaction."* • *"Aims for interpretive understanding of historical situated data."* • *"Specifies range of variation."* • *"Aims to create theory that has credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness."*

Objectivist Grounded Theory	Constructivist Grounded Theory
Implications for Data Analysis • *"Views data analysis as an objective process."* • *"Sees emergent categories as forming the analysis."* • *"Sees reflexivity as one possible data source."* • *"Gives priority to researcher's analytic categories and voice."*	***Implications for Data Analysis*** • *"Acknowledges subjectivities throughout data analysis."* • *"Views co-constructed data as begining the analytic direction."* • *"Engages in reflexivity throughout the research process."* • *"Seeks and (re) represents participants' views and voices as integral to the analysis."*

Another issue that Charmaz (2014) mentioned is the definition of theory. The author introduces two definitions of theory, a positivist definition and an interpretive definition. According to Charmaz (2014, p.229), "*most prevalent definitions of theory"* are derived from positivism. The main features of positivist theories are seeking causes, looking for explanations, and emphasising "*generality and universality*." The core feature of the "*positivist definition of theory*" is that it treats theories "*as a statement of relationships between abstract concepts that cover a wide range of empirical observations*" (Ibid, 2014, p.229).

Furthermore, Charmaz (2014, p.229) mentioned that this type of theory treats *"concepts as variables*", identifies "*the properties of concept*", specifies, explains, and predicts "*relations between concepts*", systemizes *"knowledge*", "*verify theoretical relationships through hypothesis-testing*," and generates *"hypotheses for research*."

On the other side, Charmaz (2014, p.231) mentioned that the "*interpretive definition of theory*" emphasises "*Interpretation and gives abstract understanding greater priority than explanation."* The main features of interpretive theories are 1) aiming at understanding the "*meanings and actions and how people construct*

them", 2) bringing "*in the subjectivity of the actor and may recognise the subjectivity of the researcher"*, 3) the call for "*imaginative understanding of studied phenomenon*", 4) assuming "*emergent, multiple realities. 5) indeterminacy, 6) facts and values as linked, 7) truth as provisional, 8) and social life as processual*."

Moreover, Charmaz (2014, p.231) mentioned that this type of theory conceptualises "*the studied phenomenon to understand it in abstract terms",* articulates *"theoretical claims pertaining to the scope, depth, power, and relevance of given analysis",* acknowledges *"subjectivity in theorising and hence recognise the role of experience, standpoints, and interactions, including one's own",* and offers *" an imaginative theoretical interpretation, that makes sense of the studied phenomenon."*

In addition, Charmaz (2014) compared the epistemologies of grounded theory. Table 5 shows this comparison.

Table 5 Epistemological Underpinnings of Grounded Theory

Source: (Charmaz, 2014, p.232).

Positivist	Pragmatist
• *"Follows the scientific method."* • *"Assumes an external reality."* • *"Unbiased observer"*	• *"Emphasise problem-solving"* • *"Assumes a fluid, somewhat indeterminate reality."*
• *"Discovers abstract generalities."* • *"Explains empirical phenomena."* • *"Separates facts and values."* • *"Truth is provisional."*	• *"Defines multiple perspectives. "* • *"Studies people's actions to solve emergent problems"* • *"Joins facts and values."* • *"Truth is provisional."*

Remarkably, Charmaz (2014, p.259) stated that she has *"drawn lines between positivist and interpretive inquiry, constructivist and objectivist grounded theory, and the subsequent distinctions and directions they suggest*." Though, the author confesses that "*in research practice, …, the lines are not so clear*" where the author stated:

> "*positivist researchers may explore elusive topics with ephemeral meanings and seek to understand them. Constructivist grounded theorists may investigate overt processes in painstaking detail and offer explanatory statements."*
>
> (Ibid, 2014, p.259).

3.3.5.5 Conducting Literature Review

Another major disagreement among thought leaders is about when and how to use the extant literature in GT research (Thornberg, 2012). Glaser and his proponents advise researchers to delay the literature review to the end of their analysis (Ibid, 2012). Glaser warned that reading the literature could contaminate GT researchers' thinking and force theory on the collected data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2001, 2005, cited in Thornberg, 2012). Yet, "*Glaser argues that researchers should possess prior knowledge and read literature in other substantive areas, unrelated to the actual research project, for the purpose of enhancing their theoretical sensitivity by knowing many theoretical codes"* (Thornberg, 2012, p.246). Furthermore, Glaser sees that conducting the literature review shall be the last step after researchers develop their theory. The purpose of conducting the literature review at the end is to compare the developed theory with existing theories, if any (Dunne, 2011).

On the contrary, Strauss and Corbin (2015), Charmaz (2014), Thornberg (2012) and other scholars argue that conducting a literature review is inevitable. Denk, Kaufmann and Carter (2012, p.744) mentioned that "*Strauss (1987) encourages researchers to build their studies on existing knowledge gained from prior personal and professional experiences*" while Glaser encourages researchers to maintain distance and to "*enter the field without prior assumptions or theoretical*

knowledge" (Ibid, 2012, p.744). Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.49) see that the literature can be used for six purposes. These purposes are making comparisons between concepts, enhancing a researcher's sensitivity, providing descriptive materials for the developed concepts, supplying questions for initial observations and interviews, stimulating analytic questions, and confirming the research findings. In the confirmation process, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.51) mentioned that when the investigation ends, researchers can use the findings "*to illustrate where the literature is incorrect, simplistic, or only partially explains phenomena*."

Nonetheless, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.55) warned that "*having too much knowledge about the subject under investigation can bias interpretations and block discovery of new concept*." In addition, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.55) mentioned that the "*literature can hinder creativity",* but when used for comparison, "*it can enhance the ability*" to identify the properties and the dimensions of the developed concepts from the data. In summarising their thoughts, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.55) recommended that learning "*when and how to use the literature"* is important.

Similarly, Charmaz (2014, p.306) argues that delaying the literature review could "*result in rehashing old empirical problems and dismissing the literature*." In addition, Charmaz (2015) differentiated between conducting a literature review about the area under study and conducting a literature review to write a proposal and position one's research within the extant literature. Moreover, Charmaz (2014) mentioned that there is an increased realisation by grounded theorists "*that a lack of familiarity with relevant literature is unlikely and untenable*." However, Charmaz (2014, p.305) sees that researchers may use their analysis and findings to "*critique earlier studies and theories*" and to compare their findings to the literature as it comprises a valuable source of comparison and analysis. The author mentioned that researchers can "*show how and where the existing ideas illuminate their findings and how their theories extend, transcend or challenge dominant ideas."* Also, Charmaz (2014) mentioned that through the comparison process, researchers would see whether the developed theory provides a "*fresh or deeper understanding of*" the "*studied phenomenon*" (Ibid,

2014, p.288). Moreover, Charmaz (2014, p.286) sees that GT researchers should have a clear theoretical framework to locate their argument and analysis in the relevant literature.

3.3.5.6 Pure Induction

Thornberg (2012, p.246) discussed the idea of pure induction in GT, where the author mentioned that this idea is non-realistic. The author cited many scientist philosophers and grounded theorists from twelve references who criticised the idea that a researcher can "*collects and analyses theory-free data without any prior theoretical knowledge and preconceptions."* Moreover, Thornberg (2012, p.246) cited that "*observation of a phenomenon is inevitably shaped by prior knowledge of the phenomenon.*" Also, Kelle (2012, p.20) asserted that "*researchers always have to draw on existing stocks of theoretical knowledge in order to understand, describe, and explain empirically observed phenomena*."

Furthermore, Thornberg (2012) cited Charmaz's (2006) criticism against Glaser's position, where Charmaz (2006) mentioned that "*Glaser's position … is neither entirely inductive nor free from influence from extant theories and concepts*" (Ibid, 2012, p.246). In supporting Charmaz's (2006) criticism, Thornberg (2012) evoked Glaser's (1978, 1998, 2005) arguments that researchers should "*avoid being contaminated by preconceived concepts and ideas*" and "*researchers should possess prior knowledge and read literature in other substantive areas, unrelated to the actual research project, for the purpose of enhancing their theoretical sensitivity by knowing many theoretical codes"* (Ibid, 2012, p.246). However, Charmaz (2006) and Thornberg (2012), as their argument reveals, see that it is hard to reconcile between Glaser's argument to avoid reading the literature in the area under study and reading the literature in other substantive areas that could, according to Glaser, enhances theoretical sensitivity.

3.3.6 Researcher’s Viewpoint about the Different Approaches of Grounded Theory

3.3.6.1 No Significant Process Difference

There is no vast difference between the three main approaches. All versions of GT share common GT processes (coding and categorising, constant comparison, theoretical sampling, and memo writing). Also, all the followed approaches by Glaser, Strauss and Corbin, and Charmaz are likely to complement each other and provide a rigorous qualitative data analysis process, whether the outcome is an objectivist or constructivist grounded theory or a grounded description.

3.3.6.2 Conducting an Early Literature Review

Glaser, as clarified earlier, advises researchers to delay the literature review to the end of their analysis and warns that reading the literature could contaminate their thinking and force theory on the collected data. On the contrary, Strauss and Corbin (2015), Charmaz (2014,2015), Thornberg (2012) and other scholars argue that conducting a literature review is inevitable. However, Glaser was right about his advice. In the early phases of conducting this research, as introduced in chapter 1, the researcher's initial focus was to develop a definition that might lead to a better understanding of the meaning of SCM; it was not focusing on theory development. The researcher’s focus on identifying SCM objectives and organisations' practices was the initial coding phase that represents the first phase of the GT process. Also, this process led to discovering the research gap and identifying the theory behind the researcher’s grounded theory coding approach, as will be introduced. In addition, the SCM literature showed that some scholars, who discussed the SCM theoretical foundation, related SCM to existing theories (e.g., Mentzer et al., 2001; Svensson, 2002; Mathews, 2003). Remarkably, the researcher, as will be mentioned in chapter 5, was influenced by Mathew's (2003) view.

3.3.6.3 The Outcome of Glaser’s vs Strauss’s Versions

Glaser’s criticism against Strauss’s version of grounded theory is reasonable. Strauss’s version of GT is, in fact, a descriptive or thematic analysis approach or a grounded description, as Glaser suggests. Moreover, a key characteristic of

any given interpretive theory is generating hypotheses and predictions, and those hypotheses are described through a general statement and can be empirically tested through quantitative research. Glaser (2004, para.7) clarified that the classic grounded theory (CGT) is "*a set of integrated conceptual hypotheses systematically generated to produce an inductive theory about a substantive area."* This definition of GT complies with many definitions of theory, including Strauss's and Corbin's (2015) definition. In their book, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.62) stated that "*theory remains relevant as a foundation for explaining phenomena and for providing concepts and hypotheses for subsequent research."* Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.215) mentioned that the purpose of the second part of their book (chapters 12 to 16) is to demonstrate "*how the method is applied to data*." The authors stated:

> *"as the reader moves through the next five chapters, he or she will notice how the process of constructing theory occurs from early concept identification to integration."*
>
> (Ibid, 2015, p.215).

Despite that, the presented example by Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.301) about the story of Vietnam war Veterans supports Glaser's (2016b) argument. In their explanation of their analysis, Strauss and Corbin (2015) stated:

> *"Survival is the main theme", "Every action-interaction carried out alone, or as part of a team effort was aimed at surviving the risks"; "The risks arose out of conditions and varied with the arrangement of conditions"; "survival has certain properties"; and "Reconciling necessitates making adjustment in self and in image of war then using the appropriate strategies to survive the perceived risks not only in war but of life afterwards."*
>
> (Ibid, 2015, p.300).

In general, Strauss and Corbin (2015) introduced their diagram named "*Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities*." Figure 25 shows the mentioned diagram. It is clear, as Glaser (2016b) argues, that the mentioned diagram does not show any hypotheses; it describes or portrays the survival theme.

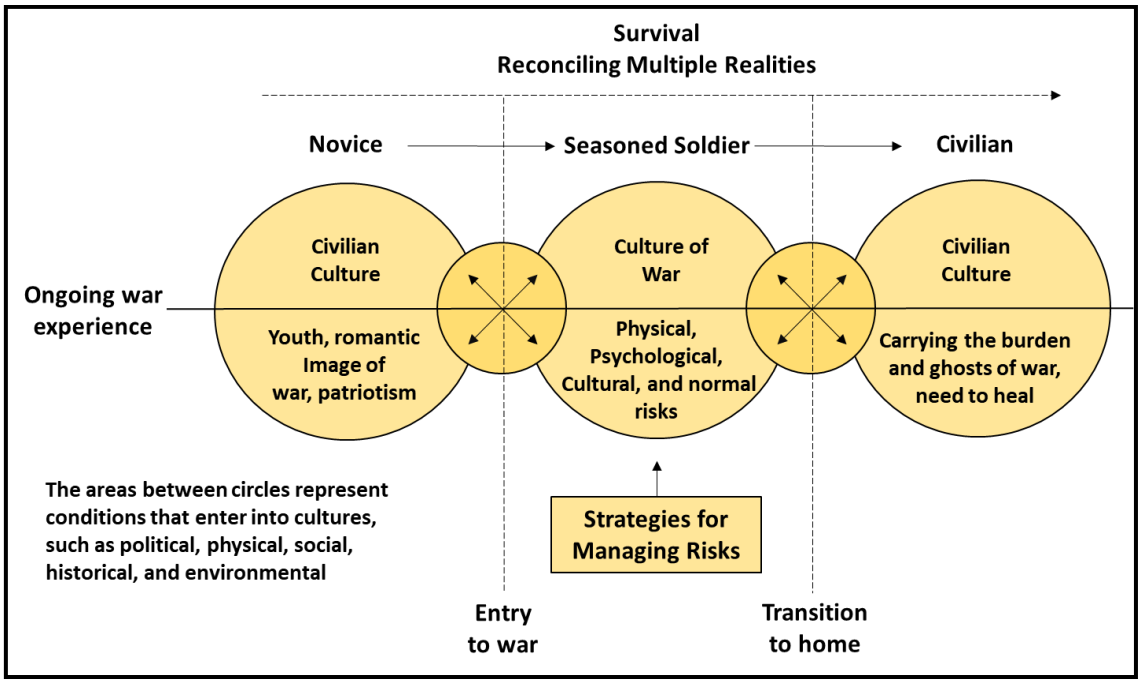


Figure 25 Strauss and Corbin (2015) Example: Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities

Source: (Ibid, 2015, p.301).

In addition to what is mentioned, Charmaz (2014) acknowledges the researcher's finding where she stated: "*many grounded theorists state that they aim for theory construction rather than identification of themes, except perhaps those influenced by Strauss and Corbin*" (Ibid, 2014, p.107).

3.3.6.4 Glaser's Coding Families and Strauss's Coding Paradigm

The offered coding families by Glaser and the coding paradigm and condition/consequential matrix by Strauss and Corbin (2015) complement each other and are useful for interpretive, explanatory, and descriptive analysis of qualitative data. This means the data analysis in the grounded theory method can be classified into 1) theoretical data analysis that aims at constructing or discovering theories that interpret or explain reality, and 2) descriptive data analysis that aims at describing or portraying reality (Charmaz, 2014)[66]. However, it is worth recalling what Kelle (2012) and Thornbergs (2012) had mentioned.

[66] As Charmaz, 2014, p.17) stated "*any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it*."

Kelle (2012, p.20) stated that "*researchers always have to draw on existing stocks of theoretical knowledge in order to understand, describe, and explain empirically observed phenomena*". Also, Thornberg (2012, p.246) cited that "*observation of a phenomenon is inevitably shaped by prior knowledge of the phenomenon.*" This statement supports the researcher's description of qualitative data analysis as a mining process where qualitative researchers do not only approach the textual data with theoretical knowledge, but also, with social axioms, norms, and beliefs. The coding process is, in fact, the data mining process through which researchers identify concepts or meanings and construct labels or names and categories according to the attributes or nature of those concepts.

3.3.6.5 There is No Such Thing as Pure Induction

Social research, as clarified in section (3.1.1), studies people's thoughts, behaviours, habits, traditions, interests, practices, actions, reactions, interactions, and discourses. Glaser and Strauss (1967), Charmaz (2014), and Strauss and Corbin (2015) mentioned that the grounded theory method focuses on studying the social processes and actions of participants. Charmaz (2014) mentioned two purposes of social theories: explanation and understanding people's actions/interactions. However, the researcher's understanding of theory, as presented in section 3.2.1, is that theories have different purposes. Among those objectives is explaining/interpreting and understanding why, when, where, or how natural phenomena or things occur or explaining/interpreting and understanding people's actions, reactions, interactions, and discourses.

Based on the foregoing, any interpretive research that aims at developing an interpretive theory can only be built on existing laws, theories, postulates, and axioms. Those laws, theories, postulates, and axioms construct the basis on which the grounded theory method is built. In other words, those laws, theories, postulates, and axioms form the general framework of interpretation and, consequently, theory development. For example, in this research, the researcher's data coding and the objective-oriented approach were built on the fact that there is a goal behind every purposeful human action or interaction. The researcher's theoretical statement of this fact or theory is that:

> ‘Human purposeful action/interaction is based on achieving or the occurrence of desirable outcomes and avoiding or preventing the occurrence of non-desirable outcomes.’

The researcher’s belief is that in the business and management field, organisational practices, policies, strategies, and decisions are based on achieving or the occurrence of desirable outcomes and avoiding or preventing the occurrence of non-desirable outcomes. Therefore, the researcher's task is identifying those business practices and the desirable/ non-desirable outcomes behind SCM.

Another example is that explaining a natural phenomenon is based on people’s belief that there is a reason or multiple reasons behind any natural phenomenon. The role of researchers is to discover that reason or those reasons. Similarly, symbolic interactionism is based on many common-sense facts and propositions. Among those facts is that people communicate through language and gestures; they communicate and interact with each other for different intentions or purposes, such as sharing and exchanging knowledge, thoughts, and social experiences or expressing feelings. Another fact is that people use different actions or strategies to achieve their desired outcomes, share and exchange thoughts, or express feelings. Furthermore, people’s discourse entails explicit names or concepts besides implicit meanings to refer to reality or to exchange thoughts. Moreover, individuals’ social interactions or responses to others are contingent and are based on individuals’ values, beliefs, impressions about or feelings towards others, knowledge or experience, interpretation and understanding of reality in addition to their assessment and view of self, situations, and others (social/emotional intelligent).

A further example is that people believe that there are different ways of achieving goals. The cliché that ‘All roads lead to Rome’ is an example of this fact. On the contrary, people believe that there is a relation between external conditions, situations, self-experience, or historical events and human behaviour or response and interaction. Accordingly, they may interpret people’s actions, reactions, or discourses based on those events, conditions, or situations. This belief is

obviously one of the beliefs behind Strauss's and Corbin's (2015) conditional matrix and coding paradigm, which according to Glaser, forces theory on data. Therefore, the tenet that pure induction is not realistic is advocated in this research. Any interpretation of human actions, interactions, or discourses is inevitably based on general laws, facts, axioms, beliefs, knowledge, experience, or even substantive facts or beliefs. However, researchers should avoid pre-judgment or pre-interpretation or reasoning. Researchers should study all possible reasons and build their interpretations on logical and rational correlations and hypotheses.

3.3.6.6 Developing a Unified Approach to Grounded Theory

The GT literature showed that there is no sign that a study of the different versions of GT aimed at establishing a common ground that merges the three approaches of GT. Nonetheless, the researcher's conviction is that achieving common ground and a unified perspective and classification of the GT method is feasible if thought leaders or scholars from different specialities (science, sociology, psychology, and business and management) are willing to collaborate and integrate their efforts. Also, there is a need to avoid the dogmatic thinking of research philosophies and to focus on improving the practical implementation of the method and improving the coding process.

However, the researcher's viewpoint is that applying GT requires having a coding or data mining framework that simplifies the theory-building process without forcing or imposing preconceived interpretations. Also, there is a need for developing a universal 'Theory-Building Framework or 'Theory-Building' domains. In this study, the researcher's developed model of data coding in the GT study is presented in (section 3.4.2.2).

3.3.7 Summary of Grounded Theory Key Points

This section presented an overview of the GT method. Three different approaches were introduced in the literature to implement the method. This diversity of methods requires researchers to give an overview of the GT method to justify the used approach or present their own approaches. Furthermore, this

section clarified the researcher's viewpoint about the different approaches of GT and reported a summary of those main differences. However, the key points to emphasis are: 1) grounded theory method is a process that is based on systematic data coding, categorising, and modelling; 2) the main purpose of the grounded theory method is theory building, not theory testing or verification; 3) the method is originally used to study and theorise people's social actions/interaction and processes; 4) the developed theory can be substantive or formal theory; 5) the method can be used in a flexible way; 6) researchers can employ any source of data including the extant literature 'All is data'; 7) researchers are invited to develop their own grounded theory data coding approaches; 8) researchers' may locate and compare their theories in the extant literature and build their argument and analysis to *"extend, transcend or challenge dominant ideas*" (Charmaz, 2014, p.305); 9) applying the method supports objectivity and value-free interpretation (objectivism); and last, 10) the method can be used for thematic analysis to offer a grounded description or a theoretical perception about a studied situation.

3.4 Researcher's Methodology

The purpose of this section is to present the details of the followed research methodology. It introduces the researcher's ontological and epistemological stance, the followed research philosophy, the researcher's approach to conducting grounded theory, the researcher's developed data coding model, and the data collection methodology for the grounded theory process. Besides, this section shows that the original/classical version of the GT, as presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967), was followed in this study. Last, the section introduces an overview of the conducted surveys in this research with a focus on the details of the pilot study.

3.4.1 Researcher's Logic

This research is contexed in the business and management field. Its main objective is theory development that contributes to practical knowledge as a response to the existing calls in the literature for achieving consensus on a unified

understanding of SCM and theory development. Based on these premises, the researcher's ontological and epistemological stances are addressed herein.

3.4.1.1 Researcher's Ontological Stance

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), the business and management discipline has emerged as a mixture of five disciplines. These disciplines are social science, natural science, applied science, humanities, "*and the domain of organisational practice*" (Ibid, 2016, p.126). This research is contexed in business and management research; therefore, there is an external 'single reality' in the real world, an 'objective reality' (Willig, 2014; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). This approach is described in the literature as objectivism, and its ontological stance is 'Realism' (Ibid, 2016).

However, through combining social science and the domain of organisational practices, the single reality in the business and management field is the meaning of management. As introduced in chapter 1, management is about the optimal, efficient, and effective utilisation of resources to achieve organisational objectives and goals. By logic and common sense, this reality is supposed to be perceived and practised by any organisation. Hence, the researcher's role is to discover that reality through studying both the organisations' practices, such as how they manage their business process, and what strategies and policies they adopt, besides studying their social actions and the interactions within or across organisations that lead to achieving their objectives and business goals.[67]

The researcher's ontological stance is acknowledged by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016, p,129), where the authors stated that "*the social phenomenon of management can be researched in an objectivist way*." The authors gave examples of arguments toward this stance where they stated: "*management is an objective entity*", and researchers "*seek to keep their research free of values*". Therefore "*social phenomena of management can be researched in an objective way.*" The authors also added that within this discipline, the role of the

[67] I.e., studying the relation between organisations' social actions and interactions and their business objectives.

researchers is "*to discover the laws that govern management behaviour to predict how management would act in the future*" (Ibid, 2016, p.129).

3.4.1.2 Researcher's Epistemological Stance

In business and management research, understanding why a social phenomenon occurs requires researchers to understand that phenomenon through the perspectives of their participants in the study. Through logic and axiom, those perspectives cannot be extracted without a direct verbal or textual interaction and communication between the researcher and the participants under study, i.e., collecting and interpreting qualitative data. This approach is described in the literature as subjectivism. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016, 130), subjectivism "*incorporates assumptions of the arts and humanities"* and asserts "*that social reality is made from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors."* Also, the authors mentioned that "*subjectivism embraces*" 'Nominalism' and 'Social Constructionism'.

3.4.1.3 Researcher's Followed Philosophy

The researcher, as introduced, aims to find a practical solution to the long-lasting debate in the literature toward achieving consensus on a unified understanding and a unified definition of SCM, a solution that improves SCM practice by identifying its theoretical foundation. As clarified, the researcher's methodology combines both stances, objectivity and subjectivity. Hence, there is a need to find which research philosophy best describes this approach.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, p.143) mentioned that one of the research philosophies "*asserts that concepts are only relevant where they support action*" and aims at reconciling *"both objectivism and subjectivism*." This philosophy considers theories not just an abstract of reality but also "*in terms of the role they play as instruments of thought and action*" and "*in terms of their practical consequences in specific contexts*". Also, this philosophy "*starts with a problem, and aims to contribute practical solutions that inform future practice*". According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, p.144), this philosophy is the philosophy of '**Pragmatism**'. The authors mentioned that within this philosophy, *"reality matters to pragmatists as practical effects of ideas, and knowledge is valued for*

enabling actions to be carried out successfully." Also, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, p.144) added that "*pragmatists recognise that there are many different ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research, that no single point of view can ever give the entire picture and that there may be multiple realities."*

In addition to what Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) have addressed, Straus and Corbin (2015, p.18) mentioned that "*grounded theory epistemology evolved from both*" "*the tradition of Chicago interactionism and the philosophy of pragmatism."*

3.4.2 Grounded Theory Version/Approach

This section justifies which version of GT was used in this research through comparing the researcher's approach and data coding with the three main versions. First, it shows how the researcher's general data coding model/framework of GT was developed, the general idea behind the developed framework of data coding, and its theoretical foundation. As will be introduced, the developed data coding framework is based on four data coding orientations. Later, through comparing the researcher's logic and philosophy with Charmaz's (2014) classification of GT, this section shows that the original/classical version of GT was followed. Finally, this section shows the data collection approach that was used in this research for the GT process.

3.4.2.1 Introduction

The use of the grounded theory method, as mentioned in chapter 1, was not considered when the initial theoretical model of SCM (Figure 2) and its meaning were developed. The reason behind that was the researcher's limited knowledge of qualitative research methods. However, this benefited the researcher in many ways. First, the researcher's thought was not influenced by any research philosophy, which gave the researcher the freedom and flexibility in conducting this research[68]. Second, the first reviewed book about GT was of Charmaz (2014), the constructivist approach. As it is mentioned in section 3.3.2.1.3,

[68] Glaser (2016a) mentioned that the GT research method does not require research philosophy.

Charmaz (2014) did not introduce a coding approach as Glaser or Strauss and Corbin (2015) did.

Furthermore, the researcher's assumption was that what was written in Charmaz's (2014) book is the accumulation of the latest improvement of the GT method. It was later when the researcher realised that there are three versions of GT, different coding views, and there is a sort of debate among GT thought leaders. Also, Charmaz (2014, p.16) mentioned that Glaser and Strauss (1967) invited researchers "*to use grounded theory strategies flexibly in their own way*." The coincidence of studying Charmaz's (2014) book before Strauss and Corbin's (2015) and the invitation by Glaser and Strauss (1967) encouraged the researcher to develop an analytical framework[69] of data coding approach in embarking on grounded theory research. The details of how the researcher's data coding framework was developed are presented below.

3.4.2.2 Researcher's General Data Coding Framework of GT

The researcher's developed coding approach was based on the researcher's logic, knowledge, and insight; it was not based on studying GT literature. The researcher's belief is that a clearly stated logical framework of analysis (theoretical framework) enhances conducting GT research and qualitative research in general. The grounded theory research method aims to discover (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) or construct (Charmaz, 2014) theories from data. These data then are coded, categorised and theorised by the researchers. The researcher's argument is how one can collect and analyse data without a clear approach to what data to collect and what analysis framework shall be used.

In support of the researcher's argument, Willig (2014, p.54) stated that, in qualitative research, the view researchers "*take of what*" transcripts represent "*will depend on the theoretical framework from within which*" researchers approach those transcripts. Also, Silverman (1993, cited in Willig, 2014, p.53) argued: "*without theory, there is nothing to research."*

[69] The researcher thought was not influenced by exiting coding approaches. The researcher believes that one should establish his own ideas and thoughts at first, then, to compare his ideas with the extant literature or knowledge. The researcher believes that this strategy enhances innovation and knowledge contribution.

Willig (2014) also mentioned that the theoretical framework of analysis is informed by researchers' epistemological stances. In clarifying her statement, Willig (2014, p.54) gave examples of the social constructionist stance and the empiricist stance. The author stated that within the empiricist stance, researchers use the GT method or "*phenomenological analysis to identify the categories of meaning used by the interviewee to make sense of events.*" The author also added that in that case, texts are "*seen as a verbal expression of the interviewee's mental processes.*" On the other hand, through the constructionist stance, researchers "*approach the text using a discourse analytic framework."* In this case, the texts are "*seen as a manifestation of available discursive resources that the interviewee is drawing upon to construct a particular version of events.*"

3.4.2.2.1 Researcher's Data Coding Approach Idea

Charmaz (2014) and Strauss and Corbin (2015) mentioned that the grounded theory method focuses on studying the social actions/interactions of participants. This means that a researcher has a defined data coding approach through which the data are coded and analysed. In this case, a researcher may focus on many questions; these possible questions are: What are the social actions and interactions that the data reveal? What are the motives or objectives behind those actions? When do those actions happen or occur? Are there internal social, physical, or psychological needs, emotions, or external influencers that led to those actions? What are the current or historical possible incidents, situations, conditions, or circumstances associated with those actions? Last and not least, what are the outcomes or the consequences of those actions or processes? By the same coin, what actions or processes led to observed outcomes/consequences?

These questions, which a researcher might ask, construct the analytical framework of the simultaneous data analysis process. Based on this view, there is a framework of four possible coding approaches or data coding orientations in grounded theory research; these data coding approaches/orientations are 1) an objective or goal-oriented approach, 2) an outcome or consequences-oriented

approach, 3) an object-oriented approach, and 4) an action-oriented or process-oriented approach. These different approaches are explained below.

3.4.2.2.2 Objective/Goal-Oriented Coding Approach

Through the objective-orientation approach, a researcher, through gathering and analysing data, looks for people's social actions/interactions and the objectives or the motives/intentions behind those actions/interactions. Linking those actions and objectives will reveal the belief behind people's actions. For example, in this research, the researcher's aim was to understand SCM by identifying the social interactions or practices within and across firms in a supply chain besides identifying firms' or SCM objectives and goals. The researcher's aim is to discover the common belief among SCM scholars. Based on the objective-orientation coding approach, the textual data analysis revealed that many authors and academics touched on or addressed the importance and the value of cooperation, collaboration, and integration across firms and how those practices lead to achieving better performance and outcomes. Linking those social practices with the identified objectives reveals the common belief among SCM scholars. Figure 26 represents the objective-orientated or the goal-orientated data coding approach.

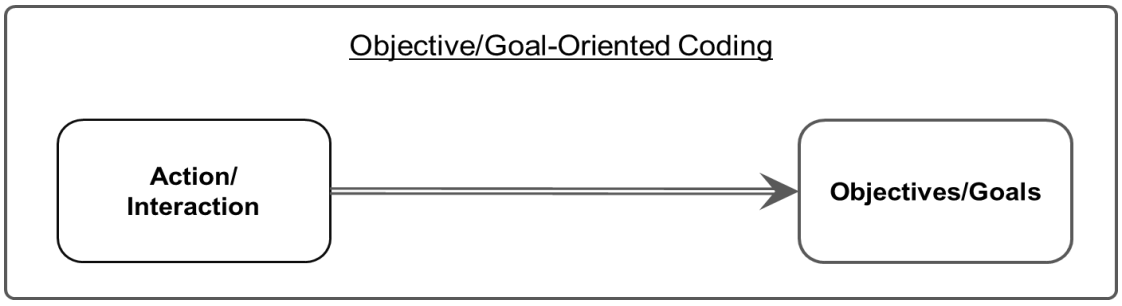


Figure 26 Objective/Goal-Oriented Coding Approach

3.4.2.2.3 Outcome/Consequences-Oriented Coding Approach

The outcome/consequences-oriented approach can be used to study or examine the outcomes of a specific action, practice, style, or habit. This also could include studying the influence of people's behaviours on themselves or others. In this approach, a researcher could state that these actions lead to these outcomes, or

these practices lead to these outcomes. An example of such theories or beliefs is the positive or negative impacts on employees' performance that are caused by top management practices. Figure 27 models this approach.

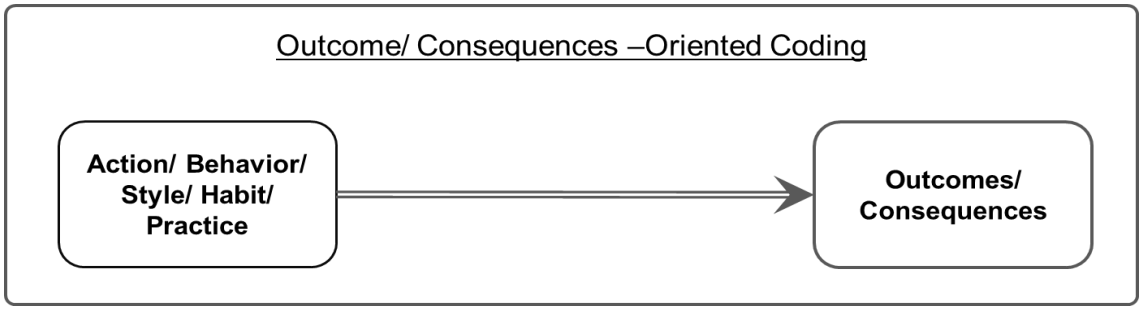


Figure 27 Outcome/ Consequences-Oriented Coding Approach

3.4.2.2.4 Object-Oriented Coding Approach

In this approach, a researcher might, for instance, observe a social action or behaviour and want to understand why that action occurs. From an object-oriented approach, the focus of a research focus would be on identifying the external influencers behind that action or reaction or what the internal emotions or feelings behind that action are. Also, a researcher might look at the context, the situations, the conditions, or the incidents within which that action occurs. Moreover, a researcher may study the impact of those external conditions, circumstances, situations, or historical and current social/political incidents on people. In this approach, a researcher could state that within these conditions, or under these situations, this action occurs, or this phenomenon occurs. For example, a researcher may ask: what is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Economy of Bahrain? What are the psychological effects of the pandemic on the people in Bahrain? What are the best actions/strategies to face the pandemic? The outcomes of these examples of studies will lead to better readiness for probable future cases.

Another example could be studying processes, as Strauss and Corbin (2015) introduced, where the authors mentioned that "*process describes how persons*

adjust action-interaction to meet the often-competing demands created by changing conditions with the aim of reaching desired goals or outcomes." Also, the authors define a process as "*a series of related acts*" (Ibid, 2015, p.176). Nonetheless, figure 28 represents the object-orientation approach.

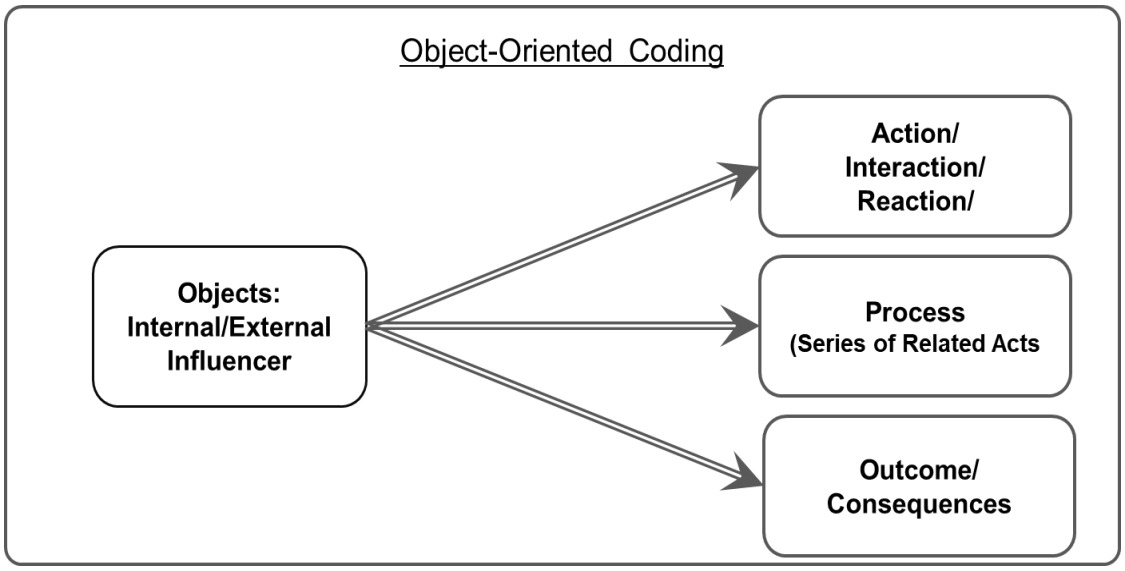


Figure 28 Object-Oriented Coding Approach

3.4.2.2.5 Action-Oriented / Process-Oriented Coding Approach

In the action-oriented or process-oriented approach, a researcher may focus on the actions or processes that lead to specific consequences, outcomes, or achievements. The main question in such cases is how these outcomes occur. For instance, a school principal might observe that students' academic scores in a specific subject in one of the classes are generally better than those in other classes. A principal might ask how the teacher in that class teaches the subject. In this case, a researcher may focus on the process or the style that has led to that outcome. A possible theory statement in the action-oriented or process-orientated approach might be 'Through these actions or this process, these outcomes occur', or these outcomes could be achieved through this process.

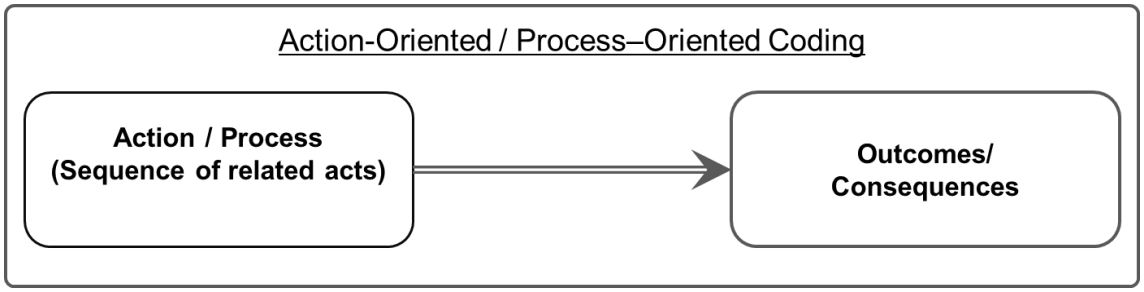


Figure 29 Action / Process-Oriented Coding Approach

3.4.2.2.6 Researcher's General Data Coding Framework

The following diagram visualises and combines the developed data coding models (Figures 26-29). However, this model can be considered a general framework for developing grounded theories.

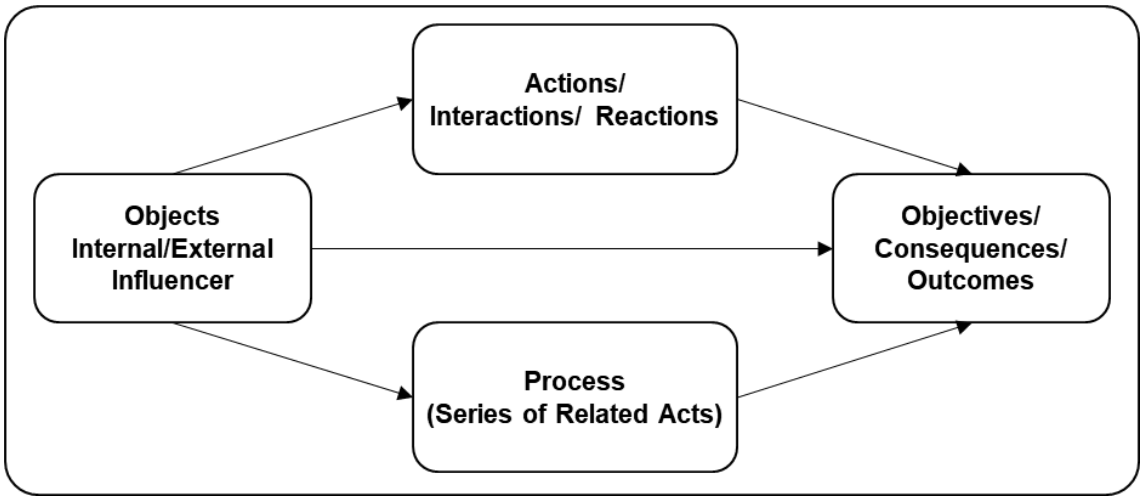


Figure 30: Researcher's Grounded Theory Data Coding Model

3.4.2.2.7 The General Idea of the Researcher's Data-Coding Model

The main idea of the researcher's data-coding model is that there are known and unknown actions, objectives, outcomes, consequences, objects or reasons, conditions, situations, and processes to a researcher. The role of a researcher is to identify these in the collected data and establish the relation between them.

For instance, in the objective-orientation approach, a researcher may observe social action or behaviour and want to know the motive behind it. In this case, a researcher links the identified action or behaviour with the identified motive. A practical example of the objective-oriented approach is this research. The researcher's focus was on identifying the objectives firms in a supply chain aim at (motive) and how they interact to achieve those objectives. Similarly, in the object-oriented approach, a researcher may want to know the external reasons behind those actions or internal emotions. In this case, a researcher links between those reasons (external/internal affecting/influencing objects) and the observed action or behaviour. However, the researcher's proposed data coding approach requires further analysis and research. Modifying, refining, and generalising this proposed approach requires further studies or meta-analyses of GT theory studies.

3.4.2.2.8 The Theoretical Foundation Behind the Researcher's Coding Approach

Charmaz (2014, p.261), as illustrated in section 3.3.5.1, mentioned that symbolic interactionism is "*the major theoretical perspective associated with grounded theory".* Strauss and Corbin (2015) touched on interactionism or the interactionist social theory as described by Kelle (2019). However, it is known by axiom and common sense that people use languages to communicate, express or share their thoughts or intentions with others. Also, people's talks or discourses reveal their way of thinking, their explicit and implicit convictions and beliefs, and the explicit and implicit meanings they aim to deliver. On the contrary, people's social actions or interactions are subjected to their habits, intentions, motives, and beliefs. Section 3.3.6.5 showed that the developed GT data coding model and the objective-orientation data coding model (Figures 26 and 30) were built on the fact that there is a goal behind every purposeful human action or interaction. The researcher's perception and theoretical statement of this fact or theory is that:

> 'Human purposeful action/interaction is based on achieving or the occurrence of desirable outcomes and avoiding or preventing the occurrence of non-desirable outcomes.'

Accordingly, a literature review was conducted to find any published work about the 'Theory of Human Action' and Social Action Theory. Based on that, the work of the sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) was identified (Ritchie and Lewis, 2014).

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2014, p.12), "*Weber tried to build a bridge between interpretivist and positivist approaches."* Weber "*believed that an analysis of material conditions*" … "*was important but was not sufficient to a full understanding of people's lives*." Ritchie and Lewis (2014, p.12) also mentioned that Weber "*emphasised that the researcher must understand the meaning of social actions within the context of the material conditions in which people live*."

Furthermore, Kdkasi (2017) mentioned that "*Max Weber theory of social action is based on the cause-and-effect relationship."* According to Kdkasi (2017)[70] and Thompson (2017)[71], Max Weber classified people's social actions into four ideal types; these types are *"Goal or Instrumental Rational social action, Value Rational social action, Affective social action, and Traditional social action*."

Kdkasi (2017) also mentioned that the goal or instrumental rational social action is "*goal-oriented, and the motive of the goal is derived from the desires of the actor*." In the value rational social action, the "*goal and means of achieving end is derived and determined by values*." The author clarified that "*the rationality of that action is justified by the actor from his set of beliefs, which may be aesthetic, religious, constitutional, and based on profession policy*." The affective social action "*is motivated by the emotions of an individual*." Finally, the "*traditional social action is derived from the customs of society*."

Accordingly, it is established that coding the data through an objective-oriented approach is linked to goal rational social actions, while the value rational, the affective, and the traditional social actions fall under the object-oriented coding approach.

[70] Sociology Learners website
[71] Revise Sociology website

Based on Weber's social action taxonomy[72], the researcher's viewpoint is that the integration of the purposeful human action theory, symbolic interaction perspective, and Weber's social action taxonomy constructs the foundation of the researcher's developed framework of grounded theory data coding.

However, a further literature review revealed that Kelle (2005, para.49), Kelle (2019, p.11) and Strübing (2019, p.12) mentioned that Strauss and Corbin's (2015) coding paradigm is based on *"the general theory of action*" or "*interactionist social theory.*" which support the researcher's view. Also, the literature showed that Kelle (2005) had used the words 'purposeful and intentional' as the author argued "*that the coding paradigm" to a great extent represents an everyday understanding of purposeful and intentional human action useful for the description of a wide array of social phenomena*" (Ibid, 2005, para. 21).

3.4.2.3 Followed Version of Grounded Theory

3.4.2.3.1 Used Data Coding Orientation

The used data coding orientation in this research is the objective-oriented approach (Figure 26). In this research, as mentioned earlier, the researcher's aim is to identify what management objectives firms in a supply chain are aiming at (motives) and to identify the social actions/ interactions among them. Through categorising and linking the social actions/interactions to management objectives, the theoretical model was established, and the common belief (theory) among SCM scholars was discovered (Figure 31).

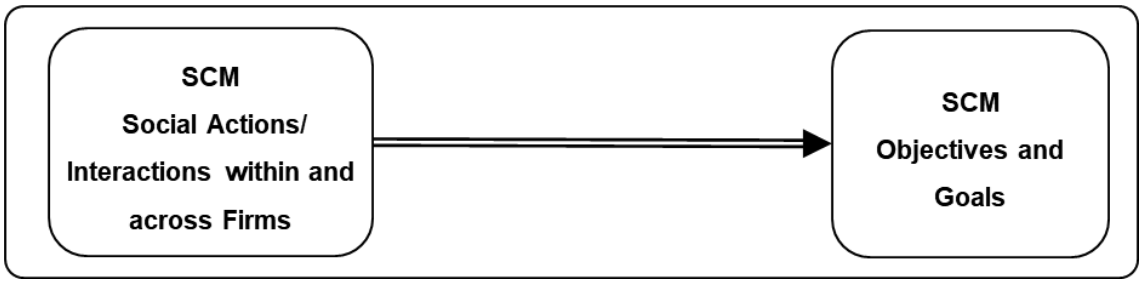


Figure 31 Used Data Coding Orientation

[72] The researcher sees that Weber's classification of social actions does not comply with the definition of theory by Charmaz (2014) and Strauss and Corbin (2015).

3.4.2.3.2 Comparing the Researcher's Grounded Theory Approach with Glaser's, Strauss's, and Charmaz's Approaches

3.4.2.3.2.1 Comparing the Data Coding Approach

Glaser, as mentioned, provided what is known as 'Glaser's Coding Families' (Kelle, 2012); Strauss and Corbin (2015) developed what they called the 'Coding Paradigm'; while Charmaz (2014) did not offer any specific coding approach, rather, Charmaz (2014) classified grounded theories into objective and constructive theories. Nonetheless, by comparing the researcher's general data coding model, it is found that the researcher's coding approach modifies and complies with Strauss and Corbin's (2015) coding paradigm. The only difference is that the orientation approach or taxonomy was used to codify the data. This means that Strauss and Corbin's (2015) GT approach was followed by the researcher in the data coding only. In fact, the researcher's coding approach combines and introduces Strauss and Corbin's (2015) coding paradigm in a holistic view. i.e., it synthesises the three "*main features*" (conditions, actions-interactions, consequences or outcomes) as described by Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.156) with the coding for contexts and processes. Moreover, the theoretical foundation of Strauss and Corbin's (2015) coding paradigm and the researcher's data coding framework is the purposeful or intentional human action, as introduced in the previous section.

3.4.2.3.2.2 Comparing the Researcher's Philosophical Approach (Ontological Stance)

The researcher's philosophy and the developed theory comply with the objectivist approach of grounded theory as described by Charmaz (2014). Charmaz (2014) mentioned that the objectivist approach is based on the philosophy of positivism. Also, Charmaz (2014) mentioned that the objectivist approach of "*grounded theory is most represented by Barney Glaser and his colleagues*" (Ibid, 2014, p.235). According to Charmaz (2014, pp.236-237), objectivist grounded theory 1) "*assumes an external reality", 2) "assumes discovery of data", 3) assumes conceptualisation emerges from data analysis", 4) "aims to achieve context-free generalisation",* 5) *"aims for parsimonious, abstract conceptualisation that transcends historical and situational locations", 6) "aims to create theory that fits,*

works, has relevance, and modifiable", 7) "view data analysis as an objective process", 8) sees emergent categories as forming the analysis", 9) "sees reflexivity as one possible data source", 10) "gives priority to researcher's analytic categories and voice", and assumes *"the role of authoritative analysts who brings an objective view to their research."*

Furthermore, Easterby-Smith et al. (2018, p.120) mentioned that Glaser's approach indicates that GT researchers "*maintain distance and independence*", theory "*emerges from data*", and the "*world is out there*."

As introduced in section 3.4.1, the researcher's ontological stance is that, in the business and management field, there is an external and objective reality to be discovered. This reality is based on the researcher's understanding of management. Moreover, as introduced in chapter 1, management is a knowledge-based practice. Therefore, the purpose of management and business research is to develop theoretical, practical knowledge and theories that fit, work, and have practical relevance. Furthermore, the developed theory in this research is context, time, and situations free. The context or dynamic business situations will not alter people's belief and conviction that firms achieve better outcomes through collaborative and integrative business relationships. Moreover, the researcher's analysis was based on the researcher's knowledge of management and the theory of purposeful human action, not on personal values. This complies with Charmaz's (2014) definition of the role of the researcher's reflexivity. Finally, the researcher's knowledge of management and purposeful human action theory represents the researcher's theoretical foundation.

3.4.2.3.3 Conclusion

Based on comparing the researcher's research philosophy, GT philosophy, and the similarity between the researcher's data coding model and Strauss and Corbin's (2015) data coding paradigm; it is established that the followed version of GT in this research is Glaser's version of GT (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which according to Charmaz(2014) is an objectivist GT approach. Yet, the developed data coding framework in this research also complies with and synthesises

Strauss and Corbin's (2015) coding paradigm and conditional/consequential matrix.

3.4.2.4 Followed Coding Phases of GT

GT thought leaders, as it is mentioned in section 3.3.2.1.2, introduced different phases of data coding. Glaser and Strauss (1967) rely on three coding phases: open, selective, and theoretical coding; Strauss and Corbin (2015) also use three different coding phases: open, axial, and selective coding, while Charmaz (2014) uses two phases of coding: initial and focused coding. The adopted and followed GT model and data coding phases in this research are the model and the coding phases of Charmaz (2014): initial and focused coding.

3.4.3 Researcher's Data Collection Approach and Strategy for the Grounded Theory Development

The 'Informed Grounded Theory' approach, which was introduced by Thornberg (2012), was followed in this research. The main feature of this approach is the use of the literature as a source of primary data other than the classical approach, which is based on interviews and analysis of transcripts. The researcher's focus was on peer-reviewed journals. The used journals were, for example, *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*; *Journal of Supply Chain Management*; *Supply Chain Forum: An International Journal*; *The International Journal of Logistics Management*; and the *International Journal of Applied Logistics*. The keywords used for searching for peer-reviewed journals were SCM definition, SCM objectives, and SCM goals. Also, some books of SCM were reviewed. Among those books are 'Logistics and SCM' by Christopher (2016), 'Essentials of Supply Chain Management ' by Hugos (2018); 'Supply Chain Management' by Sople (2011); 'Supply Chain Management: A Global Perspective' by Sanders (2012); and 'Designing and Managing the Supply Chain: Concepts, Strategies, and Case studies' by Simchi-Levi, Simchi-Levi, and Kaminsky (2008).

Nonetheless, through commencing the GT process, a minimum number of articles or sources (30 or more) was not intended. The researcher was passionate about gathering more data and exploring how SCM scholars and academics view

the concept. The authors of those articles were considered as participants in this research. Accordingly, more than 30 sources and articles were used[73].

Nevertheless, this approach broadened the researcher's thought and enabled the researcher to develop more in-depth insight into this research. Furthermore, Glaser's (2004) strategy 'All is Data' was adopted in this research. Therefore, the used resources included online lectures and courses, YouTube broadcasts, iTunes podcasts, and many academic and university websites. In general, the main criteria for including those articles, books, or sources were their potential value to this research. Moreover, the researcher's data coding was based on mining for explicit objectives and business practices of SCM. In other words, it was based on superficial coding, as described by Strauss and Corbin (2015). Furthermore, the data coding was based on manual analysis; no software was used for data analysis.

3.4.4 Research Surveys

3.4.4.1 Surveys Purposes

In social research, surveys are used for different purposes and objectives (Phillips, Phillips and Aaron, 2013). According to Gibbs (2012), the survey is the process of "*collecting a small amount of data in a standardised form from relatively large numbers of individuals."*[74] It is the process of selecting "*representative samples of individuals from a known population*." (Ibid, 2012). Nevertheless, based on the researcher's best knowledge, the social survey process includes identifying and establishing the survey purpose or objectives, sample selection, selecting the data collection method, designing the survey questions, testing and validating the survey questions, and data collection and analysis. According to Phillips, Phillips and Aaron (2013), survey objective generally includes testing relations or hypotheses, measuring or assessment, descriptive analysis, and gathering feedback or opinions (Ibid, 2013).

[73] The researcher sees that presenting a list of the used resources is not of that importance. For example, the researcher accessed 122 articles that discussed the value of collaboration in SCM. However, giving examples on how the data coding was conducted is important.
[74] A YouTube broadcasted lecture.

Nonetheless, in this research, three surveys were conducted for three different purposes. These are a pilot study, an assessment survey, and a feedback survey. The purpose of the pilot study was to find out whether there is still a different understanding of the meaning of the SCM concept among practitioners and whether the confusion/overlap between SCM and logistics management still exists, as introduced in the literature review chapter. The purpose of the assessment survey was to draw a general idea and determine whether business owners, managers, and employees from different sectors have a clear view or perspective about the meaning of managing business relations (BRM) and whether those views comply with the researcher's identified theory and perspective or not. Finally, the purpose of the feedback survey was to measure the level of acceptance and satisfaction of the outcomes of this research among a group of business owners, managers, and employees from different sectors and to identify their agreement or disagreement with the researcher's argument, propositions and premises that BRM and supply or production management should replace the term SCM in education and practice.

However, the details of the pilot study are presented in this section, and the results are introduced in chapter 4. On the contrary, the details, as well as the results of the assessment and the feedback surveys, are presented in chapter 6. Both surveys are based on the literature review, the developed theory in this research, and the researcher's argument and perspective of BRM. Also, the feedback survey design was based on the outcomes of the assessment survey. Moreover, both surveys were conducted at the end of this research project. Therefore, the details of these two surveys are introduced in a separate chapter (6) after presenting the developed theory, the researcher's argument, the perspective of BRM, and the researcher's theoretical and comparative analysis of the extant literature.

3.4.4.2 Sampling Approaches/Techniques

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) and Bryman and Bell (2015), there are two sampling approaches/Techniques[75], probability sampling and non-probability sampling. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), probability sampling is based on a random selection of participants, which according to the authors, "*is that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected."* On the contrary, non-probability sampling is based on the non-random selection of participants (Ibid, 2015, p.187). Furthermore, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) and Bryman and Bell (2015) classified the two approaches into different types. Nonetheless, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's (2016) sub-classification is somewhat different from Bryman and Bell's (2015). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) classify probability and non-probability sampling as shown in figure 32.

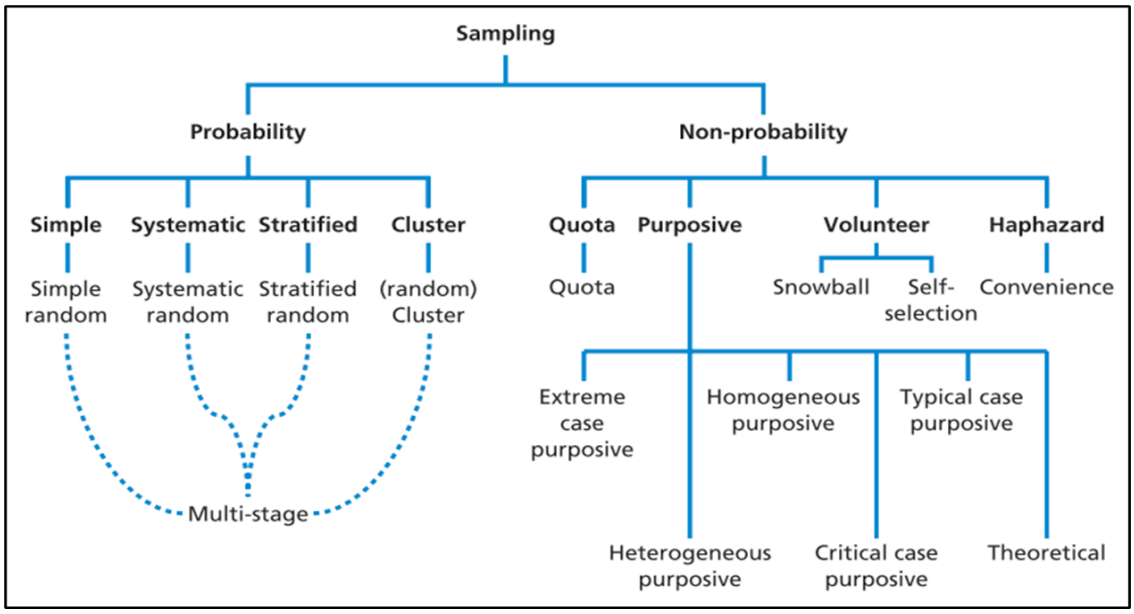


Figure 32 Sampling Techniques

Source: (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016, p.276).

On the contrary, Bryman and Bell (2015) differentiate between using the sampling approaches in conducting quantitative and qualitative research. Figure 33

[75] Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) use the word 'Technique', while Bryman and Bell (2015) use the word 'Approach.

synthesises and outlines the sampling approaches, as Bryman and Bell (2015) suggested.

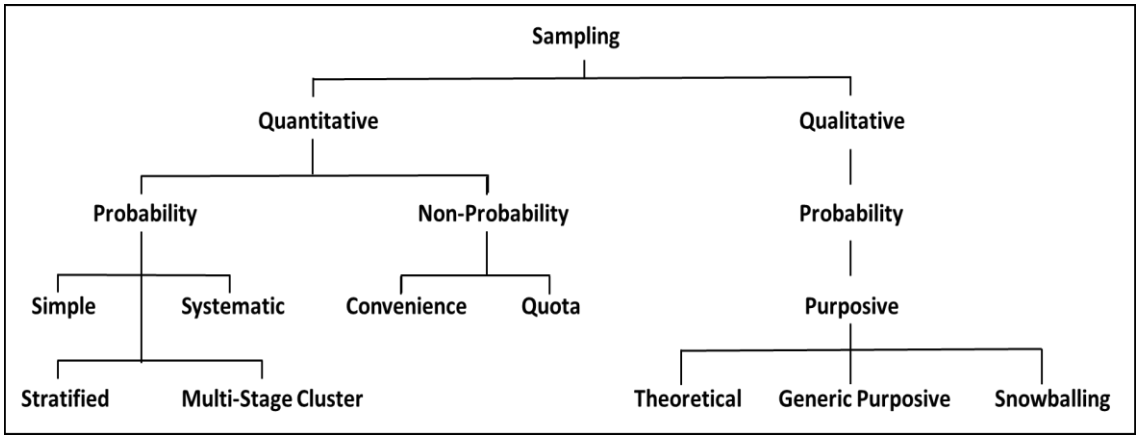


Figure 33 Classification of Sampling Approaches as Suggested by Bryman and Bell (2015).

As the reader notice, Bryman and Bell (2015) place purposive sampling under probability sampling, while Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) place purposive sampling under non-probability sampling. Hence, the adopted sampling approach in this research is of Bryman and Bell (2015). Accordingly, as will be introduced, the main techniques in the three surveys are random selection and purposive probability sampling.

However, the details of the pilot study purpose, sample selection approach, data collection methods, and the faced challenges while conducting the pilot study are addressed next.

3.4.4.3 Pilot Study Survey

3.4.4.3.1 Survey Purpose

The primary literature review showed that SCM scholars perceived the term SCM differently, which led to the absence of common language and understanding. Various definitions were offered to define the term (Stock and Boyer, 2009); some scholars mentioned that the concept was either perceived and defined as "*a management philosophy, an implementation of a management philosophy, or a set of management processes*" (Mentzer et al., 2001, p.5), while others

mentioned that many writings and talks, even seminars, were using the SCM concept as a synonym for logistics management, "*operations management, procurement, or a combination of the three*" (Lambert, García-Dastugue and Croxton, 2005, p.25; Lambert, 2014, p.1). Accordingly, many academics called for a unified SCM definition and emphasised its importance in advancing SCM understanding, practice, and research efforts.

However, the mentioned issues triggered the researcher's curiosity to conduct a pilot study. The researcher's objective was to find out whether there is still a different understanding of the meaning of the SCM concept among academics and practitioners and whether the confusion/overlap between SCM and logistics management still exists, as mentioned by Lambert and Cooper (2001), Lambert (2014), and Lambert and Enz (2017) besides identifying how practitioners differentiate between the two concepts as reported by Larson and Halldorsson (2004) (section 2.3.1.2.3). The researcher's assumption was that the pilot study might enhance the significance of this research and the importance of conducting theoretical research.

3.4.4.3.2 Survey Sample Selection

In 2018, Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) held its second Bahrain International Defence Exhibition & Conference (BIDEC). Many international military equipment manufacturers and other firms participated in the event. The event was an excellent opportunity to survey some of the participants. However, the survey was based on probability sampling or random selection. All participants were treated equally and were given the same chance to be selected. Also, all participants work in manufacturing firms. Therefore, SCM is supposed to be known and practised in their firms.

3.4.4.3.3 Data Collection Methods

Three data collection methods were used in the pilot study: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and open conversations for the mentioned purpose. The questionnaires were sent by email or manually handed over to the participants, while the semi-structured interviews and the open conversations were held face-to-face at the event site.

3.4.4.3.4 Questionnaire Content and Questions

Based on the purpose of the pilot study, the survey content was divided into two parts. The first part gathers the biographical data about the participants and their knowledge and experience of SCM. The second part aims at identifying how the participants understand and define SCM, how they perceive its importance, how successful SCM is achieved, and how they see the relation between SCM and logistics management. For these purposes, four questions were phrased: 1) What does Supply Cain management mean to you? 2) What is the importance of SCM to you? 3) In your opinion, what is needed for effective and successful SCM implementation? And last, 4) Is there a difference between the concept of SCM and the concept of Logistics Management? If so, what is the relation between them?

3.4.4.3.5 Faced Challenges and Limitations

Easterby-Smith et al. (2018, p.121) mentioned that one of the limitations of conducting grounded theory is that accessing data "*is far difficult within commercial organisations*". This is very true as the researcher faced difficulty while conducting the pilot study. In many cases, representatives of some companies were discreet in sharing their understanding of SCM without permission from their top managers, as if they were revealing their business secrets. Also, one of the exhibitors refused to participate, while other exhibitors, implicitly or through their reaction, showed a lack of interest in participating. Moreover, almost all participants, who agreed to participate, preferred written questionnaires sent through emails instead of interviews.

Nevertheless, four participants agreed on open conversations. Also, the survey response rate was very low (~10%). More than thirty emails were sent or handed over; only one written questionnaire was filled up, and three were received through emails. Appendix A shows the details of the received answers.

3.5 Researcher's Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this research comprises two axes, the elements of a conceptual framework and the problem-solving framework. According to

Maxwell (2012, p.39), a conceptual framework is "*the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs*" a study or research. Maxwell (2012, p.44) introduced four modules that construct a conceptual framework; these are "e*xperiential knowledge, existing theory and research*", "*pilot and exploratory research, and thought experiments*." According to the author, existing knowledge is what a researcher brings to research. Also, it represents a researcher's background, identity, interests, values, beliefs, knowledge, and experience. Existing theory and research are the foundation that underpins and derives a research problem. It informs and enables a researcher to justify the study and decide which research method to use.

Moreover, Maxwell (2012, p.65) added that "*prior research can be used to develop a theory*." In addition, the author mentioned that in qualitative research, pilot and exploratory research help a researcher "*to develop an understanding of the concepts and theories held by the people*" under the study. Finally, Maxwell (2012, p.68) mentioned that thought experiments challenge a researcher "*to come up with plausible explanations,*" and they aim at answering the 'what if' question. Also, the author mentioned that thought experiments "*generate new theoretical models and insights*." Furthermore, the author added that thought experiments "*encourage creativity and a sense of discovery and can help*" making "*explicit the experiential knowledge*" people already possess.

On the other hand, problem-solving research, by axiom, aims at solving theoretical or real problems. Some authors use the term 'Action Research' to describe this type of research. According to Merriam (2009, p.4), "*Action research has as its goal to address a specific problem within a specific setting.*" Also, the author added that "*action research is often conducted by people in the real world who are interested in practical solutions to problems and who are interested in social change*." However, according to Dostál (2015), a general framework of problem-solving includes 'problem awareness', 'problem perception', 'problem-solving willingness', and 'problem resolution'. Problem awareness is when a problem is realised or discovered; problem perception defines how a problem is perceived and how it should be tackled; the problem-solving willingness is the

desired outcome of solving a problem, and the problem-resolution is the developed solution of a problem. Nevertheless, a critical element to be added to Dostál's (2015) framework is the ‘Problem-Solving Strategy/Approach’.

In this study, the researcher’s objective was to develop a continuous improvement framework. The primary literature review revealed the theoretical problem of the divergent understanding of SCM among academics and scholars. Based on the researcher’s attempt to define SCM, the research gap was discovered. Accordingly, the researcher’s assumption is that through an objective-orientation grounded theory approach, the problem will be solved. The outcome of this approach, or the resolution, will be a unified theory and perspective of SCM. Hence, there will be a better understanding of SCM's meaning, better research and development in the field, better SCM practice, and better economic and social or sustainable development (willingness). Figure 34 shows the conceptual framework of this research.

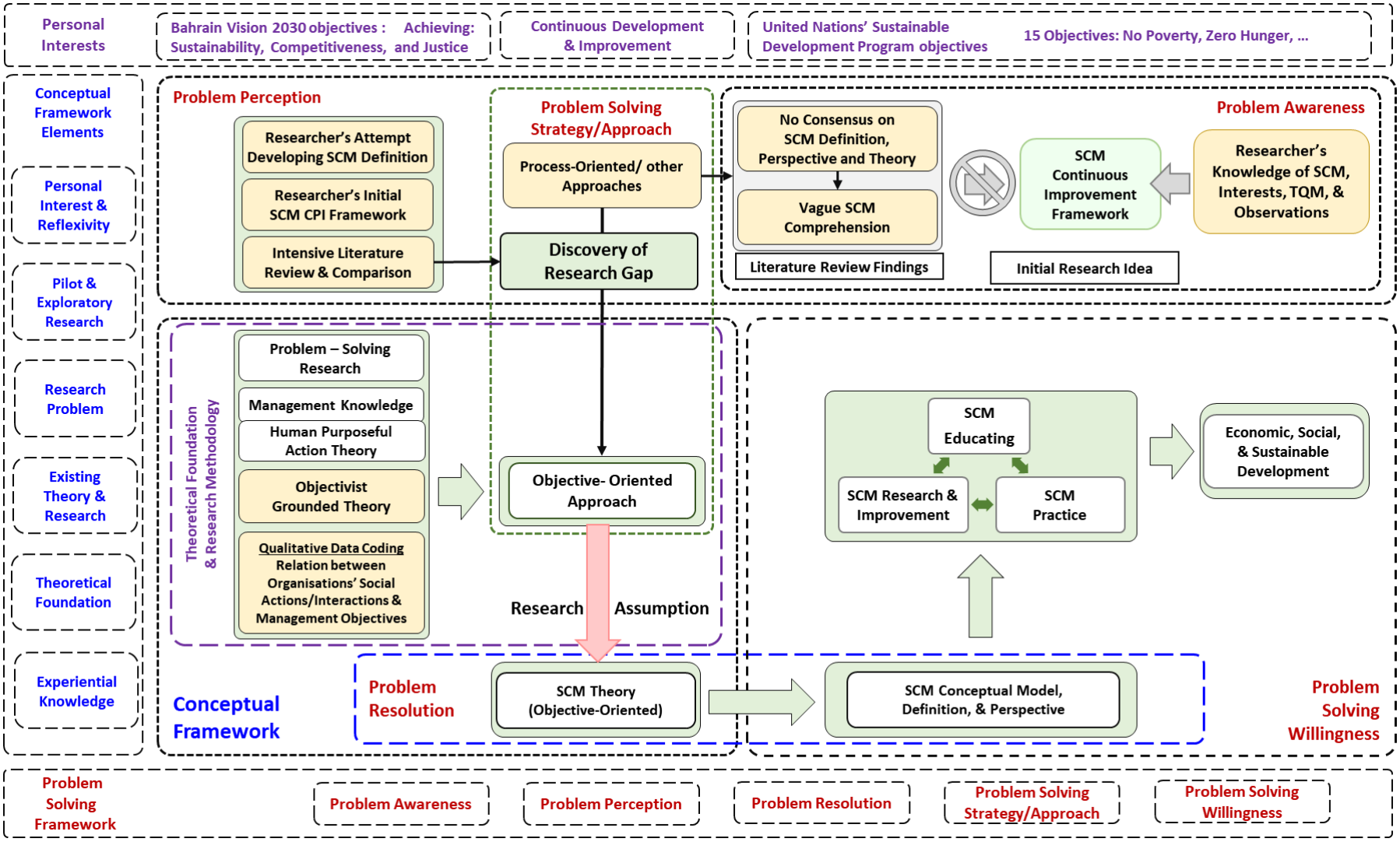


Figure 34: Research Conceptual Framework

3.6 Ethical Considerations

In this study, as mentioned, three surveys for three different purposes were conducted. The three surveys were a pilot study survey, an assessment survey, and a feedback survey. These surveys were based on purposive probability sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The purpose of the pilot study is to determine whether the different perspectives and the confusion between SCM and logistics management still exist. The purpose of the assessment survey is to assess how people view and define managing business relationships. The aim is to determine whether business owners, managers, and employees from different sectors have a clear view or perspective about the meaning of managing business relationships and whether those views comply with the identified theory and perspective of BRM in this research. Finally, the purpose of the feedback survey was to evaluate the level of acceptance and the level of participants' satisfaction about the outcomes of this research.

However, in compliance with ethical considerations and Cranfield University Research Ethical System (CURES), the following standards were maintained through conducting the three questionnaires:

1. All pilot study participants were informed by a consent statement that declares and informs the participants' right to participate, a brief about the purpose of the survey, and how their personal data will be protected. However, the actual title of this research was not stated; rather, an abbreviated title was used to avoid influencing the participants thinking about the objective orientation, which may affect their answers.[76]

2. All participants were given the right to participate in written or through check-box consent.

3. The participants in the assessment survey were asked to avoid using external aids such as Google search to answer the questionnaires.

[76] The used title in the survey was 'Conceptualising SCM, a New approach'.

4. All participants in the feedback survey were given the option to provide their names or contact emails. However, the participants were allowed to submit one answer.

5. The feedback survey participants were verbally asked to maintain objectivity and to avoid personal bias toward the researcher. Furthermore, the participants were given a choice to mention their observations or recommendations.

6. In chapter 6, section 6.2.9 report the difficulties faced by the researcher in conducting the feedback survey. The main difficulty was the lack of cooperation by the selected organisations. Five invitations were sent to five organisations. Despite that, none of those organisations replied or cooperated with the researcher. To maintain those organisations' anonymity, the name or the sector of those organisations was not mentioned.

7. Some answers in the assessment survey reveal naïve or shallow thinking. These answers are not reported in this thesis. Furthermore, some participants submitted more than one response. Those repeated responses were deleted.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the researcher’s understanding and perspective of conducting research, presented the researcher’s definition and perspective of theory, and addressed the researcher’s knowledge of grounded theory, its different versions, and the researcher’s viewpoint about those versions. Also, the chapter introduced the researcher’s philosophy and methodology, which included the researcher’s ontological and epistemological stance, followed philosophy, the researcher’s approach to conducting grounded theory as well as his developed data coding model, and the data collection methodology for the grounded theory process besides justifying the followed version of the method. Finally, the details of the pilot study and the conceptual framework of this research are presented, followed by declaring the followed ethical considerations in this research.

4 Research Processes Details and Outcomes

This chapter presents the details of the research process map, the pilot study findings, provides a detailed description of how the GT process was conducted, presents the developed theoretical model, and how the researcher's understanding evolved to the broader view that the concept of SCM is not an appropriate term to refer to or to describe the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms. In addition, this chapter introduces the perspective of the developed theory and BRM concept and discipline and briefly addresses the management objectives and goals that are enhanced through BRM. Then, this chapter presents an overview of the implications of the developed theory and introduces the proposed definition of Business Relations Management and concludes with the chapter's summary.

4.1 Research Processes Map

This study consists of several research processes, as introduced in chapter 1. The main used research method is the grounded theory method. Also, a thematic analysis method. Moreover, three surveys were conducted in this study: a pilot study survey, an assessment survey, and a feedback survey. The details and the sequence of these processes are shown in the following research processes map. However, the research map consists of twelve processes, as shown in figures 35, 36 and 37. The research process map is based on cognitive mapping of the theoretical foundation that influences the research idea/ enquiry, the research process or the used strategy, the objective of the process, the outcomes/findings of the process, and the inference or the decision the research took next.

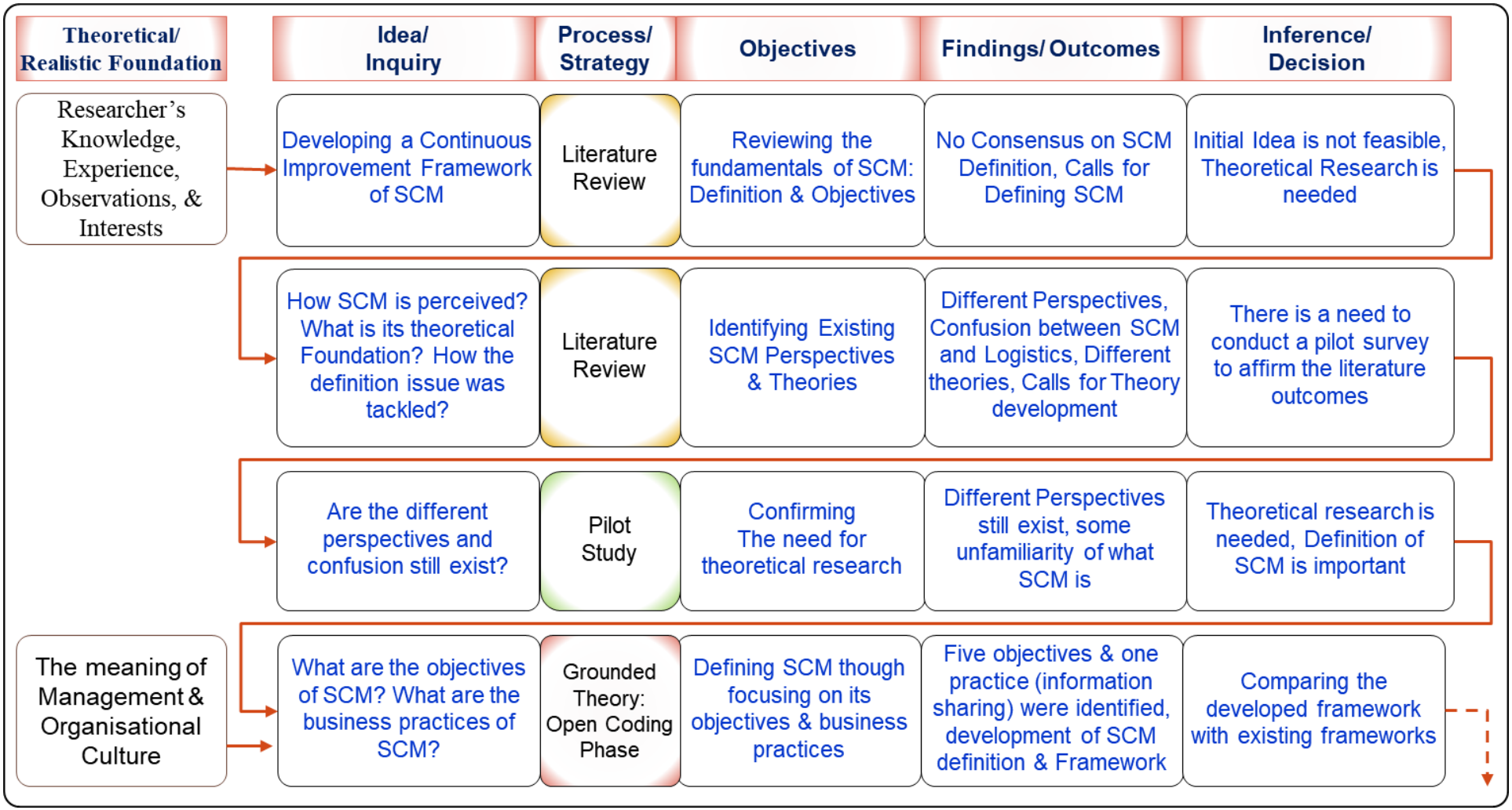


Figure 35 Research Map 1/3

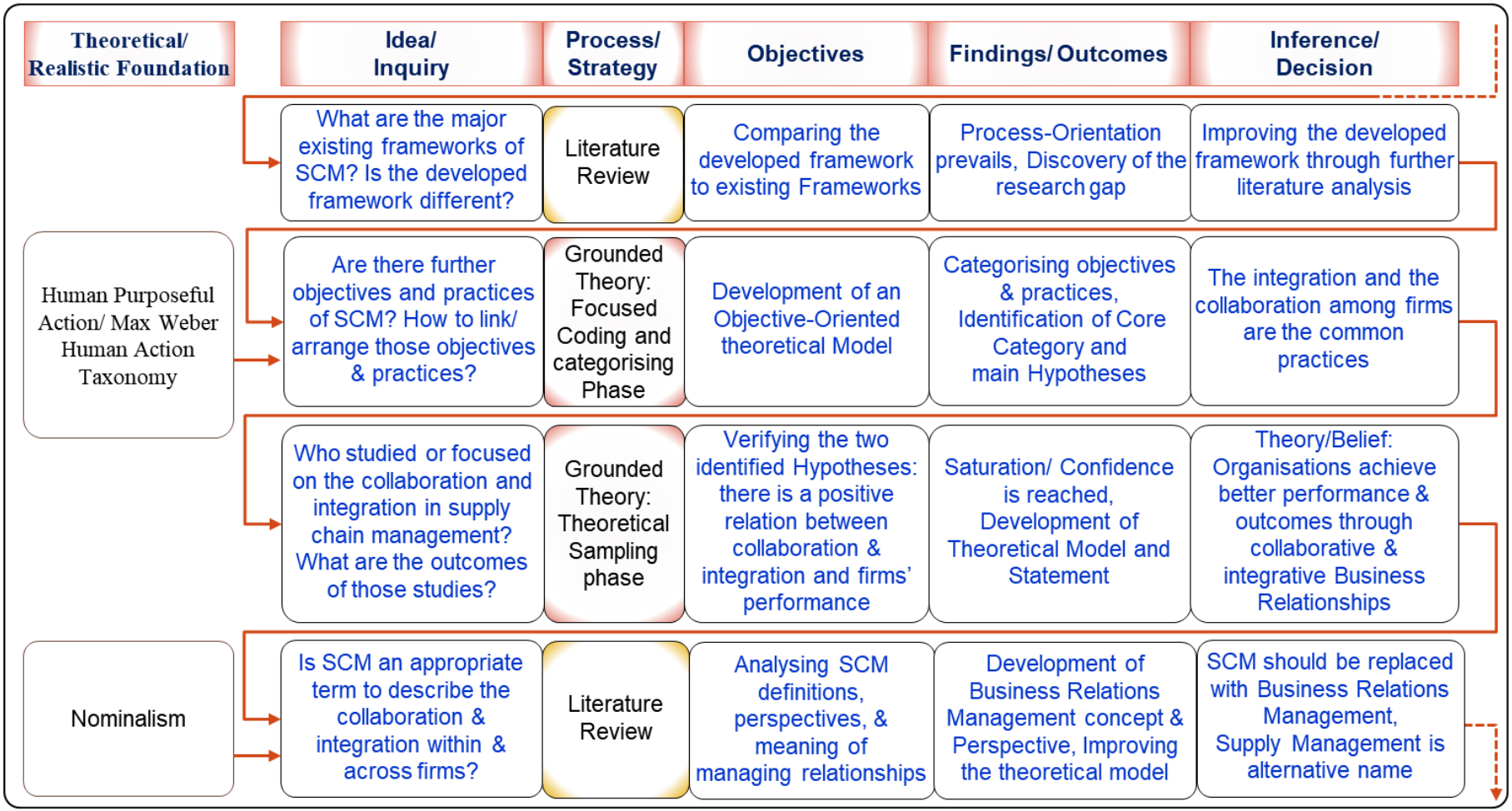


Figure 36 Research Map 2/3

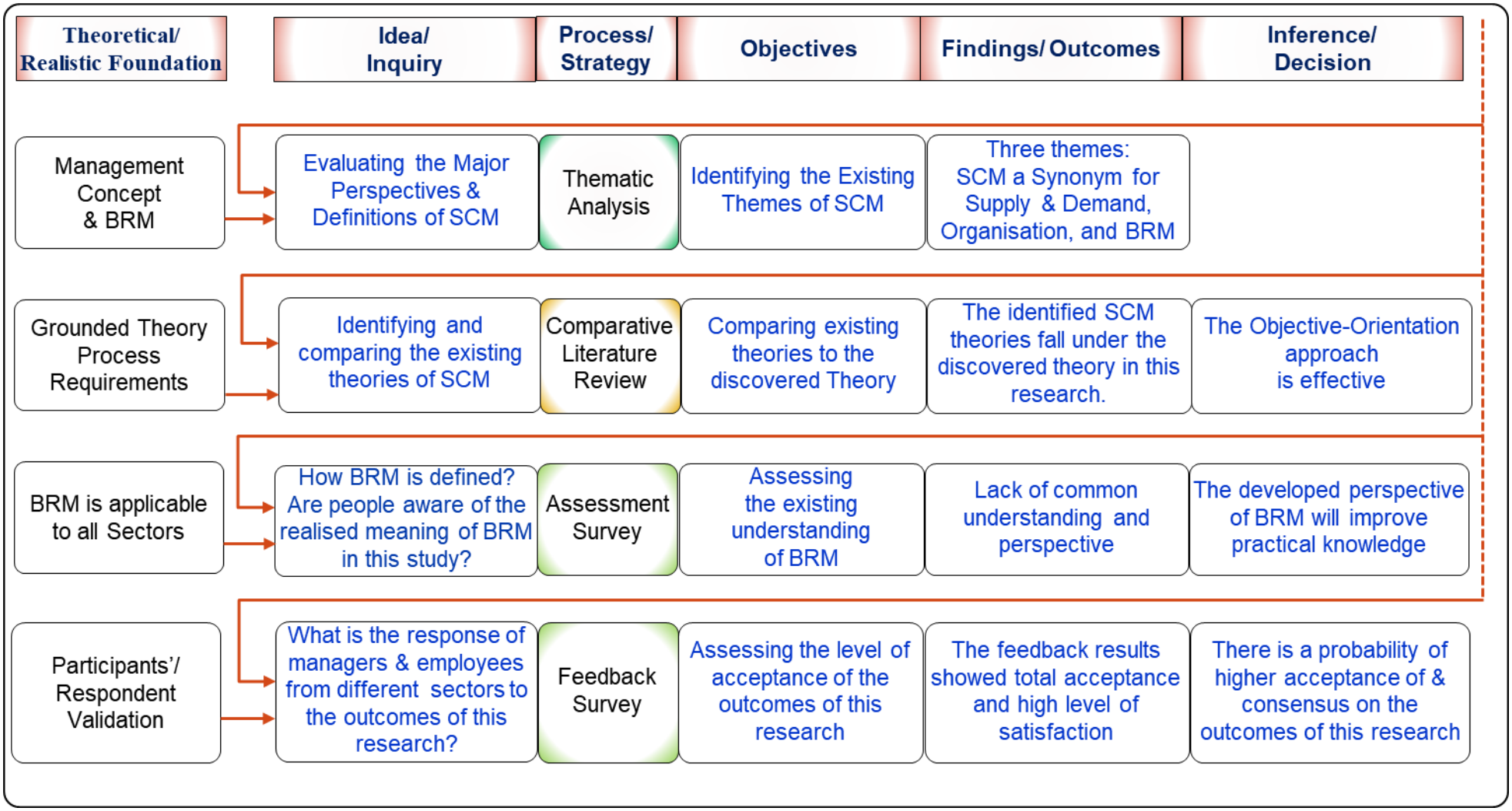


Figure 37 Research Map 3/3

4.2 Pilot Study Findings

Regardless of the few received responses and the few open conversations, the pilot study showed that the different perspectives and the confusion between SCM and logistics management still exists. Remarkably, two participants mentioned that they had never heard about the SCM concept. One was a regional coordinating manager in Bahrain, while the other was a regional marketing manager. Also, the pilot study showed that some participants consider SCM as managing their suppliers; where one business owner said: "*Our supply chain consists of twelve manufacturers; our group owns them all; they work for us and sell for other companies*."[77] However, table 6 shows the three received answers to the two main questions in the questionnaire. Remarkably, the answers advocate Halldorsson et al. (2007) study about how the relationship between SCM and logistics is viewed among practitioners (section 2.3.1.2.3).

Table 6 Pilot Study Answers

Country	Job Description	Meaning of SCM	Difference between SCM and Logistics Management
UAE	Regional Director	Supply chain management, to me, is managing the creation and delivery of a product. For example, SCM of Rice would have to do with the entire process from planting, harvesting, packaging and distributing rice until it reaches the consumer.	Yes, there is a difference; logistics management does not include the process of creating a product from raw material to the final version. The relation is logistics will always sit in a certain part of SCM.[78]
USA	Sales and Marketing Vice President	Managing what you make and what you buy so the customer gets quality products on time.	Not sure what the difference is here.

[77] This statement was noted through an informal interview as the participant did not agree on recording the interview for security reasons.
[78] The participant sees that logistics is part of SCM.

Country	Job Description	Meaning of SCM	Difference between SCM and Logistics Management
Turkey	Technical Expert	SCM is mainly focused on keeping mass production to prevent time loss because of waiting for raw material or semi-finished products.	Logistics management concept covers all steps: supplying, production and sales, but SCM just focused on supplying.[79]

4.3 Grounded Theory Process Details and Outcomes

4.3.1 Introduction

There are few standards and guidelines for writing "*qualitative research in general and grounded theory in particular*" (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.311). Pidgeon and Henwood (1997, cited in Willig, 2014, p.237) recommend that: *"grounded theory researchers document, carefully and in detail, each phase of the research process"*. The authors suggest that "*such documentation increases reflexivity throughout the research process and demonstrates the ways in which the researcher's assumptions, values, sampling decisions, analytic technique, interpretations of context"* … "*have shaped the research."* Nonetheless, as recommended by some scholars, the narrating or a story-telling writing style is followed in this thesis (e.g., Lynch, 2011). However, the following sections illustrate how the GT method was conducted, how the theory of BRM was discovered, and how the meaning and perspective of BRM evolved.

4.3.2 The Open Coding Phase

The researcher's attempt to define SCM was the open coding or the initial coding phase of commencing the use of the grounded theory method. In this phase, the focus was on identifying the objectives of SCM and the business practices that

[79] The participant sees that SCM is part Logistics management.

fall under the concept. As introduced in chapter 1, this approach was based on the researcher's understanding of the meaning of management and the importance of establishing clear management objectives that guide business management and continuous improvement activities in any organisation. However, this phase did not employ the researcher's knowledge and experience. The analysis was limited to what academics or authors wrote (objectivism). The researcher's policy was to gather those objectives as perceived by academics.

The outcomes of this phase were manifolds. These were the identification of the main five objectives of SCM, the initial definition of SCM, the initial SCM framework, the discovery of the research gap, and the primary hypothesis of the value of information sharing across a supply chain.

Nonetheless, the literature analysis in this phase was not intensive rather one of exploration. The following table gives examples of how the data were codified and how the objectives and practices of SCM (mining) were identified. The table also shows the researcher's memos and notes, which represent a key process and evidence in grounded theory development.

Table 7 Examples of the Initial/Open Data Coding Process

Statements / Data	Objectives/Practices	Memos/Notes
"*Forrester introduced a theory of distribution management that recognized the integrated nature of organizational relationships"; "increased performance-based competition"; "examine SCM phenomena to identify the factors that lead to effective SCM"; "the ultimate goals of*	- Integration, - Performance, - Competition, - Effective SCM, - Lower cost, and - Customers' satisfaction.	- What is to be integrated? - What do the authors mean by effective SCM? - How is customer satisfaction achieved through SCM? - What is the framework of customer satisfaction? - Based on what the authors mentioned, the ultimate of

Statements / Data	Objectives/Practices	Memos/Notes
supply chain management—lower costs, increased customer value and satisfaction"; "key objective is to improve customer service" (Mentzer et al., 2001, pp.1-3,15,19).[80]		SCM revolves around three key objectives: lower cost of products and services, satisfying the customers' needs and expectations, and value creation.
"*The notion of improving firm performance through supply chain management (SCM) is currently drawing much attention from practitioners and researchers*" (Ho, Au and Newton, 2002, p.4415).	- Performance	- SCM improves firms' performance.
"*Supply chain management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities. Importantly, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third-party service providers, and customers. In essence,*	- Planning, - Coordination, - Collaboration, and - Integrating supply and demand.	- Planning is one of the core tasks of management, - Coordination of supply activities across a supply chain requires collaboration. - The definition implies that SCM is the planning and coordination of business activities across supply chain members, which requires collaboration.

[80] In this phase, the researcher did not focus on the meaning of managing relationships.

Statements / Data	Objectives/Practices	Memos/Notes
supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies" (CSCMP, 2021).		
"*The purposes of SCM are to create value, enhance efficiency, and satisfy customers*" (Mangan and Lalwani, 2016, p.11).	- Value creation, - Efficiency, and - Customers' satisfaction.	- These objectives are as exact as those that Mentzer et al. (2001) mentioned.
SCM is "*the management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers in order to deliver superior customer value at less cost to the supply chain as a whole*" (Christopher, 2016, p.3).	- Lower cost, and - Value creation	- The definition focuses on cost reduction and value creation, - The value creation is customer-oriented.
"*Supply Chain Management is the integration of key business processes from end user through original suppliers"; "Operating an integrated supply chain requires continuous information flows, which in turn help to create the best*	- Business processes Integration, - Information sharing, and - Managing product flows.	- SCM depends on processes' integration, - Through information sharing, business processes or activities are coordinated.

Statements / Data	Objectives/Practices	Memos/Notes
product flows" (Lambert and Cooper, 2000, pp.66-72).		
"*Information sharing is at the core of collaborative, supply-chain based business models"; "Information sharing allows Wal-Mart to outsource much of its inventory planning to suppliers who become responsible for monitoring inventory levels, planning replenishment, and suggesting new ideas to improve throughout*" (Fawcett et al., 2007).	- Information sharing, - Collaboration, - Outsourcing inventory planning, and - Inventory monitoring and replenishment.	- There is an emphasis on information sharing, - Inventory management and coordination across a supply chain is a core mission of SCM. This is what I learned in 2005. - This article affirms the value of information sharing across a supply chain.
"*Two major concerns arise in enabling supply chain performance, information sharing and collaborative effort"; "many studies have highlighted that information sharing is one of critical factors for an effective supply chain practice*" (Wu, Chuang and Hsu, 2014, p.122).	- Performance, - Information sharing, and - Collaboration[81]	- Information sharing requires collaboration.
"S*upply chain integration (SCI) is a critical issue for*	- Integration,	- Information sharing across a supply chain leads to the

[81] In this phase, the researcher has not yet realised the concept of BRM.

Statements / Data	Objectives/Practices	Memos/Notes
supply chain management"; "Information sharing and interdependence are two important characteristics of SCI that are responsible for material flows, the establishment of common standards, and other factors" (Huang, Yen and Liu, 2014, pp.64-65).	- Information sharing.	integration of business processes and activities
"*Manufacturing organizations have begun to realise that in order to gain and sustain the competitive advantage they have to deliver the best customer value at the lowest possible cost*"; "*Firms are building collaborative relationships with their supply chain partners in order to achieve efficiencies, flexibility, and sustainable competitive advantage*"; "*Information sharing significantly affects in reducing supply chain costs, and achieving competitive advantage*" (Hudnurkar, Jakhar and Rathod, 2014, pp, 189-190,195).	- Competitive advantage, - Lower cost, - Collaboration, - Efficiency, - Flexibility, and - Information sharing.	- Based on these findings, SCM is about managing business activities through information sharing, which requires collaboration from firms. Accordingly, the main hypothesis is that: - Information sharing across a supply chain improves the performance of the members of that supply chain.

However, through the open coding phase, many objectives and practices of SCM were identified, as it is shown in table 7; these objectives and practices were Inventory Planning', 'Processes Integration', 'Information Sharing', Efficiency', 'Effectiveness', 'Coordination', 'Synchronisation', 'Customer Satisfaction', and 'Competitive Advantage'.

The researcher's initial selected objectives, as mentioned in chapter 1, were 'Integration, Satisfaction, Competitiveness, Efficiency, and Effectiveness. Also, the main SCM practices that were initially identified were planning and information sharing across firms. From these identified objectives and the SCM practices, it was established that SCM is about integrating business processes through information sharing across a supply chain through which the inventory flow is coordinated and synchronised. Also, information sharing reduces demand uncertainty. Consequently, firms achieve better performance through inventory cost reduction and enhancing customer service and satisfaction. This understanding shaped the primary hypothesis, which states that:

Hp*: Information sharing across a supply chain improves the performance of the members of that supply chain.*

Based on the identified primary hypothesis and the researcher's understanding, the researcher's definition of SCM was developed. The developed definition states that:

> *Supply chain management is the planning of providing a product or service efficiently and effectively to satisfy the customers and other stakeholders and achieving competitive advantage through an integrative information management syste*m.

Accordingly, it is determined that information sharing across a supply chain is vital for coordinating and synchronising business activities besides managing the inventory flow across a supply chain. However, the primary hypothesis of information sharing was tested with further literature review. The literature showed that some studies found positive relations between information sharing

and the performance of firms as well as the performance of the supply chains (e.g., Fawcett et al., 2007; Prajogo and Olhager, 2012; Qrunfleh and Tarafdar, 2014; Seth, Goyal and Kiran, 2015). However, this inference and definition also comply with the researcher's initial knowledge of SCM[82].

4.3.3 Focused Coding Phase

In this phase, the literature analysis was continued to find more objectives. The focus was on the relation between the 'Integration' objective and the other objectives. The researcher's inquiry was about why supply chain integration is important to SCM and how academics perceive it. Table 8 gives examples of the focused coding phase.

Table 8 Examples of the Focused Coding Phase

Statements / Data	Objectives/ Value of Integration	Memos/Notes
"*Supply Chain Management is the integration of key business processes from end user through original suppliers"; "Operating an integrated supply chain requires continuous information flows, which in turn help to create the best product flows*" (Lambert and Cooper, 2000, pp.66,72).	- Business processes Integration, and - Information Sharing - Smooth Inventory flow.	- Two types of integration: integration of business processes and informative integration.
"*The use of information systems can improve supply chain integration. From the process perspective, it is*	- Achieving supply chain integration requires a supply	- Supply chain integration depends on teamwork.

[82] The researcher reviewed his 2005 class notes of SCM after reaching this understanding.

Statements / Data	Objectives/ Value of Integration	Memos/Notes
important to have a designated supply chain planning team"; "the SCOR model is an illustration of the process approach to supply chain integration" (Zhou et al., 2011, pp.333,341).	chain planning team	
"Supply chain integration and supply chain performance are among the key topics in supply chain management"; "SCM offers competitive advantage by implementing efficiency-related tools across companies' borders"; "*the strategic collaboration of parties ultimately leads to greater benefits for all"* (Kache and Seuring, 2014, pp.664-665).	- Integration, - Performance, - Competitive advantage - Efficiency, and - Collaboration	- Firms' performance and competitive advantage require integration and collaboration.
"The results indicate that both internal and external integration positively influence product innovation and quality and ultimately, profitability. With respect to contingency effects, the results indicate that	- Integration, - Enhances products' quality, - Profitability, and - Performance.	- There is a significant relationship between SCI and firms' performance, - I should add quality to the objectives - Are there further studies that focus on the relation between SCI and quality?

Statements / Data	Objectives/ Value of Integration	Memos/Notes
equivocality moderates the relationships between integration and performance" (Koufteros, Vonderembse and Jayaram, 2005, p.97).		
"*SCI improves firms' performance"; "firms can benefit from inter-firm integration and strategic partnerships to acquire valuable resources they lack in-house*" (Zhu, Krikke and Caniëls, 2018, p.212).	- Integration across a supply improves performance, - Sharing resources	- Strategic partnerships are the enablers - Another type of integration: the integration of resources.
"Although integration has been the most commonly used, other concepts such as coordination or collaboration are usually used to describe integrative efforts along the supply chain"; "*the incentives for integration are laid on the acquisition of scarce and specific resources to protect and maintain the competitive advantage*" (Tarifa-Fernandez and De Burgos-Jiménez, 2017, p.1245).	- Maintaining competitive advantage, - Acquiring more resources	- So far, four types of integration have been identified: informative integration through information sharing, integration of business processes, integration of resources, and integration of efforts. - What are the resources that could be shared or acquired?

As it is noticed, there is a central hypothesis here, and this hypothesis states that:

H1: *There is a positive relation between Integration and firms' performance*.

Through further insight, it was determined that this hypothesis is more appropriate than the primary hypothesis about information sharing, where the first hypothesis represents only one aspect of integration among companies, which is informative integration.

However, based on the updated hypothesis, it is established that there is a need to conduct a further literature analysis and gather more data about the role of integration among companies. As it is noticed, the mentioned phase represents both: the focused coding and the theoretical sampling processes of GT.

4.3.4 Theoretical Sampling and Saturation Phase

In this phase, the focus was on finding out whether scholars have discussed the concept of 'Integration' in detail or have empirically examined this hypothesis. The main finding of this phase was that there were tens of empirical studies that have proved that integration across firms in the supply chains improves firms' performance. One of those studies was a meta-analysis study by Leuschner, Rogers and Charvet (2013), where the authors examined 80 articles about supply chain integration (SCI) benefits and concluded that "*there is a positive and significant correlation between SCI and firm performanc*e." Also, the authors mentioned that "*there is an increased need for customers and suppliers to work together more closely*", where the authors stated that "*it is believed that collaboration and coordination are elements of SCI"* (Ibid, 2013, p.34).

Leuschner, Rogers and Charvet's (2013) work clarifies that firms within a supply chain need to build collaborative business relationships to achieve the desired Integration. Based on this finding, another hypothesis was developed. This hypothesis states that:

H2: *There is a positive relationship between collaboration and firms' performance*.

Accordingly, additional literature analysis and more data were gathered to test this hypothesis (Charmaz, 2015). The literature showed that many studies also found a positive relationship between the collaboration across firms in a supply chain and their performance. For instance, Lotfi et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between collaboration and quality management in a supply chain; Scholten and Schilder (2015) concluded that there is a positive relation between collaboration and supply chain resilience; Hudnurkar, Jakhar and Rathod, 2014, p.190) reported that "*firms are building collaborative relationships with their supply chain partners in order to achieve efficiencies, flexibility, and sustainable competitive advantage*"; survey results by Um and Kim (2019, p.97) "*indicated that supply chain collaboration leads to better firm performance and transaction cost advantage and that performance results in transaction cost advantage*"; Prajogo, Mena and Chowdhury (2021, p.206) found "*that strategic collaborations mediate the relationship between the strategic value of key supplier and buyer's product performance*"; and finally, Liao, Hu and Shih, 2021, p.298) "*found that supply chain collaboration can directly and indirectly have a positive influence on innovation capability*." However, table 9 shows examples of those findings, statements, and researcher's memos and notes.

Table 9 The Meaning and Value of Collaboration and Integration

Statements / Data	Memos/Notes
"Supply chain integration (SCI) can be defined as the degree to which a manufacturer strategically collaborates with partners within its supply chain and collaboratively manages inter- and intra-organizational processes" (Tarifa-Fernandez and De Burgos-Jiménez, 2017, p.1244).	SCI depends on the collaboration with partners, Collaborative management of business processes internally and externally.

Statements / Data	Memos/Notes
"*Firms are building collaborative relationships with their supply chain partners in order to achieve efficiencies, flexibility, and sustainable competitive advantage*" (Hudnurkar, Jakhar and Rathod, 2014, pp, 189-190,195).	Collaborative relationships with partners enhance efficiencies, flexibility, and competitiveness.
"*The driving force of effective SCM is collaboration. Strategic SCM demands collaboration among all participants in the value chain, whatever their size, function, or relative position*" (Horvath, 2001, p.206).	Effective SCM depends on collaboration, This means that managing, integrating, and coordinating business activities in a supply chain depends on collaboration.
"*Collaboration in a supply chain relates to the capability of two or more autonomous firms to work effectively together, planning and executing supply chain operations toward common goals*" (Scholten and Schilder, 2015, p.471).	Collaboration is working and planning together to achieve common goals.
"A *new trend towards integration and collaboration instead of so-called arm's-length agreements between suppliers and customers has been recognised by researchers as well as business practitioners*" (Sandberg, 2007, p.274).	The two concepts, integration and collaboration, represent the main practices in a supply chain through which organisations achieve better performance and outcomes.
"*Businesses with a supply chain strategy require integration, cooperation*	This statement affirms that SCM is about managing business activities

Statements / Data	Memos/Notes
and collaboration, which in turn demand aligned objectives, open communication, sharing of resources, risks and rewards." (Soosay, Hyland and Ferrer, 2008, p.160).	in a supply chain through integration, cooperation, collaboration, and communication among firms.
"*Supply chain collaboration has become a strategic issue for companies that wish to achieve their economic, social, and environmental sustainability targets*" (Chen et al., 2017p.73)	Collaboration enhances sustainability.
"*Firms can respond to environmental contexts and enhance performance when the collective partnership knowledge and expertise with their supply chain partners can be leveraged to learn, adapt, and respond in an integrated manner*"; "*The capability to respond effectively, and meet higher customer expectations, thus, is facilitated by a learning culture and extensive collaboration, which could be integral to the development and deployment of capabilities*" (Iyer, Srivastava and Srinivasan, 2019, p.94).	Collaboration enhances responsiveness.
"According to the 17 sustainable development goals from the United Nations, "a successful sustainable development agenda requires	Collaboration is not limited to supply chains; it includes all stakeholders.

Statements / Data	Memos/Notes
collaboration among governments, the private sector, and civil society"; *"Collaboration is repeatedly mentioned in the literature as a strategy against supply chain disruption … and toward competitiveness and good performance"* (Paula et al., 2019, p.176).	
"True SCM-based collaboration among supply chain players can have significant benefits. According to researchers as well as consultants, massive reduction of costs and improved service are possible. Within the field of logistics, best practice companies have applied collaborative approaches based on the SCM philosophy and have achieved extraordinary results" (Sandberg, 2007, p.274).	Collaboration enhances cost reduction and improves services
"Firms have strategically recognized the importance of supply chain collaboration (SCC) to seek higher efficiencies in sourcing, planning, producing, and distributing" (Um and Kim, 2019, p.97).	Collaboration improves efficiency.

4.3.5 The Initial Theoretical Model and Initial Statement of SCM

Based on the outcomes of the GT process, the researcher's initial theoretical model, as shown in Figure 38, was developed.

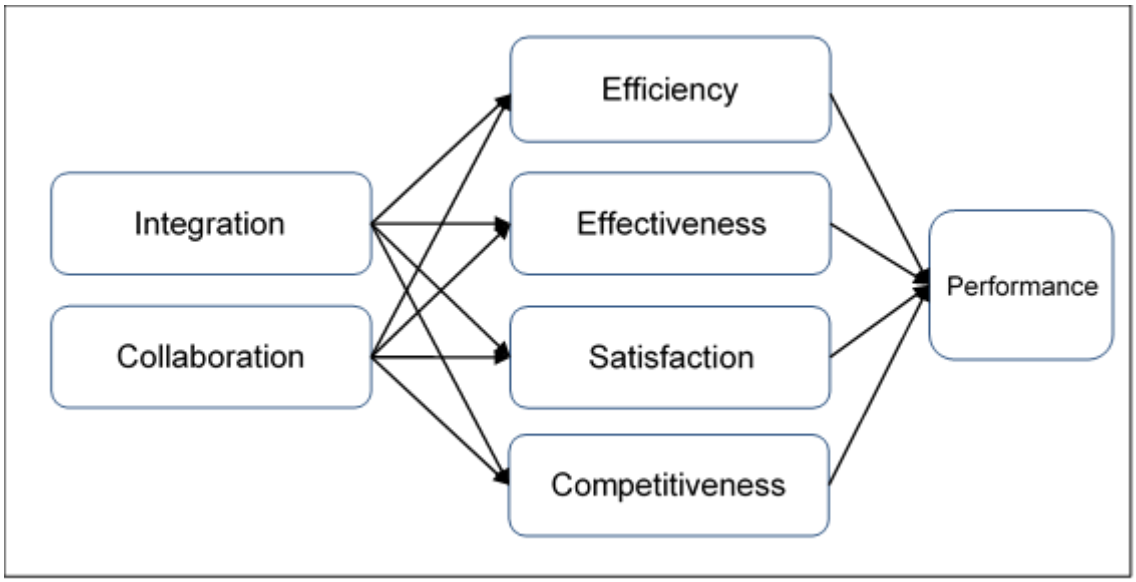


Figure 38 SCM Initial Theoretical Model

The model's main idea is that through the collaboration and integration across firms in a supply chain, better performance is achieved for the entire supply chain. The researcher's initial statement about the shown model is that:

> 'Organisations achieve better performance through integrative and collaborative planning of supply operations across the supply chain from the ultimate supplier to the ultimate customer.'

4.3.6 The Emergence of SCM Core Meaning

From the mentioned processes and findings, it was established that the core idea of SCM is the importance of collaboration and integration within and across firms. Through these two business practices, firms across a supply chain reach the state of 'Informative Integration', which reduces demand uncertainty, improves efficiency, and enables firms to mutually plan, coordinate, and synchronise their

business operations. In other words, informative Integration enables organisations to plan as one system (entity) and enhances firms' capabilities to manage their resources wisely.

4.3.7 Continuing the Quest for More Objectives

In this phase, a further literature review was commenced to identify and gather additional SCM objectives. However, the focus was on more studies about the benefits of collaboration and integration in SCM. Accordingly, further objectives were added. These objectives are: 'Agility', 'Accuracy', 'Cooperation', 'Cost', Flexibility', 'Quality', 'Productivity', 'Resilience', 'Speed', 'Visibility', and 'Sustainability.

The following table gives examples of the coding process in this phase and how the mentioned objectives were identified.

Table 10 Coding for Further Objectives

Statements / Data	Memos/Notes
"Supplier integration does significantly contribute to operational firm performance in terms of cost, quality, flexibility, and delivery performance" (Wiengarten et al., 2016, p.362).	Supplier integration reduces cost, improves quality, and enhances flexibility and delivery performance.
"Supplier integration involves suppliers taking increased responsibility for aspects of availability and product development. It involves increased interactions between businesses and functions to increase productivity and availability and reduce the risk of non-compliance" (Stevens and Johnson, 2016, p.23).	Integration improves productivity, product availability, and quality (risk of non-compliance).

Statements / Data	Memos/Notes
"Researchers who study information sharing in the supply chain often invoke the notion of visibility, where visibility refers to greater access to high-quality information describing various factors of demand and supply" (Williams et al., 2013, p.543).	Information sharing enhances visibility in the supply chain.
"The findings suggest that supplier and customer integration are vital enablers for both intra- and inter-organizational sustainability management practices and performance" (Kang et al., 2018, p.1749).	Integration enhances sustainability.
"While definitions of SCM may vary; the key commonalities represented in the literature are co-operation, coordination, integration and collaboration together with a recognition of its cross-disciplinary nature"[83]; "*A 'green' supply chain is where a focal firm works with their suppliers to improve the environmental performance of products and manufacturing processes*" (Ashby, Leat and Hudson-Smith, 2012, pp.503-504).	Key commonalities of SCM are cooperation, coordination, integration and collaboration. These practices improve sustainability.

[83] This is a significant statement that advocates the researcher's argument that SCM is not an appropriate term to describe and emphasise the value of cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms in a supply chain.

Statements / Data	Memos/Notes
"There have been a number of publications promoting the benefits of collaborative approaches. Some of the claimed benefits include lower cost and inventory, higher efficiency, improved customer service, reduced cycle times, faster time to market, increased risk sharing, improved learning and knowledge exchange, higher profit margins, improved shareholder value and increased competitive advantage over other supply chains"; "*Internal integration can improve customer service, inventory management and forecast accuracy as well as increasing customer and employee satisfaction*" (Mena, Humphries and Wilding, 2009, p.765).	Collaboration improves efficiency, speed, learning, and profit. Integration improves customer satisfaction.

However, other objectives were adopted from the researcher's military culture. These objectives are 'Readiness', 'Health, 'Safety' and 'Security'. These objectives, as will be introduced in section 4.4.2, are important objectives to all organisations.

4.3.8 The Revised Grounded Theory Model and Theory Statement

The further literature analysis and the researcher's experience enabled the researcher to improve the theoretical model and the initial framework. Also, studying the GT method enabled the researcher to modify the theoretical model, where the identified objectives were recategorized and organised. These

categories are 1) the core category, which includes the cooperation, collaboration and integration objectives or the main business practices or interactions, 2) the management objectives, and 3) the management goals. Figure 39 shows the theoretical model of the developed theory.



Figure 39 Supply Chain Management Theory

Also, it is determined that the initial theoretical statement does not accurately describe the model. Accordingly, the statement was modified to state that:

> '*Organisations Achieve Better Performance and Outcomes Through Cooperative, Collaborative and Integrative Business relationships.'*

4.3.9 The Emergence of Business Relations Management Concept

Through the developed theoretical model of business relations and the revised theory statement, the broader view behind the discovered theory began to get clearer to the researcher. In this phase, it was established that the theory is, in fact, applicable to any sector and is not limited to the manufacturing sector or supply chains. Accordingly, it is realised that the SCM term was not an appropriate description of the phenomenon of collaboration and integration within and across firms, among teams, among government institutes, and even among the armed forces. Instead, the term 'Business Relations Management' (BRM) would be more appropriate to describe that phenomenon or those business practices.

Based on the identified theoretical foundation, the literature was re-examined to identify who among SCM scholars focused on business relations management in their definitions or views. The literature showed that many scholars have touched on business relations across the supply chain (Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Sweeney, 2010) or included the words 'managing relationships' in their definition of SCM. (e.g., Wilding, 2011; Lambert, 2014; Christopher, 2016). For instance, Lambert and Cooper (2000, p.65) stated that "*the management of multiple relationships across the supply chain is being referred to as supply chain management";* Lambert and Enz (2017) focused on managing suppliers and customers relationships in their framework (the Global Supply Chain Forum framework); Christopher (2016, p.3) and Wilding (2011) stated that SCM is *"The management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers … "* while other scholars discussed business to business relationships (B2B) in the supply chain (e.g., Sweeney, 2010). Despite that, the realised meaning of BRM in this research was unclear to many scholars.

Therefore, with respect to Oliver and Weber (1982) and all other SCM scholars, the SCM concept was not an appropriate term to describe the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration phenomena within functional departments in firms, across a supply network or chain, or across firms or organisations outside the supply chain. In fact, the term 'SCM' was a misleading concept as it limits the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration to supply chains in the manufacturing sector. On the contrary, BRM is applicable to all sectors.

Moreover, the process orientation was not the right approach to theorising and understanding SCM. The process orientation focuses on the practical implementation of the concept (Mentzer et al., 2001). Theories explain why things happen (Strauss and Corbin, 2015). Therefore, in business and management, the focus should be on what firms or organisations are trying to achieve, what their objectives are, what beliefs and convictions shape, influence, and govern their decisions and actions, and how they socially interact to achieve those

objectives. Also, theory development could be through identifying the processes and best practices through which management objectives are optimally achieved.

4.3.10 Final Theoretical Statement and Model of BRM Theory

In the focused coding phase of the GT process, the researcher was in doubt about considering the internal and external communication and information sharing within and across organisations as part of integration or informative integration. Particularly, the researcher was suspicious of considering the process of surveying customers' opinions or gathering and analysing their feedback about the quality of products or services as part of the integration. For instance, Schmuck (2021) sees that the:

> *"Integration of customers is crucial as most quality management theories deal with customer satisfaction first. Getting information from customers on products and services is a supply chain downstream integration."*
>
> (Ibid, 2021, p.89).

Furthermore, the social communication between suppliers or service providers and their customers is a key value-creation practice. It is not only to gather or share information among people or organisations that, for example, reduces demand uncertainty, reduces waste, reduces inventory cost and the bullwhip effect phenomenon; rather, it creates social value for the supplier and the customer. Communication builds trust and loyalty between the customers and their suppliers and enables the suppliers to improve products and services quality and increase customer satisfaction.

However, a further literature review showed that many academics touched on the communication or used the concept to refer to information sharing across firms (e.g., Halldorsson et al., 2007**;** Soosay, Hyland and Ferrer, 2008; Moberg et al., 2008; Williamson, 2010; Scholten and Scholten and Schilder 2015; Huo et al. (2016). Therefore, there is a need to differentiate between the meaning of integration and the meaning of communication.

Accordingly, it is determined that the four constructs (Communication', 'Cooperation', Collaboration', and Integration'), in addition to the transactional relationships, represent the main social interactions and the value creation drivers within and across organisations and other stakeholders.

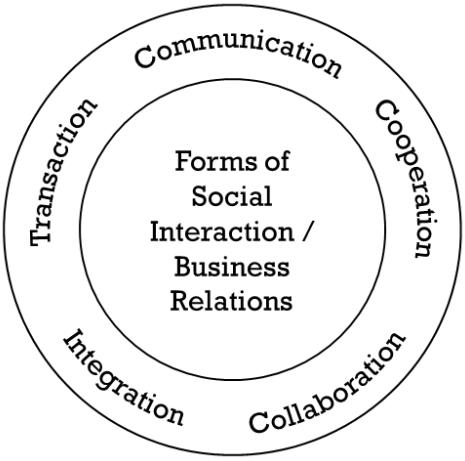


Figure 40 Main Social Interactions within and Across Organisations

Accordingly, the core category and the theoretical model were modified to incorporate four BRM constructs, as shown in figure 41. Also, it is determined that the discovered, or more accurately, the realised theory should be called the 'Business Relations Management Theory'.



Figure 41 Business Relations Management Theory

Furthermore, BRM is not limited to organisations; the concept is also applied to individuals, societies, and nations. Also, the theoretical statement should include the four constructs of BRM. Accordingly, the theoretical statement of BRM theory was modified to state that:

> '*Individuals*, *Organisations, Societies, and Nations Achieve better Performance and Outcomes through the Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration.'*

4.4 Researcher's Perception of the Developed Theory and Business Relations Management Concept/Discipline

Addressing and discussing the entire aspects of the realised theory in this research is beyond the scope of this thesis. Strauss and Corbin (2015) suggest that grounded theorists should give an overview chapter of the developed theory. Yet, the authors did not give further details about what the overview should include. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.31) suggest that *"grounded theory can be presented either as a well-codified set of propositions or in a running theoretical discussion, using conceptual categories and their properties*. Nonetheless, addressing the entire aspect of the realised theory of this research can be described as constructing and building a new management culture and perspective. It entails establishing a management discipline that is beyond the researcher's time limit and capability. Therefore, in this section, the three categories of the discovered theory, the researcher's perspective of the implications of the theory, and the proposed definition of 'Business Relations Management' (BRM) are introduced.

4.4.1 The Core Category of Business Relations Management

4.4.1.1 Introduction

The different perspectives and the lack of consensus on the meaning of SCM led to different perspectives about the meaning of integration, cooperation, and collaboration among SCM scholars. Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.23) stated that "*Many scholars agree that SCM includes certain key concepts, such as integration and collaboration/cooperation among chain members, these concepts*

are still poorly defined – with multiple meanings to both researchers and practitioners." Also, Mena, Humphries and Wilding (2009, p.764) mentioned that "*the concept of supply chain collaboration does not appear to be clearly defined.*"

Nevertheless, the collaboration concept has been highly emphasised in the literature. For example, Whipple et al. (2010, cited in Ralston, Richey and Grawe, 2017, p.508) defined collaborative relationships in a supply chain "*as long-term relationships where participants generally cooperate, share information, and work together to plan and even modify their business practices to improve joint performance*"; Ralston, Richey and Grawe (2017, p.509) cited that "*collaboration is a governance structure that allows organisations flexibility and a degree of control simultaneously resulting in superior returns on investment*"; and Christopher (2016, 240) mentioned "*that one of the key ingredients of supply chain management excellence"* is a "*high level of collaboration and, hence, trust across the network*."

On their side, Humphries and Wilding (2004, p.1109) see that the "*cooperative, coordinating, and collaborative behaviour*" in a supply chain is "*working together /jointly to bring resources into a required relationship to achieve effective operations in harmony with the strategies/objectives of the parties involved, thus resulting in mutual benefit*."

On the other hand, the integration concept was explicitly or implicitly mentioned in many definitions of SCM. For example, the definition of SCM by the CSCMP stated that "*In essence, supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies*"; Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.19) cited that the "*goal of supply chain integration is to enhance total process efficiency and effectiveness across members of the supply chain*"; while Christopher (2016, p.2) mentioned that "*Supply chain management revolves around the efficient integration of suppliers, manufacturers, warehouses, and stores*."

Moreover, Newman et al. (2009, cited in Naslund and Williamson, 2010, p.19) mentioned: "*that supply chain integration has a broader and longer-term perspective compared to supply chain collaboration*." Chang et al. (2016, p.282)

mentioned that supply chain integration "*is a firm's strategic collaboration and coordination with its suppliers and customers and the management of internal and external organisational processes*."

Nonetheless, plenty of empirical studies investigated the effect of or the relation between supply chain integration (SCI), supply chain collaboration (SCC), and firms' performance. The foremost conclusion is that SCI and SCC have a significant positive relationship with the overall performance of the firms.

For example, Leuschner, Rogers and Charvet (2013), in a paper entitled "*A meta-analysis of supply chain integration and firm performance"*, investigated a sample of 86 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 1994 and 2011. Based on their findings, the authors concluded that "*there is a positive and significant correlation between SCI and firm performance*" (Ibid, 2013, p.34).

Also, Christipher (2016) stated that:

> *"This idea of the supply chain as a confederation of partners linked together as a network provides the fourth ingredient of agility"; "Clearly a much higher level of collaboration and synchronisation is required if the network is to be truly agile"; "the route to sustainable advantage lies in being able to make best use of the respective strengths and competencies of network partners to achieve greater responsiveness to market needs."*
>
> (Christipher, 2016, pp.125-126).

Furthermore, Scholten and Schilder (2015) mentioned that:

> *"Supply chain collaboration enables the development of synergies among partners, facilitates joint planning and encourages real-time information exchange"; "collaboration is about information-sharing, jointly developing strategic plans and synchronizing operations"; "supply chain collaborations contains the collaborative activities information-sharing, decision synchronization and incentive alignment"; "the most elaborated conceptualization of supply chain collaboration"* includes the *"collaborative activities of information-sharing, goal congruence, joint decision-making,*

resources-sharing, incentive alignment, collaborative communication and joint knowledge creation among independent supply chain partners"; "supply chain collaboration brings about many benefits such as higher visibility, flexibility and reduced lead times"; "previous studies show that collaboration is important to improve responsiveness and mitigate effects of a disruption."

(Scholten and Schilder, 2015, pp.473-474).

In general, excellent organisations grasp the value of communication and establishing, developing and maintaining cooperative, collaborative and integrative business relationships internally and externally. However, the discovered theory and the developed model of this research encouraged the researcher to gather more information about the collaboration and integration concepts. The focus was on the dimensions of these two concepts, the enablers or the antecedents, the barriers, and the metaphors or forms of collaboration and integration. However, identifying and discussing the enablers and the barriers of collaboration and integration is beyond the thesis scope. Yet, this section will briefly present the researcher's perspective about these areas. Furthermore, this section will touch on the dark side or the negative aspects of collaboration.

4.4.1.2 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Dimensions

The literature showed that most academics who discussed supply chain integration (SCI) and supply chain collaboration (SCC) mentioned three dimensions of integration and collaboration. These dimensions are internal collaboration and integration across business functions and top management (vertical and horizontal), collaboration and integration with the suppliers, and collaboration and integration with the customers. Figure 42 shows how Christopher (2016) perceives achieving an integrated supply chain.

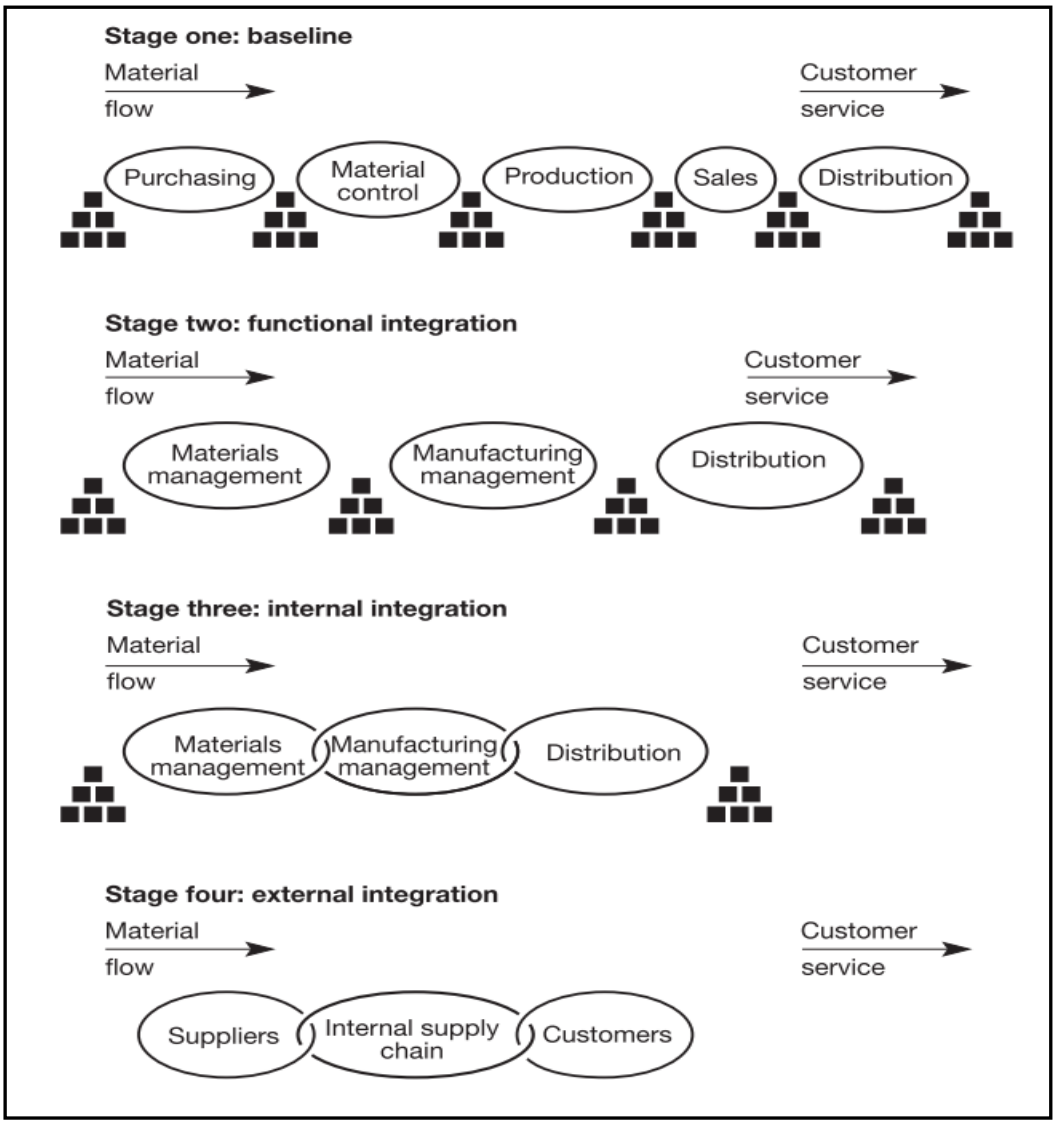


Figure 42 Achieving an Integrated Supply Chain

Source: (Christopher, 2016, p.15).

However, the literature showed that few scholars mentioned a fourth dimension, which is the collaboration and integration with other organisations or stakeholders outside the supply chain (e.g., Barratt, 2004). This can be attributed to the influence of the term SCM on many academics. The researcher's viewpoint is that the term has limited these two types of business relations to supply chains and hindered seeing the whole picture by many academics.[84] Accordingly, it is

[84] The introduced framework by Lambert (2014) as mentioned, focused on 'Suppliers Relations Management (SRM) and 'Customers Relations Management' (CRM).

determined that there are four main dimensions of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. These dimensions are shown in figure 43.

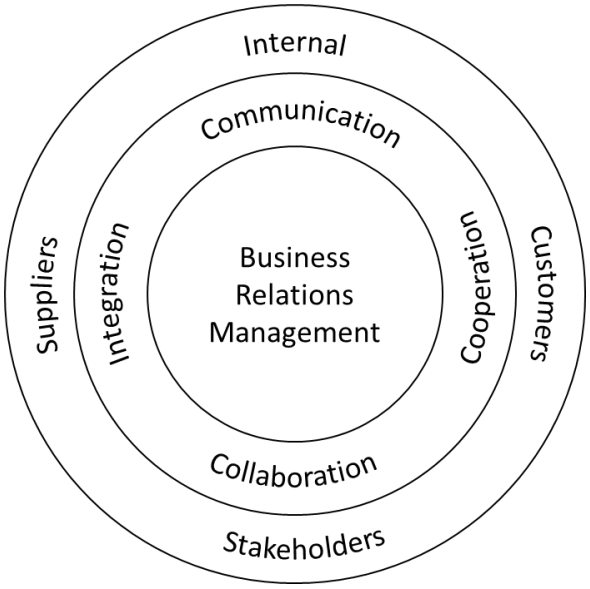


Figure 43 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Dimensions

4.4.1.3 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Antecedents

Some academics and scholars who touched on the antecedents of collaboration and integration believe that there are three main antecedents of SCM: trust commitment, and shared goals, interests, or visions among firms (e.g., Mentzer et al., 2001; Dubey et al., 2017; Shin, Thai and Yuen, 2018). However, there are at least five main antecedents of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration between individuals or organisations; these are the existence of shared goals, interests or visions, awareness, willingness, trust, and the absence of barriers. The existence of common goals, objectives, interests, or visions is the key driver of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms. Excellent organisations are supposed to have clear stated major goals and objectives. The goals and objectives are supposed to be known to all departments. All departments and employees are supposed to achieve, maintain, and stick to their goals. The awareness of the importance and the value

of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration plays another key role. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that people's awareness of the importance of their cooperation with healthcare authorities[85] in facing and containing the spread of the novel Corona Virus is a vital factor. On the other side, the lack of people's awareness and commitment was the reason behind the steep increase in the number of active cases worldwide. People's or firms' willingness is also another important factor besides the mentioned trust between firms. Also, the communication factor, especially technological communication, is the key enabler of information sharing across organisations. However, the researcher's argument is that 'commitment' is not an antecedent but rather a success factor. The concept of 'commitment' entails many meanings. It can be described as a practice that creates value or evidence or a sign of awareness.

For example, firms' commitment to the scheduled delivery of products to their customers increases trust between firms and enhances firms' 'Reliability'. This means that 'Commitment', as a practice, creates not only economic value (Mentzer et al., 2001) but also social and market value (Market Reputation). Hence, these created values (economic, market, and social) could increase firms' willingness to collaborate. However, it is worth mentioning that Mentzer et al. (2001, p.13) mentioned that "*commitment is an essential ingredient for the successful long-term relationships that are a component of the implementation of SCM."* Also, the authors mentioned that "*commitment and trust are 'key' because they encourage marketers to work at preserving relationship investments by cooperating with exchange partners*" (Ibid, 2001, p.13). Despite that, the authors consider 'commitment' as an antecedent of what they call 'Supply Chain Orientation (SCO) and SCM. Firms' failure to meet their customers' expectations (lack of commitment) decreases not only trust and willingness of collaboration but also is one of the main reasons behind breaking transactional business relations. Figure 44 outlines the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration antecedents.

[85] Bahrain government established 'Bahrain Team' which integrates experts from different ministries and authorities to face the pandemic. This is an example of the cooperation, collaboration, and integration among stakeholders. Also, the campaign slogan that Bahrain's government has used in facing the pandemic is 'Be Aware' and 'Conscious Society'.

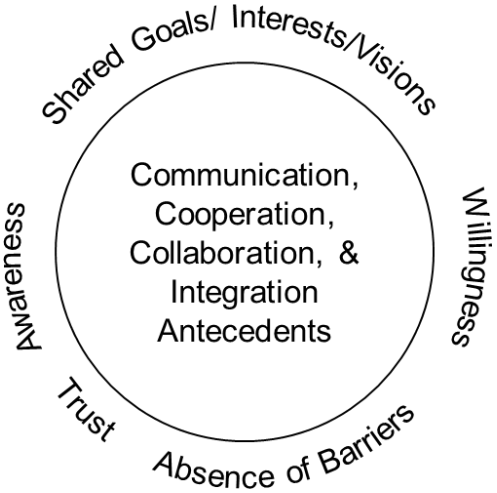


Figure 44 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Antecedents

4.4.1.4 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Forms/ Levels

The literature showed that some scholars of SCM overlooked the value of communication in their suggested models of the levels of business relationships or have different views and perspectives about it. For instance, Humphries and Wilding (2004), Wilding and Humphries (2006), and Wilding (2021) classify business relationships into three types: coordination, cooperation[86], and collaboration which they call the C3 behaviour'[87]. Similarly, Spekman, Kamauff and Myhr (1998) presented these concepts in a linear sequence or transition from 'Open Market Negotiation, Co-operation, Co-ordination, and Collaboration (Figure 45).

[86] The researcher sees that considering the coordination of inventory flow among firms as a level of business relationships is not correct. Coordination can be described as a form of cooperation.
[87] Professor Wilding still adopts the C3 idea where he addressed it in a YouTube presentation broadcasted in February 2021. It would be more accurate if the C3 behaviour refer to Communication, Cooperation, and Collaboration.

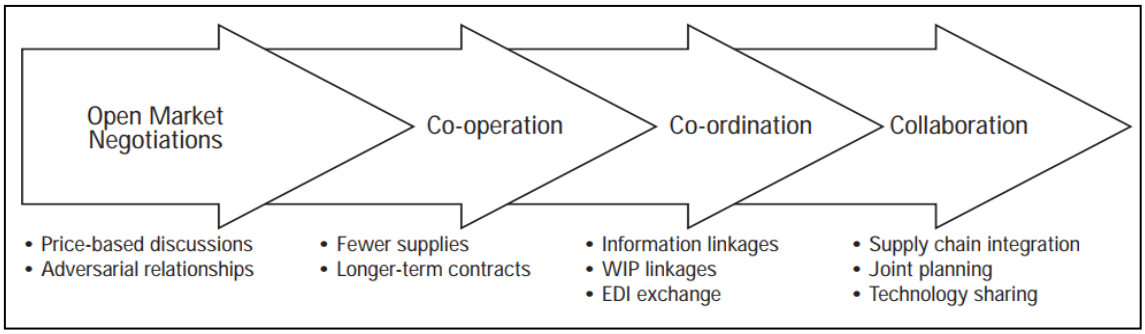


Figure 45 The Key Transition from Open-Market Negotiations to Collaboration

Source: (Spekman, Kamauff and Myhr, 1998, p.634).

On his side, Sako (1992, cited in Soosay and Hyland, 2015, p. 616) see that inter-firm relations range "*from arm's length, transactional relations, cooperative agreements, coordination mechanisms, partnerships, strategic alliances and joint ventures to vertical integration*." Another view by Barratt (2004) suggests two supply chain collaboration elements: cultural and strategic (Figure 46). Also, many authors mentioned partnership relations across firms. However, few SCM academics mentioned the merger or the union of firms as the highest level of collaboration (e.g., LugoSantiago, 2018).

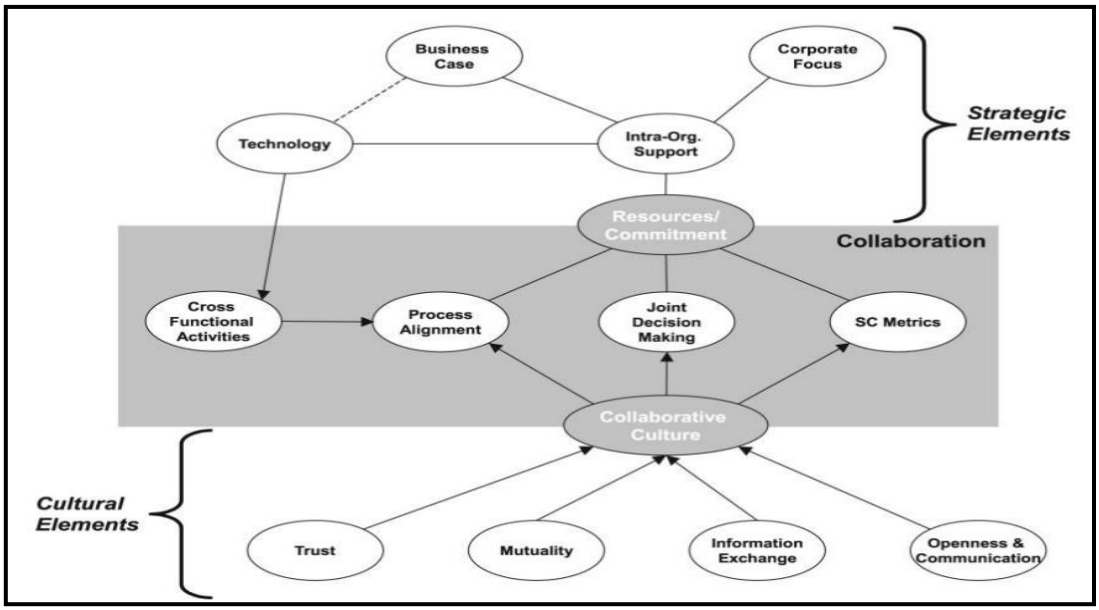


Figure 46 Elements of Supply Chain Collaboration

Source: (Barratt, 2004, p.36).

However, there are many other forms of cooperation, collaboration, and integration. The literature showed four integration types[88]. These are information sharing, which can be described as Informative Integration, integration of business processes, integration of efforts, and sharing or exchanging resources and skills, can be described as Integration of Resources. In addition, sharing knowledge, ideas, thoughts and experiences through meetings and discussions or communication with the customers or employees can be defined as intellectual or cognitive integration[89], and finally, assigning responsibilities, tasks, missions, and managing the various business functions can be described as 'Functional Integration and 'Managerial Integration'. Furthermore, there are other forms of integration among countries, such as integrative production or economic integration and integration of Defence and Security. Another form of cooperation is 'Consolidation'. Examples of consolidation are the global consolidation of specifications and measures of many products among countries, consolidation of the design of parts or components among automobiles manufacturers, consolidation of barcoding systems, consolidation of shipping containers, consolidation of currency, the consolidation of the international bank account number (IBAN) system among banks and financial institutions, and consolidation and centralisation of international aviation and marine navigation rules and regulations worldwide. All these mentioned examples are outcomes of the communication and cooperation among organisations and countries. Furthermore, as it is known, there are different forms or tools of communication, such as IT systems, meetings, social and official media, and the like. Figures 47, 48, and 49 show the forms and levels of cooperation and collaboration, integration, and communication.

[88] As introduced in table 8, page 208.

[89] The SCOR framework and the GSCF were the outcomes of the collaboration and intellectual integration between SCM scholars and experts. Moreover, group discussions or the use of Delphi method or the focus group in research are examples of intellectual integration and knowledge sharing.

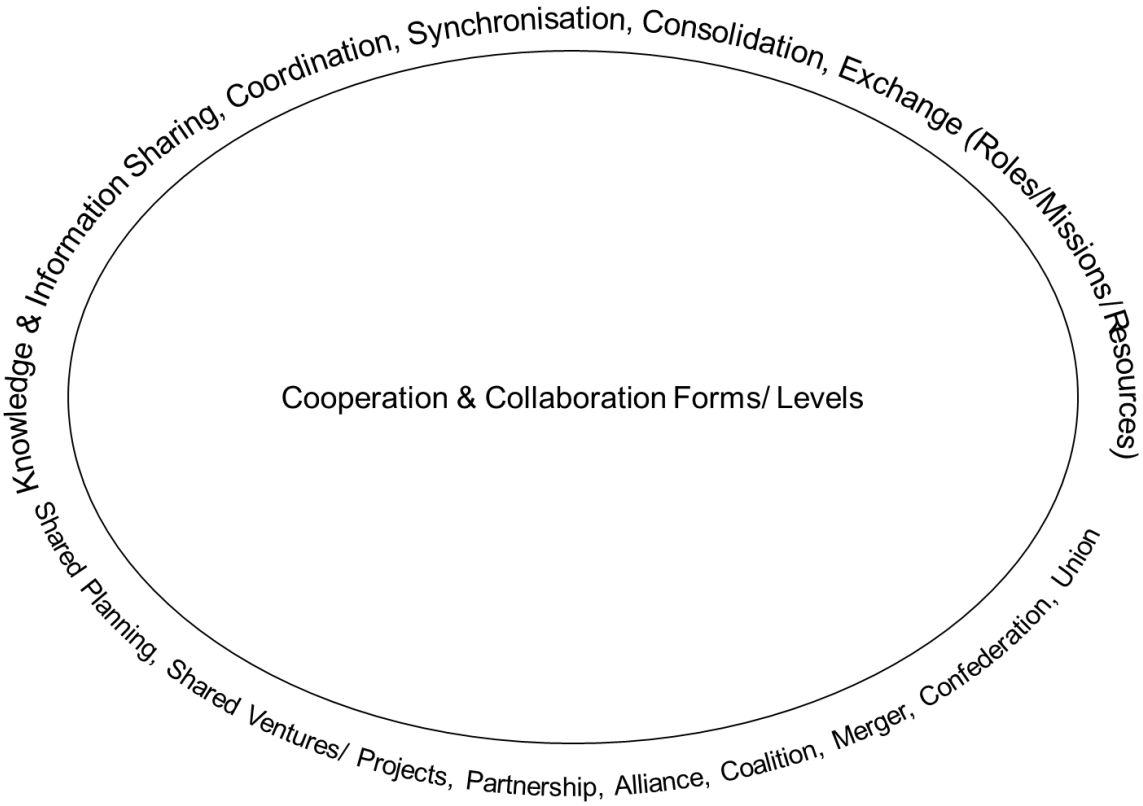


Figure 47 Cooperation and Collaboration Forms/Levels

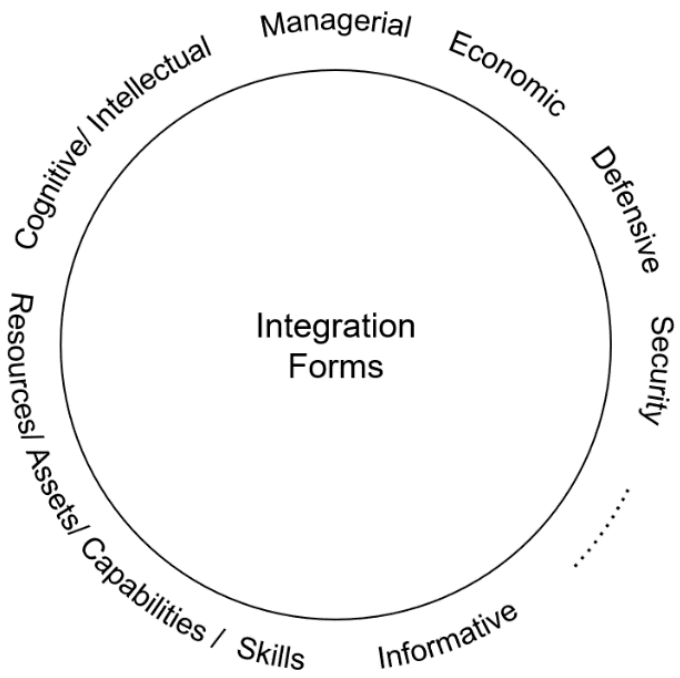


Figure 48 Integration Forms

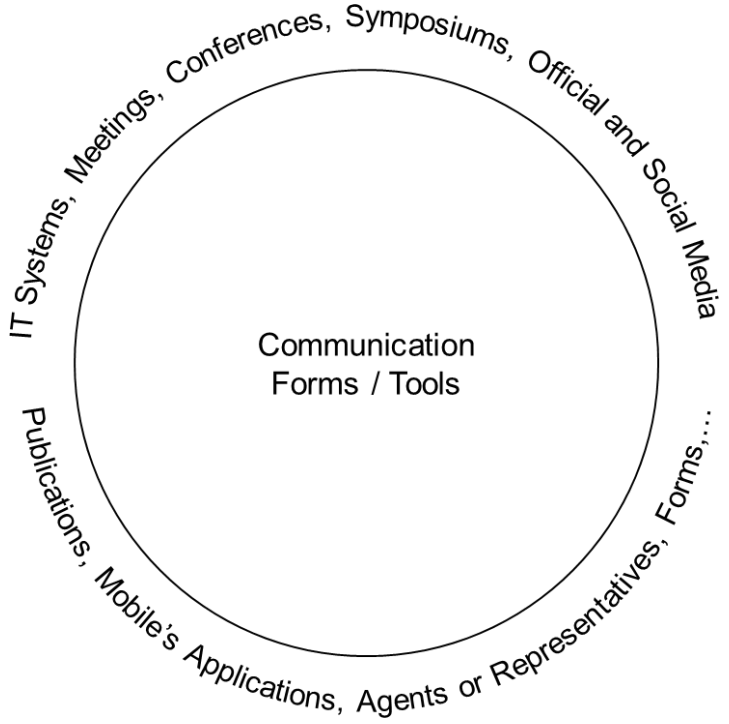


Figure 49 Communication Forms/Tools

4.4.1.5 Fields and Frameworks of Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration

There are countless fields and frameworks of cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations, stakeholders, and nations. Those fields or frameworks depend on the desired objectives and goals that could be achieved. Economic cooperation and integration are examples of the fields of cooperation and integration among countries. Another important field that demands international collaboration is what most wise people worldwide are calling for: saving the environment. Sustainability is one of the main goals of Bahrain's 2030 economic vision and the United Nations 2030 Invision, as it is introduced in chapter 1. Also, many authors focused on this goal. However, it depends on the willingness of countries to achieve and maintain this goal.

4.4.1.6 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Barriers/ Obstacles

The barriers of BRM were overlocked in general. Few scholars have mentioned this issue (e.g., Forslund and Jonsson, 2008; Christopher, 2016). Nonetheless, the main barrier is the absence of the mentioned above antecedents and the lack of resources and capabilities such as time and skills. In addition, there are other barriers to communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. The barriers can be classified into psychological, social, managerial or organisational, political, economic, cultural, religious, racial, technological, and geographical. For instance, 'Greed' and 'Arrogance' are psychological barriers, lack of trust and suspicion are social barriers, employees' grades and positions or the military personnel ranking system can be described as sources of organisational barriers, and the lack of reliable and secure communication systems or information management systems is a technological barrier. Organisations need to focus on eliminating these barriers, especially internal barriers. However, the reader is encouraged to look at Balon, Sharma and Barua (2016), who investigated and assessed the barriers in green SCM; Zhang, Narkhede and Chaple (2017), who touched on 'Lean Manufacturing' barriers; and Pabini (2017) who addressed nine[90] common "*barriers that hinder collaboration and information sharing*" inside organisations and presented her proposed solutions of how to overcome those barriers. Figure 50 outlines the types of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration barriers.

[90] The common barriers as listed by Pabini (2017) are: lack of respect and trust, different mindsets, poor listening skills, knowledge deficits, lack of alignment around goals, internal competitiveness, information hoarding, organisational silos, and physical separation.

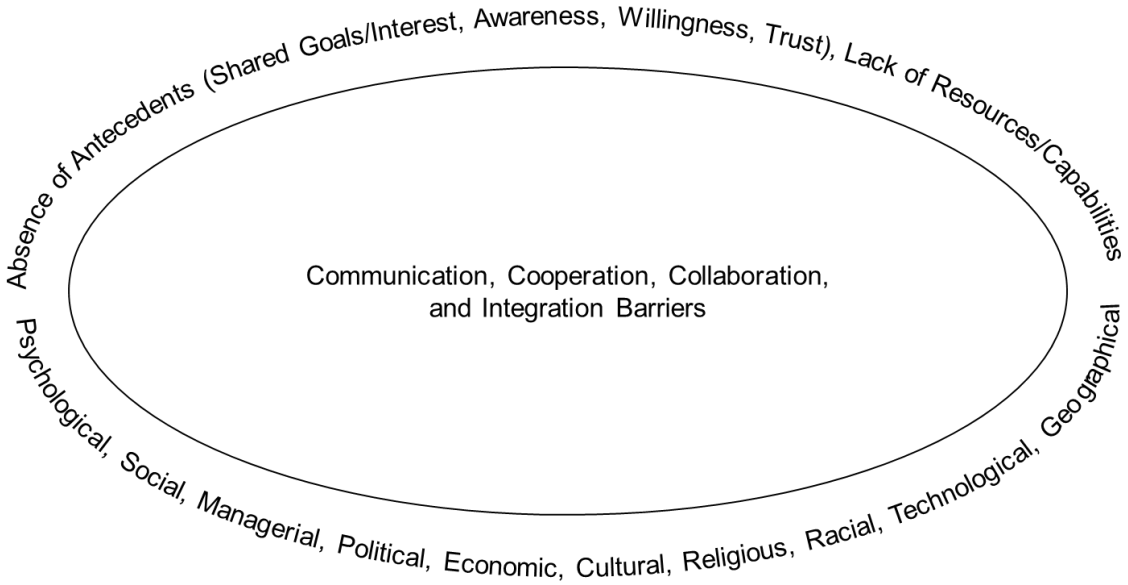


Figure 50 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Barriers

4.4.1.7 The Dark Side of Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration

This issue is an important topic to mention. Practices such as monopoly or the cooperation between suppliers against the well-beaning of society are some of those dark sides. That is why governments or legislators impose, for example, antitrust and consumer protection laws. Nonetheless, discussing this topic is beyond the thesis scope.

4.4.2 Management Objectives

The literature showed that the commonly used terms that can be defined as business management objectives were partially scattered in the tens of definitions of SCM and within the literature. Furthermore, the objectives were not profoundly emphasised and addressed. The term ‘Objectives of Supply Chain Management’ was occasionally mentioned or addressed with enough and thorough consideration in the SCM literature. However, this section aims not to address the objectives in detail but to highlight the core and common goals and objectives of business management and the value that BRM adds to these objectives.

4.4.2.1 Cost, Efficiency and Effectiveness

The 'Cost' objective was the most mentioned in all references. To many scholars like Wilding (2011) and Christopher (2016), it is the leading competitive advantage firms should plan to attain. In their definition of SCM, Christopher (2016) and Wilding (2011) stated that SCM is "*the management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers in order to deliver superior customer value at less cost to the supply chain as a whole*" (Christopher, 2016, p.3). Christopher (2016, p.244) suggests "*three key drivers of costs*": transaction costs, process costs, and uncertainty costs. According to the author, transaction costs can be reduced through the "*adoption of collaborative working arrangements supported by*" business to business "*(B2B) e. Commerce tools*", where Christopher (2016) mentioned that "*information and communication technology has made it possible to connect supply chains from one end to the other*", which in return, reduces the cost of communication. Process costs, as defined by the author, are the costs that arise due to the lack of business processes' alignment between suppliers and their customers. According to Christopher (2016, p.244), the existence of "*different products codes*" or "*different unitisation requirements*" causes additional costs as it requires further time in the receiving processes. To handle these costs and align business processes, the author suggests creating "*joint process teams"… "from both sides of customers/supplier interface*." Last, Christopher (2016) sees that uncertainty costs arise due to inaccurate forecasting and the lack of information about customers' actual requirements. Such uncertainty increases inventory holding costs. Reducing these costs can be achieved through supplier/customer communication.

In relation to the cost, 'Efficiency' was also mentioned as a major objective that leads to lower costs. Also, the meaning of 'Effectiveness' was mostly associated with other objectives such as cost-effectiveness, effective responsiveness and effective SCM. These two objectives are the key objectives of management as per the researcher's understanding of management. Lambert and Enz (2017) described this orientation as 'Managerial Efficiency'. However, 'Managerial Effectiveness is also needed in business management.

It is worth noting that Christopher (2016, p.4), in his book, states that "*effective logistics and supply chain management can provide a major source of competitive advantage."* As the reader notices, the author differentiates between logistics and SCM. However, based on the outcomes of this research, the researcher's argument is that effective logistics and BRM are two areas of management that truly "*provide a major source of competitive advantage*." For example, the success of the just-in-time policy or strategy depends on the cooperation of all stakeholders in the supply chain. However, the main interests of managing business relations are how employees, departments, suppliers, customers, and stakeholders could work together to reduce the cost of products and services, how could they work together to use their scarce resources efficiently and effectively, and finally, what information should they share efficiently and securely to reduce waste of time, money, and effort, to preserve their competitive advantage and improve their managerial and financial performance.

4.4.2.2 Responsiveness, Reliability, and Resilience

These three objectives were mentioned by Christopher (2016) collectively under what the author called the principles of supply chain competition. The author stated: "*As we move rapidly into the era of supply chain competition, a number of principles emerge to guide the supply chain manager. These can be conveniently summarised as the '4Rs' of responsiveness, reliability, resilience and relationships*." (Christopher, 2016, p.23).

According to Christopher (2016, p.23), 'Responsiveness' depends on firms' "*ability to respond to customers*" in a flexible and agile manner; 'Reliability' is about the "*supplier's ability to meet a delivery promise, or about the quality of materials or components*", while 'Resilience' "*refers to the ability of the supply chain to cope with unexpected disturbances*." This objective is an essential element of the Business Continuity Management notion.

Christopher (2016) illustrated that responsiveness depends on the agility of a supply chain. The author mentioned that information sharing leads to better "*responding to real demand*" (Ibid, 2016, p.123) and enhanced reliability. Also,

the author mentioned that a truly agile network of suppliers requires a "*higher level of collaboration and synchronisation*"(Ibid, 2016, p.126). Moreover, Christopher (2016) stated that "*a key driver of resilience is a high level of collaboration between supply chain partners*." Also, the author added, "*visibility and information sharing are fundamental to the development of a resilient supply chain*" (Ibid, 2016, p.234).

Nonetheless, as introduced, many other authors studied the value of communication and information sharing across a supply chain and the value that could be achieved through cooperation, collaboration, and integration among firms. For instance, Scholten and Schilder (2015, p.473) mentioned that "*previous studies show that collaboration is important to improve responsiveness and mitigate effects of a disruption*"; Williams et al. (2013, p.543) found that "*achieving supply chain responsiveness requires a dual-pronged approach that aligns increased visibility with extensive information processing capabilities from internal integration*"; and Power et al. (2016, p.239) mentioned that information technology improves delivery reliability.

4.4.2.3 Readiness

In the military culture, a central performance objective is being ready all the time to defend any nation, and this is what is known as Armed Forces Readiness. The US Department of Defence (DOD) defines 'readiness' "as "*the ability of military forces to fight and meet the demands of assigned missions"* (Herrera, 2020, p.3). This critical objective requires the continuous operational availability of equipment and supplies besides personnel. Also, readiness means being ready for any disruption in the supply chain.

However, instead of 'Readiness', some authors use the word 'Resilience' to describe organisations' ability "*to cope with unexpected disturbances"* (Christopher, 2016, p.23); others see that it is about the ability "*to recover from inevitable risk events more effectively"* (Jüttner and Maklan, 2011, .p246)*;* is about *"the adaptive capability of the supply chain to prepare for unexpected events, respond to disruptions, and recover from them by maintaining continuity of operations at the desired level of connectedness and control over structure*

and function" (Ponomarov and Holcomb, 2009, cited in ibid, 2011, p.247), or is about building "*certain operational capabilities that must be aligned with supply chain partners to manage both expected and unexpected changes*" (Ali, Mahfouz and Arisha, 2017, p.16).

Furthermore, Scholten, Scott and Fynes (2014, p.212) mentioned that "*resilience must be built into a supply chain in advance of a disturbance and incorporate readiness to enable an efficient and effective response*"; a systematic literature review by Hohenstein, Feisel, Hartmann, and Giunipero (2015, cited in Pires Ribeiro and Barbosa-Povoa, 2018, p.110) defined and conceptualised supply chain resilience into four "*phases: readiness, response, recovery, and growth";* while Chowdhury and Quaddus (2016, p.709) identified three dimensions of supply chain resilience: "*readiness, response and recovery*." Moreover, the authors identified the sub-dimensions of readiness, which are "*disaster preparation, flexibility, redundancy/backup capacity, visibility and collaboration*" (Ibid, 2016, p.712). Also, Chowdhury and Quaddus (2016, p.715) mentioned that "*cooperation and collaboration among the supply chain partners are essential across the supply chain partners for continuous risk reduction, avoidance and mitigation.*"

Nonetheless, there is no sign in the literature that a study had investigated the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration to armed forces readiness, which represents a valuable study, especially the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration with the suppliers. Yet, there are many forms of collaboration among the armed forces. Intelligence information sharing and Joint training between forces from different countries are examples of collaboration. Furthermore, all military operations depend on the effective communication, collaboration, and integration of the armed forces (e.g., Army, Navy, Air Force, and Air Defence). That is why joint operations centres are established in the armed forces.

4.4.2.4 Sustainability/ Supportability

The 'Sustainability' objective focus on the corporates' environmental and social responsibility. According to Naslund and Williamson (2010, p.20), "*the term*

sustainability rapidly is being adopted in the business community." The definition of sustainability which the authors cited, was developed by the *"Brundtland Commission (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987)*, *which defines sustainability as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs*." Christopher (2016, p.269) also mentioned that this definition of sustainability is the "*most widely used*."

However, Christopher (2016) relates sustainability to what he called "*the tribble bottom line: people, planet, profit*" (the three 'Ps'). Also, Elkington (1998, cited in Naslund and Williamson, 2010) and Christopher (2016) see that the concept covers three arenas 'Environment', 'Economy', and 'Society.' Carter and Rogers (2008) added risk management under the concept's umbrella. In the military community, the word sustainability has a different meaning which can be considered as a synonym for 'Supportability' or the logistical support of armed forces[91].

Generally, the main discussions around sustainability and sustainable development emphasise social responsibility, saving the environment, sustainable economy, and business continuity. For instance, Christopher (2016) touched on 'Greenhouse Gases', 'Carbon Emission and Footprint', and the three (Rs): 'Reduce, Re-use, Recycle' that focus on preserving scarce resources and energy. Winter and Knemeyer (2013, p.19) mentioned that "*the extant literature on sustainable SCM*" focuses on "*green purchasing, purchasing ethics, remanufacturing, safety management, supplier certification, carbon footprint and reverse logistics*"; Sarkis (2021, p.63) investigated "*sustainability in supply chains in a post-COVID-19 environment*", while Beske and Seuring (2014, p.322) identified "*five key categories which are of high importance for the sustainable management of supply chains: orientation toward SCM and sustainability, continuity, collaboration, risk management and proactivity*."

[91] Based on the researcher's knowledge of logistics management functions in the armed forces (Arm, Move, Fuel, Fix, and Sustain).

Nonetheless, many authors discussed the importance and the value of collaboration toward sustainability. León-Bravo et al. (2017, p.15) found that *"environmental collaboration with primary suppliers and major customers is said to impact positively on both manufacturing and environmental performance.*" Kang et al. (2018, p.1749) found *" that supplier and customer integration are vital enablers for both intra- and inter-organizational sustainability management practices and performance.*" Similarly, Touboulic and Walker (2015, p.178) stated that the "*collaborative approach to SC relationship management was likely to be more fruitful in achieving sustainable development goals*."

To conclude, the most prominent issue, as introduced, is the required global collaboration to sustainable development. Saving the environment must be everyone's business. It is a mutual responsibility. Furthermore, there is a need to focus on local or global recycling or disposal chains, not only supply chains.

4.4.2.5 Visibility

Internal and external communication and information sharing within and across firms in a supply chain is the key enabler of effective production and logistics management. Information technology and the global spread of the internet made communication and information sharing among firms a click away. The concept of vendor-manage-inventory is one of the policies that are based on real-time visibility. The success of the Collaborative Planning, Forecasting, and Replenishment (CPFR) model implementation depends on information sharing (Naslund and Williamson, 2010).

In a case study, Schmuck (2021, p.92) mentioned that Boeing company established a 'Production Integration Centre (PIC) "*to enhance awareness and visibility of the 787-program*" and "*to eliminate bottlenecks and delays*." The author also added that "*the creation of the Production Integration centre (PIC) allowed better integration of the supply chain and introduced digital supply chain quality audits*." Furthermore, in a book entitled: Toyota Supply Chain Management, Iyar, Seshadri and Vasher (2009) suggest that Toyota manages its

supply chain[92] based on five parameters[93]: visibility, velocity, variability, variety, and learning. According to the authors, these '4 Vs' and L', besides focusing on cost and customer satisfaction, are behind the success of Toyota company. However, the authors mentioned that visibility is concerned with monitoring the products' flow across the supply chain, which leads to efficient and effective production planning.

In general, total real-time inventory visibility would not be possible without informative integration across the supply chain/network. More precisely, total real-time inventory visibility cannot be achieved without cooperative and effective communication between the supply network/base and demand network/base (Christopher, 2016). As introduced in chapter 1, information is one of the key enablers of effective managerial and strategic planning. The more available information, the lower uncertainty and better production planning and management.

4.4.2.6 Quality

The quality of products, utilities, and services is one of the main drivers of customer satisfaction, competitiveness, and organisational performance (Zairi, 1995; Elg et al., 2011; Yu, Zhang and Huo, 2019). Many authors discussed the value of collaboration and integration across supply chains and its value to products' and services' quality (e.g., Ho, Au and Newton, 2002; Soosay, Hyland and Ferrer, 2008; Akyuz, 2011; Mellat-Parast, 2013; Liao, Hu and Shih, 2021; Schmuck, 2021). For instance, Schmuck (2021) stated:

> *"Integration of customers is crucial as most quality management theories deal with customer satisfaction first. Getting information from customers on products and services is a supply chain downstream integration"; "supply chain quality integration deals with the integration with suppliers and customers for quality improvement"; "it is possible to have configurations for speed, flexibility, and quality by using collaboration strategies"; "a survey conducted in*

[92] The authors used the words "manage its supply chain." The researcher argues that Toyota does not manage its SC, it manages its business.
[93] The authors used the word 'parameters. However, the researcher sees that these are objectives and business policies.

Southeast Asian countries shows that collaboration with suppliers improves quality control"; "in the manufacturing sector, the three types of supply chain integrations[94] *together lead to developments in design quality and conformance quality which fosters the overall product quality"; "a stronger customer integration decreases the total cost of quality, such as inspection, rework, product returns, and warranties";* and *"the use of cross-function teams increases effectiveness."*

(Ibid, 2021, pp.89-90).

Furthermore, Schmuck (2021, p.90), in his case study of Boeing company, mentioned that Boeing "*sends engineers and production workers to its suppliers in several countries of the world to smooth the supply chain quality integration."* This policy or practice by Boeing is collaborative and integrative monitoring or surveillance between manufacturers and their suppliers, which is believed to enhance and assure products' quality, reduce costs of reproduction and waste, and enhance sustainability[95].

Nonetheless, many other practices that fall under BRM may lead to better TQM. For example, placing suggestion boxes in many organisations is a form of intellectual integration that contribute to improving products' and services' quality. Employees and customers may present valuable suggestions or innovative ideas that lead to cost and waste reduction, process re-engineering, improving organisational structure, or improving sustainability. Without official or personal internal communication between employees and top management or external communication with customers or other stakeholders, those ideas will remain in people's minds. Continuous improvement, as introduced, is one of the main tasks of management. Therefore, involving employees and customers or other stakeholders in these efforts undoubtedly improves total quality, organisations' performance, customers' and stakeholders' satisfaction, and competitiveness.

[94] Internal, supplier, and customer.
[95] Reduces Carbon footprint and saves energy.

4.4.2.7 Health, Safety, and Security

Employees' health and safety, information security, and organisational assets' safety are no less important than the abovementioned objectives. Assuring health, safety, and security is a critical factor that minimises the risk of supply chain disruption and losing businesses. For example, maintaining information security and cybersecurity are the responsibility of everyone in any organisation. The commitment and the collaboration of all departments and employees are the core success factor in maintaining these objectives. In addition, employees' and customers' suggestions may promote health and safety in the workplace or add health and safety requirements to the products or services.

However, it is worth mentioning that through a systematic literature review by Rantsatsi, Musonda and Agumba (2020), the authors identified 11 critical factors of collaboration "*for improving health and safety performance in construction projects."* The authors found that "*trust, culture, commitment, communication, clear roles and responsibilities, resource/information sharing, mutual goals, conflict resolution, early involvement of key participants, competence, and continual improvement*" (Ibid, 2020, p.121) are the major factors to achieve and maintain health and safety in such projects. As the reader notices, communication, coordination (clear roles and responsibilities)[96], resources and information sharing, and stakeholders' involvement fall under the BRM concepts.

4.4.3 Management Goals or Ultimate

There is a consensus among scholars that customers' and other stakeholders' satisfaction, competitive advantage, and achieving better performance are the primary goals of SCM, where the focus lies in creating value for the customers through which competitive advantage is achieved and consequently achieving better performance (Mentzer et al.,2001). In the developed model of this study, these three goals are positioned under one category. These three goals are integrated and intertwined. For example, in the private sector, firms' financial performance depends on their competitive advantages and the level of

[96] The researcher's definition of 'Coordination' is the planning process that establishes who is doing what and when to do it, i.e., assigning roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

customers' satisfaction. It also depends on their managerial performance. On the contrary, in the public sector, organisations' managerial performance and governmental services' quality levels increase their customers' (citizens and residents) satisfaction.

Nonetheless, managers should know that satisfaction entails two main dimensions, internal and external. Internal satisfaction is related to top management as well as employees' satisfaction. Top management should maintain its managerial and social attitudes that satisfy its employees. Top management or leaders should maintain justice, integrity, and respect and perform their managerial responsibilities (empowerment, motivation, rewarding,..) as they should. Employees' satisfaction is the key to their productivity and loyalty. Similarly, employees should maintain discipline, commitment, respect and perform their jobs and duties to satisfy top management. The most important attitude is the collaboration of all employees.

On the other hand, external satisfaction includes customers, suppliers, shareholders, and other stakeholders. Customers' satisfaction depends on meeting customers' requirements and expectations. Quality of products, services, utilities, and after-sale services are among the main requirements. Yet, there are other factors that increase customer satisfaction, such as meeting customers' economic, social, psychological, health and safety, environmental, knowledge, and legal demands and expectations. The cost of products and services is a vital economic demand; protecting customers' health and safety is a vital demand; integrity, honesty, respect, transparency, and trustworthiness are social and psychological demands; producing environment-friendly and recyclable products is an environmental demand; providing sufficient information about products and services is a knowledge demand; and finally, meeting and preserving customers' rights and privacy is a legal demand. Therefore, the more the suppliers and services providers meet customers' requirements and expectations, the more delighted the customers are.

The other external dimensions of satisfaction are suppliers' and other stakeholders' satisfaction. The speed of financial transactions and payment

processes between firms and their business customers is one of the suppliers' satisfaction factors.

Nevertheless, discussing and addressing competitiveness and performance in detail is beyond the thesis scope. Yet, firms and organisations should establish clear and well-stated frameworks of customers' and stakeholders' satisfaction, competitiveness, and performance. Also, firms and organisations should be aware of modifying or improving those frameworks when needed. Moreover, business managers are supposed to be aware that the importance and the priority of management objectives vary according to the type of business. For example, readiness, responsiveness, effectiveness, and equipment quality might be considered the most important objectives to armed forces, while the cost is considered a lower priority. In contrast, cost, speed, and quality are the most important in the construction sector[97].

4.5 The Implication of the Developed Theory in Business and Management

The general implication of the developed theory and BRM perspective in this research is that organisations should establish clear objective/goal-oriented frameworks of internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. Internally, these frameworks or practices of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration should be imposed through regulations and laws, detailed procedures, and clear responsibilities. Also, organisations need to explore and identify the present and future external cooperation, collaboration, and integration opportunities. As mentioned, the key value of managing business relations is what can be achieved or improved through these relations. Organisations need to know, identify, and explore the added values of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration internally and externally.

[97] Based on a personal meeting with an owner of a construction establishment in Bahrain.

4.6 The Definition of Business Relations Management

Based on the developed theory in this research, the researcher's definition of business relations management states:

> *'Business relations management is the strategic planning of providing product or service, managing business activities, and achieving business objectives and goals through the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations, with end customers, and other stakeholders.'*

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the general research processes map, the details of the pilot study findings, covered the details of the GT process of this research and presented the developed objective-oriented BRM theoretical model and statement. Also, the researcher's perspective of the developed theory and Business Relations Management are presented through giving an overview of the constructed theory model and explaining, in brief, the major objectives of management with special emphasis on TQM and satisfaction. Furthermore, this chapter presented a general view of the implication of the developed theory and perspective of BRM in the business and management field, followed by the definition of BRM.

5 Theoretical and Comparative Literature Analysis

In grounded theory research, as mentioned in chapter 3, there is an agreement among GT thought leaders that a critical and comparative literature review and analysis should be conducted at the final stage of GT research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that the literature review should be avoided in the beginning and delayed to the end of the study; Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.51) mentioned that when the investigation ends, researchers can use the findings "*to illustrate where the literature is incorrect, simplistic, or only partially explains phenomena.*" Also, Charmaz (2014, p.305) suggests that researchers may use their analysis and findings to "*critique earlier studies and theories*" and to compare their findings. Charmaz (2014) also added that researchers could "*show how and where the existing ideas illuminate their findings and how their theories extend, transcend or challenge dominant ideas*", and the comparison process shows whether the developed theory provides a "*fresh or deeper understanding of*" the "*studied phenomenon*" (Charmaz, 2014, p.288). Moreover, Charmaz (2014, p.286) sees that GT researchers should have a clear theoretical framework to locate their argument and analysis in the relevant literature.

However, based on these premises and the outcomes of this research, it is determined that the analysis and discussions in the post-grounded theory literature review should include a thematic analysis of the existing definitions of a supply chain and SCM and perspectives, a comparative analysis of extant theories, identifying how SCM scholars or academic perceive managing business relationships, and comparing their perspectives to the developed theory and perspective of BRM.

The purpose of the thematic analysis process is to advocate the researcher's argument and claim that SCM was not an appropriate term to describe and highlight the importance of BRM and the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms. Also, to show that some SCM scholars use the term (SCM) as a synonym for BRM in addition to what is mentioned in the literature review chapter. On the other hand, the purpose of the

theoretical comparison is to show the quality and the virtue of the developed theory as it gives a wider realistic interpretation than the compared theories[98].

However, this chapter presents, at first, a theoretical summary of the developed theory and perspective of BRM. Thereafter, thematic analysis and a discussion of the major SCM definitions and perspectives are introduced. Based on the outcomes of the thematic analysis and developed theory and perspective, the Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) perspective is analysed and compared. Then, the developed theory in this research is compared with the relevant theories that were related to SCM. Last, the chapter introduces the researcher's major argument, followed by the chapter summary.

5.1 Business Relations Management Theory and Perspective Summary

Through the objective-orientation approach and applying the grounded theory method, the grand theory behind SCM was identified. The GT outcomes showed that the concept is about managing business activities and achieving business objectives and goals through communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms in a supply chain. The identified theory is named 'Business Relations Management Theory. This theory (fact) states that:

> *'Individuals, organisations, societies, and nations achieve better performance and outcomes through the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration.'*

Based on the developed theory, it was determined that SCM was not an appropriate notion to refer to or describe the four identified business practices. Business Relations Management (BRM) is more appropriate and realistic. It is also applicable to all business sectors.

Accordingly, BRM is defined as follows:

> *'Business relations management is the strategic planning of providing products or services, managing business activities, and achieving business objectives*

[98] See Appendix F, section F.6.3

and goals through the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations, with end customers, and other stakeholders.'

The implication of the developed theory and definition is that BRM revolves around the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations and with customers or other stakeholders. Through BRM, Individuals, organisations, societies, and nations achieve better outcomes.

Two main dimensions and five sub-dimensions of BRM were identified. The two main dimensions are internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. The internal dimension includes horizontal and vertical communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration across business functions and between top management and subordinates, while the external dimension includes managing business relations with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders.

This culture promotes and stimulates organisations in all sectors to establish clear objective/goal-oriented frameworks of internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. Organisations need to know, identify, and explore the added values of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration internally and externally.

Furthermore, organisations should realise that they need to develop multiple frameworks of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration that cover all management fields in any organisation. The most important fields that require managing business relations are 'Research and Development (R&D), Continuous Improvement (CI), TQM, Sustainability, and Risk Management. Moreover, individuals and organisations should be aware that BRM depends on people's willingness and awareness. It depends on the existence of common goals, interests, visions, trust, and the absence of barriers. Also, organisations should know that BRM should be objective/ goal-oriented. i.e., planning and managing business relations should be oriented toward achieving and maintaining business goals and objectives.

5.2 Thematic Analysis

5.2.1 Thematic Analysis Outcomes

The primary literature review revealed many perspectives about the meaning of SCM. Lambert and Enz (2017) mentioned that many scholars and academics view SCM as a synonym for purchasing management, logistics management, operations management, or the combination of the three concepts; Mentzer et al. (2001, p.5), through their thematic analysis of many SCM definitions, established that the concept is viewed as "*a management philosophy, an implementation of a management philosophy, or a set of management processes*"; Ellram and Cooper (2014) found that SCM was perceived as 1) a process, 2) a discipline, 3) a philosophy, 4) a governance structure, and 5) a functional area. According to Ellram and Cooper (2014,p17), these different perspectives collectively "*create the domain of SCM",* and Croom, Romano and Giannakis (2000), through a critical literature review, found that SCM has evolved as a multidisciplinary concept.

However, these different perspectives and views can be attributed to the deviation and the spread of diverse understandings of the meaning of SCM around the globe (Larson and Halldorsson, 2004). Also, these different views were the main reason behind the plethora of the introduced and used theories in SCM studies and research, as will be introduced in section 5.4.

Nonetheless, through the developed theory and perspective of BRM in this research, the researcher's knowledge of management, and macro thematic analysis of existing definitions, perspectives, and frameworks of SCM, it is determined that academic and SCM scholars use four interlinked fundamental management concepts as synonyms to define, conceptualise, and implement SCM. These are 'Supply Management' or 'Production Management', Demand Management', 'Organisation Management', and 'Business Relations Management'. In other words, SCM scholars combine BRM and other disciplines under one name. The following subtitles give a further explanation of the thematic analysis outcomes.

5.2.1.1 SCM as a Synonym for Supply and Demand Management

Based on the researcher's best knowledge, the domain of 'Supply Management' includes the planning and managing of five general supply operations, these are 'Research and development of products and services', Test and Evaluation of the products, Purchasing and Acquisition, Production and Manufacturing, and Logistics and Services Delivery. On the other hand, 'Demand management' includes the activities of planning and synchronising supply or production with demand, meeting customers' and stakeholders' requirements, demand forecasting, sales, customer services, marketing[99] and market research, and capability and capacity management.

However, the literature showed that many academics use SCM as a synonym for logistics management, purchasing management, operations management, or a combination of three (Lambert, 2014). i.e., the term is being used as a synonym for supply operations management or production management. Yet, through the conducted pilot study in this research and the literature analysis, in addition to what Lambert (2014) mentioned, it is found that some practitioners use SCM as a synonym for s demand management or production management. In other words, they perceive SCM as a synonym for managing businesses in production or manufacturing companies or enterprises or managing businesses in the wholesale and retailing sectors. That is why, for instance, Lu (2011, p.13) suggests that "*SCM is simply and ultimately the business management.*"[100].

Furthermore, through the researcher's military experience and study of logistics management, it was realised that the term logistics is being taught and used as a synonym for supply and demand management[101]. For example, Larson and

[99] The key role of marketing in the production sector is creating demand, therefore the researcher considers it part of demand and sales management.

[100] There are lot of examples of using SCM as a synonym for business management in the manufacturing, retail, or wholesale sectors. For example, many authors and websites mention or discuss Toyota SCM, Walmart SCM, Tesco SCM, and so forth. In section 4.4.2.5, the researcher showed that Iyar, Seshadri and Vasher (2009) , in their book 'Toyota SCM', suggest that Toyota company manages and plans its supply chain based on five parameters : visibility, velocity, variability, variety, and learning.

[101] Based on the researcher's military training, logistics management includes five main supply functions: Arm, Move, Fuel, Fix, and Sustain. The main duties of logisticians are managing and execution the supply operations (purchasing/acquisition, storage, and transportation) of providing

Halldorsson (2004) in their international survey, as introduced in section 2.3.1.2.3, found that 51% of SCM academics, consultants, and practitioners see that what was called logistics management is being called SCM. In addition, one of the participants in the pilot study stated that SCM is about "*managing what you make and what you buy so the customer gets quality product on time"* to achieve "*less no performing inventory, quicker product delivery*", and *"satisfied customer."*[102]

Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of both terms SCM and logistics management as synonyms for supply and demand management was behind the belief of many academics and practitioners that SCM is a substitute for logistics management.

5.2.1.2 SCM as a Synonym for Organisation Management

Any organisation consists of a group of people or an integrated system of different departments or business functions that are supposedly working together to accomplish a mission and achieve and maintain their organisation's objectives and goals. All those departments perform different tasks to accomplish that mission. The success of organisations in achieving their goals depends on the level of internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration in those organisations, i.e., it depends on effective BRM.

Generally, managing an organisation means managing people and resources and managing business activities efficiently and effectively to accomplish the stated mission and achieve and maintain business goals and objectives. Therefore, by logic and common sense, the organisation management concept involves implementing best managerial practices to manage an organisation as a whole, as one integrated and interdependent system.

Nonetheless, many academics, as introduced, suggest that a supply chain should be managed as one entity from end to end. In other words, the single entity view or philosophy promotes managing a supply chain or a network of organisations

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equipment, gears and clothes, ammunition, spares, fuel, water, food, medical, and other supplies to the combat units.

[102] See Appendix A, section A.2.2, part 2.

as managing one organisation, which is believed to improve the performance of the whole supply chain members. For instance, Stephens (2007)[103], in his blog, narrated that K. Oliver stated: "*We're talking about the management of a chain of supply as though it were a single entity,"…, "not a group of disparate functions*"; Svensson (2003, p.308) mentioned that Oliver and Weber (1982) suggest "*that the marketing channel should be seen as an integrated single entity*" and added that " *SCM usually regards the marketing channel as a single entity that aims at satisfying the needs and wants of the customer, and eventually the ultimate consumer*"; while Lambert (2014, p.4) suggests that since a supply chain "*is a network of companies, then the management of that network is supply chain management*."

Therefore, it can be said that those academics who adopt the single entity view are using the term SCM as a synonym for organisation management, whose success depends on effective and efficient internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration across business functions. They believe that managing a supply chain as one entity will improve the performance of the supply chain as a whole. Therefore, the adopters of this view believe that contemporary competition is between supply chains.

However, this SCM perspective (managing a network of organisations as one entity) overlooks the value of extending the business relations with the final user/ consumer and other stakeholders. Also, it ignores the value of end-user involvement or feedback, which often improve products and services quality in all business sectors. Furthermore, the idea of managing a supply chain from end to end, as argued, is not realistic.*"* Remarkably, as introduced in the literature review chapter, one among the participants of a study conducted by Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015) stated that:

[103] As the researcher highlighted, Stephens was a Chief Technology Officer of the Supply Chain Council (1997-2005) (Stephens, 2007).

Management of the supply chain is an aspirational and theoretical notion. It is about "end-to-end pipeline management", which is not practical. In practice, SCM is about managing relationships with key customers and suppliers."

(Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2015, p.62).

This statement shows that some practitioners realise that SCM is a theoretical notion and managing a supply chain from end to end is not practical.

5.2.1.3 SCM as a Synonym for Business Relations Management in a Supply Chain/Network

Based on the developed theory and perspective of BRM in this research, it is determined that SCM is being used as a synonym for BRM within and across firms in a supply chain or network. The GT process revealed that almost all SCM scholars and other academics mentioned the coordination and synchronisation of inventory flow across the supply chains, besides information sharing or the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among a supply chain's members or partners (Naslund and Williamson, 2010; Lambert,2014; Christopher, 2016; Pellathy et al., 2019). Also, the GT process showed that many scholars discussed business-to-business relationships and the value of collaboration and integration across the supply chains. The used terminology for describing these relationships and interactions was varied. Lambert (2014) used the terms 'Supplier Relations Management (SRM) and 'Customer Relations Management' (CRM); Lambert and Enz (2012) used the terms 'Business to Business Relations' (B2B) and 'Business to Customers Relations' (B2C); Han, Wang and Naim (2017) used the term Buyer-Supplier Relationships; Wu and Choi (2005) used the term 'Supplier-Supplier Relationships, while others used the term 'Relationship Marketing (Svensson, 2003; Shelby and Donna, 2008; Hammervoll, 2011; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2010, cited in Banyte and Dovaliene, 2014). Moreover, Lambert and Cooper (2000, p.65) stated that "*the management of multiple relationships across the supply chain is being referred to as supply chain management";* Lambert (2014, p.7) stated, "*At the end of the day, supply chain management is about relationship management";* Lambert and Enz (2017) focused on managing suppliers and customers relationships in their

framework (the Global Supply Chain Forum framework); while Christopher (2016, p.3) and Wilding (2011) stated that SCM is *"The management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers."*

Despite all that, SCM thought leaders and academics (e.g., Wilding, 2021; Lambert, 2014; Christopher, 2016, Mentzer, 2001, Ellram and Cooper, 2014) and organisations (e.g., CSCMP, GSCF, APICS/ASCM), and CIPS) continue to use the term. Ellram and Cooper (2014), who question whether SCM is an academic "*fad or here to stay*", believe that "*It is unlikely that society or academia will move away from the term SCM"* and "*SCM will continue to evolve and improve in theory and practice*" (Ibid, 2014, p.17), Mentzer et al. (2001) suggest that sharing information, sharing risk and reward, cooperation, and partnership in the supply chain requires the adoption of what they called "*Supply Chain Orientation"* (SCO) and see that "*Supply Chain Management is the implementation of a supply chain orientation across suppliers and customers*" and "companies "*must first have*" and adopt the SCO philosophy (Mentzer et al., 2001, p.11), while Gibson, Mentzer and Cook (2005), who surveyed 744 members of the CSCMP to develop an official definition of SCM for this organisation, suggest that "*collaboration with suppliers and customers should be included in any definition of SCM*" (Ibid, 2005, p.21). Despite that, the term SCM is still in use.

Therefore, it is argued that SCM was not an appropriate term to refer to the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms, the end user, and other stakeholders. Also, it can be said that SCM (chained) academics' and researchers' thinking and was a misleading notion and a barrier to realise the formal theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) of BRM and its holistic meaning and perspective.

5.2.2 Discussion

The different perspectives of SCM were the outcomes of adopting all or some of the four mentioned fundamental management concepts (section 5.2) as synonyms to define, conceptualise, and implement SCM'. For instance, the early perspective of SCM, as mentioned, focuses on managing inventory flow or inbound and outbound logistics across a supply chain, besides demand

management and BRM. This perspective concentrates on synchronising supply with demand and reducing inventory costs through information sharing. The definition of SCM by some scholars highlights this understanding. For example, the adopted definition by Christopher (2016, p.3) states that: "*SCM is the management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers in order to deliver superior customer value at less cost to the supply chain as a whole*." Also, based on the researcher's best knowledge, Christopher is among the first thought leaders of SCM who argued for using the term ' Demand Chain Management' and 'Demand Network Management' instead of SCM (Lambert and Enz, 2015).

However, the process orientation was the dominant approach in those perspectives. The literature showed that SCM scholars focused on managing and coordinating inventory flow and its associated information, i.e., they focused on coordinating logistics operations in addition to synchronising supply with demand. This perspective interprets why Launchbury (2019) believes that "*Supply Chain Management is on the way out*!" Launchbury (2019) sees that "*The World needs Intelligent Product Flow Networks.*" This statement reveals that Launchbury (2019) sees that logistics management or the inventory flow and its associated information can be managed through an ERP system.

Examples of BRM practices that are applied in logistics management are information sharing, Vendor-Managed-Inventory policy, and the Just-In-Time production policy. The key objectives that can be achieved within this view are cost reduction, responsiveness or speed of delivery, total visibility or transparency[104], competitiveness, customer satisfaction, and consequently better performance for the supply chain as a whole.

Christopher (2016) and Wilding (2011) are likely adopting this view. Christopher (2016, p.15), as presented, believes "*that the concept of supply chain management, whilst relatively new, is in fact, no more than an extension of the logic of logistics."* However, Christopher (2016) does not consider SCM as a

[104] Wilding (2021)

synonym for logistics only, as Lambert and Enz (2015) had argued[105], but also the author, as it seems, combines and focuses on the downstream (demand side) of logistics management and BRM. Christopher's (2016) definition and book, entitled 'Logistics and SCM', indicates that the author uses the term as a synonym for BRM, not just the extension of the logic of logistics management, as he stated (section 2.3.1.2.4).

Similarly, Wilding (2011), as it seems, focuses on logistics management or supply and demand management besides BRM. Remarkably Wilding (2011) believes that "*the application of logistics is essential for effective SCM*." This statement raises criticism and an argument. The application of logistics is not the mean of effective SCM. In contrast, the application of BRM is essential for effective logistics management across a supply chain. In other words, effective communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within firms, across a supply chain or network, and with end customers or other stakeholders is essential for successful business and logistics management.

Last, it is worth mentioning that in Cranfield School of Management, two master's degrees are taught under two names, "*Purchasing and SCM*" and "*Logistics and SCM*". These two names imply that the SCM faculty at Cranfield School of Management views SCM as a synonym for BRM.

Nonetheless, there are many limitations of perceiving SCM as a synonym for logistics and BRM. For example, it overlooks the value of customers' involvement in new product development and customer feedback. This justifies why Ellram and Cooper (2014), in their systematic literature review, found that there is "*some consensus that SCM entails collaboration, but very little agreement about new product development being part of SCM"* (Ibid, 2014, p.10). Moreover, this perspective overlooks the value of internal communication and intellectual integration towards achieving managerial excellence and the importance of the communication and collaboration with other stakeholders toward national or international sustainable development.

[105] The authors, in their criticism against the paper of Christopher and Ryals (2014), as mentioned, stated: "*refrain from using SCM as a synonym for logistics*" (Lambert and Enz, 2015, p.15).

To conclude, academics and practitioners must differentiate between BRM and Logistics or Supply or Production management. The term SCM is the key source of lack of consensus (Mentzer et al., 2001; Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006), confusion (Moberg, 2008; Lambert, 2014), ambiguity (Stock and Boyer, 2009; Mentzer, Stank, and Esper, 2008; LeMay et al., 2017), absence of common language and understanding, and the "*divergence between theory and practice"* Sweeney, Grant and Mangan (2015, p.56).

5.3 Comparison Between the Developed Theory and Perspective of BRM to the Global Supply Chain Forum Perspective

The developed theory and perspective of BRM in this research, as introduced in section 4.3.8, motivated the researcher to re-examine the literature to identify who among SCM scholars has focused on business relations management in their definitions or their perspectives of SCM. The literature showed that many scholars have touched on business relations across the supply chain (e.g., Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Mentzer et al., 2001; Sweeney, 2010) or included the words 'managing relationships' in their definition of SCM. (e.g., Wilding, 2011; Lambert, 2014; Christopher, 2016). For instance, Lambert and Cooper (2000, p.65) stated that "*the management of multiple relationships across the supply chain is being referred to as supply chain management";* Lambert and Enz (2017) focused on managing suppliers and customers relationships in their framework (the Global Supply Chain Forum framework); Christopher (2016, p.3) and Wilding (2011) stated that SCM is *"The management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers … "* while other scholars discussed business to business relationships (B2B) in the supply chain (e.g., Sweeney, 2010). However, further analysis and evaluation revealed that the developed and introduced perspective of SCM by the Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) is the nearest to the findings of this research despite its limitations and limited view of BRM if compared to the realised perspective in this research. Therefore, the details of the GSCF perspective are addressed and discussed herein.

5.3.1.1 The Origin of the GSCF's Perspective and Definition of SCM

Based on the researcher's best knowledge, the earliest developed perspective of SCM by the GSCF was published in 1997. This perspective was based on a literature review by Cooper, Lambert, and Pagh (1997)[106]. In their article, the authors stated the following:

- "*Practitioners and educators have variously addressed the concept of SCM as an extension of logistics, the same as logistics, or as an all-encompassing approach to business integration*" (Ibid, 1997, p.1).
- *"There is a need for some level of coordination of activities and processes within and between organisations in the supply chain. We believe that this is what should be called SCM*" (Ibid, 1997, p.1).
- "*Consultants proposed the term and educators proposed structure and theory*" (Ibid, 1997, p.1).
- "*The original use of the term emphasised a reduction in inventory both within and across firms*" (Ibid, 1997, p.1).
- "*The integration of business processes across the supply chain is what we are calling SCM*" (Ibid, 1997, p.2).
- "*The scope of the supply chain can be defined in terms of the number of firms involved in the supply chain and the activities and functions involved"* (Ibid, 1997, p.2).
- *"Early writers stated that SCM covers the flow of goods from supplier through manufacturing and distribution chains to the end user*" (Ibid, p.2)
- "*Understanding the scope of the supply chain is the most commonly accepted in the literature*" (Ibid, 1997, p.2).
- "*While some authors have addressed the entire supply chain, others have focused on parts of it, across or within firms*" (Ibid, 1997, p.2).
- "*Purchasing personnel may view SCM as managing suppliers*" (Ibid, p.2).
- SCM is the "*successful coordination and integration of all those activities associated with moving goods from the raw materials stage through to the*

[106] The researcher considers this article as the seminal work and the original foundation of the GSCF perspective. Therefore, it worth to give the reader a broad view about it.

end user for sustainable competitive advantage" (Cooper, Lambert, and Pagh, 1997, p.2).

- SCM "*includes activities such as "systems management, sourcing and procurement, production scheduling, order processing, inventory management, transportation, warehousing, and customer service"* (Ibid, 1997, p.2).
- "*The second scope issue is how many functions and activities should be included in SCM*" (Ibid, 1997, p.2).
- "*The greatest agreement among authors is the need for information systems integration, as well as planning and controlling activities*" (Ibid, 197, p.2).
- "*SCM also may include cooperative efforts between chambers and such areas as marketing research, promotion, sales and information gathering, research and development, product design, and total system/value analysis*" (Ibid, 1997, p.3).
- "*Product development, operations management, manufacturing operations, and customer service management are also included and the implementation of SCM*" (Ibid, 1997, p.3).
- Implementing SCM requires "*coordination across organisational boundaries"*. It "*includes integration of processes and functions within organisations and across the supply chain*" (Ibid, 1997, p.3).
- "*One central question is how to integrate the supply chain*" (Ibid, 1997, p.3).
- "*The importance of building and managing relationships among members of the supply chain has been addressed by many authors"* (Ibid, 1997, p.3).
- "*Objectives of supply chain management is to lower the total amount of resources required to provide the necessary level of customer service to a specific segment, increasing customer service, and building competitive advantage*" (Ibid, 1997, p.3).
- The objectives of Business Processes Management (BPM) are "*efficiency and effectiveness maximisation*" (Hewitt, 1994, cited in ibid, 1997, p.3).
- "*A new and broad understanding of SCM seems to be emerging*." The "*heart of this emerging new understanding are*" the "*widely acknowledged and*

implemented process orientation of business work activities" and "*the significant change in the perception of SCM as being more than just logistics*" (Cooper, Lambert, and Pagh, 1997, p.3).

Based on the above statements, Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997) established that SCM is about integrating business processes within and across firms in a supply chain. The authors' developed definition states that "*SCM is the integration of business processes from end-user through original suppliers that provides products, services and information that add value for customers*" (Cooper, Lambert and Pagh, 1997, p.2). Also, in their article, the authors introduced their first proposed framework of SCM (Figure 51). The framework is built on three elements: business processes, management components, and supply chain structure (Figure 16 refers).

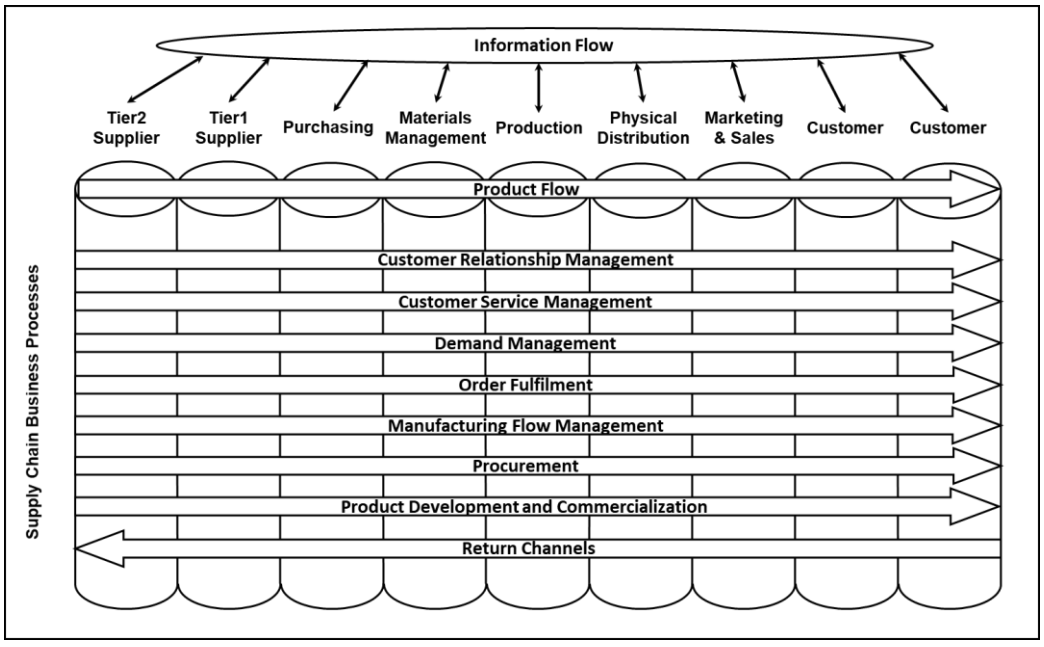


Figure 51 Initial Framework of SCM by the GSCF

Source: (Cooper, Lambert and Pagh, 1997, p.10).

Since the publication of the mentioned paper, Lamberts and his co-authors have continued revising and improving their perspective. In 1998, Lambert and Cooper (1998) modified their definition of SCM by limiting integration to key business

processes across firms, where they stated that SCM "*is the integration of key business processes* …".

However, Lambert and Enz (2017, p.5) mentioned that the GSCF modified and updated the definition in 2013 because the original definition "*did not mention: relationships, network of organisations or that the processes were cross-functional."*[107] The latest updated definition by the GSCF states that:

> "*Supply Chain Management is the management of relationships in the network of organisations, from end customers through original suppliers, using key cross-functional business processes to create value for customers and other stakeholders*."
>
> (Lambert, 2014, p.2).

However, it seems that the GSCF modified the definition after publishing an article by Lambert and Enz (2012). The article is entitled '*Managing and measuring value co-creation in business-to-business relationships.'* In this article, Lambert and Enz (2012, p.1605) mentioned that "*in B2B relationships, value co-creation requires the interaction of managers in cross-functional, cross-firm teams."*

Nonetheless, the developed definition of SCM by the GSCF would be better coined if the word 'relationships' was flipped with the phrase "*key cross-functional business processes." The GSCF definition of SCM would be more precise if it were coined as follows:*

> *"Supply Chain Management is the management of"* ~~relationships~~ "*key cross-functional business processes*" "*in the network of organisations, from end customers through original suppliers*", ~~using key cross-functional business processes~~ through the management of business relationships "*to create value for customers and other stakeholders.*"

Remarkably, despite Lambert's and Cooper's (2000, p.5) statement that "*the management of multiple relationships across the supply chain is being referred*

[107] The implication of the authors' statement is left to the reader.

to as supply chain management (SCM)" and Lambert's (2014, p.7) confession that "*at the end of the day, supply chain management is about relationship management"*, Lambert and Enz (2017) are still using the term SCM since then. Therefore, there is no doubt that Lambert and his co-authors use the term SCM as a synonym for BRM across a supply chain or network.

5.3.1.2 The GSCF SCM Framework

Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997) developed the GSCF framework of SCM based on their literature review and research. As introduced, the framework is process-oriented and is based on managing seven business processes across a supply chain. The processes were "*Customer Relationships Management, Customer Service Management, Demand Management, Order Fulfilment, Manufacturing Flow Management, Procurement",* and "*Product Development and Commercialisation.*" The processes were then modified to include eight processes, where the 'Return Management' process was added, and "*the 'Procurement' process was changed to 'Suppliers Relationships Management"* (Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.7).

However, Lambert (2014) illustrated the relationship between the eight processes in the framework showing that supplier relationship management (SRM) and customer relationship management (CRM) "*form the critical linkages throughout the supply chain*" (Ibid, 2014, p.15) (Figure 52 refers).

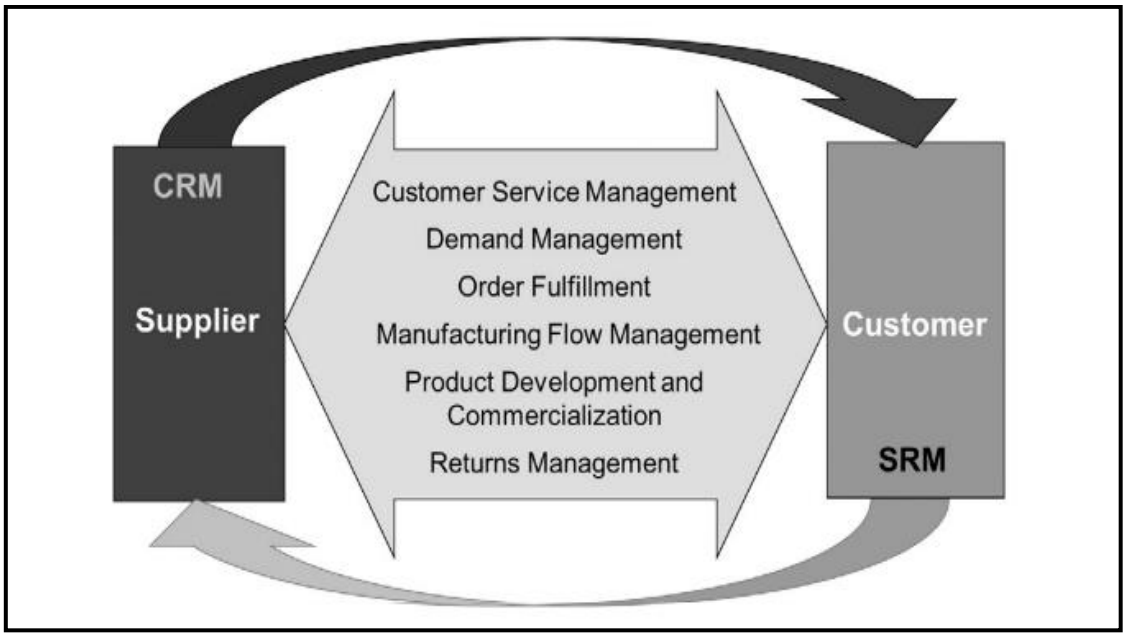


Figure 52: The Relation Between the GSCF Processes

Source: (Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.9).

A further illustration of the mentioned processes is addressed below. However, it appears that the developed framework by Lambert and his co-authors represents the possible areas or the framework of the process-oriented cooperation, collaboration, and integration across firms in a supply chain or network. A general look at figure 52 clarifies the researcher's viewpoint.

Furthermore, describing the 'Suppliers Relations Management (SRM) and 'Customer Relations Management' (CRM) by Lambert and his co-authors as business processes is problematic. According to Cooper, Lambert and Pagh (1997), Davenport (1993, cited in ibid, 1997, p.5) "*defines processes as a structured and measured set of activities designed to produce a specific output for a particular customer of market.*" Hence, describing the management of relations as processes is not appropriate. Managing business relations, in general, is a management field that entails many management practices, and the findings of this research tell what those practices are. Any form of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and among firms toward value creation is a best practice that falls under BRM culture. A practice that is based

on the belief that organisations achieve better outcomes through communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among them.

5.3.1.3 Overview of the Introduced SCM Key Processes

This section addresses how the process orientation shaped the view of GSCF members (Lambert and his co-authors).

5.3.1.3.1 *Customer Relationship Management*

According to Lambert (2014, p.10), CRM "*process provides the structure for how relationships with customers will be developed and maintained.*" The author mentioned that a firm's management needs to identify its key customers who are part of its business mission and develop a partnership with a small group of them. The author also mentioned that "*Cross-functional customer teams tailor Product and Service Agreements (PSAs) to meet the needs of key accounts while achieving the firm's profit goals*" (Ibid, 2014, p.11). The main objectives of CRM, as introduced by the author, are meeting firms' profit goals, process improvement, and reducing non-value-added activities.

Nonetheless, as introduced in chapter 2, section 2.2.6.1, most definitions of a supply chain exclude the end-user from the chain. As the reader notices, Lambert's (2014) description of CRM excludes the end-user from the supply chain. Using the words key customers, cross-functional integration, and partnership clearly excludes the end user. Moreover, Lambert (2014) focused on the structure of a supply chain and the processes that could be managed across firms. In addition, the author mentioned that a firm's management needs to identify its key customers who are part of its business mission and develop partnerships with a small group of them. However, Lambert's (2014) view that firms need to identify their key customers raises three questions: are not all customers important to firms? Is not all customers' satisfaction what firms are seeking? Do not customers' feedback about products' quality and service levels create value?

Yet, another implication of Lambert's (2014) view is that not all customers are willing to cooperate or collaborate with their suppliers. Therefore, the customers

who are willing to cooperate and collaborate and work with the suppliers are key customers or partners.

5.3.1.3.2 Supplier Relationship Management

Similarly, Lambert (2014) mentioned that the SRM process "*provides the structure for how relationships with suppliers will be developed and maintained*" (Ibid, 2014, p.11). Identifying key suppliers, developing partnerships, and "*Product and Service Agreements (PSAs)"* are similar to CRM. According to Lambert (2014, p.11), "*the desired outcome of*" SRM "*is a win-win relationship*" between the supplier and the customer.

5.3.1.3.3 Customer Service Management

Lambert (2014, p.11) mentioned that customer service management (CSM) *"is the supply chain management process that deals with the administration of the PSAs developed by customer teams as part of the customer relationship management process*." The author also added that "*customer service managers monitor the PSAs and proactively intervene on the customer's behalf if there is going to be a problem delivering on promises that have been made."* However, Lambert (2014) presented a limited description of the meaning of CSM, where the author has also omitted the end customers from the supply chain. Also, in his description of managing customers relationships, the author focused on key customers. Here, the researcher's enquiry is, shouldn't CSM be applied to all customers?

5.3.1.3.4 Demand Management, Order Fulfilment, and Manufacturing Flow Management

According to Lambert (2014, p.11), the key activity in the demand management process is to balance *"the customers' demand with the capabilities of the supply chain."* The process also includes demand forecasting, synchronising "*supply and demand, reducing variability, and increasing flexibility."* "*The order fulfilment process involves*" filling orders besides "*all activities necessary to design a network and enable a firm to meet customer requests while maximizing its profitability";* while "*manufacturing flow management includes all activities necessary to obtain, implement and manage manufacturing flexibility in the*

supply chain and to move products into, through and out of the plants. According to Lambert (2014), the key objectives in these three processes are meeting customer demand and requirements, profit maximisation, and production flexibility.

5.3.1.3.5 *Product Development and Commercialisation*

The product development and commercialisation process "*is the supply chain management process that provides the structure for developing and bringing to market products jointly with customers and suppliers"* (Lambert, 2014, p.12). The author mentioned that the "*effective implementation of"* this process enables the coordination of new product flow across the supply chain; besides, it "*assists other members of the supply chain with the ramp-up of manufacturing, logistics, marketing and other activities necessary to support the commercialization of the product."* In further description of this process, the author stated:

> "*The product development and commercialization process team must coordinate with customer relationship management process teams to identify customer articulated and unarticulated needs; select materials and suppliers in conjunction with the supplier relationship management process teams; and work with the manufacturing flow management process team to develop production technology to manufacture and implement the best product flow for the product/market combination."*
>
> (Lambert, 2014, p.12).

5.3.1.3.6 Return Management

The last process that Lambert (2014) suggested is the return management process. According to the author, in this SCM process*, "activities associated with returns, reverse logistics, gatekeeping, and avoidance are managed within the firm and across key members of the supply chain." "The implementation of this process enables"* the efficient management of *"the reverse product flow", identifying "opportunities to reduce unwanted returns",* and controlling *"reusable assets such as containers"* (Ibid, 2014, p.13).

5.3.1.4 The Process of Collaboration Initiatives

Lambert and Enz (2012, p.1590) mentioned that "*managers need a practical framework in order to achieve the value creation potential of the interactions that occur within a business relationship*". To this end, the authors cited a collaboration framework by Lambert et al. (2010, cited in ibid 2012). Lambert and Enz (2012, p.1591) suggest that the framework "*can be used by managers to structure business relationships*." According to the authors, the framework consists of six activities; these activities include assessment's "*drivers for each company"*, aligning "*expectations"*, developing "*action plan*", developing "*product and service agreement*", review "*performance"*, *and periodically"* re-examining drivers (Ibid, 2012, p.1592). Figure 53 shows the sequence of these activities.

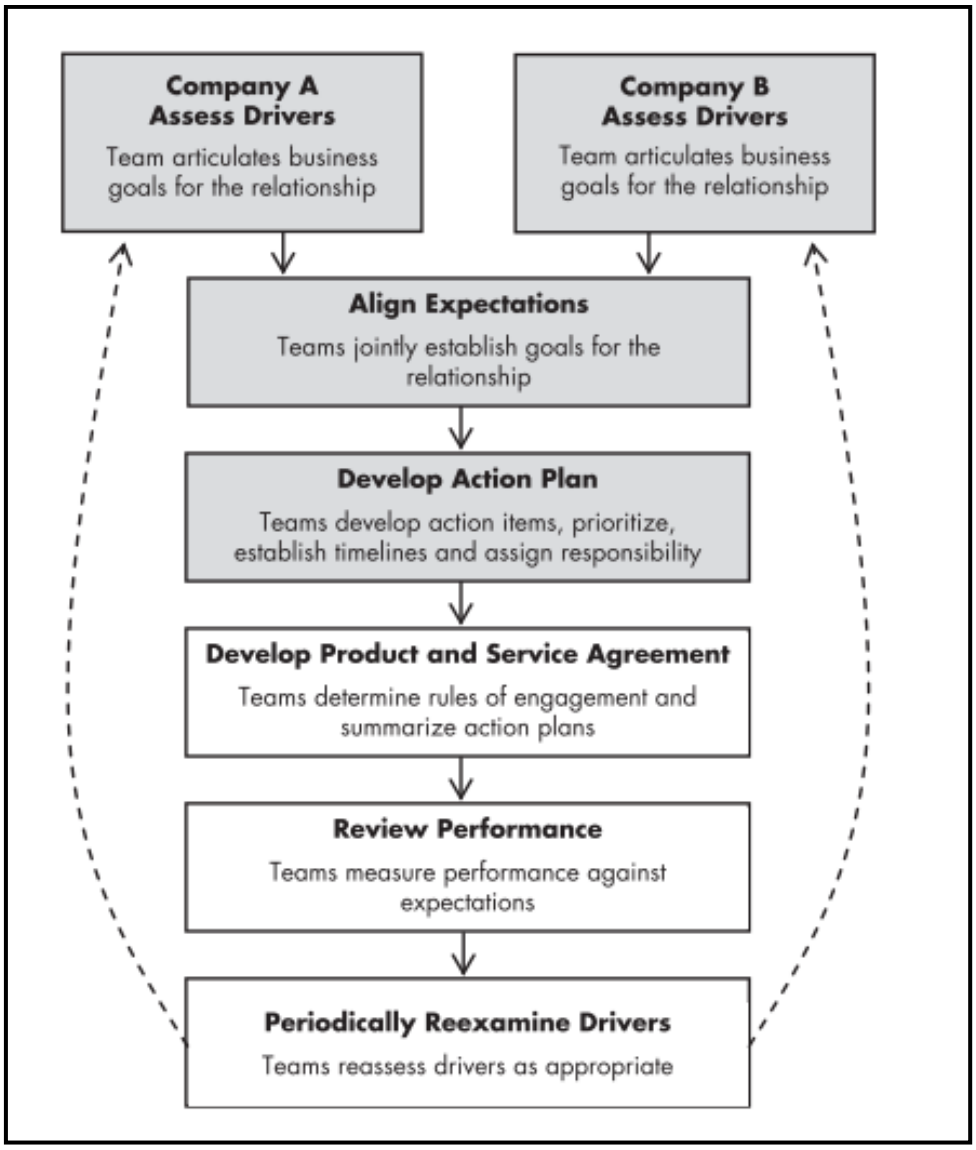


Figure 53 Collaboration Framework

Source: (Lambert and Enz, 2012, p.1591).

Lambert and Enz (2012) mentioned that the assessment "*drivers require that each firm's representatives independently identify their business goals for the relationship in terms of four driver categories (asset/cost efficiencies, service improvements, marketing advantage, and profit growth/stability).*" In the aligning of "*expectations session*", the authors mentioned that "*teams mutually establish goals based on the drivers of both firms*" (Ibid, 2012, p.1591).

Also, the authors mentioned that in the development of an "*action plan*", teams are required to "*prioritise initiatives, assign responsibilities, establish timelines,*

and agree on the appropriate metrics" (Ibid, 2012, p.1591). The product and service agreement states that "*the rules of engagement and action plan*" (Ibid, 2012, p.1592). Finally, the authors mentioned that *"It is necessary to review performance to ensure that each firm has achieved its drivers. Besides, the teams should periodically re-examine the drivers"* (Ibid, 2012, p.1592*).*

However, it can be said that the introduced framework by Lambert and Enz (2012) represents the process of initiating, developing, reviewing, and evaluating a collaboration framework across firms. A collaboration framework should represent the areas and the shared benefits of collaboration across firms and with customers. Therefore, the description of the presented model by Lambert and Enz (2012), figure 53, would be more accurate if it is relabelled with another description such as 'Developing and Improving a Collaboration Framework Process or the process (the model) of initiating, developing, reviewing, and evaluating a collaboration framework across firms.

5.3.1.5 Researcher's Assessment of the GSCF Perspective

As it is noticed, the GSCF perspective of SCM is the nearest to the findings of this research. Lambert (2014) and co-authors emphasise the value of BRM. This is the main strength of their perspective. Also, the authors focused on the business process that could be managed and mutually planned across firms in a supply chain or network. However, there are several limitations of this perspective. The first major limitation of the GSCF perspective is limiting the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration practices to supply chain members while it overlooks the realised benefits of these practices with end customers or other stakeholders outside the supply chain, such as the collaboration with other competitors, the merger of different businesses, and the collaboration with research centres or public authorities toward national economic and sustainable development. The second limitation is the focus on the process orientation rather than the objective orientation, besides the limited view of the business processes that could be managed through BRM. Lambert (2014) focused only on the supply and demand management process across firms. In other words, managing business relations across firms is product and service-

oriented. However, this view overlooks the value of internal and external BRM toward, for example, achieving organisational excellence and TQM, managerial research and development such as processes reengineering, waste management, risk management, and sustainable development. Last and not least, is that adopting the term 'SCM' as a description of the cooperation, collaboration, and integration among firms limits the benefits realization (Badewi, 2012)[108] of such relations to the manufacturing sector, which contradicts the reality that BRM are applicable and can be practised in all business sectors including government institutes and non-profit organisations besides the reality that it is applicable in all aspects of social life. Also, it is worth calling back what Moberg et al. (2008) mentioned, where the authors see that the GSCF framework focuses "*on the integration of services across various partners*"; therefore, the "*framework is less clear than the other models about the measurement of internal performance*." Moreover, the authors mentioned that the GSCF framework "*does not provide benchmarking information*." Last, the authors see that the GSCF framework "*works better*" when the customer's demand is visible and has low variability.

However, the following statements by Lambert and his co-authors give a further idea about their views and thoughts.

- "*Imagine the degree of complexity*[109] *required to manage all suppliers back to the point of origin and all products/ services out to the point of consumption*"; "*to make a very complex network more manageable, it seems appropriate to distinguish between primary and supporting members"; "The point of origin of the supply chain occurs where no previous primary suppliers exist"; "The point of consumption is where no further value is added*[110]*, and the product and/or service is consumed"; "What are the operational definitions of the key business processes and what are the relationships among these processes?"; "What metrics*

[108] The term 'benefit realisation' was used in Badewi (2012) PhD thesis.
[109] A confession by the authors that managing an entire supply chain is a complex task.
[110] The authors see that no further value will be added to the products or service once it is consumed; it is known that products or services' quality can be improved through getting customers' feedback, i.e., further value can be added.

should be used to evaluate the performance of the entire supply chain[111]*, individual members or subsets of members?"*

(Lambert and Cooper, 2000, pp.67,70-71,80-81).

- "*The definition of SCM developed in 1995 and reported in Lambert and Cooper (2000) was updated because it did not mention: relationships, network of organizations or that the processes were cross-functional. In 2013, we worked with the executive members of the research centre to craft the … new definition*"; "*Increasingly, Customer Relationship Management is being viewed as strategic, process-oriented, cross-functional, value-creating for buyer and seller, and a means of achieving financial performance*"; "*Partnerships are developed with a small group of key customers"; "Suppliers are segmented based on their importance to the company's long-term success"; "Supply chain management is about relationship management, and the supply chain is managed link by link"; "Management should implement processes that increase the profitability of the supply chain, not just the profitability of a single firm.*[112] *Key supply chain members should share equitably in the risks and the rewards"; "The SCM framework, the result of 25 years of collaboration between industry and academia*[113]*, provides the knowledge and the tools needed to manage a complex network of business relationships."*

(Lambert and Enz, 2017, pp.5,7-10,15).

Also, Lambert and Enz (2017, p.14) introduced some future research questions, which show the limitation of the process-orientation approach and the GSCF framework. Some of these questions are:

- "*How implementing the SCM framework mitigate risk in the supply chain? … research is necessary to document how supply chain risks can be mitigated by implementing the SCM framework."*

[111] How realistic and feasible to evaluate the entire performance of a supply chain? If so, who is responsible of that?
[112] In reality, who is willing to do so?
[113] An example of collaboration between stakeholders.

- *“How sustainability efforts are supported by the SCM framework? … research is needed to identify the benefits of embedding individuals from the sustainability organization into each process as compared to having sustainability efforts centralized in a single function*.”
- “*How the marketing function contributes to successful implementation of the SCM framework?”*

The answer to these questions is to develop clear objective-oriented frameworks of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration across business functions or with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders.

5.4 Theoretical Comparative Analysis

5.4.1 Preface

As presented in the previous chapter, the realised theory in this research states that ‘Individuals, organisations, societies, and nations achieve better performance and outcomes through collaborative and integrative business relationships.’

In grounded theory research, Glaser and Strauss (1967), Charmaz (2014), and Strauss and Corbin (2015) mentioned that once grounded theorists develop their grounded theory, they might conduct a literature review to compare the developed theory against the literature. Therefore, the identified theories in the literature were examined to identify which theory meets or implies a close meaning to the developed theory. The focus was on those academics who addressed or discussed the theoretical foundation of SCM, besides those who addressed or studied collaboration, integration, and business relationships in their published works. The literature showed that many authors related SCM to existing theories or introduced their own views. Also, some systematic literature review studies reported the used theories in logistics and SCM. However, this section addresses and discusses some of the existing theories which are most relevant to the realised theory in this research.

5.4.2 Used Theories in SCM

As mentioned in chapter 2, the literature has shown that some scholars called for theory development as they concluded that SCM lacks a theoretical foundation (e.g., Carter, 2011; Sweeney, 2011), and some scholars related SCM to existing theories (e.g. Mentzer et al., 2001; Svensson, 2002; Mathews, 2003; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Defee et al., 2010; Hitt, 2011; Fayezi, O'Loughlin and Zutshi, 2012; Wu, Chuang and Hsu, 2014), while others proposed their own theories and views (e.g. Dyer and Singh, 1998; Carter, Kosmol and Kaufmann, 2017). However, this section presents examples of the theory-relevant studies of SCM.

5.4.2.1 An Inventory of Theories

In a study by Defee et al. (2010), the authors aimed to identify the used theories in logistics and SCM research. According to the authors, more than 180 theories were identified in the literature. The major theories are the Resource-Based View, Resource-Advantage Theory', 'Relational View, Supply Chain Orientation, Natural Resources based View, Relationship Marketing, Alliance, Collaboration, Collaborative Advantage, Dependency Theory, Asset Specificity, Buyer-Supplier Relationships, Reciprocity Theory, Relationships Management, Relationship Orientation, Communication Theory, Human Communication Theory, Relational Theory, Social Resources Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Social Network Theory, Social Capital, Coordination Theory, Integration, Stakeholder influence, Collaborative Supply Chain Framework, Interorganisational Relationship Theory, and Bonding Theory.[114]

5.4.2.2 A Systematic Literature Review by Soosay and Hyland (2015)

In a systematic literature review by Soosay and Hyland (2015), the authors aimed to study the supply chain collaboration (SCC) concept. The authors examined more than 200 published articles between 2005 and 2014. Through their study, the authors identified twelve organisational theories that underpin the collaboration concept; these theories were the Resource-Based view or theory[115] (RBV/RBT), Resource-Advantage Theory (RA), Relational View (RV), Social

[114] Glaser's argued that reading the literature in advance could contaminate researchers' thinking.
[115] The words' 'View' and 'Theory' are used interchangeably in the literature.

Exchange Theory (SET), Dynamic Capability View (DCV), Stakeholder Theory, Signalling Theory, Force Field Theory, Transaction Cost Theory, Contingency Theory, Agency Theory, and the Technology-Organisation-Environment theory.

5.4.2.3 A Systematic Literature Review by Gligor et al. (2019)

In another article[116], Gligor et al. (2019, p.170) stated that "*Supply chain scholars"… "have primarily relied on a limited number of theories to help explain the phenomena of interest."* The authors examined 411 articles published over ten years in SCM journals through a systematic literature review. The authors found that 95% of the scholars relied on 15 theories within SCM studies. The following table shows these theories and their relative frequency.

Table 11 Theories Within Supply Chain Management

Source: Modified from Gligor et al. (2019, p.172).

Theory	Frequency
Resource-Base View (RBV)	71
Transaction Cost Economics (TCE)	49
Game Theory	41
Institutional theory	27
Contingency theory	26
Organizational theory	24
Agency theory	23
Social Exchange Theory	21
Resource dependence theory	21

[116] This article is published in the Supply Chain Management: An International Journal.

Theory	Frequency
Stakeholder theory	20
Inventory Theory	18
Social Capital Theory	17
Relational Exchange Theory	13
Competence and capability theory	11
Information processing theory	10

According to Gligor et al. (2019), RBV and TCE were the most dominant theories within SCM. However, the authors found that 30 theories could be considered "*most salient to supply chain research*."

5.4.2.4 Further Literature Review Study by Carter, Kosmol, and Kaufmann (2017)

In a paper entitled 'Toward a Supply Chain Practice View[117], Carter, Kosmol and Kaufmann (2017, p.114) mentioned that "*a growing body of supply chain management literature has relied on the premises of the resource-based view (RBV) and its extensions like the relational view (RV) to investigate resources and their relationship to performance."*

5.4.2.5 Mathew's (2003) View

Mathews (2003) is one of the authors who related the concept of SCM to a single theory. The author introduced what is called the 'Extended Resource-Based view (ERBV). The author mentioned that the "*extended resource-based perspective sees firms as being able to draw on a wide array of external resources, through both market-mediated transactions and through various kinds of resource*

[117] Published in the Journal of Supply Chain Management.

exchange and resource leverage relations that link firms in value-chains that criss-cross the economy" (Ibid, p. 25).

In his conclusion, Mathews (2003) mentioned that the ERBV "*emphasises on the restless dynamics of resources*". It suggests that "*firms' capabilities are built from a resource base and put to use in generating value through organisational routines.*" It also views that "*economic performance ultimately depends on the dynamic configuration of resources in the economy, both within and between firms*" (Ibid, p.25).

Nonetheless, in chapter 3, section 3.3.6.2, the researcher mentioned that Mathew's (2003) view had influenced the researcher's thinking. At the beginning of this study, the researcher adopted Mathews's (2003) belief that the theory behind SCM is the extended resource-based view where the researcher wrote: *"The relation between SCM and the … Resource-Based view has been identified (The Extended Resource-Based View, (Mathew, 2000)"* (Alkebaisi, 2018)[118]. The researcher's conviction was that firms, through information sharing, gain intangible resources and, consequently, will have a better competitive advantage. However, it was later when the researcher realised that the key value-creator is the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms. Therefore, Glaser's warning about reading the literature in advance is worth considering.

5.4.3 The Researcher's Justification of the Multiple Used Theories in SCM

Organisational culture, as defined in chapter 1, is the sum of beliefs, tenets, and theories that shape organisations' practices and decisions. Therefore, the multiple used theories by academics in SCM can be attributed to the different perspectives of the concepts. Viewing SCM as a synonym for supply or logistics management is one of the main reasons.

[118] A poster presented by the researcher at Cranfield University. Available at: https://figshare.com/articles/poster/Conceptualising_Supply_Chain_Management_An_Objective-Oriented_Approach/7206701.

For example, Wittke (2014) assessed the extent to which *"stakeholder theory has an influence on supply chain management*" (Ibid, 2014, p.10). The author found that the stakeholder theory impacts the decisions organisations take. The author stated that "*stakeholder theory is applied to the make-or-buy, sourcing strategy, supplier strategy, and contracting decisions.*" Wittke (2014, p.2) mentioned that "*cost, speed or time-to-market, quality, and variety matters are of relevance to the respective SCM strategies."* Accordingly, the author concluded that "*stakeholders are part of any SCM decision*" (Ibid, 2014, p.1). The researcher's argument is that the author uses SCM as a synonym for supply or purchasing management. Achieving lower cost, speed, product quality, and variety are some of the main objectives that shape the decision-making processes in suppliers' selection or purchasing management.

Another example is the raised claim by Halldorsson et al. (2007), who concluded that "*building a unified theory of SCM"* that explains the "*decision-making and practices in a complex network of collaborating firms" "might be difficult"* (Ibid, 2007, p.284). As presented in section 2.4.3.5, the authors tested four mid-range theories "*that can be used to establish a theoretical framework of SCM"* (Ibid, 2007, p.287). The theories were the Principal-Agent Theory (PAT), the Transaction Cost Analysis (TCA), the Network Perspective (NT), and the Resource-Based View (RBV). The application of these four theories, as the authors presented, was investigated in two areas of SCM: Third-Party Logistics (3PL) and new product development (NPD). In their justification of selecting these theories, the authors stated that they "*understand supply chains as interconnected socio-economic institutions.*" Hence, the authors "*argue that these theories are most useful to explain both structure and management issues of supply chains"* (Ibid, 2007, p.287).

According to Halldorsson et al. (2007), "*reducing the supplier base of transport firms and entering into close and long-term cooperation with a few key operators, a firm may reduce the transaction cost*" (Ibid, 2007, pp.288-290), "*outsourcing decisions are based on the idea of focusing on core competencies and outsourcing complementary competencies to external partners",* "*NPD activities*

are often proprietary in nature, which makes firms reluctant to involve suppliers in their activities."

As the reader notices, the authors focused on the value of BRM, the value of collaboration among firms. Table 12 shows the mentioned practices by the authors that fall under implementing the four mentioned theories in 3PL. The majority of the mentioned practices by the authors are based on BRM constructs/theory (communication, information sharing, assets sharing or access to assets) and its antecedents (trust, win-win situation, and shared or mutual incentives).

Table 12 The Theoretical Framework Applied to Third-Party Logistics

Source: (Halldorsson et al., 2007, p.289).

Characteristics	PAT	TCA	RBV	NT
Behavioural Assumptions	*Asymmetric information between shipper and TPL provider Goal conflict*	*Calculative trust Safeguards, specific investments or long-term contracts*	*Personal trust Joint learning Transfer of knowledge*	*Personal trust, Information-sharing, and Win-win situation.*
Problem orientation	*Performance measurement ABC costing, open-book, incentives*	*Which activities should be outsourced to the TPL provider?*	*Development of competencies internally and between shipper and TPL provider*	*Development of relations Communication and interaction*
Unit of Analysis	*Formal TPL contract*	*TPL services Transaction*	*Resources and capabilities shared by*	*Relations between*

Characteristics	PAT	TCA	RBV	NT
		costs Logistics performance	*shipper and TPL provider*	*shipper and 3PL provider*
Nature of Relations	*Adversarial relations Contract influences both the number and nature of outsourced activities*	*Arm's-length relations Regular tenders to test the TPL market Focus on cost-efficiency Short-term contracts*	*Complementary resources Creating new competencies through TPL relations*	*Voice relations Access to resources possessed by TPL firms Evergreen TPL contract*
Primary domain of interest	*Alignment of behavioural and outcome-based contracts*	*Investment in specific assets (warehouses, IT, personnel) Minimizing transaction costs*	*Development of new competencies (e.g. batch-monitored shipments, merge-in-transit, track-and-trace).*	*Mutual adaptation of IT systems, processes, routines.*

5.4.4 Comparing some of the Existing Related Theories of Supply Chain Management to the Developed Theory

This section addresses and compares the most relevant theories to the BRM theory. These theories are the Resource-based View (RBV), the System Theory, and the Relational View.

5.4.4.1 Resource-Based View (RBV)

5.4.4.1.1 Overview

The resource-based view was first introduced in 1991 as a strategic management view (Chen and Paulraj, 2004a; Defee et al., 2010; Soosay and Hyland, 2015). This view states that firms' sustainable competitive advantage depends on their resources (Defee et al., 2010).

Generally, many scholars have related the RBV to the SCM concept (e.g., Sundram, Chandran and Bhatti, 2016; Williams, Maull and Ellis, 2002; Mathews, 2003; Rungtusanatham et al., 2003; Lavie, 2006; Halldorsson et al., 2007; Wang and Wei, 2007; Hunt and Davis, 2007; Chen, Daugherty and Landry, 2009; Kovács and Tatham, 2009; Ponomarov and Holcomb, 2009; Squire et al., 2009; Esper, Defee and Mentzer., 2010; Hitt, 2011).

According to Shi and Yu (2013, p.1295), through the RBV, "*firms create performance advantages by integrating sets of resources to enhance organisational capabilities*" that are "*neither so simple to be imitated by competitors nor so complex that it defies internal steering and control*." Sjoerdsma and Van Weele (2015, p.193) "*argue that companies can become more successful if they are able to manage and to access (supplier) resources that are immobile, scarce, inimitable, non-substitutable and that provide competitive advantage*." The authors stated: "*the RBV states that the basis for a firm competitive advantage primarily lies in the application of that bundle of valuable tangible and intangible resources, both internal and external, that are at the firm disposal*" (Ibid, 2015, p.193).

Also, Eisenhardt and Martin (2000, p.1105) mentioned that "*RBV assumes that firms can be conceptualised as bundles of resources, that those resources are heterogeneously distributed across firms, and that resource differences persist over time.*"

To conclude, Dorn, Schweiger and Albers (2016, p.493) mentioned that the RBV, besides other theories such as the "*transaction cost theory and game theory*", *"build important bases for investigating competitors' incentives to work together."*

Moreover, the authors mentioned that all these theories "*share the underlying assumption that competitors are intrinsically motivated to collaborate."*

5.4.4.1.2 Researcher's Viewpoint

As the reader notices, the collaboration and integration within and among organisations increase their capabilities. However, the RBV emphasises enhancing firms' capabilities and competitiveness, but it does not explain, for example, the social value and the environmental value creation through the cooperation between manufacturers in producing recyclable products. It also overlooks the value of internal communication, cooperation, and integration in public organisations that enhance the quality and speed of public services and, consequently, lead to better performance and customer satisfaction.

Further, the RBV is not the only view or theory that focuses on sharing or integrating resources; many mentioned theories revolve around the same meaning. However, different names were used to describe those theories, such as 'Resource-Dependence-View', 'Competency and Capability Theory', Social Capital Theory', 'Social Resources Theory' (Defee et al., 2010), and 'Dynamic capabilities Theory (Aharonovitz, Vieira and Suyama, 2018). The key bond in these theories and views is the common-sense belief that organisations' capabilities depend on the optimal and effective utilisation and integration of their available human, tangible, and nontangible resources.

In summary, the main implication that organisations should be aware of is the value of managing relationships, that is, the value of the internal vertical communication, collaboration, and integration between top management and employees, the value of horizontal communication, collaboration, and integration between business functions, and the value of external communication, collaboration, and integration with stakeholders. Through this culture, organisations should learn and identify the best practices that fall under BRM.

5.4.4.2 Relational View of Competitive Advantage

5.4.4.2.1 Overview

The 'Relational View' (RV) of competitive advantage was introduced in 1998 by Jeffery Dyer, an assistant professor of management and Harbir Singh, a professor of management (Dyer and Singh, 1998). According to the authors, strategy scholars relied on two views as sources of competitive advantage, the 'Industry Structure View' which views industry as a unit of analysis and the Resource-Based-View of a firm which views firms "*as primary unit of analysis*" (Ibid, 1998, p.660). On the contrary, the RV "*focuses on dyad/network routines and processes as an important unit of analysis for understanding competitive advantage"* (Ibid, 1998, p.661).

In their article, Dyer and Singh (1998) stated that 'Relational View' (RV) "*suggests that a critical resource may span firm's boundaries and may be embedded in interfirm resources and routines"* (Ibid, 1998, p.660). The view "*holds that through idiosyncratic interfirm linkages", "firms can generate relational rents, defined as 'super-normal profits', that would be impossible for an individual firm to create independently"* (Carter, Kosmol and Kaufmann, 2017, p.114).

Also, Dyer and Singh (1998) mentioned that there are studies that suggest that "*productivity gains in the value chain are possible when trading partners are willing to make relation specific investment and combine resources in unique ways."* In addition, the authors mentioned that there had "*been increased attention to the inter-organisational relationships in the strategic management literature*" where alliance and partnerships between "*pair or a network of firms or networks"* become an *"important unit of analysis*", and many researchers have studied "*how firms collaborate to generate economic rent."* With such relationships, firms may invest in relation-specific assets, exchange of knowledge, and combine *"complementary, but scarce, resources or capabilities."* The results of these interactions are mutual "*creation of unique products, services, or technologies", "lower transaction costs",* and *"effective governance mechanism"* (Ibid, 1998, pp.661-662,675).

In providing further details about *"investments in relation-specific asset"*, Dyer and Singh (1998) mentioned that "*three types of asset specificity"* were identified; these are site, physical asset, and human asset specificities (Ibid, 1998, pp.662,664). The authors also mentioned that "*organisations often learn by collaborating with other organisations*" through "*interfirm knowledge-sharing routines*", where the authors reported that some studies showed that "*more than two-thirds of innovations in some industries*" were suggested by customers and suppliers (Ibid, 1998, pp.664-665). Furthermore, the authors mentioned that generating relational rent can be achieved "*by leveraging the complementary resource endowments of an alliance partner"* (Ibid, 1998, p.666). Finally, Dyer and Singh (1998, p.670) mentioned that an effective governance mechanism generates "*relational rent by either lowering transactional cost or providing incentives for value-creation initiatives*."

5.4.4.2.2 Researcher's Viewpoint

The reader notices that the Relational View' depends mainly on managing relationships between firms; it depends on the firms' willingness to collaborate through which mutual values are created. Therefore, the researcher's viewpoint is that the RV focuses on three types of integration: informative, intellectual, and resource integration among firms.

However, the main point to emphasise is the narrow scope of the RV, which limits collaboration practices to organisations. Also, its statement limits value creation to the extension of organisational resources (Carter, Kosmol and Kaufmann, 2017) and overlooks the value of communication and collaboration across business functions and with consumers or end-users. Moreover, it focuses on achieving organisations' competitive advantages and overlooks the value of communication and cooperation with end-users that enhances customers' satisfaction and creates social value. It also overlooks the value of cooperation between firms and customers toward protecting the environment through recycling and producing recyclable products. Moreover, the RV ignores the value of collaboration among government institutions which improves the overall governmental performance and improves people's satisfaction. Besides, it

overlooks the value of cooperation between all stakeholders for better national economic development.

5.4.4.3 System View

5.4.4.3.1 Overview

Many academics related SCM to the philosophy[119] of system view [120] or system approach (e.g., New, 1997; Mentzer et al., 2001; Ho, Au and Newton, 2002; Caddy and Helou, 2007; Rabdall et al., 2010; Miocevic, 2011; Randall and Mello, 2012). The system perspective views an organisation or a firm as a system that is dependent on its functional departments (Svensson, 2002; Teeboom, 2018). Accordingly, the firms or companies that are part of a supply chain represent subsystems of the supply chain. Consequently, the supply chain is considered a system of systems (SOS) (Randall and Mello, 2012).

For example, Mentzer et al. (2001, p.2) mentioned that many authors conceptualised SCM "*as a form of integrated system,"* where the authors illustrated that "*SCM takes a systems approach to viewing the supply chain as a single entity".* Mentzer et al. (2001, pp.7-8) also mentioned that "*SCM as a management philosophy*" requires expanding firms' *"integrated behaviour to incorporate customers and suppliers"* through information sharing, sharing risks and rewards, cooperation, and building and maintaining long-term relationships.

5.4.4.3.2 Researcher's Viewpoint

It is clear that through effective communication and information sharing within and across businesses, organisations plan as one integrated system. Therefore, it is not the system view philosophy that is behind SCM, rather the belief that through communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration, organisations become an integrated system that works together and plans as one entity. Organisations or firms in a supply chain are, by default, systems that are part of a larger system (system of systems). Therefore, managing external business relations means creating value for the entire system. On the other hand,

[119] Mentzer et al. (2001) used the term 'philosophy of system approach'.
[120] Some academics use the term 'System Theory' as it is mentioned in section 2.2.5

an organisation with low performance or limited capabilities will negatively affect the entire system's capability and performance. The bottle-neck concept in production processes is an example of the negative impact of one sub-unit on the total output and firms' production capacity or capability and speed of delivery. The cliché that a 'Supply Chain is only as strong as its weakest link' represents the bottle-neck concept.

5.4.5 The Quality of the Developed Theory

Based on the evaluation criteria suggested by GT thought leaders (Appendix F refers), it is found that the discovered theory meets most of those criteria. The main suggested criteria of a good quality theory are Credibility, Originality, Resonance, Usefulness, Empiricism, Generalisability, Abstraction, Parsimony and Simplicity[121]. The explanation of the concepts is introduced in section (F.6). Nonetheless, the developed business relations management theory is likely to meet the following:

- Credibility: the theory is based on analysing a large amount of textual data and evidence collected from SCM books, peer-reviewed journals, and other sources.
- Originality: the theory offers new insight and a new concept as it challenges SCM.
- Resonance: the theory portrays a comprehensive perspective of BRM; it makes sense to the participants and offers deeper insight.
- Usefulness: the theory contributes to practical knowledge.
- Generalisability: the theory is generalisable to all sectors.
- Abstraction: the theory is context-free and is independent of space and time.
- Parsimony and Simplicity: the theory fulfils the parsimony and the simplicity criterion as it offers shorter and more precise explanations and fewer assumptions.

[121] The researcher did not include the evaluation of the quality of the discovered theory in the feedback survey questions to keep the survey as short as possible.

5.5 Researcher's Argument

The main argument in this research is that if the 'Business Relations Management' (BRM) concept was used instead of SCM, there would not be that amount of debate in the literature or confusion among scholars about the meaning of SCM; there would not be statements such as "*the death of SCM"*; "*SCM is on the way out*" (Lyall, Mercier and Gstettner, 2018); "*is SCM a fad or here to stay*" (Ellram and Cooper, 2014, p.17); or "*SCM, the Elusive concept*" (LeMay et al., 2017, p.1425). Another argument is that there was a lack of realisation and awareness among many academics that business relations are not limited to transactional relations, but also through the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration, organisations will achieve better outcomes. If all academics were aware of this meaning, there would not be statements such as: "there is "*some consensus that SCM entails collaboration"* (Cooper and Ellram, 2014, p.10); "*there has been growing attention on supply chain collaboration*" (Panahifar et al., 2018, p.358); "*SCM literature indicates an increasing interest in supply chain collaboration*"; "*Supply chain collaboration is considered a major factor in maintaining a supply chain's competitive position and deemed an important research topic"* (Soosay and Hyland, 2015, p.614); "*There exist a considerable number of studies which emphasise the outstanding benefits that can be derived from supply chain collaboration"* (Kumar et al., 2017, p.45); "*The belief is that increased collaboration will lead to a seamless, synchronized supply chain, which in turn will lead to improved customer service, lower costs, and higher profits"* (Holweg et al. 2005, cited in Naslund and Williamson, 2010, pp.18-19); and "*Many scholars agree that SCM includes certain key concepts, such as integration and collaboration/cooperation among chain members, these concepts are still poorly defined – with multiple meanings to both researchers and practitioners*" (Naslund and Williamson, 2010, p.23).

Finally, there is a need for an accurate and careful description of reality. Using an inappropriate notion to describe social behaviour or a phenomenon could lead to misunderstanding and confusion among people. That is why it is argued here that describing the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration across

business functions, among firms in a supply chain, or among stakeholders, as SCM was not an appropriate and precise description.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter brought back a summary of the developed theory and perspective of BRM, presented a thematic analysis and discussion of the existing perspectives of SCM, compared the GSCF perspective of SCM with the outcomes of this research, compared the developed theory to some of the existing theories in the literature, and declared the researcher's argument. The main outcomes and conclusions of this chapter are 1) academic and SCM scholars use four interlinked fundamental management concepts as synonyms to define, conceptualise, and implement SCM. These are Supply Management or Production Management, Demand Management, Organisation Management, and Business Relations Management; 2) SCM was not an appropriate term to describe or refer to the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within or across organisations; 3) if the Business Relations Management (BRM) concept was used instead of SCM, there would not be that amount of debate in the literature or confusion among scholars about the meaning of SCM; 4) the multiple used theories by many academics in SCM are due to the different existing perspectives of the concepts. Viewing SCM as a synonym for supply or logistics management is one of the main reasons; 5) the identified used or offered theories to explain and interpret SCM practices (RBV, RV, and System View) are limited in scope. These theories limit collaboration practices to organisations, focus on achieving organisations' competitive advantages, and overlook the value of communication and cooperation with end-users that enhance customers' satisfaction and create social or environmental value; 6) it is not the system view philosophy that is behind SCM, rather the belief that through communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration, organisations become an integrated system that works together and plans as one entity; and 7) the global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) perspective is the nearest to the outcomes of this research despite its limitations, such as using the term

SCM to refer to suppliers and customers relationships management, the focus on the structure of a supply chain, and the focus on the business processes.

6 Assessment and Feedback Survey Design and Results

This chapter introduces the details and the results of the assessment and feedback surveys. The details include the purposes of these two surveys, the design, the survey sample selection approach and considerations, the data collection methods, the data analysis approach, the results, and the researcher's conclusion.

6.1 Assessment Survey

Based on the discovered theory in this research, Business Relations Management (BRM) would be a more accurate term and a discipline that focuses on the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration and integration practices for organisations. Also, managing business relations should be objective-oriented. The literature review showed that this meaning was not clearly stated or addressed[122]. Therefore, conducting a survey that explores how managers and employees from different sectors define business relations management (BRM) could support and increase the significance of the research outcomes.

6.1.1 Survey Purpose

The purpose of the assessment survey, as mentioned in chapter 3, is to draw a general idea and determine whether business owners, managers, and employees from different sectors have a clear view or perspective about the meaning of managing business relations and whether those views comply with the researcher's identified theory and perspective or not.

6.1.2 Survey Sample Selection

The sample selection was based on probability sampling or random selection bases. The participants were invited from different sectors in the Kingdom of

[122] The researcher found different definitions of the meaning of managing relationships. However, due to time limitations, those definitions were not included in the literature review.

Bahrain (government, private, and non-profit) to participate in the survey. Also, participants from other countries were invited.[123]

6.1.3 Data Collection Method

Two versions (Arabic and English) of an online questionnaire using the Google Forms platform were initiated. Then, multiple invitations were sent through emails and the WhatsApp application. Through this survey, 63 (English version) and 138 (Arabic version) valid responses were received.

6.1.4 Questionnaire Content and Question

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part gathers the biographical data of the participant, such as job description, industry /business sector, education level, and experience. The second part includes one question: 'What does 'Managing Business Relations mean to you?'

However, the details of this survey and the received answers are shown in Appendix B.

6.1.5 Participants' Details

Tables 13 to 16 show the details of the participants in the assessment survey.

Table 13 Participants' Sector and Description

Seq.	Sector	Number of Participants	Manager/ Executive	Employee
1	Public	158	67	91
2	Private	42	25	17
3	Non Profit	1	1	
Total		201	93	108

[123] Algeria, Egypt, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and UK.

Table 14 Participants' Education Level and Experience

Seq.	Education Level	Number of Participants		Total
		Manager/ Executive	Employee	
1	PhD	7	4	11
2	Master	40	15	55
3	Bachelor	30	56	86
4	Diploma	6	4	10
5	Secondary	2	17	19
6	NA	8	12	20
Total		93	108	201

Table 15 Participants' Experience

Seq.	Years of Service/Experience	Number of Participants		Total
		Manager/ Executive	Employee	
1	Over 15 Years	50	35	85
2	11-15 Years	23	25	48
3	6-10 Years	8	15	23
4	1-5 Years	4	19	23
5	Less than a year		2	2
6	NA	8	12	20
Total		93	108	201

Table 16 Participants Nationality

Seq.	Country	Number of Participants	Manager/ Executive	Employee
1	Algeria	1	1	
2	Bahrain	145	58	87
3	Egypt	2	2	
4	India	1	1	
5	Jordan	29	15	14
6	Kuwait	1	1	
7	Oman	10	9	1
8	Qatar	1		1
9	Saudi Arabia	5	3	2
10	United Arab Emirates	4	2	2
11	United Kingdom	2	1	1
Total		201	93	108

6.1.6 Assessment Survey Findings

The assessment survey responses showed a lack of or very limited understanding of the meaning of BRM among participants. The realised meaning of BRM in this research was not clear to all participants.

For instance, one participant, who holds a PhD in management[124], stated:

> *'Business is based on interactions between entities (organisations, companies, firms...). Interactions refer to relations between these entities.*

[124] The participant was one of the researcher's colleagues at Cranfield University.

Managing business relations is therefore managing interactions between entities involved in the business.'

The participant focused on the external interaction among firms in his definition of BRM. The participant also overlooked the value of communication with customers and internal interaction, which implies a limited view about BRM if compared to the realised meaning and perspective in this research. Also, it is obvious that the participant did not mention what managing the interactions between firms or entities meant to him.

Another participant stated that BRM is about:

'Ensuring the quality of provided goods and/or services while maintaining customers satisfaction, employees' happiness, environmental and ethical standards, while providing financial security to the company.'

The participant did not give the meaning of BRM; rather, he focused on the value and the outcomes of BRM. The participant focused on some of the management objectives (quality assurance, customers' and other stakeholders' satisfaction, financial security, or financial risk mitigation). Also, the participant touched on sustainability as he mentioned the environmental and ethical standards, which are parts of corporates' social responsibility[125]. Moreover, it is worth noting that Christopher (2016), in his book, introduced the 3P concept (People- Planet-Profit) of sustainability. It can be noticed that the meaning of the 3P concept, as introduced by Christopher (2016), is present in the participant's statement.

Remarkably, some respondents stated they had no idea or had never heard about the BRM concept[126]. Furthermore, the assessment survey showed that many participants focused on the transactional and social aspects of business relations, where they see that managing business relations means respect, appreciation, encouragement, and building trust. Also, many participants focused on external value creation and public relations, such as retaining customers and enhancing companies' names in the market.

[125] Researcher's knowledge.
[126] See Appendix B, pages 402, 432, and 436.

Therefore, it is important to present the researcher's findings and perspective about Business Relations Management to evaluate how academics, business managers, and employees from different sectors respond to the researcher's perspective, arguments, and recommendations. The assumption is that the finding of this research will crystalise, improve, and expand people's understanding of the meaning of managing business relations. However, the following table shows further samples of the received answers and how the participants perceive the meaning of BRM. Furthermore, Appendix B gives full details of the received answers.

Table 17 The Meaning of BRM as Perceived by some Participants

Job Description / Education Level/ Experience	Meaning of BRM	Researcher's Analysis/ Memos
Manager/ Executive (PhD) (Over 15 years)	It has multiple dimensions. It covers engagement with personal interaction with various elements of organisation resulting in enhanced performance. And similarity interaction between B2B. Input vs output.	Limited view: the participant focused on internal relationships, external relationships with firms (B2B), and enhancing performance. The end customer is overlooked.
Manager/ Executive (Master) (over 15 years)	It is the relation between the companies and their customers.	Very narrow view: the participant Ignored the internal relationships; unclear view of what BRM mean.
Manager/ Executive (Master) (1-5 years)	PR in business.	Unclear meaning: the participant focused only on public relations, which is a very narrow view. It ignores the internal relationships management and B2B relationships.

Job Description / Education Level/ Experience	Meaning of BRM	Researcher's Analysis/ Memos
Employee (Bachelor) (11-15 years)	Satisfy your customer to build loyalty.	Extremely limited view; the participant focused on customer satisfaction only. The importance and value of internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration are overlooked.
Employee (Bachelor) (6-10 years)	Communication skills, dispute resolution and networking to better manage your business relationships.	Although the participant copied this answer from a website, the realised meaning of BRM in this research is clearly absent. The website confined business relations to communication skills, dispute solving, and networking.
Advisor (PhD) (Over 15 years)	3ms: material + money + men.	Unclear meaning; confusion with management concepts; the object orientation is present in this statement. (what to manage through BRM).
Manager/ Executive (Master) (Over 15 years)	The core of running a business in this region is based on personal relations. Whether within the same organisation or across organisations.	The participant realises the value of managing relationships. However, the answer implies a limited view of BRM. Also, the participant focused on personal relationships.

Job Description / Education Level/ Experience	Meaning of BRM	Researcher's Analysis/ Memos
Employee (Master) (Over 15 years)	For me, the first thing or priority is to develop rapport and then managing all other things. It is that if I want to develop my business further, I prefer to involve personal relations to get maximum benefits.	Unclear meaning: the participant focused on personal relationships; this reflects the participant's substantive organisational culture; to involve in personal relationships instead of collaborative relationships to get the job done and get maximum benefits.
Travel agent -	Control	The participant focused on one of the management tasks: control. The meaning of BRM is absent.
Manager/ Executive (Diploma) (Over 15 years)	To help my subordinates in their weakness & let them carry on their strengths.	Unclear meaning of BRM: the participant focused on enabling and empowering subordinates. This is a management task.
Employee (Master) (Over 15 years)	It's an idea or planning to make you better for a good future.	Despite the participant's education level and experience, the answer implies that the participant focused on one aspect of BRM, future planning and readiness (make you better) through BRM.
Employee (Master) (6-10 years)	Style of the interaction between the people within business (organization) to achieve business objectives.	The participant is aware of the value of BRM and focused on interaction style, yet, he limited BRM to an organisation and ignored the end customer.

The sample participants' answers in table 17 show that the meaning of BRM, as established in this research, is unclear to the participants.

Furthermore, the survey answers showed that few participants mentioned one or two of the four identified constructs of BRM. For example, 25 participants focused on 'the importance of internal communication only (12.5%), while 22 participants focused on both: internal and external communication (12%). Remarkably, 7 participants (4%) touched on internal or external cooperation, while 4 participants touched only on the importance of internal integration.

6.1.7 Assessment Survey Conclusion

The assessment survey responses revealed that the developed meaning and perspective of BRM in this research are not clear to almost all participants. Accordingly, it is determined that the developed meaning and perspective of BRM in this research will improve, broaden, and crystalise managers' and employees' understanding of BRM and enhances their awareness of its value to individuals and organisations.

6.2 Feedback Survey

6.2.1 Introduction

The main objective of this research is to examine the effectiveness of the objective-orientation approach in conceptualising SCM as a contribution toward achieving consensus among academics and practitioners on a unified definition, perspective, and theory of SCM. As in the literature review, many academics discussed the importance of achieving that consensus and how those different perspectives might impact SCM's proper implementation and improvement.

However, as mentioned, the GT outcomes showed that SCM is all about managing business relationships within and across organisations in a supply chain. Business Relations Management (BRM) revolves around the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations through which economic, social, and other values are enhanced or

created. The main purpose of BRM is to achieve optimal, efficient, and effective internal communication, integration, and collaboration within an organisation and the investment of these relations outside that organisation. Investment in external relationships depends on the existence of shared goals, interests, trust, or the exchange of benefits among stakeholders besides the willingness to collaborate, the awareness of the importance and the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration, and the absence of communication' and collaborations' barriers. Also, BRM is not limited to the supply chains or the production sector; communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration practices are supposed to exist in all sectors. Individuals, organisations, societies, and Nations are advised to adopt the BRM culture as a core management field that should be known to everyone regardless of his/her speciality. Also, business schools or universities should rethink teaching BRM as an alternative to SCM. It will be more appropriate if the term SCM is replaced with 'Supply Management' so that it covers the fundamentals of the main pillars of supply and demand management. Another option is to use logistics management as a synonym for supply management. However, all these mentioned propositions and premises require empirical validation.

According to Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.342), valid qualitative research should accurately represent the "*features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain, or theorise*." Also, the authors see that credibility should indicate that the "*findings are trustworthy and believable in that they reflect participants', researchers', and readers' experiences with phenomena*" (Ibid, 2015, p.346). Furthermore, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.350) introduced 33 checkpoints to evaluate the methodological consistency, quality, and applicability of a GT study. The main checkpoints are 1) researchers should describe how the coding process was applied, 2) whether there is "*a core category*" or not, 3) the presence of a clear relationship between the core category and the other categories in the developed theory, 4) getting "*feedback from the professionals*

and participants?"[127]*;* 5) Finally, the core category should be "*sufficiently broad so that it can be used to study other populations."*

Furthermore, Bryman and Bell (2015) mentioned that 'Credibility' is one of the criteria for evaluating qualitative research. The authors stated that establishing credibility in qualitative research requires "*ensuring that research is carried out according to the canons of good practice*" besides "*submitting research findings to the members of the social world who were studied for confirmation that the investigator has correctly understood that social world"* (Ibid, 2015, p.401). According to the authors, submitting the research findings is called "*respondent validation or member validation*". Likewise, Maxwell (2012, p.126) sees that validating qualitative research requires respondent validation. The author suggests that respondent validation is the process of "*systematically soliciting feedback about"* one's *"data and conclusions from the people*" under the study (Ibid, 2012, p.126). Moreover, the author mentioned that generalising qualitative research means that a study's findings are transferable to other cases or contexts. Based on these premises, a questionnaire-based feedback survey was conducted.

6.2.2 Survey Purpose and Objectives

As introduced in chapter 1, this research combines three virtues: problem-solving, theory development, and practical relevance. The literature showed that many academics called for theory development and consensus on a unified definition and perspective of SCM. Based on the outcomes of this research, it is presumed that the developed theory and the researcher's perspective of BRM will satisfy and capture the attention of practitioners and academics, and hence, there will be a probability of accepting the researcher's perspective, premises and recommendations. Accordingly, there will be a probability of achieving the desired consensus among academics and practitioners. Therefore, the objective and the feedback survey design should enable the researcher to measure the

[127] The researcher followed this checkpoint, where the researcher presented the research findings to a number of academics and practitioners from different sectors to get their feedback about the developed theory, the researcher's perspective, arguments, and recommendations.

participants' level of acceptance and satisfaction of the outcomes of this research and identify their agreement or disagreement with the researcher's propositions and premises.

6.2.3 Questionnaire Content Design

The content and the objectives of the survey questions were based on the following premises.

6.2.3.1.1 The Call for Defining SCM and Achieving Consensus on a Unified Understanding

Many scholars and academics, as mentioned, called for consensus on a unified meaning of SCM. It is worth calling back some of those calls and arguments is worth it. The following bullets present some of those statements.

- *"Discussions of SCM often use complicated terminology, thus limiting management's understanding of the concept and its effectiveness for practical application"; "Despite the popularity of the term Supply Chain Management, both in academia and practice, there remains considerable confusion as to its meaning"; "Research and practice would be improved if a single definition were adopted"; "The term 'supply chain management presents a source of confusion for those involved in researching the phenomena, as well as those attempting to establish a supply chain approach to management"; "Without a clear understanding of SCM, we cannot expect wide application of SCM in practice or research."*

  (Mentzer et al., 2001, pp.2-3,5,19).

- "*Without the adoption of a uniform definition accepted by researchers, confusion will continue to hinder the study and further development of SCM; and research will extend in various directions, rather than build upon itself"; "We argue that there are too many definitions of SCM and that there is a need for a single consensus definition"; "A consensus definition of SCM is of significant importance in the advancement of SCM theory and practice"; "The lack of a definitive conceptualisation of the components and activities encompassing SCM phenomenon will lead to theory that is*

ambiguous and incompletely conceived"; "Agreement on a definition will allow SCM research and practice to move forward from both theoretical and practical perspectives."

(Stock and Boyer, 2009, pp.691,707-708).

- *"Education and research could benefit from a better understanding of how practice is defining the profession"; "Lack of shared definition means that researchers should use caution when identifying key informants for empirical research"; "Definitions of SCM have emerged from conceptual thinking rather than practice in part because the study of SCM practice has been too difficult"; "There are differences between how academics conceptualise the field and how it is practised"; "Companies in our sample define SCM as a process management role that relies on information systems"; "This research shows that SCM is not easily defined in concept or in practice."*

(Rossetti and Dooley, 2010, pp.40-41,53-54).

- *"SCM has been poorly defined, and there is a high degree of variability in people's minds about what is meant"; "The development of common definitions and understandings between supply chain partners is a critical success factor"; "Lack of definitional consistency and common understandings may be inhibitors*."

(Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2018, p.856,869).

- *"The inconsistency in the way that SCM is viewed has also possibly hampered the progression of SCM scholarly work and practitioner application."*

(Ellram and Cooper 2014, p.8).

- *"There is still not a consensus view of what SCM involves or how it should be implemented.*

(Lambert and Enz, 2017, p.2).

- *“As supply chain management (SCM) evolves, disagreement abounds as to whether SCM is a strategy, a process, a business philosophy or just another term for logistics.”*

(Swanson et al., 2018, p.100).

Based on the mentioned statements, the main issues within those arguments are 1) confusion about SCM meaning, 2) no clear understanding, 3) the need for consensus on a unified definition, 4) and achieving consensus will lead to improved research and practice.

Accordingly, it is assumed that the developed theory in this research and the researcher’s perspective will 1) present a precise and clear understanding of the meaning of SCM, which in return will 2) eliminate the confusion among scholars and practitioners. Also, 3) there will be a probability that the desired consensus among scholars will be achieved, and accordingly, 4) will improve research and practice. Hence, the questionnaire should include a survey of respondents’ opinions about their understanding of the concept, which will indicate the likelihood of achieving the desired consensus.

6.2.3.1.2 The Researcher’s Argument

The second element of the questionnaire is based on the researcher’s arguments. Many arguments were articulated based on the research findings and gained insight. The main arguments are that 1) the term Supply Chain Management was not an appropriate name to describe the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and among firms; 2) the process orientation was not an appropriate approach to conceptualising SCM; rather, the objective-orientation is more appropriate in managing business relations; 3) the SCM term was a misleading name as it limits managing business relations across a supply chain, besides the confusion the concept has made among academics; 4) the term business relations management is more appropriate as it generalises the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration to all sectors including services providers such as healthcare and education, and 5) other terms such as ‘Supply Management’, ‘Production Management’, Supply

and Demand Management', Supply and Production Management', would be more appropriate to be used in describing the discipline instead of SCM.

6.2.3.1.3 The Researcher's Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the main recommendations are that 1) the principles of supply and demand management should replace the term SCM in education; 2) organisations should establish at first a clear framework of internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration toward achieving their business goals and identify the possible cooperation, collaboration, and integration opportunities outside their organisation; and 3) universities should rethink teaching BRM as realised in this study.

6.2.3.1.4 The Researcher's Assumptions

Based on the outcomes of this study, it is assumed that 1) the introduced meaning and perspective of BRM will refine and improve the participants' managerial thought. 2) This study will improve participants' awareness of the importance and value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. 3) Last, the researcher's perspective and BRM theory will improve the participants' awareness of the management objectives they should focus on through managing their business relations.

6.2.3.1.5 Participant Opinions

The final part of the survey aims to gather the participants' satisfaction about the research outcomes, their overall evaluation, and their benefit from this research.

6.2.3.2 Survey Data Analysis

The main purpose of this survey is to evaluate the level of academics' and practitioners' satisfaction and acceptance of the outcomes of this research. Therefore, a descriptive data analysis was used to report the results.

6.2.3.3 Survey Details

The feedback survey consists of two main parts. The first part aims to collect details about the participants' biography, business sector, and experience. The second part consists of three main questions. The first question collects the

participants' agreement/ disagreement with the researcher's statements. The second question aims at getting participants' opinions about the researcher's suggestions and arguments. The final question aims at rating the participants' level of satisfaction about the outcomes of this research, the degree to which they benefited from it, and to submit their further opinions and suggestions. However, the details of the feedback questionnaire are presented in Appendix C.

6.2.4 Data Collection Strategy and Method

Getting feedback about the outcomes of qualitative research findings requires presenting and lecturing the targeted sample or population about the whole research idea and outcomes. Therefore, a lecture was prepared, and an online questionnaire was developed. The Google Forms platform was used for data collection. The content of the lecture included the following topics:

- An overview of SCM,
- Addressing the identified issues of SCM with example excerpts from the literature.
- Addressing the research gap through presenting the importance of the objective orientation in management knowledge and showing the dominance of the process orientation in the literature,
- Introducing the purpose of the GT method, the definition of theory, the human action theory, and the meaning of developing a unified theory,
- Reporting the major identified objectives and goals of SCM in the literature,
- Presenting the theoretical model and statement of the realised theory,
- Outlining the general implications of BRM in practice with examples from reality besides touching on the value of BRM and the collaboration of all stakeholders in facing the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Presenting the researcher's claim, argument, and perspective of BRM, including the different dimensions and types of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration,
- Introducing a brief comparison between the research outcomes and the existing SCM perspectives, theories, and frameworks, and finally,

- Explaining, in brief, the feedback questionnaire to ensure that the participants understand what is required and to affirm the importance of honesty and avoiding bias in answering the questionnaire.

6.2.5 Survey Sample Selection

The main outcome of the GT process is that SCM scholars and academics believe that organisations achieve better performance and outcomes through the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. Accordingly, it is established that SCM is not the right description of such business practices. The importance of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration is not limited to the production sector companies or enterprises in a supply chain. All other business sectors are required to communicate, cooperate, collaborate to achieve internal integration and invest in external relationships with their customers or other stakeholders. Therefore, the survey population should include managers, employees and business owners from all sectors (public, private, and not-for-profit). The survey population also should include academics and professionals of management, TQM, logistics and SCM. Accordingly, many colleagues, co-workers, managers, employees, business owners, and academics from different organisations were invited to participate in the survey.

6.2.6 Sampling Approach

Bryman and Bell (2015, p.428) mentioned that purposive sampling in qualitative research revolves around "*what units need to be sampled.*" Moreover, the authors mentioned that that researchers who aim at generalising their research "*to a wider population, probability sampling is likely to be a more compelling sampling approach*." Based on Bryman and Bell's (2015) suggestion, the used sampling approach in the feedback survey is the purposive sampling approach that falls under probability sampling.

6.2.7 Invitation Methods and Strategy

The survey participants were invited through different methods. Official and non-official invitations were used. Official invitations were based on official letters sent by emails to different organisations and universities. The official letters were

based on prior visits, phone calls, and coordination with those organisations. Moreover, a summary of the research idea and the lecture content were attached with the official letters. Nonetheless, the full details about the research outcomes were not introduced; only an abstract about the research problem was introduced. The purpose was to motivate and capture the targeted people's interest to discover more about the research outcomes.

On the contrary, the non-official invitations were based on personal face-to-face invitations, phone calls, and WhatsApp text and voice messages to co-workers, colleagues, and acquaintances.

6.2.8 Sample Size

The researcher's objective was to lecture 100 participants from different sectors. The targeted sectors and organisations were Defence, Law Enforcement, government services, Wholesalers/ Retailers, Financial Services, Banking, Food/ Agriculture/ Provisioning, Manufacturing/ Mining, Construction / Real-estate Development, Logistics/ Warehousing, Transportation/Aviation, Education, Healthcare, Hospitality, Energy/ Petroleum, Communication and Information Technology, Tourism / Recreation, and Non-Profit organisations.

6.2.9 Faced Challenges and Limitations

The main limitation in conducting the feedback survey was the limited number of participants. There were many reasons behind that. The main reason was the COVID-19 pandemic effect. Gathering people and conducting face-to-face or online lectures at work or after duty hours was a challenging task. The difficulty was to convince the targeted participants to attend a 45-minute online lecture and answer another 15-minute questionnaire during duty hours or during their private time. This issue was behind the lack of cooperation and interest in participating. Officially, five invitation letters were sent to five organisations from five different sectors. Out of five, three letters were sent by email after the communication and coordination with the public relations representatives in those organisations or through the researcher's acquaintances. Despite the iterative follow-up by the researcher, none of those organisations replied to the researcher's request.

Moreover, invitation emails were also sent to those who participated in the pilot study survey. Unfortunately, no replies were received. Nonetheless, a few managers and employees showed cooperation and interest in participating. The researcher was able to lecture 33 participants from different sectors through three face-to-face lectures with a limited number of participants and two online lectures.

6.2.10 Feedback Survey Results

6.2.10.1 Participants' Details

Tables 18 to 22 show the details of the participants in the feedback survey.

Table 18 Participants' Sector/Industry Details

Seq.	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Number of Participants	Percentage
1	Public	Military, Law Enforcement	24	88%
2	Public	Other Government Services	3	
3	Public	Education	2	
4	Private	Healthcare	1	12%
5	Private	Food/ Agriculture/ Provisioning	1	
6	Private	Banking/Financial Services	1	
7	Private	Transportation/ Aviation	1	

Table 19 Participant' Educational Level

Seq.	Education Level	Number of Participants	Percentage
1	PhD	2	6%
2	Master	10	30%
3	Bachelor	7	21%
4	Diploma	6	18.5%
5	High School/ Secondary	8	24.5%

Table 20 Participant' Description

Seq.	Personal Description	Number of Participants	Percentage
1	Chief Executive/ Chairman	1	3%
2	Manager / Head of Department	12	36.5%
3	Vice Manager / Assistant Manager	4	12%
4	Employee	16	48.5%

Table 21 Participants' Job Title/ Description

Seq.	Job Description	Number of Participants
1	Secretary-General of Tender Board	1
2	Aircraft Maintenance Duty Manager	1
3	Quality Assurance Manager	1
4	Sales and Customer Services Manager	1
5	Head of Training	1
6	Management Officer	2
7	Engineer	2
8	Military/ Law Enforcement Officer	6
9	Supply Officer	4
10	Training Officer	1
11	Senior teacher / Teacher	2
12	Technician	5
13	Physiotherapist	1
14	Accountant	5

Table 22 Participants' Experience

Seq.	Years of Service/Experience	Number of Participants	Percentage
1	Over 15 Years	18	54.5%
2	11-15 Years	3	9.1%
3	6-10 Years	5	15.2%
4	1-5 Years	7	21.2%

6.2.10.2 Participants' Level of Agreement

The results of this survey showed that all the participants in the feedback survey agreed that SCM was not an appropriate name to describe the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among firms in a supply chain, was not an appropriate term to describe the internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among employees or across business functions, and was not an appropriate term to describe the external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration with firms or organizations outside a supply chain. Also, all the participants agreed that they have a better understanding of what managing business relations mean and agreed that universities should think of teaching the principles of Business Relations Management. These findings advocate the researcher's argument that Business Relations Management is more appropriate than SCM to describe the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within or across firms. However, table 23 presents the participants' responses and agreement with the researcher's viewpoint and recommendations. The participants' open-ended answers and notes are presented in Appendix C.

6.2.10.3 Renaming the Term SCM

The survey results showed that all participants agreed on renaming supply chain management to another term. 39.4% of the participants (13 out of 33) prefer to keep the decision to rename the discipline of SCM to the academics and business schools; 36.4% (12 out of 33) adopted the term Supply Management, while the rest 24.3% (8 participants) selected the terms Production Management, Supply and Production Management, and Supply and Demand Management.

6.2.10.4 Survey Answers

Table 23 shows the received feedback survey answers.

Table 23 Participants' Feedback

Researcher's Argument/ Assumption/ Belief	Responses		Percentage of Agreement
	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1) The term SCM was not an appropriate name to describe the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among firms in a supply chain.	21	12	100%
2) Describing the internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among employees or across business functions as SCM is inappropriate.	23	10	100%
3) Describing the external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration with firms or organizations outside a supply chain as SCM is inappropriate.	19	14	100%
4) I have a better understanding of what managing business relations mean.	21	12	100%
5) I have a better understanding and awareness of the importance and the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations.	21	12	100%
6) I have a better awareness of the objectives that can be achieved through managing business relations.	28	5	100%

Researcher's Argument/ Assumption/ Belief	Responses		Percentage of Agreement
	Agree	Strongly Agree	
7) Establishing clear objective-oriented frameworks of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration inside organizations or among them is essential for effective management of business relations.	14	19	100%
8) The internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within or between organizations should be supported and enforced by laws, regulations, and agreements.	22	11	100%
9) The success of managing business relations requires mutual planning among all business functions or departments in any organisation.	16	17	100%
10) The communication, cooperation and integration between top management and employees in any organization (vertically) are no less important than the horizontal communication, cooperation and integration among departments or business functions in any organisation.	18	15	100%
11) Managing business relations is the main success factor for all organisations in any sector (public and private, production and services).	17	16	100%

Researcher's Argument/ Assumption/ Belief	Responses		Percentage of Agreement
	Agree	Strongly Agree	
12) It is important to differentiate between teaching the principles of supply and production management (purchasing, production, logistics, demand, and sales) and the principles of managing business relations.	19	14	100%
13) Universities should think of teaching the principles of Business Relations Management to all students regardless of their academic discipline.	13	20	100%
14) The researcher sees that the term SCM should be changed to another name to eliminate confusion among academics and practitioners about its meaning. Do you agree with the researcher's viewpoint?	13	20	100%

6.2.10.5 Participants' Level of Satisfaction and Benefit

The following charts show the level of participants' satisfaction with the outcome and the extent to which they benefited from this study.

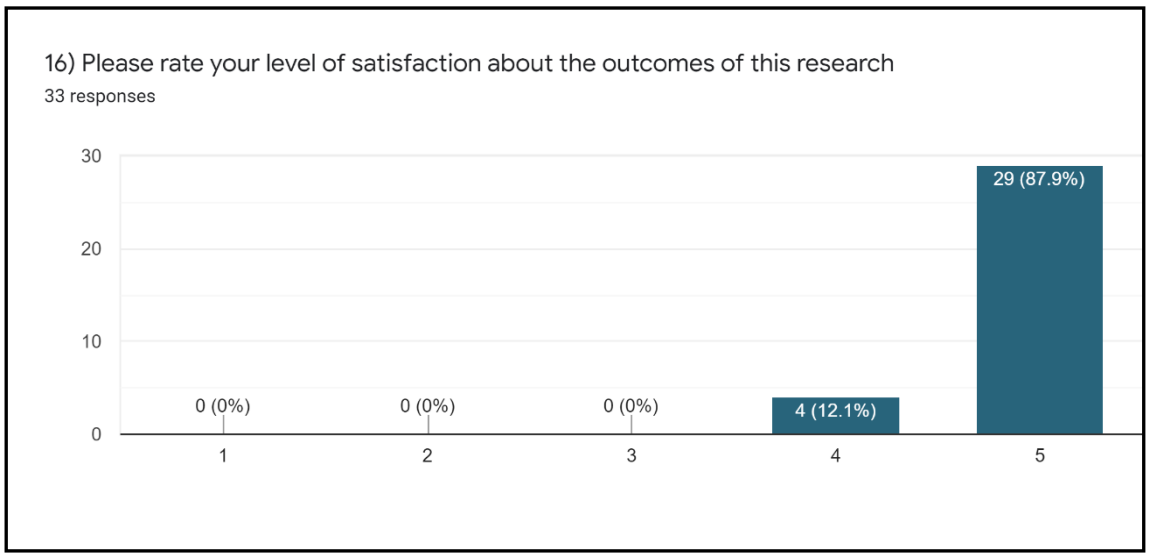


Figure 54 Participants' Level of Satisfaction about the Outcomes of Research.

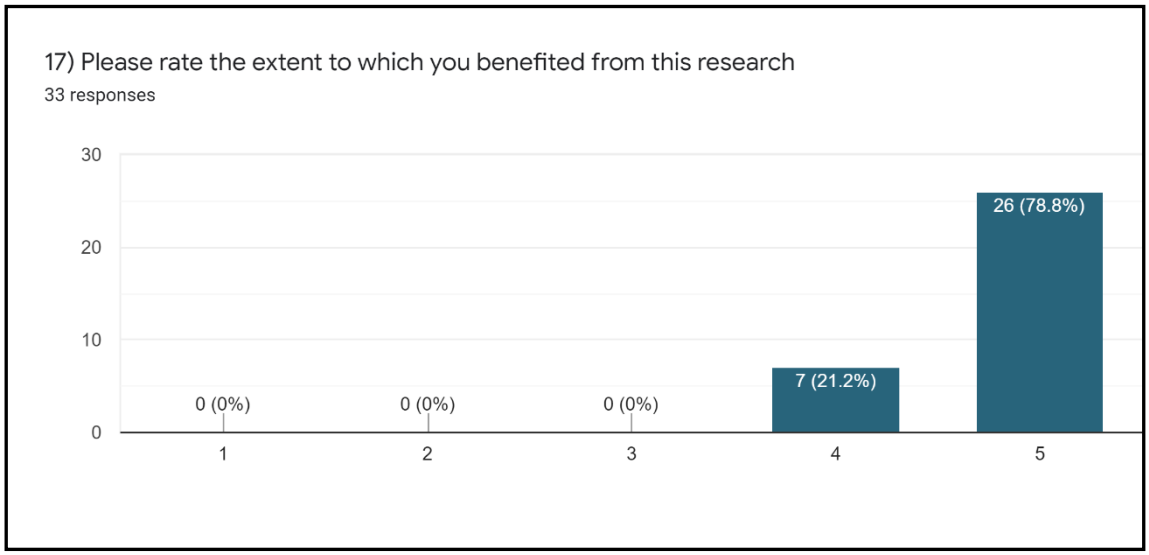


Figure 55 Participants' Level of Benefit.

6.2.11 Feedback Survey Conclusion

The outcomes of the feedback survey led to the conclusion that the objective-orientation approach was an effective approach to conceptualise SCM. The participants' agreement with the research and their satisfaction with the outcomes of this study supports the researcher's conclusion. Furthermore, despite the limited number of participants, there is a considerable probability that the developed perspective will gain wider acceptance by practitioners and academics and hence, a probability of achieving the desired consensus among them. More than 50% of the participants were managers or heads of departments. All of them agreed with the researcher's argument. Furthermore, there is a probability that this study will eliminate the conflict and confusion among academics and practitioners. Finally, there is a probability that business schools will rethink teaching the principles of Business Relations Management and renaming the term SCM.

6.2.12 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the purposes and the details of the assessment and feedback surveys were reported and analysed. The assessment survey showed a lack of comprehensive understanding about the meaning of BRM and its importance among almost all participants. Also, there is an overlap between human and public relations and managing business relations among the participants. These findings promote the value of the outcomes of this research. Accordingly, it is determined that presenting the outcomes of this research to a group of managers, employees, and business owners will refine and broaden their understanding of BRM and enhances their awareness of its value to organisations.

Similarly, the feedback survey showed significant general agreement and satisfaction among the participants. All participants agreed that SCM was not an appropriate name to describe or refer to the value of internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms in a supply chain. Accordingly, it is concluded that there is a high probability that the developed perspective of BRM will gain wider acceptance by practitioners

and academics and hence, there will be a considerable probability of achieving the desired consensus among them.

7 Conclusion

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of this research, addresses and discusses the main objectives and outcomes of this study, and introduces the research conclusion, contribution, implications, and limitations. Lastly, future research opportunities and the researchers' recommendations are noted.

7.1 Research Summary

Although more than three and half decades have passed since the term Supply Chain Management (SCM) was first introduced in the literature and is being practised and taught globally, scholars and practitioners still have divergent views and understandings about its meaning. The literature has shown that there is no consensus on the definition of SCM, different perspectives were reported, there is confusion and an overlap between the concept and logistics management, a unified conceptual or theoretical model has not been yet widely acknowledged, and several frameworks have been offered. In addition, some academics found that SCM discipline lacks clear boundaries. Also, some academics see that the existing frameworks lack the call for a holistic model that encompasses the essence of the notion. Remarkably, some academics see SCM as an elusive concept or warn that the term might become another academic fad. Furthermore, three academics in very recent articles predict the death of SCM and see that it is on the way out within five years, while others criticised the term where they proposed different names to replace it.

In general, these mentioned issues raised many calls in the literature for achieving consensus on a unified definition, a unified understanding and perspective, a unified conceptual model, and a holistic framework of SCM. The argument in the literature is that achieving consensus among scholars and practitioners will improve research and practice and the SCM discipline. For this purpose, some academics focused on defining SCM through analysing many existing definitions of the concept, while others see that identifying the theoretical foundation behind the concept will be the right approach to reach the desired consensus among scholars and practitioners. Yet, few academics believe that

developing a unified theory for SCM is difficult, while other academics related the term to some existing managerial theories or offered their own views. Despite all those issues and discussions, some thought leaders see that their perspective, definition, and framework of SCM is the right perspective, and academics should follow that perspective. Therefore, the continuity of the argument about SCM definition, the theoretical confusion and the overlap between SCM and other concepts trigger the necessity that researchers should radically investigate and trace the tenets and approaches through which SCM was defined, conceptualised, modelled, and introduced in the literature.

Accordingly, a literature review was conducted to define the SCM concept at first, and then an intensive literature review was conducted to determine what approaches were used and implemented toward defining, conceptualising or modelling the concept. Through the researcher's attempt to define the concept and the intensive literature review, the literature showed that most identified definitions of a supply chain exclude the end-user or consumer from the supply chain. Besides, many scholars focused on the structure of the supply chains and suggested that a supply chain should be managed as one entity. Remarkably, the literature revealed that the process orientation was the prevailing used and recommended approach by many scholars to conceptualise and implement SCM. Also, there is no evidence in the literature that a study has investigated the effectiveness of an objective-oriented approach toward theorising or conceptualising SCM.

Nonetheless, this finding triggered the researcher's interest in investigating the effectiveness of this approach. The focus on the objectives of SCM was based on the researcher's comprehension of management. Management practices, strategies, policies, and decisions are supposed to be objective or goal-oriented. Moreover, management practices, strategies, policies, and decisions are based on people's theoretical knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and convictions. Therefore, SCM business practices and other managerial practices mirror or reflect the academic and practitioners' beliefs and convictions. However, discovering those beliefs and convictions can only be acquired through studying

and analysing qualitative data. Such study requires conducting grounded theory research which aims at understanding and explaining social phenomena and building theories from the real world through studying peoples' actions and interactions. In this research, the main assumption is that using the grounded theory method through the objective-orientation data coding approach will be effective and lead to a better conceptualisation of SCM and identify its theoretical foundation. This approach is based on the fact that purposeful human actions and interactions aim to achieve or the occurrence of desired outcomes and prevent and avoid the occurrence of non-desirable outcomes. Also, conducting the grounded theory method is based on the assumption that there is a single and common belief among SCM scholars. Therefore, the role of the researcher is to discover that belief through analysing the literature.

7.2 Research Outcomes

This research responds to the existing calls for theory development, achieving consensus on a unified understanding and perspective of SCM, and remodelling the concept. The main aim is to investigate the feasibility of developing a unified theory and perspective of SCM through an objective-oriented grounded theory approach. Also, this research responds to the researcher's interest in developing a holistic framework in business management. Accordingly, this research covers four main objectives

1. Grounded theory development toward achieving a unified understanding and perspective of SCM through an objective-oriented data coding approach,
2. Comparing the developed theory and perspective with the extant literature,
3. Evaluating the level of acceptance of the developed theory and perspective among some academics and practitioners, and
4. Developing a general objective-oriented Business Management framework that can be used or modified for any business sector.

7.2.1 First Objective

The first objective of this research, as introduced, is to use the grounded theory method through an objective-oriented data coding approach to discover the common belief/theory among SCM scholars toward developing a unified definition, understanding, and perspective of the concept. The developed theory and its quality, the researcher's argument, and the researcher's perspective of BRM are summarised below.

7.2.1.1 Developed Theory

Through the objective-orientation approach and applying the grounded theory method, the theory or the common belief behind SCM was identified. The concept is all about managing business activities within and across firms through communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms. The researcher's proposed name of the identified theory is the Business Relations Management Theory. The suggested statement of this theory is that:

> *'Individuals, organisations, societies, and nations achieve better performance and outcomes through the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration.'*

The literature analysis showed that SCM includes different practices such as communication and information sharing across firms, the cooperation and collaboration between the suppliers and their customers or other stakeholders, establishing partnerships among firms, and the integration of business processes and activities. These practices aim at achieving many objectives and goals such as managerial efficiency and effectiveness, customers' satisfaction, enhancing firms' competitiveness, coordinating and synchronising the inventory flow across a supply chain, improving products' quality through customers' involvement or suppliers' involvement, sustainability, responsiveness, resilience, and improving firms' overall performance.

The terms supply chain integration (SCI) and supply chain collaboration (SCC) were used to refer to the collaboration and the integration among firms in a supply chain. Many academics and researchers empirically investigated these two

concepts. For example, a meta-analysis study of more than 86 peer-reviewed journal articles showed a significant positive correlation between SCI and firms' performance. Other studies showed a significant positive correlation between SCC and firms' performance. Furthermore, many studies discussed the value of communication within and across firms or with customers. For example, a study showed a positive relationship between communication practices and customers' satisfaction and loyalty.

Accordingly, this research argues that the term SCM was not an appropriate term to describe, refer to, or emphasise the value of the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration practices across business functions in any organisation, across organisations in a supply chain, with other stakeholders, or with the final consumers or customers. SCM should be replaced with the term Business Relations Management (BRM) as the former limits the benefits of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration to a chain or network of firms and enterprises within the production sector. The virtue of the 'Business Relations Management' term is that it is a more realistic description than SCM. The benefits of BRM are generalisable to all sectors and all stakeholders, including the final users, consumers, and services recipients. Nonetheless, the literature revealed that the term 'SCM' was also used as an encompassing concept to refer to purchasing, logistics and operations management. However, it would be more appropriate if universities or business schools teach the principles of supply and demand under other names such as 'Supply Management' or keep the use of the term 'Logistics Management' as an overarching concept. Organisations need supply or logistics management professionals as well as BRM professionals.

7.2.1.2 Business Relations Management Concept and Perspective

The discovered theory and the emergence of the BRM concept activated the researcher's interest in conducting an assessment survey about how people view and define managing business relations. The survey showed that many managers and employees have different views of BRM. For example, one participant sees that managing business relations means '*managing interactions*

between entities involved in the business' while another participant sees that BRM means ensuring the quality of provided goods and/or services while maintaining customers' satisfaction, employees' happiness, and environmental and ethical standards. This Finding, in return, adds value to the significance of this research that understanding what BRM mean is essential to its implementation. Nonetheless, through the developed theory and the meaning of management, BRM should be perceived as follows.

7.2.1.2.1 The Meaning of BRM

Business relations management (BRM) revolves around the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations and with customers or other stakeholders. Through BRM, economic, social, and other values are created. The main purpose of BRM is to achieve optimal, efficient, and effective internal communication, integration, cooperation, and collaboration within an organisation, besides the investment of these relations outside that organisation toward achieving and maintaining business objectives and goals.

7.2.1.2.2 The Dimensions of BRM

The literature showed that most academics who discussed supply chain integration (SCI) and supply chain collaboration (SCC) mentioned three dimensions of collaboration and integration. These dimensions are the internal collaboration and integration across business functions, the collaboration and integration with the suppliers, and the collaboration and integration with the customers. Also, some academics mentioned the vertical and horizontal collaboration and integration within and across firms. However, few scholars mentioned a fourth dimension, which is the collaboration and integration with other organisations or stakeholders outside the supply chain. Accordingly, it is established that there are two internal dimensions of BRM: vertical and horizontal. Vertical BRM is between top management, lower management, and employees, while horizontal BRM is among business functions or departments. On the other hand, there are three external dimensions of BRM. These are the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration with suppliers, customers, and other

stakeholders such as competitors, public organisations, not-for-profit organisations and the public.

7.2.1.2.3 Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Forms and Levels

Traditional business relations are transactional by default. However, different classifications or descriptions were offered in the literature. Some SCM scholars[128] classified the relations in the supply chain into three levels 'coordination, cooperation, and collaboration'. Other academics use other descriptions or forms such as arm's length, partnership, strategic alliance, and joint ventures. However, the literature showed that the highest level of cooperation, which is the merger or the union of companies or enterprises, was overlooked. Nonetheless, business relations can be classified into four levels: transactional, cooperative, collaborative, and integrative.

On the other hand, there are many forms of integration. For instance, information sharing can be described as Informative Integration, sharing resources and skills can be described as Integration of Resources; sharing knowledge, ideas, thoughts and experiences through meetings and discussions can be defined as Intellectual or Cognitive Integration; and finally, assigning responsibilities, tasks, missions, and managing the various business functions can be described as Functional Integration and Managerial Integration. Nonetheless, the cooperation across a supply chain entails many forms, such as the consolidation of the designs, specifications, and measurements of products and the coordination or the synchronisation of the inventory flow in the supply chain, which is being referred to as SCM by many scholars and researchers. Furthermore, there are many forms of integration among countries, such as integrative production or economic integration, besides consolidating currency or the international customs' laws and regulations.

[128] Such as Professor Richard Wilding, OBD

7.2.1.2.4 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Antecedents/Enablers

Many academics and scholars touched on the antecedents of cooperation, collaboration, and integration. Two main antecedents were most mentioned: trust and commitment. However, there are at least five main antecedents of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration between individuals or organisations; these are the existence of shared goals and interests, awareness, willingness, trust, and the absence of barriers. The existence of common goals or objectives, or interests is the key driver of cooperation, collaboration, and integration practices. The awareness of the importance and the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration plays another important role. People's or firms' willingness is also another important factor besides the mentioned trust between firms. Finally, the absence of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration barriers is critical to initiating collaborative relationships. For example, technological or digital communication is the key enabler of information sharing among organisations.

7.2.1.2.5 Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Barriers

The barriers to communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration were generally overlocked, as the literature showed that few scholars had mentioned this issue. The main barrier of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within or across firms is the absence of the aforementioned antecedents. There are also many other barriers. The barriers can be classified into psychological, social, managerial or organisational, political, economic, cultural, technological, and geographical. For instance, 'Greed' and 'Arrogance' are psychological barriers, lack of trust or suspicion are asocial barriers, and employees' grades and positions or the military personnel ranking system can be described as sources of organisational barriers. Organisations need to focus on eliminating these barriers, especially the internal barriers.

7.2.1.2.6 Definition of Business Relations Management

Based on the developed theory and perspective in this research, business relations management is defined as follows:

'Business relations management is the strategic planning of providing product or service, managing business activities, and achieving business objectives and goals through communication, cooperation, collaboration, and the integration within and across organisations and with the end customers/ services recipients or other stakeholders.'

7.2.1.2.7 Business Relations Management Implication

The general implication of the developed theory and concept in this research is that organisations should establish clear internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration frameworks. Internally, these frameworks or practices of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration should be imposed through stated regulations and laws, detailed procedures, and clear responsibilities. Also, organisations need to explore and identify the present and future external cooperation, collaboration, and integration opportunities. The key value of managing business relations is what can be achieved or improved through these relations. Organisations need to know, identify, and explore the added values of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration internally and externally. Governmental institutions are not excluded from initiating and having well-established frameworks of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. For instance, the success of armed forces operations totally depends on effective communication, collaboration, and integration among military forces.

7.2.2 Second Objective

Comparing a grounded theory with the extant theories in the literature is part of the grounded theory process as recommended by GT thought leaders. However, based on the outcomes of this study, the research focus was on two objectives: analysing the major perspectives of SCM that advocates the researcher's argument and perspective of BRM through thematic analysis and comparing some extant theories of SCM with the discovered theory in this research: the business relations management theory.

7.2.2.1 Outcomes of the Thematic Analysis

Based on the thematic analysis process, academics are using the term SCM as a synonym for Supply and Demand Management, Organisation Management, and Business Relations Management. In summary, the literature showed that many academics use SCM as a synonym for 'Logistics management, purchasing management, operations management, or a combination of three (Lambert, 2014). Yet, based on the researcher's knowledge of management and logistics management, many academics and organisations[129] use SCM as a synonym for 'Supply and Demand Management or Production Management in addition to BRM. In other words, they perceive SCM as a synonym for managing businesses in production or manufacturing companies or enterprises or managing businesses in the wholesale and retailing sectors. The definitions of SCM by APICS, CSCMP, and CIPS organisations reveal this understanding. For example, the acknowledged definition by the CSCMP members states that SCM entails planning and managing business activities in a supply chain, such as purchasing and production. Therefore, CSCMP and many other academics believe that logistics management is part of SCM.

Also, many academics use SCM as a synonym for managing a single organisation. It is known that any organisation consists of a group of people or an integrated system of different departments or business functions supposedly working together to accomplish a mission and achieve and maintain their organisation's objectives and goals. All those departments perform different tasks to accomplish that mission. The success of organisations in achieving their goals depends on the level of internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. I.e., it depends on effective BRM. However, the literature showed that Oliver and Webber (1982, cited in Christopher, 2016), who introduced the SCM term, and many other scholars suggest that a supply chain should be viewed and managed as one entity from end to end. In other words, the single entity view promotes managing a supply chain or a network of organisations as managing one organisation, which is believed to improve the performance of the whole

[129] SCM organisations such as the CSCMP, ASCM (APICS), CIPS besides Business Schools in many universities in Bahrain and UK.

members of a supply chain, or in other words, the performance of the whole system. Nonetheless, some academics confessed[130] that managing all suppliers from the origin and managing the products and services to the point of consumption is a complex task.

Last, SCM is being used as a synonym for BRM within and across firms in a supply chain. Business practices, such as communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration across a supply chain besides information sharing, working together, mutual planning, partnerships, integration of business process, and sharing risk and rewards, undoubtedly, fall under relationships management. All such practices are derived from the common belief among SCM academics that organisations achieve better outcomes through communication and cooperative, collaborative and integrative business relationships.

Accordingly, this thesis argues that SCM was not an appropriate term to describe these practices or refer to the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms. Through such practices, they become an integrated system of organisations.

Also, if the 'Business Relations Management' (BRM) concept was used instead of SCM, there would not be that amount of debate in the literature or confusion among scholars about the meaning of SCM. Also, adopting and emphasising the process orientation (what processes are managed in a supply chain), focusing on managing a supply chain as a structure, excluding the end-users or consumers, overlooking of the objective orientation, and the less emphasis on theory development through grounded theory instead of thematic analysis of existing definitions of SCM were behind the long-lasting debate and the different perspectives of SCM.

7.2.2.2 Outcomes of Comparing Major Extant Theories of SCM

The literature revealed that three single theories were used to explain the SCM concept or were used in SCM research. These theories were the 'Resource-Based' View (RBV), the 'System' theory or view, and the Relational View'. The

[130] (Lambert and Cooper, 2000).

RBV states that firms' sustainable competitive advantage depends on their resources. Many academics mentioned that organisations achieve a better competitive advantage if they share tangible and non-tangible resources. One of the academics used the term Extended RBV to refer to the value of the collaboration among firms in a supply chain. Other scholars used other terms or theories to refer to the value of resources sharing and integration, such as Resource-Dependence-View', 'Competency and Capability Theory', Social Capital Theory', 'Social Resources Theory', and 'Dynamic capabilities Theory. The key bond in these theories and views is the common-sense belief that organisations' capabilities depend on the optimal and effective utilisation and integration of their available human, tangible, and nontangible resources. The cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and among organisations undoubtedly increase their capabilities. However, the RBV emphasises enhancing firms' capabilities and competitiveness while it does not explain, for example, the social value and the environmental value creation through the cooperation between manufacturers in producing recyclable products.

Similarly, the 'Relational View (RV) of competitive advantage focuses on the value of informative, intellectual, and resource integration among firms. The RV emphasises the value of partnership and alliance among firms. Nevertheless, the main limitation of the RV is its narrow scope, which limits collaboration practices to organisations. Also, its scope limits value creation to the extension of organisational resources and overlooks the value of communication and collaboration with consumers or end-users.

Finally, many academics related SCM to the philosophy of system view or system approach. The system perspective views an organisation or a firm as a system that is dependent on its functional departments. Academics who believe that a supply chain should be managed as a single entity used the system theory or view as a theoretical perspective. Accordingly, many academics see that firms should work together, cooperate, share information, and build long-term relationships through which they achieve better outcomes. However, It is clear that through effective communication and information sharing within and across

businesses, organisations plan as one integrated system. Therefore, it is not the system view philosophy that is behind SCM, rather the belief that through communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration, organisations become an integrated system that works together and plans as one entity. Organisations, by default, are systems that are part of a larger system (system of systems). Therefore, managing external business relations means creating value for an organisation and its entire system.

7.2.3 Third Objective

The third objective of this research is to evaluate the level of acceptance of the developed theory and the researcher's perspective of BRM among some academics and practitioners. For this purpose, a feedback survey was conducted. The participants were invited from different sectors based on a random purposive sampling approach. The details of the research idea, SCM issues, the researcher's approach, the outcomes of this study, and the researcher's argument and perspective of BRM were presented to the participants. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the difficulty of conducting face-to-face lectures, and the lack of people's cooperation, 33 participants from 7 different sectors and businesses were lectured.

The main questions in the questionnaire aim at identifying whether BRM is a more appropriate term than SCM; getting participants' opinions about renaming SCM to another name; and whether the outcomes of this study had improved the participants' understanding of BRM and their awareness of the objectives that can be achieved through BRM. Furthermore, the participants were asked whether they agree/disagree that establishing clear objective-oriented frameworks of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration inside or across organizations is essential for effective management of business relations; the internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within or between organizations should be supported and enforced by laws, regulations, and agreements; the success of managing business relations requires mutual planning among all business functions or departments in any organisation; the communication, cooperation and integration between top

management and employees in any organization (vertically) are no less important than the horizontal communication, cooperation and integration among departments or business functions in any organisation; and that managing business relations is the main success factor for all organisations in any sector (public and private, production and services). Moreover, the participants were asked whether they agree or disagree that It is important to differentiate between teaching the principles of supply and production management (purchasing, production, logistics, demand, and sales) and teaching the principles of managing business relations; and universities should think of teaching the principles of Business Relations Management to all students regardless of their academic discipline.

In general, the feedback survey results showed high acceptance and satisfaction. All the participants agreed that SCM was not an appropriate term to describe or refer to the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across firms in a supply chain. Furthermore, all participants agreed that universities should teach BRM principles to all students regardless of their academic discipline. Accordingly, this thesis establishes that there is a significant probability that the concept and the perspective of BRM, as presented in this research, will gain wider acceptance and acknowledgement by practitioners and academics, and hence, there will be a considerable probability of achieving the desired consensus among them.

7.3 Researcher's Conclusion

The main conclusion of this study is that the objective-orientation approach was an effective approach to conceptualise SCM. Furthermore, this study refutes the claim that developing a unified theory of SCM is not feasible or impossible. Also, there is a considerable probability that the developed perspective will gain wider acceptance among practitioners and academics. Furthermore, there is a high probability that this study will eliminate the conflict and confusion among academics and practitioners. Finally, there is a probability that business schools will rethink teaching the principles of Business Relations Management. Aside from these mentioned propositions, it is found that the introduced perspective by

the Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF), regardless of its limitation, is the nearest perspective to the BRM concepts.

7.4 Research Contribution

This research is investigative and combines problem-solving research toward theory development that has useful and practical relevance and consequently advances business and management thought. Therefore, this study contributes to the following areas.

7.4.1 Theoretical Contribution

7.4.1.1 The Discovered/ Realised Theory

Through the objective-orientation approach and applying the grounded theory method, the theory behind SCM was discovered. The researcher's proposed name of the developed theory is *Business Relations Management Theory*. The suggested statement of this theory is that:

> *'Individuals, organisations, societies, and nations achieve better performance and outcomes through the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration.'*

However, the researcher's findings refute the claim that developing a unified theory of SCM is not feasible. Besides, it is not the system view philosophy, the resource-based view, or the relational rent view that best describes the theory behind SCM; rather, the business relations management theory or the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and among organisations is the key value-driver that enable organisations to plan and work as one system and benefit from sharing information and resources.

7.4.1.2 Business Relations Management Perspective

The approach in this research (objective orientation) enabled the researcher to synthesise the different perspectives and understandings among SCM scholars into one perspective and concept: Business Relations Management. The

introduced perspective of BRM and the objective orientation approach collectively develop a new culture among academics and businesses.

7.4.1.3 Business Relations Management as a Discipline

The introduced objective-oriented perspective of BRM in this research forms a new discipline to be taught. Furthermore, academics who teach public relations may discuss combining and integrating both disciplines (BRM as introduced and PR) under one name, Business and Public Relations Management (BPRM), provided the use of the objective orientation approach. Combining both disciplines will bond managing relationships under one umbrella.

7.4.2 Methodological Contribution

This study offers a general framework for GT research and theory development. The GT method is based on textual data analysis (qualitative). It was originally discovered and improved by the sociologists B. Glaser, A. Strauss; J. Corbin; and C. Charmaz. The literature showed that B. Glaser introduced Coding Families, and Strauss and Corbin introduced the ‘Coding Paradigm. Strauss and Corbin (2015) also introduced their Conditional/ Consequential Matrix, which according to them, fills the gap in their coding paradigm and increases the data analysis complexity.

In contrast, Charmaz (2014) did not offer any coding guidelines rather introduced the constructivist approach to GT. Regardless of the different approaches and perspectives among GT thought leaders, there is consensus that the method is used to study human actions and interactions toward theory development. In other words, GT studies purposeful human actions and interactions.

However, the researcher’s understanding of theory is that a theory is a belief or an assumption/proposition about the reality that interprets and explains why, when, where, or how things occur, correlates between variables or concepts, and posits or constructs a perception about reality. Accordingly, theories are classified into interpretive, correlational, and envisioned theories/perspectives. Furthermore, the researcher’s conviction about purposeful human action is that purposeful human action/interaction is based on achieving or the occurrence of

desirable outcomes and avoiding or preventing the occurrence of non-desirable outcomes.

However, examining the seminal books of GT scholars revealed that GT research aims to discover or construct theories that interpret or explain reality. GT research investigates why, when, where, or how things occur. Based on synthesising these mentioned premises, there are four data coding or analysis approaches that can be used in GT research; these approaches are 1) the Objective/Goal-Oriented approach, 2) the Outcomes/Consequences-Oriented approach, 3) the Object-Oriented approach, and 4) the Action/Process-Oriented approach. These orientations collectively construct the conceptual model of GT research or theory development framework. The researcher's perspective about the established model is that a researcher has known and unknown actions, objectives, intentions, outcomes, consequences, objects or reasons, conditions, situations, and processes. The role of a grounded theorist is to 1) discover the relation or the link between the purposeful human actions/interactions and the internal motive or the external objects behind those actions/interactions/reactions; 2) discover the outcomes of certain actions/interactions; or 3) or discover how certain outcomes occur.

Nonetheless, a comparison between the developed data coding model with Glaser's version of GT, Glaser's coding families, and Strauss and Corbin's coding paradigm and their Conditional/ Consequential Matrix showed that the researcher's developed data coding model of GT research complies with and synthesises Strauss's and Corbin's (2015) coding paradigm and matrix in one model. Also, the researcher's developed data coding model complies with the objectivist or Glaser's version of GT.

Accordingly, it is believed that the developed data coding model or the conceptual framework of GT research can be considered a modest methodological contribution to the GT body of knowledge.

7.5 Research Implications

The general practical implications of the outcomes of this research and the developed theory and BRM perspective in the Business and Management field are that organisations should establish clear objective/goal-oriented frameworks of internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration. Internally, these frameworks or practices of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration should be imposed through regulations and laws, detailed procedures, and clear responsibilities. Also, organisations need to explore and identify the present and future external cooperation, collaboration, and integration opportunities. As mentioned, the key value of managing business relations is what can be achieved or improved through these relationships. Organisations need to know, identify, and explore the added values of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration internally and externally.

Furthermore, organisations should realise that they need to develop multiple frameworks of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration that cover all management fields in any organisation. The most important fields of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration are Research and Development (R&D), Continuous Improvement (CI) and TQM. SCM scholars focused on developing process-oriented frameworks that highlight the business processes that could be mutually managed, synchronised, and coordinated across supply chains in the production and manufacturing sectors. However, they overlooked the value of internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration toward achieving managerial or organisational excellence, which should be the ultimate of every organisation. Managerial excellence and BRM are not limited to producing or delivering high-quality products or services that satisfy the customers, grant competitive advantage, and improve financial performance; it also includes the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration toward achieving the efficient and effective management of people and resources to accomplish an organisation’s mission through which business objectives are optimally achieved.

However, managing relationships is useless without a clear mission and shared organisational vision, goals, and objectives among all managers and employees. Furthermore, organisations need to identify and eliminate or minimise the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration barriers internally and externally, especially with their customers, partners, or other stakeholders.

Anyhow, addressing more implications about the outcomes of this research is endless. Yet, practitioners, academics, and researchers are invited to develop further frameworks and expand and address the further implications of the outcomes of this study.

7.6 Research Limitations

The main limitation of conducting this research was that the driven conclusion from the feedback survey was based on a limited number of participants. There was a lack of cooperation with the researcher. The main reason was the COVID-19 pandemic effect. Gathering people and conducting face-to-face or online lectures at work or after duty hours was a challenging task. The difficulty was to convince the targeted participants to attend a 45-minute online lecture and answer another 15-minute questionnaire during duty hours or private time. Also, many people or organisations were not interested in participating or being lectured about this research. Therefore, generalising the findings and the researcher's conclusion could be challenged. That said, the overall construct of the thesis and the work undertaken is based upon rigorous research.

7.7 Future Research Opportunities

There are many research opportunities from the finding of this research. However, some of the major research areas that could extend this research are as follows.

7.7.1 Revising and Improving the Theoretical Model of BRM

The developed theoretical model of BRM theory (Figure 41) is mainly based on the identified business management objectives and goals in the literature. However, the social objectives or values of management, such as Justice,

Integrity, Credibility, Equity, Transparency, Loyalty, Trustworthiness, Reputation, and Reliability, are not included in the model. Maintaining these values and objectives is essential to all organisations. Excellent organisations focus on achieving and maintaining customers' and employees' satisfaction, trust, and loyalty besides maintaining other stakeholders' satisfaction and trust. Moreover, excellent organisations work on avoiding, preventing, and terminating any form of non-ethical or non-human practices, such as Opportunism, Discrimination, Deception, Monopolism, Prices Manipulation, Humiliation, and Racism. Therefore, future research could be focused on integrating and organising these mentioned social values in the model.

Furthermore, there was a dispute among the feedback participants and co-workers around the 'Integration' concept. Some agreed on placing 'Integration' in the core category, while others suggested placing it with the other objectives so that the core category includes only 'Communication, Cooperation, and 'Collaboration'. Although this idea sounds logical, it should be studied and evaluated.

7.7.2 The Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Barriers

The literature showed that some authors (Christopher, 2016; Pabini, 2017) have touched on the integration barriers; despite that, the collaboration barriers within and across organisations were not investigated thoroughly. This can be attributed to the confusion caused by the SCM notion, its different meanings and perspectives, the absence or the non-realisation of the developed BRM theory in this research, and the narrow vision of the meaning of BRM. There is a need, especially in the public sector, to address and investigate these barriers within and across organisations and how to overcome those barriers.

7.7.3 The Relation between Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration Toward Achieving High Readiness of Armed Forces

As the term SCM limits communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration to the production sector, there is no sign in the literature that a study that has investigated the relationship between communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration and achieving high readiness within the armed forces, especially in maintaining military equipment. There is a need to develop a clear framework of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among armed forces units and departments toward achieving the various military objectives. Evaluation research could identify the level of awareness among armed forces personnel about the importance of their collaboration to achieve higher readiness status.

7.7.4 Highest Value Driver Dimension of Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Integration

This thesis addressed four dimensions of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations: internal C&I, supplier C&I, customer C&I, and C&I of stakeholders. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that people's (customers/ service recipients) awareness, cooperation, and commitment to the announced health measures by the public authorities are the core success factors in facing and containing that pandemic. This means that the highest value creation depends on people's cooperation. Therefore, future research can evaluate the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration of each dimension for any sector or organisation. Such research aims to raise the practitioner's awareness of the highest value deriver dimension to their business.

7.7.5 Evaluating and Improving the Orientation Data-Coding Approach

In this research, the researcher developed a Data Coding approach, which can be used as a framework for theory development in GT research (Figure 30). Four possible orientations were introduced. However, further investigation is required to verify the effectiveness and the value of this data coding approach. Also, further research could be focused on identifying the framework of Glaser's coding families and how all those coding approaches could be integrated into a unified framework. Moreover, the developed theory-development framework is based on human action/interaction. Also, it is based on the objectivist approach of GT (Glaser's version). Future research could investigate the applicability of the developed data coding framework in the constructionist version of GT (Charmaz's approach) so that it incorporates discourse analysis.

7.7.6 Evaluating the Researcher's Proposed Business Management Framework

The initial idea behind this research was the researcher's intention to develop a framework in SCM. The reason behind the idea, as explained in chapter 1, was the researcher's profession as a supply manager for more than 25 years, the researcher's interest in 'Management Knowledge, TQM implementation and organisational excellence frameworks, Continuous Improvement, Risk and Business Continuity Management (BCM), Economic Reform in Bahrain and Sustainable Development initiative by the United Nations Organisation, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and the researcher's work experience and observations.

Through the outcomes of this research, the researcher realised that most of the researcher's mentioned observations and the non-mentioned observations in the real world indicate a lack of understanding and commitment to achieving TQM, lack of awareness of the importance of communication, cooperation, and integration within and across firms, lack of emphasising on customers and other stakeholders satisfaction, the absence of integrated managerial or system

thinking, and the lack of awareness of the value of mutual planning and integrated continuous improvement efforts.

Nonetheless, based on the used approach (objective orientation) in this study, the discovered theory, the researcher's perspective of the 'Business Relations Management' concept, and the calls in the literature to remodel SCM (Moberg et al., 2008) and develop a normative theoretical model (Lambert and Enz, 2017), the researcher was able to develop a universal objective-oriented 'Business Management Framework' that highlights the importance of managing business relationships for any business sector, a framework that emphasises the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration to individuals, societies, organisations, and nations, a framework that links all stakeholders toward achieving the desired sustainable and economic development.

Appendix G presents the researcher's proposed business management framework. However, future research could focus on validating the proposed framework, evaluating its strength and weakness and comparing it with extant frameworks such as the GSCF.

7.7.7 Developing Objective-Oriented Models/Frameworks

The objective orientation could enhance management knowledge in other areas. Researchers are encouraged to develop further objective-oriented models and frameworks in other areas such as Human resources and TQM.

7.8 Recommendations

Business Relations Management (BRM) is not limited to the supply chains or the production sector. Individuals, organisations, societies, and Nations are advised to adopt the BRM culture as a core management field. Organisations might need to establish BRM departments or Business and Public Relations departments responsible for business and public relationships management. Schools and universities should rethink teaching BRM as an alternative to SCM. It is important to differentiate between the essentials of supply/production and demand management and BRM. It would be more appropriate if the term SCM is replaced with Supply Management or Production Management so that it incorporates

purchasing, manufacturing and production, logistics, and demand management. Effective BRM requires effective communication, shared vision, and mutual planning. It requires establishing clear cooperation, collaboration, and integration frameworks within organisations, supply chains, or other stakeholders. Organisations should be aware of the value of vertical communication, cooperation, and integration among top management, lower management, and employees besides horizontal communication, cooperation, and integration.

Armed forces are advised to teach the principles of Management and BRM in early training phases and focus on developing, improving, standardising, and legislating and enacting BRM frameworks and practices within and across all combat, combat services, and combat services support units. An important recommendation is to establish clear total satisfaction frameworks that include all stakeholders. The satisfaction frameworks should be based on actual and predicted demand and expectations of employees, customers, and other stakeholders.

Social or governmental organisations need to work as a system. Achieving that requires efficient and effective communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among them. Also, achieving the desired economic and sustainable development depends on managing business relations within and across countries. The absence of shared goals and interests, willingness, awareness, and trust among nations and people and the lack of commitment to the global agreements among nations are the key inhibitors to achieving the desired United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Envision. Finally, organisations are advised to bring their mission, vision, goals, objectives and values upfront, assess their existing frameworks and practices of BRM, identify their strengths and weaknesses, existing gaps, and opportunities, and identify the existing barriers in all areas if they aim to achieve the total cooperation, collaboration, and integration. The most important issue is that establishing, assessing, improving, and standardising the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration frameworks should be based on the collaboration and involvement of all specialists, innovators, and stakeholders.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Pilot Study Survey and Responses

A.1 Pilot Study Survey Form

PhD Research Survey

Conceptualising Supply Chain Management, A New Approach

By:
Colonel Engineer: Hussain K. Alkebaisi
Bahrain Defence Force, Kingdom of Bahrain

Dear Participant:

First, I would like to take this moment to express my sincere appreciation for your valuable contribution to this survey. Second, I believe that we both agree that research endeavours in the business and management field enhance and improve management practices by organisations, which consequently lead to better achieving organisations' goals. However, these efforts cannot be fruitful and achieve their objectives without the cooperation between researchers who dedicate themselves to improving our lives and those organisations who believe that an essential part of their social responsibility is supporting these efforts. Therefore, your participation in this survey shows your willingness and care toward research and researchers in advancing our knowledge and life.

In brief, I am undertaking this survey as part of a PhD Research in one of the essential management fields, which is known as "Supply Chain Management". The research is about investigating the effectiveness of a new approach toward Conceptualising Supply Chain Management (SCM) and developing a unified understanding of the notion". The literature has shown that there are different views about the meaning of Supply Chain Management, which has caused considerable debate and confusion among academics and practitioners.

Accordingly, many scholars since 2001 have called for achieving a consensus on a unified understanding and definition of the concept, developing a comprehensive theoretical foundation that explains the concept, and developing a framework that enhances SCM practice. However, many attempts and approaches were used in solving this issue; despite that, no general agreement among academics has been achieved yet.

In this research, the central hypothesis is that through the new novel approach, the researcher would be able to develop a unified understanding of SCM by identifying the theory behind it, which will consequently lead to better implementation and practice.

Finally, thank you very much for taking the time to assist with this research.

Cranfield University, UK
Contact details:

Informed Consent Form

Title of the project:	*Conceptualising Supply Chain Management, A New Approach*		
Name of the researcher:	Hussain K. Alkebaisi		
Researcher's contact details:			
Participant ID:		Date:	

Part 1: Consent to Participate.

1. I confirm that I have been informed about this research project, and I agree to take part.
2. I understand that all personal information I provide will be treated with confidence, and my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation.
3. I have been provided with a participant number, as shown above. The researcher will record data against my participant number instead of recording my name. The file linking my name to my participant number will be accessible only to the principal researcher and will be securely destroyed as soon as it is no longer required.
4. I understand that I can withdraw from this project at any stage by informing the researcher, for whom contact details have been provided. I also understand that I can withdraw my data for a period of up to 1 month from today, as after this time, it will not be possible to identify my individual data from the aggregated results, as explained in point 3.
5. I understand that the data I provide will be used by Cranfield University for the purpose of research. The data will be stored on the University's network that can only be accessed by authorised users, in line with the UK Data Protection Act 2018.
6. I am happy for my anonymised answers to be published: Yes / No
7. I understand that the final analysis and the aggregated data will be published in support of the research findings.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided on this form and give my consent to take part in this research.

Participant's signature:		**Date:**	
Participant's name / Contact			
Participant's Organisation:			
Researcher's signature:		**Date:**	

One copy of this form must be given to the participant, and one copy held by the researcher.

Participant ID:

Conceptualising Supply Chain Management, A New Approach

Questionnaire

(This survey is intended for managers and executives)

Part 1: Introductory Questions:

Q1. In which country is your company primarily resident?

Q2. What is your position in your company?

Q3. Have you ever heard about Supply Chain Management? Yes / No

(If the answer is no, then you are no longer required to answer this survey)

Q4. What is your experience in the SCM field?

Q5. Did you study SCM? Yes / No

(If the answer is no, then this ends part 1)

Q6. What courses or degrees have you taken?

(please specify the title of the course or the degree, university or institute, and year of study)

Q7. In brief, what were the major topics that were covered in your study of SCM?

End of Part 1

Part 2: Main Survey Questions

Q1. What does Supply Cain management mean to you?

(Please explain your understanding of SCM as you see it without referring to any source. Also, you might add the definition of a supply chain if you wish; and please feel free to write what you think is important; there is no limit)

Q2. What is the importance of SCM to you?

((Please explain what you could achieve through SCM and how the implementation of SCM improves your organisation's overall performance).

Q3. In your opinion, what is needed for effective and successful SCM implementation?

Q4. Is there a difference between the concept of SCM and the concept of Logistics Management? If so, what is the relation between them?

This ends this questionnaire; thank you for your cooperation.

A.2 Pilot Study Survey Received Responses

A.2.1 Participant 1

Participant ID: 1

Conceptualising Supply Chain Management, A New Approach

Questionnaire

(This survey is intended for managers and executives)

Part 1: Introductory Questions:

Q1. In which country is your company primarily resident?

UAE

Q2. What is your position in your company?

Regional Director

Q3. Have you ever heard about Supply Chain Management? Yes / No
(If the answer is no, then you are no longer required to answer this survey)

Q4. What is your experience in the SCM field?

My experience in SCM is focused on the logistics portion, specifically in tracking assets on land, sea and air through satellite communication devices

Q5. Did you study SCM? Yes / No
(If the answer is no, then this ends part 1)

Q6. What courses or degrees have you taken?
(please specify the title of the course or the degree, university or institute, and year of study)

BSC, Business Administration, California State University, Monterey Bay, 2007-12

Q7. In brief, what were the major topics that were covered in your study of SCM?

Basic business level logistics and product lifecycles

End of Part 1

Part 2: Main Survey Questions

Q1. What does Supply Cain management mean to you?
(Please explain your understanding of SCM as you see it without referring to any source. Also, you might add the definition of a supply chain if you wish; and please feel free to write what you think is important; there is no limit)

Supply chain management, to me, is managing the creation and delivery of a product. For example, SCM of Rice would have to do with the entire process from planting, harvesting, packaging and distributing rice until it reaches the consumer.

Q2. What is the importance of SCM to you?
(Please explain what you could achieve through SCM and how could the implementation of SCM improve your organisation's overall performance).

SCM at our company would have to do with production of certain products and delivery across the globe. Implementing SCM could improve this by accurately forecasting for products that will be sold, consumed, and developed in the future. We emphasize on SCM to avoid shortages and oversupply of certain products. It's also important that we build our products in the most cost-effective way. SCM is always considered due to the cost of logistics, complexity of regulatory approvals and manufacturing costs.

Q3. In your opinion, what is needed for effective and successful SCM implementation?

Accurate forecasts for products that need to be supplied. A thorough understanding of the market you operate in to avoid high costs of shipments, procurements, etc. There will be a different model for successful implementation in every case. It will be based on the product and market to ensure an effective implementation of SCM.

Q4. Is there a difference between the concept of SCM and the concept of Logistics Management? If so, what is the relation between them?

Yes, there is a difference; logistics management does not include the process of creating a product from raw material to the final version. The relation is logistics will always sit in a certain part of SCM.

This ends this questionnaire; thank you for your cooperation.

A.2.2 Participant 2

Participant ID: 2

Conceptualising Supply Chain Management, A New Approach

Questionnaire

(This survey is intended for managers and executives)

Part 1: Introductory Questions:

Q1. In which country is your company primarily resident?

United States of America

Q2. What is your position in your company?

Sales and Marketing Vice President

Q3. Have you ever heard about Supply Chain Management? **Yes** / No
(If the answer is no, then you are no longer required to answer this survey)

Q4. What is your experience in the SCM field?

Q5. Did you study SCM? Yes / **No**
(If the answer is no, then this ends part 1)

Q6. What courses or degrees have you taken?
(please specify the title of the course or the degree, university or institute, and year of study)

Q7. In brief, what were the major topics that were covered in your study of SCM?

End of Part 1

Part 2: Main Survey Questions

Q1. What does Supply Cain management mean to you?
(Please explain your understanding of SCM as you see it without referring to any source. Also, you might add the definition of a supply chain if you wish; and please feel free to write what you think is important; there is no limit)

Managing what you make and what you buy so the customer gets quality product on time.

Q2. What is the importance of SCM to you?
(Please explain what you could achieve through SCM and how could the implementation of SCM improve your organisation's overall performance).

Less no performing inventory, quicker product delivery, satisfied customers

Q3. In your opinion, what is needed for effective and successful SCM implementation?

Good MRP system to manage materials, manufacturing, and assembly.

Q4. Is there a difference between the concept of SCM and the concept of Logistics Management? If so, what is the relation between them?

Not sure what the difference is here.

This ends this questionnaire; thank you for your cooperation.

A.2.3 Participant 3

Participant ID: 3

Conceptualising Supply Chain Management, A New Approach

Questionnaire

(This survey is intended for managers and executives)

Part 1: Introductory Questions:

Q1. In which country is your company primarily resident?

Turkey

Q2. What is your position in your company?

Technical Expert

Q3. Have you ever heard about Supply Chain Management? **Yes**
(If the answer is no, then you are no longer required to answer this survey)

Q4. What is your experience in the SCM field?

I have no experience in SCM

Q5. Did you study SCM? **Yes**
(If the answer is no, then this ends part 1)

Q6. What courses or degrees have you taken?
(please specify the title of the course or the degree, university or institute, and year of study)

I am an industrial engineer; I took a course, “Production management”, that includes SCM

Q7. In brief, what were the major topics that were covered in your study of SCM?

Important points of SCM

End of Part 1

Part 2: Main Survey Questions

Q1. What does Supply Cain management mean to you?
(Please explain your understanding of SCM as you see it without referring to any source. Also, you might add the definition of a supply chain if you wish; and please feel free to write what you think is important; there is no limit)

SCM is mainly focused on keeping mass production to prevent time loss because of waiting for raw material or semi-finished products.

Q2. What is the importance of SCM to you?
(Please explain what you could achieve through SCM and how could the implementation of SCM improve your organisation's overall performance).

In our company we have to obey the procedures of supplying, because of this, we cannot make good SCM, so we have many problems for supplying such as expensive supplying, delay of supplying, we cannot follow our supplier quality systems.

Q3. In your opinion, what is needed for effective and successful SCM implementation?

Good engineering, management capability and open vision

Q4. Is there a difference between the concept of SCM and the concept of Logistics Management? If so, what is the relation between them?

Logistics management concept covers all steps: supplying, production and sales, but SCM just focused on supplying.

This ends this questionnaire; thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix B Assessment Survey and Responses

B.1 Assessment Survey Form

Managing Business Relations

This survey is part of a PhD research that aims at studying how managing business relations is viewed and defined by people. Business owners, employees and managers from all sectors are invited to participate in this survey.

Please be informed that none of your personal details will be shared or used for any other purposes and will be erased once the research is completed.

Your participation in this survey is evidence of your awareness of the importance of research in developing human knowledge and business and management practice. Your contribution is very appreciated.

With sincere thanks.

Part 1: Participant's Data:

1) Please select your business sector
    a. Government
    b. Private
    c. Non-profit
2) Please describe your Business Field / Type / Industry/ Activity
3) Please select the option that best describes you.
    a. Chief Executive/ Chairman
    b. Manager / Head of Department
    c. Vice Manager / Assistant Manager
    d. Self-Employed / Business Owner
    e. Employee

4) Years of service/working/experience.
    a. less than a year
    b. 1-5 years
    c. 6-10 years
    d. 11-15 years
    e. Over 15 years
5) Please select your education level
    a. Secondary
    b. Diploma
    c. Bachelor
    d. Master
    e. PhD
6) Your country of residence/ work
7) Email / contact details (Optional)

Part 2: Survey Question:

This is a one-question survey; please write and use your own words. Using external resources will lead to inaccurate assessment. Thank you for your commitment.

What does 'Managing Business Relations' mean to you?

B.2 Assessment Survey Received Answers

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
1	Government	Algeria	Geospatial data	Manager/ Executive	PhD	Over 15 years	Business is based on interactions between entities (organisations, companies, firms...). Interactions refer to relations between these entities. Managing business relations is therefore managing interactions between entities involved in the business.
2	Government	Bahrain	Military Organization	Manager/ Executive	PhD	Over 15 years	From my perspective, 'Managing Business Relations' affects both internal and external relationships with internal customers and external vendors that enable you to provide the best service quality as possible and in a timely manner within the limitations of the available resources that you have.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
3	Government	Bahrain	Advisor	Other	PhD	Over 15 years	3ms: material + money + men.
4	Government	Bahrain	Education	Employee	PhD	11-15	Business relations is a big network that might include relationships with customers, competitors, creditors, suppliers... etc. It has a huge impact on the success of any business; therefore, businesses should maintain its relationships and try to expand it. One way to manage these relationships is by having a plan or a system that assists the company in motivating the other party to continue dealing with the company. So, the company should know the factors that it should focus on in improving its relationship with each party.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
5	Private	United Kingdom	Academia	Employee	PhD	6-10	Ensuring the quality of provided goods and/or services while maintaining customers satisfaction, employees' happiness, environmental and ethical standards, while providing financial security to the company.
6	Private	United Kingdom	Defence engineering	Manager/ Executive	PhD	Over 15 years	It has multiple dimensions. It covers engagement with personal interaction with various elements of organisation resulting in enhanced performance. And similarity interaction between B2B. Input vs output.
7	Government	Bahrain	Engineer	Employee	Master	Over 15 years	It's an idea or planning to make you better for a good future.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
8	Government	Bahrain	Defence	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	It is the relation between the companies and their customers.
9	Government	Bahrain	Safety & Security	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	The core of running a business in this region is based on personal relations. Whether within the same organisation or across organisations.
10	Government	Bahrain	Security	Employee	Master	Over 15 years	It is the core of the business.
11	Government	Bahrain	EX	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	It means no business remains without managing relationships with partners and the sources' owners.
12	Government	Bahrain	Defence	Employee	Master	Over 15 years	For me, the first thing or priority is to develop rapport and then managing all other things. It is that, if I want to develop

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							my business further, I prefer to involve personal relations to get maximum benefits.
13	Government	Bahrain	Governmental sector - service provider	Employee	Master	6-10	Managing business relations means the connections and network shall be available with each manager that handles the work at the business. All the relations and good connections will lead to smooth the work and reach the results requested within a short period and higher quality also, as having good network will cut the time waste and as a business owner time is valuable so having good relations will lead you to reach for your goals easier and faster.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
14	Government	Bahrain	Training	Employee	Master	6-10	Style of the interaction between the people within business (organization) to achieve business objectives.
15	Government	Bahrain	Cafeteria	Manager/ Executive	Master	6-10	How to involve with co-workers.
16	Government	Bahrain	Tax management	Manager/ Executive	Master	1-5	Managing employees' expectations and managing the objectives of my organization.
17	Private	Bahrain	Investment company	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15	To have a continuous relation with your clients, especially when the market is doing badly.
18	Private	Bahrain	Banker	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15	Build capability to implement respect for keep 2-way Business together to focus in their entire in making better business relationships or to keep the lines of communication open.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
19	Private	Saudi Arabia	Medical supply	Manager/ Executive	Master	1-5	PR in business.
20	Government	Bahrain	Health care service	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	I do not know exactly, but, in general, relationship is something very important to ease the work.
21	Government	Bahrain	Quality management	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Nothing.
22	Government	Bahrain	IT department	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Maintaining a positive relationship with the customers which will lead to expand the level of trust. In addition to that, it will open relationships for more business.
23	Government	Bahrain	Government sector	Employee	Bachelor	11-15	Satisfy your customer to build loyalty.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
24	Government	Bahrain	Finance	Employee	Bachelor	6-10	Communication skills, dispute resolution and networking to better manage your business relationships. Note: the participant copied the answer from the Business Queensland website https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/marketing-sales/managing-relationships
25	Government	Bahrain	Generating government revenues	Employee	Bachelor	6-10	It means to strengthen and organizing the relations between the business with another business or its customers.
26	Government	Oman	Engineering	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	6-10	More production and less cost.
27	Government	Bahrain	Financial	Employee	Bachelor	1-5	Using different methods and tactics in order to form relationships with other

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							businesses that are involved with your business. It could be in terms of partnerships and deals that will help create a better flow of work and ease of doing business. It will also create a sense of trust and understanding between the parties involved, leading to better productivity and efficiency.
28	Government	Bahrain	Educator	Employee	Bachelor	1-5	Relationship between a service organization and their business partners.
29	Government	Bahrain	Engineer in Electricity & Water Authority	Employee	Bachelor	1-5	It might mean the relationship between the employee of a certain service providing company with the customers, but to me, I can relate it to the behaviour and mannerisms that are taken to manage my relations with employees from other government bodies since the

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							line of work that I do deals with a lot of correspondence and shared interests internally (within the authority) and externally. Setting a good relationship can ease and speed up the process of correspondence and sharing of information.
30	Government	Bahrain	Governmental entity	Employee	Bachelor	1-5	Having a healthy professional relation with other individuals inside and outside the organization.
31	Government	Bahrain	Auditing	Employee	Bachelor	1-5	The important thing in the work, for managing the relations and work between workers instead of minimizing the problems that are expected will happen or solving the problems happening between employees, the part that encourages the employees to do

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							their best, give them the support and all what they need, and you will see how it will affect the productivity for the employees.
32	Government	Bahrain	Teacher	Employee	Bachelor	Less than a year	Effective communication with colleagues, respect, competence and cooperation.
33	Private	Bahrain	Real estate	Self-Employed / Business Owner	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Is one of the most important parts to conduct business.
34	Private	India	AUTOMOTIVE	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Very important for retaining customers, improve sales and enhance the company name in the market.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
35	Private	Bahrain	Finance	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	11-15	It is fundamental to your work.
36	Private	Bahrain	Credit analysis	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	11-15	It is the relationship you build with your client or the counterparty which in turn, leads to loyalty, trustworthiness and establishing a strong relationship between both parties.
37	Private	Bahrain	Used cars	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	6-10	It means the edge between failure and success.
38	Private	Bahrain	I don't have	Employee	Bachelor	6-10	Management.
39	Private	Bahrain	Event's organizers	Self-Employed / Business Owner	Bachelor	6-10	Relationships with business partners, entities in a company's value chain and entities directly linked to the company's operations, products or services.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							Note: the participant copied the answer from Global Business Initiative (GBI) website. https://gbihr.org/insights-and-practices/business-relationships?cv=1
40	Private	Bahrain	Fibre infrastructure	Employee	Bachelor	1-5	No idea.
41	Private	Bahrain	Cosmetics manufacture	Self-Employed / Business Owner	Bachelor	1-5	I seem managing the relationship between business and business or business and customer and links all the related organizations in either the government sector or private to help businesses to grow and improve.
42	Non-Profit	Bahrain	Sports for people with disabilities	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Nov-15	Maintain and develop current and future prospects/interested parties.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
43	Private	Bahrain	Power & Utilities serving an oil Refinery - Energy Conservation	Manager/ Executive	Diploma	Over 15 years	To help my subordinates in their weakness & let them carry on their strengths.
44	Government	Bahrain	Projects management	Manager/ Executive	-	-	Network between the company/ company and business providers.
45	Government	Bahrain	-	Manager/ Executive	-	-	How creates better relationships for your business.
46	Government	Bahrain	-	Manager/ Executive	-	-	To share success through efficient and effective cooperated, coordinated and joint efforts.
47	Government	Bahrain	Council of Representatives	Employee	-	-	How to control your business.
48	Government	Bahrain	Agency	Self-Employed /	-	-	Managing all relations related to business to better results and success.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
				Business Owner			
49	Government	Bahrain	Engineering	-	-	-	The ability to control the circumstances to serve the best interest for the particular business.
50	Government	Bahrain	-	-	-	-	Building a good network that helps you to have good communication, and you may know your role model and also you should know the benchmark and how does it work.
51	Government	Bahrain	-	-	-	-	Managing relationships at work between both colleagues and administration.
52	Government	Bahrain	-	-	-	-	"*Business relationship management (BRM) promotes a positive and productive relationship between a company and its business partners. BRM*

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							seeks to build trust, solidify rules and expectations, and establish boundaries. It also can help with dispute resolutions, contract negotiations, and cross-sale opportunities." Note: the participant copied the answer from the investipedia.com website. https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/relationship-management.asp
53	Government	Bahrain	-	-	-	-	An integrated system that includes an integrated team leader to achieve the required goals.
54	Government	Bahrain	-	-	-	-	Important to all businesses.
55	Private	Bahrain	Travel agent	Manager/ Executive	-	-	Control.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
56	Private	Bahrain	-	Manager/ Executive	-	-	Interaction between two parties to exchange business interests.
57	Private	Bahrain	Travel and Tourism	Manager/ Executive	-	-	It means managing the relationships with different stakeholders.
58	Private	Bahrain	Electrical engineering	Employee	-	-	Nothing at all.
59	Private	Bahrain	Private business	Employee	-	-	It's the key for successful business.
60	Private	Bahrain	Travel and Tourism	Self-Employed / Business Owner	-	-	It means to me the continuation of my business and the good reputation.
61	Private	Bahrain	-	-	-	-	Growth and business.
62	Private	Bahrain	-	-	-	-	Business relations are connections between stakeholders in the process of businesses.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
63	Private	Bahrain	-	-	-	-	Ongoing business.
64	Government	Bahrain	Training	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Good communication between all employees at all levels.
65	Government	Bahrain	Management	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	Connecting work.
66	Government	Jordan	Management	Manager/ Executive	Secondary	Over 15 years	Communication and creating a good relationship between employees at various levels.
67	Government	Oman	Supervising technical and managerial work	Manager/ Executive	PhD	Over 15 years	It is the connection of all concepts between the different parties to conduct work according to certain systems.
68	Government	Saudi Arabia	Education	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	The relationship that I have with my employees and co-workers.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
69	Government	Bahrain	Security	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	Personal and practical relationships with co-workers, whether in the work environment or outside the work environment.
70	Government	Oman	Financial	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Effective communication between all levels of management at work.
71	Government	UAE	Security	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Simply the way and good dealing with everyone who has a party in the institution, whether they are employees, customers or suppliers, to achieve the goal that the institution aspires to.
72	Government	Bahrain	Quality	Manager/ Executive	PhD	Over 15 years	It is a professional working relationship and personal communication to accomplish tasks and goals.
73	Government	Oman	Education	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	Create an ideal environment within the work environment to raise productivity and job satisfaction for all employees.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
74	Government	Bahrain	Security	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Building a strategy for the relationship between the institution and the public or the institution and the rest of the other institutions or between the departments of the institution itself in order to reach a specific goal and the quality of work.
75	Government	Bahrain	Defence	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	Reconciling employee relations at work to facilitate the workflow.
76	Government	Bahrain	Support	Employee	Secondary	6-10 years	Establishing laws and regulations that help to reach the highest degree in the conduct of work.
77	Government	Bahrain	Supervising Electronic Education	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Coordination between all relevant authorities to achieve the objectives
78	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Master	Over 15 years	Working as a team.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
79	Government	Oman	Engineering	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	11-15 years	Maintaining relationships for the proper conduct of work, whether between employees or with entities that benefit or benefit the work.
80	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	Managing working relationships between employees to improve production.
81	Government	Saudi Arabia	Management	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Managing working relationships between employees to improve production.
82	Private	Bahrain	Housekeeping	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Organizing communication between workers.
83	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	It is the management of the institution's relationship with each party that may fall within the scope of its work and communication and coordination with the

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							parties with interests and related and joint works.
84	Government	Bahrain	Public Relations	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	The mirror that reflects any governmental or private institution.
85	Private	Bahrain	IT	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	How to build relationships within your business.
86	Government	Bahrain	Services	Employee	Master	Over 15 years	Arranging and organizing human resources in labour relations according to the specializations that help develop work and facilitate work.
87	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	High School	Over 15 years	Responsibility for the relationship between the employer and external parties that deal with the employer.
88	Government	Bahrain	Security	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Team spirit to get the job done to the fullest.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
89	Government	Saudi Arabia	Diplomatic organisation	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	Communicate with internal and external stakeholders to achieve the organization's goals.
90	Government	Oman	NA	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Control and distribution of administrative tasks according to the perspective of specialization while building good relations within permissible limits with employees.
91	Private	Bahrain	Real Estate	Manager/ Executive	Diploma	6-10 Years	Communication between employees within the facility and communication between the worker or employee with customers.
92	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Establishing correct working relationships to enable correct productivity.
93	Government	Saudi Arabia	Supervisory	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	Relationships manager + responsible for the public relations of a company or facility with a large number of workers in his department to strengthen relations.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
94	Government	Bahrain	Supply	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	It is a set of activities that are related to each other in order to implement effective control over all the functions of the company. Business administration is also defined as the processes that are applied in order to activate dealing with people and things within the scope of the work environment, which leads to the successful achievement of the desired goals. Business management is the actions and methods aimed at directing the people, affairs and special business of an organization.
95	Government	Bahrain	Supervision	Manager/ Executive	Diploma	11-15 years	Work to create a personal and intellectual consensus among team members.
96	Government	Bahrain	Engineering	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	It means how to deal with customers and investors, improve services for them, gain their trust and gain new customers.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
97	Government	Oman	Engineering	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Management in its broad sense includes planning, organization, coordination and control. With regard to labour relations management, it is planning and controlling the levels of relations according to certain frameworks, organizing them in a streamlined manner and monitoring their performance through the achievements achieved in this field and developing them according to the requirements of internal and external variables, and managing labour relations It includes the internal relations according to the institution or external with the parties to which the institution is directly or indirectly connected.
98	Government	Bahrain	Legal Affairs	Employee	Master	1-5 Years	Coordination and organization among employees within the work environment, in order for the work to proceed as required and with the least percentage of collision

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							between employees and each other or between employees and the official.
99	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	It is an activity aimed at more communication and understanding between an organization and individuals between a person and more commonly called the public
100	Government	Bahrain	Ministry of Interior	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	The organization organises the work with the rest of the participating parties in the same facility.
101	Private	Oman	Services	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	The concept refers to the company's efforts to manage the existing relationships of various employees. Many companies have one or more employee relations representatives, often people who work in the human resource department, to ensure that company policies are followed fairly and consistently, such as company benefits,

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							salaries, training, onboarding and also promotions.
102	Private	Bahrain	Used Auto Dealer	Manager/ Executive	Secondary	Over 15 years	Continuous relationships between people earn you a great position in dealing.
103	Private	Bahrain	Transport Company	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	It includes loyalty and the performance of the work duties assigned to the employee in the highest possible quality under the work team.
104	Government	Bahrain	Ministry of Interior	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	11-15 years	Organizing relationships between departments and individuals and setting specific laws or policies so that they maintain the desired goal of the work.
105	Government	Bahrain	Ministry of Interior	Employee	Master	Over 15 years	In my opinion, it is how I build personal relationships at work, whether inside or outside the institution, between colleagues, superiors and subordinates, for the sake of work and not to exploit these relationships in

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							personal matters or other matters that contradict the regulations, rules and laws.
106	Government	Bahrain	IT	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Applying work legislation and procedures, settling disputes and disagreements, strategy, and determining employees' performance levels.
107	Government	Bahrain	Security	Employee	Secondary	11-15 years	Cooperation in the development of work.
108	Government	Bahrain	Ministry of Interior	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	Communicate with employees.
109	Government	UAE	Ministry of Interior	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	To coordinate the inputs and outputs necessary for the workflow.
110	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Diploma	Over 15 years	Interaction.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
111	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Teamwork.
112	Government	Bahrain	Ministry of Information	Employee	Diploma	11-15 years	In my opinion, it is the basis for the success or failure of the work.
113	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	It is divided into several values, the first of which is the relationship manager, and then the management of relations with employees, the relationship between employees and co-workers and how to succeed in creating relationships between the client and the employee by communicating.
114	Government	Bahrain	Public Relations	Employee	Secondary	11-15 years	A department specialized in linking with all other departments and departments outside and inside the ministry or the company.
115	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	In my opinion, it is a policy or approach to follow in work for administrative

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							interdependence and improving the quality of work by looking at all obstacles and negatives at the administrative level or achieving job satisfaction in order to move forward to achieve the goals of the institution in the midst of a healthy work environment.
116	Government	Bahrain	NA	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	The art of dealing on a practical and human level.
117	Government	Bahrain	Coordinator	Employee	Diploma	11-15 years	Communicating with individuals and society.
118	Private	UAE	Banking	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	Labour relations are the ties that exist in the field of work. In general, it refers to the relationships between labour and capital within the productive process. In modern societies, labour relations are regulated by the employment contract, which stipulates

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							the rights and obligations of both parties and how to deal with them.
119	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	The method of dealing between employees, whether between the boss and the subordinate or the ordinary employees themselves, easily and easily and in a way that leads to reaching the final product and achieving goals.
120	Government	Bahrain	Healthcare	Employee	PhD	11-15 years	How to manage several departments with work and cooperation in productivity.
121	Government	Bahrain	Education	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 Years	Seeking to organize internal affairs among employees and external affairs between the institution and other institutions.
122	Government	Bahrain	Education	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	It is the art of managing workflow related to productivity and employees.
123	Government	Bahrain	IT	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	Arranging and coordinating the employer's relationship with clients and beneficiaries.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
124	Government	Bahrain	NA	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	How to manage organisations while being careful to strengthen relations and good behaviour and management to maintain them between the parties.
125	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	Strong management capable of developing work and giving every employee his rights.
126	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Bachelor	6-10 Years	Relationships between all functional levels, whether horizontal or vertical and the way of dealing and communicating with each other within the framework of work.
127	Private	UAE	Banking	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	The work environment must be healthy to reach the set goals, and here relationships at work must be healthy and drawn from all layers of employees so that everyone is heading towards the goals set by the upper management, and there must be no barriers between all layers of work, even if We came

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							working relationships between different departments must be transparent so that all departments complement the other, and there must be a service level agreement and set by the officials in the department and then followed by the employees.
128	Government	Bahrain	Quality	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	It is the use of scientific and practical methods that take into account a specific protocol to make maximum use of the capabilities available in the work environment to increase productivity in a collective and effective manner.
129	Government	Bahrain	Education	Employee	Bachelor	6-10 Years	Success in distributing roles fairly and equally and forming a strong team without discrimination or differentiation in effort and tasks.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
130	Government	Bahrain	Coordinator	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	It is the regulation of the relationships that develop between workers and their managers or superiors.
131	Government	Jordan	NA	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	The process by which production and building internal and external relationships lead to the achievement of the goal.
132	Private	Bahrain	Healthcare	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 Years	A job that contributes to enhancing communication with customers and linking the nature of the facility's work with the opinions of the public, and it is also the activity carried out by the institution's management in order to introduce the nature of its work to people.
133	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	It is a strategy that aims to distribute the work of each within his specialization.
134	Government	Bahrain	Education	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	Create a positive and cooperative environment among employees within the organization to accomplish the required

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							tasks and manage positive and successful relationships with external institutions.
135	Government	Jordan	QA	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Directing relations between employees and between employees and management so that they are participatory in which cooperation and human relations do not affect the workflow.
136	Government	Bahrain	NA	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	How to deal with other businesses separately.
137	Government	Oman	Training	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Organizing the relationships between the different departments in the same organization in order to reach the best performance with the least resources and at high speed.
138	Government	Jordan	Accountability	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Managing relationships between employees and with each other and between employees and external customers.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
139	Government	Kuwait	Projects management	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Supervising, following up and coordinating the management of specific interests in the field of work in coordination with the staff cadre.
140	Government	Egypt	Maintenance	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Organizing work between different disciplines to reach the best way to save time, effort and expenditure and achieve the highest level of performance.
141	Government	Jordan	Monitoring	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	Organizing work through proper, correct and effective communication to partners in order to complete the work in the fastest time and in the best way.
142	Government	Jordan	Warehousing	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	Managing the relationships that are related to the completion of work, whether they are internal relationships (within the organization in which the person works) or external (such as service recipients and suppliers) in a manner that ensures the proper functioning

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							of the work and meets the needs of the service recipient, work duties, management requirements and owners in a timely manner.
143	Government	Bahrain	Ministry of Interior	Employee	Bachelor	6-10 years	A way to facilitate and complete work in a shorter period of time by identifying all sectors of the business and dealing with them comfortably.
144	Government	Bahrain	Security	Employee	Bachelor	6-10 years	It is how to manage work through the control tools for workers and follow up the rules of work and workers and their relationship through their development and organization and the creation of laws to organize between work and workers.
145	Government	Jordan	NA	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	Our relationship with the service recipient is within certain controls.
146	Government	Oman	NA	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	11-15 years	Managing relationships in a way that contributes to completing the work in an

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							appropriate manner and facilitating communication between employees and benefiting from work relationships in the completion and facilitation of external work tasks easily.
147	Government	Jordan	Monitoring	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Directing employees to establish positive relationships with each other in order to improve the level of institutional performance and include all types of relationships, whether social, professional, competitive, integrative or cooperative and others, controlling at the same time any negative relationships or trends and developing the necessary solutions to address them. It also includes organizing relationships between the various administrative levels in both directions. From top to bottom and back.
148	Government	Jordan	QA	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	Internal procedures and strategies for communication.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
149	Government	Bahrain	NA	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Organizing relationships within the framework of work in a manner that builds respect.
150	Government	Jordan	NA	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Organizing and managing the relationship with all service recipients and business partners in order to improve and satisfy all concerned parties.
151	Private	Bahrain	Civil Engineering	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	Employees' relations with each other and with management.
152	Government	Bahrain	NA	Retired Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Coordination of tasks and functions among employees of the organization.
153	Government	Jordan	Warehousing	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Identification and classification of internal and external service recipients.
154	Government	Jordan	Warehousing	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	11-15 years	Defining powers and responsibilities, raising efficiency, empowerment and decision-making.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
155	Government	Bahrain	NA	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	It is the process of coordinating relations between employees and between the tasks and duties assigned to them, as well as the process of directing the work required for the concerned person according to the job description given to him by his job. In other words, assigning the task to the person responsible for it.
156	Government	Jordan	Auditing	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	11-15 years	Coordination and cooperation between business parties.
157	Government	Bahrain	Management	Employee	Master	Over 15 years	Strengthening communication and workflow to ensure the achievement of objectives.
158	Government	Jordan	Quality Engineering	Employee	Bachelor	6-10 years	No answer.
159	Government	Jordan	QA	Employee	Bachelor	11-15 years	Organizing relationships between all parties involved in this work.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
160	Government	Bahrain	Civil Defence	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	Relationships that benefit work.
161	Government	Bahrain	Retailing	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	The art of managing business among departments or sections in any organization or establishment, whether governmental or private, so that decisions issued by the senior management are consistent with the rest of the departments. It also means the art of managing human or material resources and reconciling them to reach the desired goals.
162	Government	Jordan	Quality	Employee	Master	11-15 years	Adjusting and managing relationships in the right direction in the workplace in accordance with the policy and ethics of the job.
163	Government	Jordan	QA	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	Managing the relationship of employees with each other and their relationship with their departments and vice versa, which is

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							reflected on workflow, productivity and work success.
164	Government	Jordan	Metrology	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	Communicate with the relevant authorities at work.
165	Government	Jordan	Quality	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	The ability to communicate with work-related bodies and benefit from them as much as possible so as to achieve the strategic goals entrusted to the institution.
166	Government	Jordan	Ministry of Works & Housing	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	11-15 years	Coordination between the various service providers and communication with similar directorates in the governorates, in addition to managing the requests of service recipients.
167	Government	Bahrain	Healthcare	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	I don't know.
168	Government	Bahrain	Ministry of Labour	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	Business.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
169	Government	Jordan	Management	Manager/ Executive	Diploma	Over 15 years	Transfer of knowledge and awareness regarding the development of work with the participation of all.
170	Government	Jordan	Engineering	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Communicate to a distinguished service that comforts the worker and the customer and communicates to provide better services.
171	Government	Jordan	Monitoring	Manager/ Executive	Master	6-10 years	1 - How to deal with colleagues at work, whether inside or outside the scope of work, to ensure that the privacy of the relationship is preserved during work time to ensure that the desired results are obtained from work. 2- How to manage relations between employees and service recipients to maintain barriers between them and not have to give up neutrality with some service recipients from the employee.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
172	Government	Jordan	Quality	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	Managing communication, information transfer and work tasks between all members of the organization.
173	Government	Bahrain	Legal consultations	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	Communicate with all employees in the ministry quickly and efficiently and provide the necessary legal advice professionally and impartially.
174	Private	Bahrain	Banking	Employee	Master	11-15 years	A new term for me, but I think it focuses on relationships at work.
175	Private	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Secondary	Less than a year	It is a system used to study and analyse various companies and products as they progress from the formation stage to the stages of expansion and stability.
176	Private	Bahrain	NA	NA	Diploma	Over 15 years	It is necessary for every establishment, whether governmental, non-governmental or in the private sector, to manage labour relations. Relationship management connects all work entities and the result of

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							this is improving performance between employees, the worker and the customer. If the good work is done, it will be reflected in the production. Relationship management is considered a complement to human resource management in any business.
177	Government	Jordan	NA	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	How to deal with all business partners.
178	Government	Bahrain	M.O.I.	Manager/ Executive	Master	11-15 years	The meaning of the term may take two directions, an internal curve of how to manage relationships between employees within the department that aims for strategies to be achieved through mechanisms of understanding the thinking pattern of people and reconciling them, to reach quality, efficiency and excellence in job performance, and an external curve between the department and its relations with other

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							departments or institutions or other dealers outside the scope of the administration itself, with the same mechanisms, but with different entity dealing with, whether individuals or legal persons, in an effort to achieve joint cooperation and achieve the required services of the highest quality and achieve satisfaction through the management of minds.
179	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	Business-management relationships are the most complex relationships any HR manager has to deal with. Effective maintenance of labour relations helps human resource managers in developing a harmonious environment within the organization which in turn helps the organization in effectively achieving its goals and objectives. Well-managed business relationships provide a

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							competitive advantage to an organization by negating problems
180	Government	Bahrain	Training	Employee	Master	6-10 years	The relationship between the administration and other departments or institutions that aim to increase productivity or strengthen relationships and the role of individuals between them
181	Government	Jordan	Quality	Employee	Master	11-15 years	The ability to build professional relationships within the framework of work, and consolidate team spirit within the cadres.
182	Government	Qatar	Maintenance	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	How to deal with the work environment, including co-workers, auditors, etc., within certain bases and standards.
183	Government	Jordan	Chemical Engineering	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Efforts aimed at managing relationships between company employees and management.
184	Government	Jordan	Quality	Employee	Bachelor	1-5 years	It is the management of relationships with customers, partner institutions, or any

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							relationship between the employer that is related to his work.
185	Government	Bahrain	MOI	Employee	Secondary	Over 15 years	Communicate with workers to produce the best services or to put employees in the right place and know their personalities.
186	Government	Bahrain	Defence	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Good leadership with wisdom and humanity, good appreciation of everyone, motivating them, and informing them of their value and that work is worship, so that together we may reach the desired goal.
187	Private	Bahrain	Education	Employee	Master	11-15 years	The relationship between people at work.
188	Government	Bahrain	Education	Employee	Bachelor	Over 15 years	Work performance management and discipline, Promote mutual respect, performance appraisal and appraisal, Promote, understand and create an innovation climate.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
189	Government	Bahrain	Technician	Employee	Secondary	6-10 years	To have a good relationship with employees and officials, and to have experience in dealing with them, so that the work is better and creates an atmosphere for work.
190	Private	Jordan	Industrial Engineering	Manager/ Executive	Diploma	Over 15 years	Building a state of equilibrium between all parties affecting the completion of the work, and arranging the importance of each party according to its impact on the achievement in terms of quantity and quality.
191	Government	Bahrain	MOI	Manager/ Executive	Master	Over 15 years	The relationship between the boss and the subordinate at work such as the relationship between the manager and the employees or between the employees themselves.
192	Private	Bahrain	Business Owner	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	6-10 years	It means a lot to me; it is enough to say that my income is based on it.
193	Government	Egypt	Armed Forces	Manager/ Executive	PhD	Over 15 years	Business relations management is choosing the best method to create a good environment to develop the performance of

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
							the authority or the company by developing awareness among all employees of the need to work as an integrated team that sets its sights on achieving the goals of the authority as a supreme goal. And overcoming problems through the establishment of continuous channels of communication between leadership levels and subordinates.
194	Government	Bahrain	MOI	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	It is the communication network between the employee and the administration, the communication between the departments and the communication between the members of the administration and the beneficiary of the service.
195	Government	Bahrain	HR	Manager/ Executive	Bachelor	Over 15 years	It means for me to form distinguished relationships with the departments and authorities that are related to my work and to work in a team spirit with the colleagues who are under my management.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
196	Private	Bahrain	Aviation Engineering	Manager/ Executive	Diploma	Over 15 years	CRM is an approach that helps companies improve relationships with existing customers and acquire new customers faster.
197	Government	Bahrain	Defence	Manager/ Executive	Master	6-10 years	Strengthening the positive relationship between the company and its business partners. It seeks to build trust, establish rules and expectations, and establish boundaries. It also assists in dispute resolution, contract negotiations, and cross-selling opportunities.
198	Government	Bahrain	NA	Manager/ Executive	PhD	Over 15 years	Mobilize the energies of the organization and employees towards the goals of the organization, train employees and empower them to achieve the vision of the organization.
199	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Secondary	1-5 years	Important.

S	Sector	Country	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Education Level	Years	Meaning of 'Managing Business Relations'
200	Government	Bahrain	NA	Employee	Secondary	6-10 years	Administration in general.
201	Private	Bahrain	Construction	Self-Employed / Business Owner	Master	1-5 years	work facilitation.

Appendix C Feedback Survey and Responses

C.1 Feedback Survey Template

Supply Chain Management ... the Misleading Concept

Lecturer: Hussain Alkebaisi
Attendee Feedback Survey

Welcome

First, I would like to express my deep thanks for your cooperation. Please know that your participation is greatly appreciated. Your feedback will be combined with those of others to evaluate your opinion about the outcomes of this study, as well as your suggestions, agreement, or disagreement with the researcher's claims and recommendations.

Please be informed that none of your personal details will be shared or used for any other purposes and will be erased once the research is completed.
Your participation in this questionnaire is voluntary, and you can stop at any point without your responses being included in the dataset.

With sincere thanks

Hussain Alkebaisi, PhD student @ Cranfield University, UK
Kingdom of Bahrain.

In order to participate, please tick below to confirm that you consent to participate.

- o I consent.

Part 1: Participant's Data:

1) Please select your business sector
    a. Government.
    b. Private.
    c. Non-Profit
2) Please select your organisation's Business Field / Type / Industry/ Activity.
3) Name of your organisation (optional).
4) Please select the option that best describes you.
    a. Chief Executive/ Chairman
    b. Manager / Head of Department
    c. Vice Manager / Assistant Manager
    d. Self-Employed / Business Owner
    e. Employee
5) Job title/ Description/ Specialty.
6) Please select your education level.
    a. Secondary
    b. Diploma
    c. Bachelor
    d. Master
    e. PhD
7) Years of service/working/experience.
    a. less than a year
    b. 1-5 years
    c. 6-10 years
    d. 11-15 years
    e. Over 15 years
8) Your country of residence/ work
9) Email address

Part 2: Survey Questions

(In this section, the researcher presents his viewpoint, argument, and suggestions about the term SCM. It is important that you select or type what represents your convictions or beliefs).

Q1. Based on what you learned from the lecture: to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements:

(Definitely disagree, Disagree, Not sure/ Neutral, Agree, Definitely agree)

1) The term SCM was not an appropriate name to describe the communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among firms in a supply chain.

2) Describing the internal communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration among employees or across business functions as SCM is inappropriate.

3) Describing the external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration with firms or organizations outside a supply chain as SCM is inappropriate. (Such as the cooperation between companies and government institutions or the cooperation between two companies in the same sector or with competitors.)

4) I have a better understanding of what managing business relations mean.

5) I have a better understanding and awareness of the importance and the value of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations or with the customers or services' recipients.

6) I have a better awareness of the objectives that can be achieved through managing business relations.

7) Establishing clear objective-oriented frameworks of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration inside organizations or among them is essential for effective management of business relations.

8) The internal and external communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within or between organizations should be supported, applied, and governed by laws, regulations, and agreements.

9) The success of managing business relations requires mutual planning among all business functions or departments in any organisation.

10) The communication, cooperation and integration between top management and employees in any organization (vertically) is no less important than horizontal communication, cooperation and integration among departments or business functions.

11) Managing business relations is the main success factor for all organisations in any sector (public and private, production and services).

12) It is important to differentiate between teaching the principles of supply and production management (purchasing, production, logistics, demand, and sales) and teaching the principles of managing business relations.

Q2. The researcher argues that the term SCM is a misleading concept and a source of confusion among academics and practitioners. Please give your opinion about the following statements:

13) Based on the outcomes of the introduced study, universities should think of teaching Business Relations Management to all students regardless of their academic discipline.

14) The researcher sees that the term SCM should be changed to another name in order to eliminate the confusion among academics and practitioners about its meaning. Do you agree with the researcher's viewpoint?

15) If you agree that SCM should be renamed, which of the following terms is more appropriate to rename the discipline of SCM? (If you disagree with changing the name, you may type “keep using the term SCM”).

a. Supply Management
b. Production Management.
c. Supply and Demand Management.
d. Supply and Production Management.
e. I prefer to leave the choice to educational institutions and specialists.
f. Other.

Q3. Participants' General Opinion.

16) Please rate your level of satisfaction with the outcomes of this research.

Likert Scale (1-5)

17) Please rate the extent to which you benefited from this research.

Likert Scale (1-5)

18) Please describe in brief what you benefited from this study. Also, you may mention your observations or recommendations, if any.

C.2 Feedback Survey Open-Ended Answers

Table 24 Participants' Biography and Feedback Survey Open-Ended Answers

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
1	Government	Government Services	Chief Executive/ Chairman	Secretary-General	PhD	Over 15	The study was very comprehensive, and it covered a lot of concepts in a well-integrated manner. Reflection on the regulatory body and the regulations could be an area for further studies.
2	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Manager / Head of Department	Engineer	PhD	Over 15	More confident.
3	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Vice Manager / Assistant Manager	Supply Officer	Master	Over 15	I benefited a lot.

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
4	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Manager / Head of Department	Accountant	Master	Over 15	This study has improved my thinking of management and the value of managing business relations for the military forces
5	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Vice Manager / Assistant Manager	Supply Officer	Master	Over 15	I understood the meaning and the value of managing business relations. Also, I understood the importance of cooperation and integration in continuous improvement for the public and private sectors.
6	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Manager / Head of Department	Supply Officer	Master	Over 15	For better performance, there must be effective communication and cooperation among all.
7	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Manager / Head of Department	Officer	Master	Over 15	Focusing on communication and integration for better performance

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
8	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Vice Manager / Assistant Manager	Officer	Master	Over 15	It is clear to me now what do I have to do before establishing any business and what steps should I follow, especially managing Relationships with others to improve and succeed.
9	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Vice Manager / Assistant Manager	Supply Officer	Master	Over 15	I have no observations. The lecture has improved my knowledge of my career.
10	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Training officer	Master	6-10	I enjoyed the time when I listened to the researcher's point of view. I got to know the correct concept of management, and I aspire to apply this concept in my work.
11	Government	Government Services	Manager / Head of Department	Head of training	Master	6-10	-
12	Private	Health-Care	Employee	Physiotherapist	Master	1-5	supply chain management must be business relation management

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
13	Government	Education	Manager / Head of Department	English language senior teacher	Bachelor	11-15	I learned that supply chain management needs to change its name to business relations management because it helps me in my working field and in communication with the school administration and ministry
14	Government	Government Services	Employee	Civil Engineer	Bachelor	1-5	No observations
15	Government	Education	Employee	Teacher	Bachelor	1-5	People have misconceptions about the definition of supply chain management. What they call SCM is best described as business relation management.
16	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Officer	Bachelor	1-5	Now I can manage relationships at work in a better way.
17	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Officer	Bachelor	6-10	I benefited from this study that every organization in the world needs to apply it because it is more comprehensive.

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
18	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Manager / Head of Department	Management officer	Bachelor	Over 15	An excellent study that requires joint cooperation between institutions, companies, military sectors, civilian sectors and commercial companies to achieve better goals and accomplish work.
19	Private	Financial Services, Banking	Employee	Sales and customer services	Bachelor	1-5	No recommendations. It was brief enough

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
20	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Manager / Head of Department	Management officer	Diploma	11-15	I benefited from this study that the name SMC is not a realistic name for this process and it is a misleading name, and this process deserves another name that is more appropriate, more descriptive and realistic than this name, such as the name (supply management), and this is from the results of the study, research, analysis and reality by the researcher.
21	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Officer	Diploma	6-10	I recommend that every organization in the world must apply this study, whether it is military, commercial, or any organization in the world, because it is more comprehensive
22	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Officer	Diploma	6-10	This study has improved my knowledge.

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
23	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Accountant	Diploma	Over 15	Cooperation and communication between people are the key to problem-solving and improving the work procedures. I agree that teaching BRM is very important and using the term SCM to refer to the cooperation and coordination between companies is not correct.
24	Private	Transportation/ Aviation	Manager / Head of Department	Aircraft Maintenance Duty Manager	Diploma	Over 15	The main benefit was that the new concept focuses on internal communications and many other aspects that are not integrated within the initial concept.
25	Private	Food/ Agriculture/ Provisioning	Manager / Head of Department	Quality Assurance Manager	Diploma	Over 15	I agree with the researcher’s opinion.

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
26	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Manager / Head of Department	Technician	Secondary	Over 15	It became clear to me the importance of managing relations between all parties from companies or from the government and between employees and managers
27	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Manager / Head of Department	Technician	Secondary	Over 15	I benefited that the cooperation between companies and establishments and small businesses is the core of managing the work
28	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Technician	Secondary	Over 15	I have a clear meaning of supply and production and the importance of managing relations.
29	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Technician	Secondary	Over 15	From the presented lecture, I realised the importance of cooperation between organisations so that all benefit from that and the work is done better.

S	Sector	Business Type/Industry	Personal Description	Job Title/ Description	Education Level	Years	What did you benefit from this study?
30	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Technician	Secondary	Over 15	I have a clear meaning of supply and production and managing relations and how to benefit from them in public and private life.
31	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Accountant	Secondary	11-15	I understood that managing business relations among individuals, institutions, and companies is the main success factor for any project.
32	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Accountant	Secondary	1-5	I understood the meaning of managing relations in the workplace. Managing supply operations is different from managing business relations.
33	Government	Military, Law Enforcement	Employee	Accountant	Secondary	1-5	I understood the meaning of managing relations and that SCM is not correct to describe the cooperation between companies.

Appendix D Analysis of some Selected Excerpts

There are many noteworthy statements and discussions in the literature about the mentioned issues of SCM. In this Appendix, some of those statements are reported and analysed. The reader may notice how recent some statements are and where those statements were published.

Table 25 Analysis of Selected Statements

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
"Supply Chain Management is on the way out! The World needs Intelligent Product Flow Networks" (Launchbury, 2019), APICS 2019 Top Management Night. *"The death of Supply Chain Management"; "Within 5-10 years, the supply chain function may be obsolete, replaced by a smoothly running, self-regulating utility that optimally manages end-to-end workflows and requires extraordinarily little human intervention"; "Clearly, the death of supply chain management as we know it is on the horizon"* (Lyall, Mercier and Gstettner, 2018), Harvard Business Review.	Firstly, it is notable how recent these statements are. Second, the authors of these statements anticipate that the term SCM will vanish in the near future. They believe that SCM can be replaced or handled by AI software or an ERP system. However, it appears that the authors are likely considering SCM as a business function that manages the workflow or the inventory flow across a supply chain through an IT system. Accordingly, they believe that very little human intervention is required. Interestingly, this view complies with the researcher's initial developed definition, which states that: SCM is the planning of providing a product or service ... through an integrative information management system (Section 1.3.2.4).

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
"We look forward to continual research on developing new frameworks to better describe, explain, predict, and shed light on the evolving nature of supply chain management"; "we defined SCM as "...the systemic, strategic coordination of the traditional business functions within a particular company and across businesses within the supply chain." (Min, Zacharia and Smith, 2019, p.53), Journal of Business Logistics.	First, the authors call for developing new theoretical frameworks. Second, the authors' definition of SCM focuses on the strategic coordination of supply operations among business functions. This means that the authors focused only on the value of coordination within and across firms in a supply chain which is a very limited perspective about the value of managing relationships. Also, the final customer is excluded.
"*The term supply chain management is difficult to define, and its definition has changed over time"; "The terms "logistics" and "logistics management" are closely related to "supply chain management,*" "*and it can be difficult to draw a clear distinction*" (Snyder and Shen, 2019, p.2).	It is 2019, yet there is no clear distinction between SCM and logistics.
"As supply chain management (SCM) evolves, disagreement abounds *as to whether SCM is a strategy, a process, a business philosophy or just another term for logistics"* (Swanson et al., 2018,	If there had been a universal consensus on the meaning of SCM, the authors would not have raised these questions.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
p.100), Supply Chain Management: An International Journal.	
"*A plethora of logistics and supply chain management (SCM) definitions have been developed over the years evidencing different emphases and approaches among practitioners across different industrial sectors, geographical areas and functional backgrounds*"; "*There is also evidence of a divergence between theory and practice, particularly in relation to the practical implementation of logistics and SCM concepts and principles at a strategic level in firms*"; "*SCM has been poorly defined, and there is a high degree of variability in people's minds about what is meant*", (Sweeney, Grant and Mangan, 2018, pp. 852,856,857), International Journal of Operations & Production Management.	It is 2018, and there is still divergence between theory and practice. Besides, SCM has been poorly defined.
"*Supply chain management: the elusive concept and definition*" (LeMay et al., 2017, p.1425), The International Journal of Logistics Management.	It is 2017, though; the term is still elusive.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
"*The premise that has underpinned this book since the 1st edition is that businesses compete as supply chains rather than as stand-alone companies"; "converting this idea from an abstract concept into real-world practice is still proving a challenge for many organisations"; "supply chain management seeks to achieve linkage and coordination between the processes of other entities in the in the pipeline"; "supply chain becomes the value chain"; "It must be recognised that the concept of supply chain management, whilst relatively new, is in fact, no more than an extension of the logic of logistics*" (Christopher, 2016, pp. xiii,14,16) published in the author's book.	The author sees that SCM is the extension of the logic of logistics. Also, the SCM objective is to achieve coordination between the processes of other entities. These two statements imply that SCM aims to synchronise the production processes and inventory flow and coordinate supply with demand.
"*SCM suffers from a conceptual slack"; "there is no unified theory of SCM"; "SCM needs theorization*" (Halldorsson, Kotzab and Mikkola, 2015, pp.574,577,582), Supply Chain Management: An International Journal.	It is 2015, the authors' statements increase the significance and the value of this research.
"*Refrain from using logistics and supply chain management as*	As introduced earlier, Lambert and Enz (2015) raised this statement against

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
synonyms" (Lambert and Enz, 2015. p.15), Journal of Business Logistics.	some authors, including M. Christopher. Lambert and Enz (2015) affirm that there is confusion among many scholars in business schools between logistics and SCM.
"*We have failed to develop a theory of what we are managing—a theory of the supply chain*" (Carter, Rogers and Choi, 2015, p.89), Journal of Supply Chain Management.	Failure to develop a theory.
"*The inconsistency in the way that SCM is viewed has also possibly hampered the progression of SCM scholarly work and practitioner application"; "Is supply chain management a fad, or here to stay?"* (Ellram and Cooper, 2014, pp.8-9), Journal of Supply Chain Management.	The authors found that SCM was viewed differently, and it may become a management fad. It is worth noting that Lisa Ellram is a distinguished professor of Supply Chain Management at Miami University, and Martha Cooper is a professor emeritus of marketing and logistics at the Ohio State University.
"*If SCM is to mature as a discipline, then theory-building must be assisted by drawing on the study of practice"; "Further research in SCM should be directed towards finding a "unified theory of SCM"* (Soni and Kodali, 2013, pp. 263-264).	The authors call for further practice-based research toward finding a unified theory. This is what the researcher followed. Through studying firms' social interactions (collaboration, information sharing, integration,..) or SCM

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
	practices, the researcher was able to develop a unified theory.
"*Theory defines a scientific discipline, yet the supply chain management discipline has largely failed to develop its own theoretical bases*" (Carter, 2011, p.3), Journal of Supply Chain Management.	Failure to develop a theory.
"*There is still no universally accepted definition of what SCM is (and, indeed, is not)"* (Sweeney, 2011, p.30), International Journal of Applied Logistics.	The call for defining SCM.
"*There is a dearth of evidence in relation to the extent to which SCM – as defined in the academic literature – is implemented or even understood in practice*" (Kotzab et al., 2011, p.223), Supply Chain Management: An International Journal.	Different definitions and different understandings among academics.
"*While many scholars agree that SCM includes certain key concepts, such as integration and collaboration/ cooperation among chain members, these concepts are still poorly defined – with multiple*	Although the authors mentioned that SCM includes integration, collaboration, and cooperation, and these terms are important, they concluded that these three terms were

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
meanings to both researchers and practitioners. Since the mentioned concepts obviously are important to the development of SCM, they need to be further explored and defined" (Naslund and Williamson, 2010, p.23).	poorly defined and needed further definition. It is questionable whether the core meaning of SCM was before the author's eyes; it is managing relationships. Despite that, the authors and many other authors were not able to see this meaning.
"*If the academic and formal definitions of SCM do not coincide well with the way that professionals are organized into task-specific positions in practice, then it indicates a continued gap between research and practice"; "Without a shared definition of the discipline, there is variation in the body of knowledge for which professionals are educated and continuously trained"; "Our results indicate that there are differences between how academics conceptualize the field and how it is practised"; "We find tentative support that industry views an SCM professional as a process manager*" (Rossetti and Dooley, 2010, pp.40-41,53), Journal of Supply Chain Management.	Difference between conceptualisation and practice. The key points to highlight are "*there are differences between how academics conceptualize the field and how it is practised",* and an SCM professional is a process manager.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
"*The complexity of today's supply chain systems means that it is almost impossible to thoroughly explain a supply chain phenomenon with a single theory*"; "*A single theory may have very limited explanatory power. Instead, combining the tenets from multiple theories can generate a thorough understanding and a more complete scheme*." (Chen, Daugherty and Landry, 2009, pp.31,38), Journal of Business Logistics.	The authors believe that explaining a supply chain phenomenon with a single theory is impossible. The finding of this research may refute this belief. Moreover, the overlap between supply management and business relations management is probably the main reason behind many authors' belief that developing a unified theory is not feasible.
"*Without an inclusive or encompassing definition, it will be difficult for researchers to develop supply chain theory"; "Issues in SCM that could be examined"… "is there a theory or theories of SCM?"; "Theory development must be the backbone and at the heart of scientific research endeavours*" (Stock and Boyer, 2009, pp.690,707), International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management.	The importance of SCM definition.
"*Supply chain activities are still often functionally-based. A process orientation is needed to fully extract*	The focus is on the process orientation.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
*the potential value of supply chain alignmen*t" (Melnyk et al., 2009, p.4642), International Journal of Production Research.	
"*Many practitioners and academics define supply chain terms differently, and they are still trying to sort out how SCM differs from logistics*" (Moberg et al., 2008), Supply Chain Quarterly, CSCMP.	No clear distinction between SCM and logistics.
"*There is no such thing as a unified theory of SCM"; "building a unified theory of SCM might be difficult*" (Halldorsson et al., 2007, p.284), Supply Chain Management: An International Journal.	The findings of this research refute this statement.
"*From a conceptualization perspective, the definition of the term is unclear, and the impact of theoretical diversity is such that it is doubtful SCM is based on a coherent theory*" (Burgess, Singh and Koroglu, 2006, p.703), International Journal of Operations and Production Management.	The authors are in doubt about developing a coherent theory. The authors' conclusion was based on their literature analysis.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
"*Although we doubt whether a unifying theory of SCM will emerge, debate about the boundaries and nature of the discipline can only help provide the direction necessary for coherent theory building and accumulation in the area*" (Cousins, Lawson and Squire, 2006, p.701), International Journal of Operations and Production Management.	The need for theory; another doubt about the emergence of a unifying theory.
"SCM tasks firms to co-operate with the common goal to increase the overall channel sales and profitability, rather than competing for a bigger share of a fixed profit"; "search for cost-cutting opportunities gives greater importance to the internal flow of goods and to process-oriented management practices (Cigolini, Cozzi and Perona, 2004, p.8). International Journal of Operations & Production Management.	The authors see that the term SCM "*tasks firms to co-operate*". Also, the authors see that cooperation across firms in the supply chain increases their overall profitability. This implies that the authors use the term as a synonym for managing relationships. Also, as the reader notices, the authors focused on the process orientation.
"*If SCM is "owned" by operations research/management scientists, research will involve mathematical modelling and teaching will focus on decision analysis tools. Alternatively, if SCM is "owned" by*	This statement shows some discussions about who owns SCM or where it best fits under existing disciplines. Survey results among the members of the CSCMP showed that more than 80% of the participants "*felt*

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
marketing, for example, then SCM tends to resemble marketing channels; if owned by purchasing it resembles strategic procurement; if owned by logistics it resembles integrated logistics, and so on. According to the current definitions, however, SCM is not "owned" by any one discipline or department, but rather is a phenomenon that touches nearly all areas of business"; "A strong majority of respondents felt SCM encompassed supplier and customer collaboration (80.8%), while a much smaller percent felt information technology (49.7%), marketing (39.4%), finance (32.4%), sales (32.4%), and product design (24.3%) were also encompassed in SCM."; "What is common across these definitions of SCM is Coordination/ collaboration with suppliers and customers, demand and supply side matching, and a flow perspective"; "Despite these commonalities, ambiguity still exists in terms of clearly defining the boundaries of SCM." (Mentzer, Stank, and Esper, 2008, pp. 31-32), Journal of Business Logistics.	*that SCM*" is about managing relationships between suppliers and customers. An analysis of two offered definitions by the CSCMP and Mentzer et al. (2001) showed that SCM's common activity is "*Coordination/ collaboration with suppliers and customers."* Despite all that, no clear understanding and boundaries of SCM. Also, the authors mentioned that the majority of the participants 'Feel' that SCM "encompasses supplier and customer collaboration which indicates a lack of strong belief about the value of collaboration to all businesses. Based on these indications, the researcher argues that the term SCM was a misleading concept and Business Relations Management (BRM) is more accurate to describe the value of collaboration across organisations.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
"During the 1980s and 1990s, a new trend towards integration and collaboration instead of so-called arms-length agreements between suppliers and customers has been recognised by researchers as well as business practitioners"; "*Within the field of logistics, best practice companies have applied collaborative approaches based on the SCM philosophy and have achieved extraordinary results"* (Sandberg, 2007, p.274).	SCM philosophy means collaboration and integration. The researcher asks: is describing and referring to the value of the collaboration and integration among best practice companies as SCM realistic or accurate? Is the philosophy of managing the supply chain as a single entity realistic?
"*Who is managing the supply chain?"; "Supply chain theory would suggest that the supply chain should be managed from end-to-end. Our research found very few examples of this*" (Storey et al., 2006, p.763), International Journal of Operations & Production Management.	First, this is the question the researcher asks: who is managing the supply chain? Second, Storey's et al. (2006) finding supports the researcher's claim in section (2.2.6.2) that the philosophy of managing a supply as one entity is only feasible among a group of firms or enterprises that comprise a limited supply chain or a network of organisations that are owned by a holding company, or family-owned, or a group of partnering organisations.
"*A clear definition of SCM is imperative for understanding the concept"; "SCM definition research*	The authors affirm the importance of SCM definition research efforts.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
efforts must continue"; "Existing definitions do not portray SCM consistently" (Gibson, Mentzer and Cook, 2005, p.18), Journal of Business Logistics.	
"*Many authors have highlighted the pressing need for clearly defined constructs and conceptual frameworks to advance the field"; "The new orthodox of SCM, however, is in danger of collapsing into a discredited management fad unless a reliable conceptual basis is developed"; "Our analysis confirms that the area is devoid of clear theory*" (Chen and Paulraj, 2004b, pp.132,151), International Journal of Production Research.	The need for a clear definition, conceptual framework, and theory. This is the purpose of this research.
"*There is a need, therefore, for the development of theoretical constructs regarding supply chain phenomena that will diminish the confusion around the nature of SCM and make it more understandable and applicable to academics and practitioners*" (Giannakis and Croom, 2004, p.28).	A need for theory to eliminate the confusion among academics and practitioners. This statement constructs one of the researcher's assumptions in designing the feedback survey.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
"*Supply chain collaboration has proved difficult to implement*" (Sabath and Fontanella, 2002, cited in Barratt, 2004, p.30), Supply Chain Management: An International Journal.	Collaboration across a supply chain is difficult. Indeed, it is.
"Despite the growing interest in supply chain management (SCM), our understanding of the subject issue is still limited, largely due to inadequate attention being placed to theory building"; "the dominant conceptual SCM models focus mainly on the practices-performance relationship, overlooking the context-practices relationship"; "A greater advance in theory development is possible if researchers adopt a process-based view of SCM" and "*develop conceptual SCM models based on a con- text-practices-performance framework"; "Three core elements of this conceptualization of SCM can be identified: value creation, integration of key business processes, and collaboration"* (Ho, Au, and Newton, 2002),	Limited understanding, inadequate attention to theory building, practices-performance conceptualisation, and adopting the process-based approach will advance SCM theory. The process orientation is expected to advance SCM theory as the reader notices. Furthermore, this is another example that raised the researcher's wonder. The authors stated that SCM has three core constructs: value creation, integration of business processes, and collaboration. The researcher wonders again: the core meaning of SCM was before the author's eyes; it is managing relationships; despite that, the authors also were not able to see that meaning.[131]

[131] It is worth to mention that the researcher traced who cited this reference. More than 200 papers cited the authors, yet none of those papers discussed the definition of SCM nor investigated its theoretical foundation.

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
International Journal of Production Research.	
"*Without a clear understanding of SCM, we cannot expect the wide application of SCM in practice or research"* (Mentzer et al., 2001, p.19), Journal of Business Logistics.	A need for clear understanding. This emphasises the value of using the grounded theory method to understand what SCM is.
"Supply chain management has received attention since the early 1980s, yet conceptually the management of supply chains is not particularly well-understood, and many authors have highlighted the necessity of clear definitional constructs and conceptual frameworks on supply chain management"; "The scientific development of a coherent supply chain management discipline requires that advancements be made in the development of theoretical models to inform our understanding of supply chain phenomena"; "most definitions of supply chain management … focus on the external environment of an organisation" (Croom, Romano, and Giannakis, 2000, p. 68), European	The authors highlighted the need for developing a theoretical model that informs the understanding of SCM. Also, the authors mentioned that most SCM definitions "*focus on the external environment of an organisation."*

Statements/ Sources	Researcher's Analysis/Comment
Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management.	
"*Supply chain management in theory and practice: a passing fad or a fundamental change*" (Chandra and Kumar, 2000, p.100). Industrial Management & Data Systems.	The comment is that SCM might be a 'fad'. An in-vogue phrase or concept.
"*Does supply chain management really exist*?" (LaLonde, 1997, cited in Larson and Halldorsson, 2004, p.17). International Journal of Logistics Research and Applications.	Since the 1990s, academics have been questioning the exitance of the term.
"*Pursuit of a universal definition may lead to unnecessary frustration and conflict"* (Saunders, 1995, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.68), European Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management.	The lack of awareness by Saunders (1995) about the importance of a clear meaning of SCM. It is worth noting that the researcher faced such an argument with one of the thesis committee members who believes that the definition issue is not significant to practitioners; where he stated: "*it's not so much the definition that matters but, rather, those aspects of supply chain management which matter most to the particular organisation."*

From the table above, the reader might have realised the significance of this research. The researcher's main implication is the pressing need for investigating a different approach to conceptualise, define, and model SCM.

Appendix E Further Definitions of Supply Chain Management

This appendix presents an additional sample of SCM definitions and their implied perspectives.

Table 26 SCM Additional Definitions

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Alberta Efuture centre, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"The act of optimizing activities across the Supply Chain."*	The general perspective of management	• The author focused on the general perspective of management.
(Anderson et al., 1997, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1435).	*"Organizations involved in management of the flow of products, services, and information. The supply chain includes all the links involved in managing the flow of products, services, and information from their supplier's suppliers to their customer's customers."*	Logistics Management	• The supply chain definition excludes the final consumer. • The authors used the chain view. • Focuses on managing inventory flow.
(Ayers, 2001, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"The maintenance, planning, and Supply Chain processes activity for the satisfaction of consumers' needs."*	Managing supply process	

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Christopher, 1998, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1433).	"*The management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers to deliver superior customer value at less cost to the supply chain as a whole."*	Managing Relationships with suppliers and customers	• The author limited the benefits of managing business relations to cost reduction only.
(Christopher, 2016, p.3).	"*The management of upstream and downstream relationships with suppliers and customers in order to deliver superior customer value at less cost to the supply chain as a whole*."	Managing Relationships with suppliers and customers	• The author did not change the definition since 1998.
(Computerworld, 2001, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"The management that allows an organization to get the right products and services to the location they required on time, in the suitable quantity and at a satisfactory cost. Effectively managing this process involves supervising connections with customers, suppliers and controlling inventory, forecasting demand and getting regular feedback on what is occurring at every connection in the chain."*	Managing Inventory flow,	• Using the term as a synonym for business management.

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Cooper and Ellram, 1993, p.13).	"*An integrative philosophy to manage the total flow of a distribution channel from the supplier to the ultimate user*."	Logistics Management	• SCM is a philosophy.
(Cooper, Lambert and Pagh, 1997, p.2).	"*The integration of business processes from end user through original suppliers that provides products, services, and information that add value for customers*."	Integrating business processes across the supply chain	• Focused on business processes integration,
(Copacino, 1997, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1433).	"*The art of managing the flow of materials and products from source to user*."	Logistics management	• SCM is an art.
(Coyle et al., 2013, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1433).	*"The art and science of integrating the flows of products, information, and financials through the entire supply pipeline from the vendor's vendor to the customer's customer*."	Logistics management	• SCM is an art.

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Croxton et al., 2001, p.13a).	"*Supply chain management is the integration of the key business processes from end users through original suppliers that provides products, services, and information that add value to the customers and other stakeholders."*	Integrating business processes	• The authors recommended the developed definition of SCM by the Global Supply-Chain Forum (GSCF)
(CSX World Terminals, 2004, cited in LeMay et al., 2017).	"*The management and control of all materials and information in the logistics process from acquisition of raw materials to delivery to end user."*	Logistics management	• Focused on managing inventory flow, • The definition considers purchasing as part of logistics management.
(Ellram, 1991, p.13).	"*Supply chain management is defined here as an integrative approach to dealing with the planning and control of the materials flow from suppliers to end-users.*"	Managing inventory flow across a supply chain.	• Focused on managing the supply operations or processes associated with the inventory flow.

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Ganeshan and Harrison, 1995, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"A chain of facilities and distribution alternatives that perform the functions of obtainment of products, transformation of these products into intermediate and finished goods, and the distribution of these finished goods to customers."*		
(Gibson et al., 2005, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1434).	*"The planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all Logistics Management activities. Importantly, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third-party serviced providers, and customers. In essence, supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies."*	Business management	• The authors adopted the CSCMP definition. • Managing all business activities indicates that authors are using the term as a synonym for business management.

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Grant et al., 2006, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"Supply Chain Management refers to corporate business processes integration from end-users through suppliers that provides information, goods, and services that add value for customers."*		
(Harland, 1996, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1435).	*"The management of a network of interconnected businesses involved in the ultimate provision of product and service packages required by end customers."*	Managing firms	• Managing a supply network
(Hau and Billington, 1995, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"The integration of activities taking place among facilities network that acquires raw material, transform them into intermediate products and then final goods, and deliver goods to customers through a system of distribution."*	Logistics Management	

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Kitsolutions, 2003, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	SCM is *"providing the right goods or services, to the right location, in the right quantity, at the right time and at the right cost."*		
(LaLonde, 1996, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1434).	*"The delivery of enhanced customer and economic value through synchronized management of the flow of physical goods and associated information from sourcing to consumption."*	Logistics management	• Focused on managing inventory flow, • The author sees that SCM is the synchronisation of inventory flow across a supply chain
(Lambert (2014, p.2).	*"Supply Chain Management is the management of relationships in the network of organizations, from end customers through original suppliers, using key cross-functional business processes to create value for customers and other stakeholders."*	Managing business relations across the members of the supply chain	• Process-Oriented

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Lambert and Cooper, 2000, p.66).	*"Supply Chain Management is the integration of key business processes from end user through original suppliers that provides products, services, and information that add value for customers and other stakeholders."*	Integrating of Key business processes	• Process-oriented
(Larson and Rogers, 1998, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1434).	*"The coordination of activities, within and between vertically linked firms, for the purpose of serving end customers at a profit."*	Coordination of business activities	• Focused on the coordination of business activities. • Used the chain view.
(Lee, Kim and Kim, 2004, p.198).	*"Supply Chain Management is about managing the physical flow of product and related flows of information from purchasing through production, distribution and delivery of the finished product to the customer."*	Managing and coordinating internal inventory flow	• The definition is a synonym for supply management. • This is what happens in any firm in the production or the manufacturing sector.

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Little, 1999, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"Supply Chain Management (SCM) aims at increasing value contribution to the customer while concurrently optimizing functional costs of the Supply Chain."*		
(Lummus and Alber, 1997, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1433).	*"The network of entities through which material flows. Those entities may include suppliers, carriers, manufacturing sites, distribution centres, retailers, and customers."*		• This is a definition of a supply chain
(Lummus et al., 2001, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1434).	*"All the activities involved in delivering a product from raw material through to the customer, including sourcing raw materials and parts, manufacturing and assembly, warehousing and inventory tracking, order entry and order management, distribution across all channels, delivery to the customer, and the information systems necessary to monitor all of these activities."*	Managing and controlling supply and demand operations	

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Quinn, 1997, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1434).	*"All of those activities associated with moving goods from the raw materials stage through to the end user."*	Logistics management	• Focused on managing inventory flow.
(Simchi-levi, Kaminsky and Simchi-levi, 2008, cited in LeMay et al., 2017, p.1434).	*"A set of approaches utilized to efficiently integrate suppliers, manufacturers, warehouses, and stores, so that merchandise is produced and distributed at the right quantities, to the right locations, and at the right time, in order to minimize system-wide costs while satisfying service level requirements."*	Integration of supply chain members; logistics management	• The authors focused on cost reduction and service level.
(Sople, 2011).	*"SCM is the systematic and strategic coordination of all business functions within a company and across businesses within the supply chain to improve the long-term performance of individual companies and the supply chain, as a whole".*	Managing business functions across a supply chain	• The author rephrased the definition of Mentzer et al., 2001

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Supply Chain Management Professionals' Council, 2009, cited in Janvier-James, 2012, p.195).	*"Supply Chain Management (SCM) includes the designing and management of all activities involved in sourcing and purchasing, transformation, and all logistics management activities. Principally, it also includes coordination and partnership with network partners, which can be suppliers, mediators, third party service providers and customers. Fundamentally, Supply Chain Management (SCM) coordinates supply and demand management within and across corporate"*	Managing business activities.	
(Walters and Lancaster, 2000, cited in Stock and Boyer, 2009, p.703).	*"Supply chain management" is "the management of the interface relationships among key stakeholders and enterprise functions that occur in the maximization of value creation which is driven by customer needs satisfaction and facilitated by efficient logistics management."*	Managing relationships and logistics	

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Tan et al., 1998, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.69)	*"Supply chain management encompasses materials/supply management from the supply of basic raw materials to final product (and possible recycling and re-use). Supply chain management focuses on how firms utilise their suppliers' processes, technology and capability to enhance competitive advantage. It is a management philosophy that extends traditional intra-enterprise activities by bringing trading partners together with the common goal of optimisation and efficiency."*		
(Berry et al., 1994, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.69).	*"Supply chain management aims at building trust, exchanging information on market needs, developing new products, and reducing the supplier base to a particular OEM (original equipment manufacturer) so as to release management resources for developing meaningful, long term relationship."*		

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Saunders, 1995, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.69).	*"External Chain is the total chain of exchange from original source of raw material, through the various firms involved in extracting and processing raw materials, manufacturing, assembling, distributing and retailing to ultimate end customers."*		
(Ellram, 1991, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.69).	*"A network of "firms interacting to deliver product or service to the end customer, linking #ows from raw material supply to "final delivery."*		
(Christopher, 1992, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.69).	*"Network of organisations that are involved, through upstream and downstream linkages, in the different processes and activities that produce value in the form of products and services in the hands of the ultimate consumer."*		
(Lee and Billington, 1992, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.69).	*"Networks of manufacturing and distribution sites that procure raw materials, transform them into intermediate and finished products, and distribute the finished products to customers."*		

Reference	SCM Definition	Perspective	Researcher's Notes
(Kopczak, 1997, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.69).	*"The set of entities, including suppliers, logistics services providers, manufacturers, distributors and resellers, through which materials, products and information flow."*		
(Lee and Ng, 1997, cited in Croom, Romano and Giannakis, 2000, p.69).	*"A network of entities that starts with the suppliers' supplier and ends with the customers' custom the production and delivery of goods and services."*		

Appendix F Grounded Theory Research Method Further Details

In this appendix, the researcher presents further details and issues of the GT method. The topics include the offered models of GT, Straus and Corbin's Coding Paradigm and Matrix, Glaser's data coding families, suggested criteria of evaluating grounded theories, details of the 'Informed GT' approach by Thornberg (2012), further literature review about presenting GT research and its recommended structure, and some issues of conducting GT research.

F.1 The General Facts and Presumptions of the Method

The following table summarises the general facts and the presumptions about the method.

Table 27 Summary of the Grounded Theory Facts and Presumptions.

Grounded Theory facts and Presumptions	References
The original purpose of the method is to develop theories from qualitative data, not theory testing. Also, its original goal is to understand social phenomena.	(Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014, 2015; Straus and Corbin, 2015).
The grounded theory method provides an "*abstract, conceptual understanding of studied phenomena"* [132].	(Charmaz, 2014, p.8).
The first use of the method was in sociology. Nowadays, the method is used in many disciplines, including business and management studies.	(Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015).

[132] This statement supports the researcher's decision to use the GT method to understand the meaning of SCM.

Grounded Theory facts and Presumptions	References
The method is used to study human social actions and interactions to interpret those actions/interactions and understand the meaning of those actions/interactions.	(Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015).
The traditional or the original data collection method is intensive interviews. Though, researchers can use any source of data (including the literature) as well as both qualitative and quantitative data.	(Glaser,2016a).
The researchers' interests and knowledge dictate the nature and the purpose of inquiry, the primary and the emergent questions to be asked, and the data coding process. It is inevitable to approach and analyse data without prior knowledge or a theoretical foundation.	(Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 2015).
"*Data collection methods flow from the research question and where"* researchers *"go with it*."	(Charmaz, 2014, p.27).
Data analysis is based on both: inductive and deductive reasoning, or what many academics call 'Abductive Reasoning'. This means the data analysis is an iterative process. A researcher's induction from data leads to generating hypotheses about the further data to be collected, through which grounded theorists examine the rationality or the validity of those hypotheses.	(Thornberg, 2012; Timmermans and Tavory, 2012; Charmaz, 2014, 2015).
Data coding and analysis can be "*superficial to in-depth*" analysis. This means that the development of concepts ranges from using	(Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.68).

Grounded Theory facts and Presumptions	References
explicit concepts in the data (in-vivo coding) or constructing new concepts to describe or refer to implicit meanings in the data (nominalism).	
The method enables "*developing comprehensive explanation*" about behaviours and "*can be used to gain new insight into old problems as well as to study new and emerging areas in need of investigation"* and "*can be used to uncover* [133] *the beliefs*[134] *and meanings that underline action*".	(Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.11).
Using the method could offer a "*fresh or deeper understanding of*" a "*studied phenomenon*", offer new theories to a discipline, provide "*an analysis in a new area*", provide "*an original treatise in an established or fading area*", or "*extension of current ideas.*"	(Charmaz, 2014, p.288).
Grounded theories could refine, extend, challenge, or supersede[135] extant concepts	(Charmaz, 2014, p.310).
"*Grounded theory can provide the basis for an alternative view of well-established fields."*	(Bryman and Bell, 2015, p.593).
"Grounded theory is well suited to research in management and organizational studies where existing theories cannot further our understanding of specific phenomena."	(O'Reilly, Paper and Marx, 2012, p.260).

[133] The word 'uncover' supports B. Glaser's philosophy and claim that theories are discovered, not constructed. I.e., in social research, GT can be used to discover people's beliefs, convictions, or the tenets behind their actions or interaction.
[134] In section 1.2.1.1, p.3, the researcher mentioned that management is a knowledge and a belief- based practice. Also, in section 3.2.1, p. 169, the researcher defined theory as a 'Belief'.
[135] This is what exactly the researcher has discovered. Based on the developed theory in this research, the researcher argues that SCM was not an appropriate concept to refer to manging supply activities or managing business relations within or across firms in a supply chain.

Grounded Theory facts and Presumptions	References
The outcomes of grounded theory study include "*substantive, middle range, or formal*" theories.	(Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.63).
Applying the method supports objectivity and value-free interpretation (objectivism).	(Charmaz, 2014, p.236).
"*In practice, grounded theory research is*" not linear."	(Charmaz, 2014, p.18).
Researchers may "*gain further insights and create more ideas"* through the writing and rewriting stages, which make the writing phase an analytic process.	(Charmaz, 2014, p.289).
Researchers "*should be aware that there are different versions of grounded theory and will need to articulate" their "own position when writing up the research.*"	Easterby-Smith et al. (2018, p.119).
The grounded theory process is time-consuming.	(Willig, 2014; Bryman and Bell, 2015).
Presenting a full description of all aspects of the developed theory in one research paper or dissertation might not be feasible due to time limitations or the number of pages or words limitations.	(Strauss and Corbin, 2015).

F.2 Grounded Theory Process Models

Different models were used to represent the GT process, as the researcher introduced. Charmaz (2014) illustrated the process's main elements, Strauss and

Corbin (2015) illustrated the elements and the used strategies to enhance the process's rigour, while Bryman and Bell (2015) introduced a different model. In chapter 3, the researcher introduced Charmaz's (2014) model. Therefore, figures 56 and 57 show the suggested models by Strauss and Corbin (2015) and Bryman and Bell (2015).

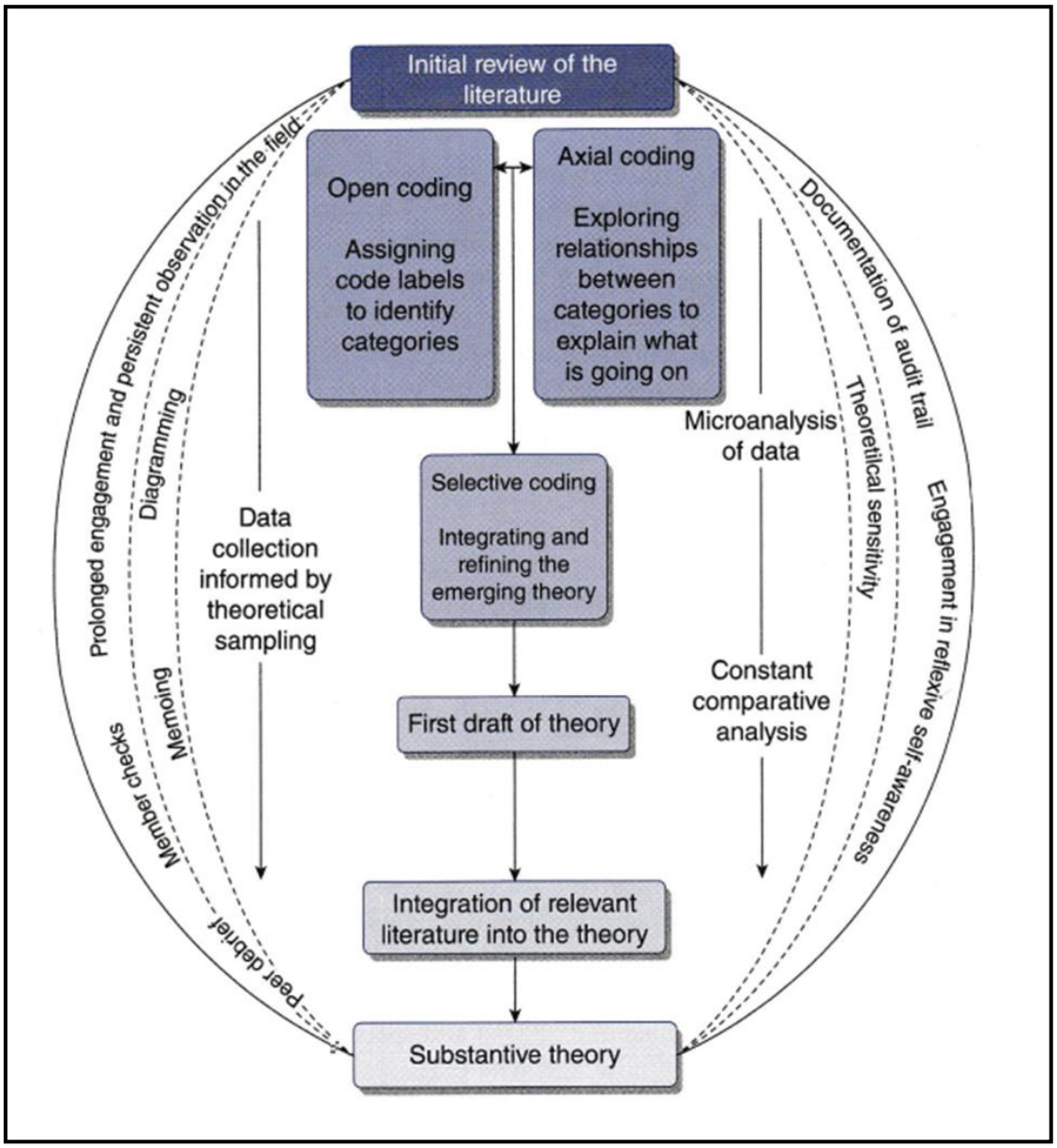


Figure 56 Elements and Strategies of Grounded Theory Process

Source: (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p. 344).

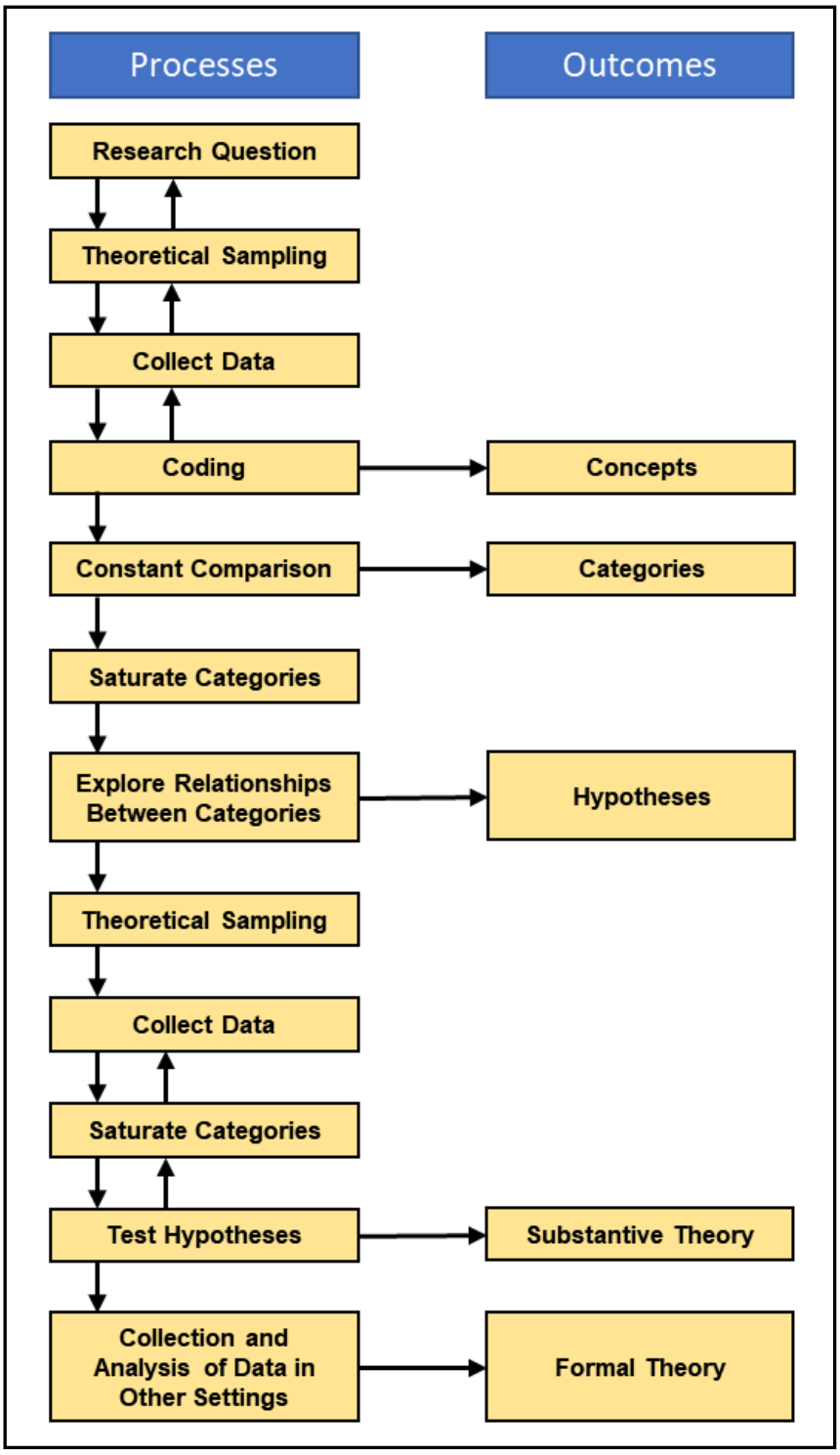


Figure 57 Grounded Theory Process

Source: (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p.588)

F.3 Strauss's and Corbin's Data Coding Approach

Strauss and Corbin introduced a coding approach known as the 'Coding Paradigm' (Strauss and Corbin, 2015). As defined by the authors, the coding paradigm "*is an analytic tool designed to help analysts keep action-interaction in the centre while sorting out the relationship between it and other concepts derived during*" the data analysis process (Ibid, 2015, p.166). According to the authors, this paradigm facilitates the application of the method, especially for novice researchers.

Strauss and Corbin's coding paradigm was initially introduced in 1987 and has been refined since then (Urquhart, 2019). Table 28 illustrates the evolution of this paradigm.

Table 28 Evolvement of Strauss and Corbin Coding Paradigm

Source: Amended from Urquhart (2019, p.8)

Coding Paradigm	Year
"Conditions, consequences, interactions, strategies and consequences."	1987
"Causal Conditions, Context, Intervening Conditions, Action/Interaction, Strategies and Consequences."	1990
"Conditions (causal, intervening, and contextual), Actions/Interactions (strategic or routine tactics), Consequences (immediate, cumulative, reversible, foreseen or unseen)."	1998
"Conditions, interactions and emotions, consequences."	2008
Conditions, Actions – Interactions and Consequences	2015

As noticed from the above table, Strauss and Corbin (2015) refined the coding paradigm to focus on three categories or three "*main features*" as described by the authors (Ibid, 2015, p.156); these features are Conditions, Actions – Interactions, and Consequences.

According to Strauss and Corbin (2015), coding conditions entail "*questions about why, when, and how come*." The conditions are those "*reasons that persons give for why things happen and the explanations that they give for why they respond in the manner that they do through actions-interactions*." Conditions are the reasons "*persons give for what they say, think, feel, and do (action-interaction)*." Also, the authors mentioned that those explanations might "*be implicit or explicit*" (Ibid, 2015, pp.158,165).

The actions-Interactions category, as Strauss and Corbin (2015, 158) stated, "*are the actual responses people or groups make to the events or problematic situations that occur in their lives*." Last, Strauss and Corbin (2015, 159) mentioned that "*the consequences are the anticipated or actual outcomes of actions and interactions*."

Noteworthy, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.157) stated that the used terminology in the paradigm was "*borrowed from standard scientific terms scientists used in relationship to theory.*" The authors also added that the used terms in the paradigm "*are consistent with the logic and terms expressed by persons in their everyday descriptions of things*." Strauss and Corbin (2015, p157) gave an example of such logic about a person's thinking when describing things, where the authors stated: "*When this happens, I do this, with the anticipation of having this result*." However, the researcher would like the reader to keep in mind that the authors have mentioned that their coding paradigm is based on logical thinking.

Furthermore, the researcher would like to mention that Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.157) stated that their coding paradigm "*is only a tool and not a set of directives."* The authors also added that "*analysts can use*" the paradigm "*to sort out and arrange concepts by asking questions and thinking in terms of possible linkages."*

Also, the researcher would like to mention that Strauss and Corbin (2015) stated the following:

> *"A common mistake among beginning grounded theorists is that they fixate on the specifics of the paradigm and code only for these features. Being overly concerned on identifying conditions or actions-interactions or consequences rigidifies the analytic process. Something is missing when analysts think of coding only in terms of the specifics of the paradigm, and that something is the eloquence that gives qualitative research its soul."*
>
> (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, pp.157-158).

However, it is worth taking a pause here. Although Strauss and Corbin (2015) provided a logical explanation for their coding paradigm, the authors' last statement contradicts the purpose of their coding paradigm. The researcher wonders: how possible for a grounded theorist to reconcile between using the paradigm as an analytical coding and a categorisation tool and, at the same time, free his/her thinking from focusing on codes that imply conditions, actions-interactions, and consequences? Last, how can a grounded theorist free his/her thinking from imposing those features on the data under analysis?

F.4 Strauss's and Corbin's Conditional/ Consequential Matrix

Strauss and Corbin (2015) developed what they call the Conditional/ Consequential Matrix. According to the authors, the coding paradigm, although it provides help for analysts, it does not "*help researchers bring complexity into the analysis*", and "*the matrix they proposed fills this gap*" (Ibid, 2015, p.160). Figure 58 illustrates Strauss's and Corbin's (2015) Conditional/ Consequential Matrix.

However, Strauss and Corbin (2015) explained two coding purposes in GT research: coding for context and coding for processes. The coding for context "*is used to denote relationships between concepts and to locate action and interaction in the web of conditions and consequences that surround it.*" On the other hand, the coding for a process is "*the rhythm as well as the changing and repetitive forms of action-interaction plus the pauses and interruptions that occur*

when persons act and interact for the purpose of reaching a goal or solving a problem" (Ibid, 2015, p.172).

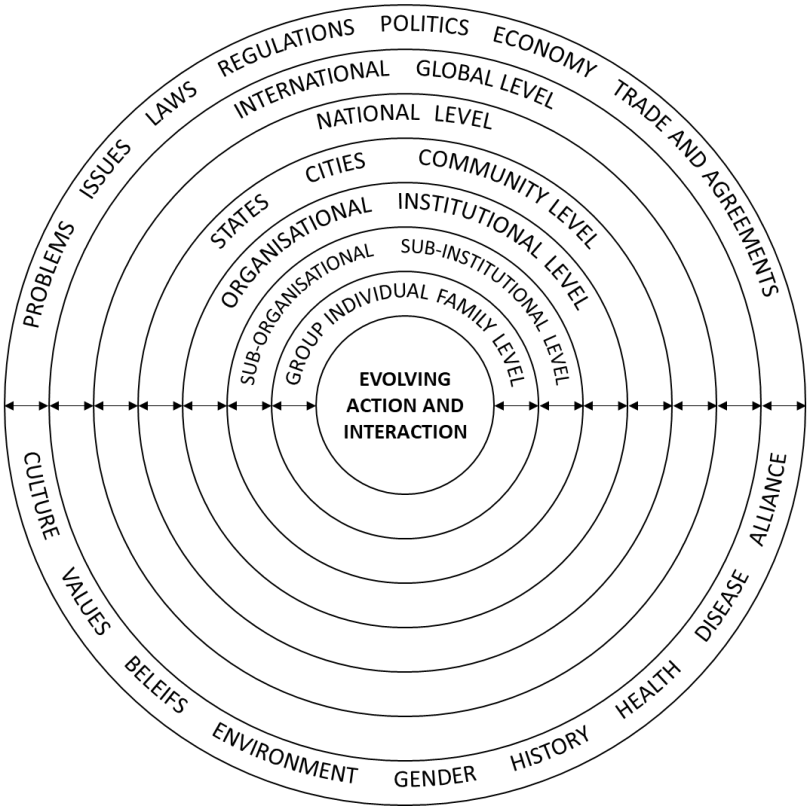


Figure 58 The Conditional/ Consequential Matrix

Source: (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.163).

F.5 Glaser's Data Coding Approach

Glaser criticised Strauss and Corbin's approach, where he claimed that the coding paradigm forces theory on data, which, as he argued, leads to losing the essence of the method. Glaser urged researchers to conduct GT research without any preconceived ideas as he sees that researchers shall be open-minded to data. However, Glaser provided what is known as the 'Glaser's Coding Families'. Glaser (1978, cited in Mello and Flint, 2009) introduced 18 coding families, which, according to Glaser, improve researchers' theoretical sensitivity and help them "*see patterns in data*." Table 29 lists examples of the coding families of Glaser.

Table 29 Glaser's Coding Families

Source: (Mello and Flint, 2009, p.118)

Family	Types of Codes
The "Six C's"	*"Causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions."*
Process	*"Stages, staging, phasings, progressions, passages, gradations, transitions, steps, ranks, careers, orderings, trajectories, chains, sequencings, temporaling, shaping, and cycling."*
Degree	*"Limit, range, intensity, extent, amount, polarity, extreme, boundary, rank,* *grades, continuum, probability, possibility, level, cutting points, critical juncture, statistical average, deviation, standard deviation, exemplar, modicum, full, partial, almost, half, and so forth."*
Dimension	*"Dimensions, elements, division, piece of, properties of, facet, slice, sector,* *portion, segment, part, aspect, and section."*
Type	*"Type, form, kinds, styles, classes, and genre."*
Strategy	*"Strategies, tactics, mechanisms, managed, way, manipulation, manoeuvrings, dealing with, handling, techniques, ploys, means, goals, arrangements, dominating, and positioning."*
Interactive	*"Mutual effects, reciprocity, mutual trajectory, mutual dependency,* *interdependence, interaction of effects, and covariance."*

Family	Types of Codes
Identity-Self	*"Self-image, self-concept, self-worth, self-evaluation, identity, social worth, self-realisation, transformations of self, and conversions of identity."*
Cutting Point	*"Boundary, critical juncture, cutting point, turning point, breaking point, benchmark, division, cleavage, scales, in-out, intra-extra, tolerance levels, dichotomy, trichotomy, polychotomy, deviance, and point of no return."*
Means-Goal	*"End, purpose, goal, anticipated consequences, and products."*
Cultural	*"Social norms, social values, social beliefs, and social sentiments."*
Consensus	*"Clusters, agreements, contracts, definitions of the situation, uniformities, opinions, conflict, dicensus, differential perception, cooperation, homogeneity- heterogeneity, conformity, nonconformity, and mutual expectation."*
Mainline	*"Social control, recruitment, socialisation, stratification, status passage, social organisation, social order, social institutions, social interaction, social worlds, social mobility, and so forth."*
Ordering or Elaboration	*"Structural- organisation, division, group, subgroup, team, and person. Temporal- one category comes after another in a sequence. Conceptual- as in specification of concepts, and in developing properties of categories."*

Family	Types of Codes
Unit	*"Collective, group, nation, organisation, aggregate, situation, context, arena, social world, behavioural pattern, territorial units, society, and family. Positional- status, role, role relationship, status-set, role-set, person-set, role partners."*
Reading	*"Concepts, problems, and hypotheses."*
Models	*"Linear or property space."*

According to Urquhart (2019, p.6), Glaser's coding families, which "*now totalling 41*", are "*inspired by how other theories conceptualise phenomena*."

Although Glaser provided those coding families, Belgrave and Seide (2019, p.6) mentioned that Glaser discussed "*potential pitfalls of depending on some of these families*", also, Mello and Flint (2009, p.117) mentioned that Glaser warned *"the researcher not to focus on a 'pet' code, but rather to take their cues from the data."*

F.6 Evaluation of Grounded Theory Research

The essential topic the researcher would like to address is how GT research and qualitative research, in general, are evaluated. According to Strauss and Corbin (2015), assessment of "*qualitative research has not yet been solved*", where the authors mentioned that "*there is little consensus about what constitutes an appropriate set of evaluation criteria for qualitative research*" (Ibid, 2015, p.341). Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 399) mentioned that "*there has been discussion among qualitative researchers concerning the relevance of reliability and validity for qualitative research*." The authors mentioned that these two criteria are applied to quantitative research while their application "*to qualitative research is not desirable*." Bryman and Bell (2015, p.400) also mentioned that some writers proposed two main "*criteria for assessing a qualitative study: trustworthiness and*

authenticity." Trustworthiness concerns credibility, which is parallel to validity; transferability, which is parallel to external validity; dependability, which is parallel to reliability; and conformability, which is parallel to objectivity. On the other hand, authenticity concerns the "*wider political impact of research*."

However, GT thought leaders introduced many criteria to evaluate the quality of a developed grounded theory. Also, some scholars of logistics and SCM presented valuable guidelines when applying GT in these areas. The following subtitles highlight some of those criteria and guidelines.

F.6.1 Validity and Credibility

Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.342) cited that valid qualitative research should accurately represent the "*features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain, or theorise*." Also, the authors see that credibility should indicate that the "*findings are trustworthy and believable in that they reflect participants', researchers', and readers' experiences with phenomena*" (Ibid, 2015, p.346).

F.6.2 Quality and Rigour

Mills, Birks and Hoare (2014, p.10) see that the quality of GT research depends on the researcher's ability to demonstrate rigour in conducting research, applying the method, and "*ensuring philosophical and methodological alignment*." Strauss and Corbin (2015) see that:

> "*Achieving rigour in GT research could be through 1) letting the participants guide the process, 2) checking the theoretical construction generated against participants' meanings of the phenomenon, 3) using participants' actual words in the theory, 4) articulating the researcher's personal view and insights about the phenomenon and specifying the criteria built into the researcher's thinking, 5) specifying why participants in the study were selected, 6) delineating the scope of the research, and 7) describing how the literature relates to each category that emerged in the theory*."
>
> (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.343).

Furthermore, Manuj and Pohlen (2012, p.784) provided "*a framework to assist reviewers in evaluating grounded theory research and increasing the rigour and credibility"* of the GT methodology. The authors' framework was based on a systematic literature review of sample GT research papers in logistics and SCM. The framework included eight steps for conducting GT. However, addressing those steps is beyond the scope of this thesis.

F.6.3 Criteria of Evaluation

Wacker (1998) suggested many criteria that represent a good theory; these criteria and their key features are shown in table 30.

Table 30 The Virtues of 'Good' Theory Key Features

Source: (Wacker, 1998, p. 365).

Virtue	Key feature	Importance
Uniqueness	*"The uniqueness virtue means that one theory must be differentiated from another."*	*"If two theories are identical, they should be considered a single theory."*
Conservatism	*"A current theory cannot be replaced unless the new theory is superior in its virtues."*	*"Internal consistency refutation means that the theory logically explains the relationships between variables."*
Generalizability	*"The more areas that a theory can be applied to makes the theory a better theory."*	*"If there are two competing theories, the theory that predicts the most unlikely event is considered the superior theory."*

Virtue	Key feature	Importance
Fecundity	*"A theory which is more fertile in generating new models and hypotheses is better than a theory that has fewer hypotheses."*	*"Theories which expand the area of investigation into new conceptual areas are considered superior to theories which investigate established research areas."*
Parsimony and simplicity	*"The parsimony virtue states, other things being equal, the fewer the assumptions, the better the theory is."*	*"If two theories are equal in all other aspects, the one with fewer assumptions and the fewer definitions is more virtuous. This virtue also includes the notion that the simpler the explanation, the better the theory."*
Internal consistency	*"Internal consistency means the theory has identified all relationships and gives adequate explanation."*	*"Internal consistency refutation means that the theory logically explains the relationships between variables. The more logically the theory explains the variables and predicts the subsequent event, the better the theory is."*
Empirical riskiness	*"Any empirical test of a theory should be risky; Refutation must be very possible if a theory is to be considered a 'good' theory."*	*"If there are two competing theories, the theory that predicts the most unlikely event is considered the superior theory."*

Virtue	Key feature	Importance
Abstraction	*"The abstraction level of theory means it is independent of time and space. It achieves this independence by including more relationships."*	*"The abstraction level means it is better to integrate many relationships and variables into a larger theory. If one of two competing theories integrates more internally consistent concepts, it is more virtuous than a theory that integrates fewer internally consistent relationships."*

In addition to what was mentioned, Mills, Birks and Hoare (2014) summarised the main "*criteria for the purpose of evaluating the outcomes of grounded theory research*". These criteria are classified according to the three approaches (Glaser's or the 'Traditional', the Straussian or the 'Evolved' and the 'Constructivist'. The following table illustrates those criteria.

Table 31 Evaluation Criteria of Grounded Theory

Source: (Mills, Birks and Hoare, 2014, p.10).

Glaser	Strauss and Corbin	Charmaz
"Does the theory fit the data? Does it work in that it possesses explanatory and predictive power? Is it relevant? Is it modifiable? Does the theory demonstrate parsimony? Does it have scope for broader application?"	*"Does the theory demonstrate data quality? Is the research process adequate? What evidence is there of empirical grounding? What judgements can be made about theory quality? 10 basic criteria for appraising theoretical outcomes 13 additional criteria for judging structure and process."*	*"Does the theory have credibility? Does it demonstrate originality? Does it have resonance? What evidence is there of its usefulness?"*

F.6.4 Evaluation of the Methodological Consistency, Quality, and Applicability of a Grounded Theory Research

Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.350) introduced 33 checkpoints to evaluate the methodological consistency, quality, and applicability of a GT study. The researcher sees that it is important to address the main checkpoints; these are 1) did the researcher describe how the coding process was applied; 2) *"Is there a core category",* and is there a relationship between the core category and the other categories in the developed theory? ;3) "*Was there feedback from the professionals and participants?";* 4) Finally, "*is the core category sufficiently broad so that it can be used to study other populations?"*

F.7 Informed Grounded Theory

In an article Informed Grounded Theory', entitled 'Thornberg (2012) introduced a new approach in conducting GT research by taking advantage of extant literature as he and other scholars criticised the idea of pure induction and delaying the literature review. Thornberg (2012, p.243) called this approach the 'Informed Grounded Theory', which according to the author, adds "*literature review strategies to the GT research approach*." The following subheadings address Thornberg's approach in detail.

F.7.1 Thornberg Viewpoint about Using the Literature Review in Grounded Theory

Thornberg (2012) presented and cited many viewpoints in his argument for conducting a literature review in studying, for example, a phenomenon. The following bullets expose these viewpoints:

- "*An early and on-going literature review reveals how the phenomenon has been investigated to date, helps the researcher to be aware of and avoid earlier conceptual and methodological pitfalls, and stimulates theoretical sensitivity"* (Thornberg, 2012, p.245).
- The "*literature can be used more actively in GT research as long as the researcher does not allow it to block creativity and get in the way of discovery"* (Thornberg, 2012, p.245).
- "*Using the literature enriches the analysis, while simultaneously encouraging the researcher to take a critical stance and challenge "emergent" concepts and ideas"* (Thornberg, 2012, p.245).
- The literature review "*can help the researcher to formulate relevant research questions and make constant comparisons between data and literature to elaborate, revise or criticise pre-existing knowledge and extant theories*" (Thornberg, 2012, p.245).
- Finally, Thornberg (2012) introduced a lengthy statement by Dune (2011) where he stated:

"Indeed, if the fundamental concern of Glaser is the threat of external ideas impinging upon the research and distracting focus away from the raw data, then perhaps there is a way to monitor and counteract this threat which is less extreme than the initial abstinence from literature which he prescribes. After all, it would be both unfortunate and unconstructive to sacrifice the numerous advantages derived from conducting an early literature review based on a concern about what impact extant ideas might have on the researcher."

(Dunne, 2011, p.117; Thornberg, 2012, p.245).

As the reader sees in the mentioned arguments, what Thornberg mentioned supports what was presented in the literature review chapter of this thesis. The researcher was able to identify the gap in the literature, formulate the research question, and choose the research method.

F.7.2 Thornberg Approach

Thornberg (2012) cited and presented many guidelines for using the literature in grounded theory research. These guidelines are addressed herein.

Thornberg (2012, p.250) mentioned that researchers might face many theories in the literature. Accordingly, the author recommended that:

- Researchers should "*not subscribe to any of the theories they might know or have reviewed before or during data collection and analysis*",
- Researchers should be "*sensitive to different theoretical positions, the cracks between the theories, and the spaces in the literature*",
- "*Researchers should take a critical stance toward pre-existing theories and research findings throughout the research project*",
- Researchers should "*treat all extant theories and concepts that one already knows or might encounter during the pre-study or on-going literature review as provisional, disputable and modifiable conceptual proposals",*
- Researchers should use "*different and even competing theoretical perspectives*" (The author named this approach 'theoretical pluralism' and considered it a "*conversation between different perspectives*").

Furthermore, Thornberg (2012) mentioned that the literature could be used for theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling, as the researcher mentioned, is:

> *"the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and then decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges."*
>
> (Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.45).

However, Thornberg (2012, p.252) mentioned that "*applying this principle to the ongoing literature review, the researcher searches and reads literature guided by the codes, concepts, questions, and ideas that he or she develops during data collection and analysis."* Also, the author mentioned that researchers would reach the state of theoretical saturation "*when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of*" the *"core theoretical categories*."

In his conclusion, the main idea that Thornberg (2012) emphasised was that:

> "*The literature review should, therefore, be seen as an open, critical and pluralistic conversation between the researcher, the literature, the data and the "emerging" body of concepts and ideas*."
>
> (Thornberg, 2012, p.250).

Besides, the author sees that the "*informed GT constructed by the researcher might extend and elaborate as well as challenge and revise pre-existing concepts and theories.*"

Aside from what Thornberg (2012) stated, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, p.74) cited Strauss and Corbin (2008) that an effective literature review will lead to the emergence of "*new findings and theories that neither*" the researcher "*nor anyone else has thought about*." Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.49) also mentioned that since "*each investigation is somewhat different, new information will be uncovered*."

F.8 Presenting and Disseminating Grounded Theory Findings

Mills, Birks and Hoare (2014) suggested four principles to present findings from GT research; these are identifying the audience, the decision about "*what level of analytical detail is required*", choosing the "*appropriate style of writing*", and presenting "*the GT as a whole*" (Ibid, 2017, p.11). The authors clarified that the aim of those principles is "*to increase the impact of*" research. According to the authors, Cameron (2012, cited in ibid, 2017) defined research impact as the "*effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond academia"* (Ibid, 2017, p.11). Furthermore, Mills, Birks and Hoare (2014, p.12) mentioned that researchers should "*focus on the potential contribution*" that their GT "*study can make in respect of innovation and change*."

Besides, Strauss and Corbin (2015) posited some guidelines for writing GT research. The first key issue is the researcher's confidence in the developed theory. Another issue is the audiences to whom researchers will address their work, where the authors mentioned that defining audiences is important to thesis content.

Nevertheless, Fendt and Sachs (2008, pp.451-452) recommended that, in management research, researchers should:

- "*Discuss and Understand GTM and its versions and make an informed and conscious choice for a version/type/form of GTM.*"
- "*Introduce GTM early in management studies and discuss its various forms.*"
- "*Simplify the fracturing and coding strategies and procedures.*"
- "*Support conclusions generously with verbatim quotes.*"
- *"Stick with Glaser and Strauss's (1967) original wish that scholars would ''codify and publish their own methods for generating theory*."

F.9 Grounded Theory Research Thesis Structure

According to Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.311), there are few standards and guidelines in writing up "*qualitative research in general and grounded theory in*

particular". Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.322) mentioned that "*grounded theory requires an open and flexible design*". Also, Strauss and Corbin (2015, p.322) mentioned that many universities impose quantitative thesis templates in PhD studies which, according to the authors, are inconsistent with the nature of qualitative research.

However, Strauss and Corbin (2015) suggested that "*a common format of grounded theory dissertation*" could generally contain six chapters; these chapters are 1) an introductory chapter that describes the research and the significance of the problem; 2) a literature review chapter; 3) an explanation of the research methodology; 4) an overview of the developed theory; 5) a chapter that presents a "*detailed explanation of the theory, emphasising major points with detail and examples included*"; 6) and finally, a "*discussion, implications, and recommendations*" chapter (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, p.320).

Another grounded theory thesis structure was recommended by Willig (2014). The writer suggested that a thesis structure in grounded theory should cover four main areas: the introduction chapter, the method, the results, and the discussion. Willig (2014) mentioned that the introduction chapter should include the rationale behind the study, introducing the research gap, and the research objectives. The method chapter is similar to the methodology chapter, where the researcher introduces his/her methodology in detail. The result part could be presented in more than one chapter as required. In this part, a researcher presents his/her grounded theory findings. Finally, the discussion part introduces "*the practical implications of the study*" (Ibid, 2014, p.224). As it is noticed, Willig (2014) did not suggest a literature review chapter in the structure.

Appendix G The Proposed Framework of Business Management

G.1 Introductory Review

G.2 The Foundation of the Structure of the Proposed Framework

The structure of the proposed framework is based on the syntheses of the researcher's knowledge and perspective of Management, the principles of Economy, the System View/Perspective or system thinking philosophy, the researcher's interests in continuous improvement, sustainable development and corporate social responsibility, and the realised theory and perspective of BRM.

As the researcher introduced, Management Knowledge is essential to all business sectors. It is about the efficient, effective, and optimal utilisation of available resources, capabilities, and skills to accomplish organisational missions and tasks and to optimally achieve business goals. Business management and improvement in any organisation are supposed to be objective-oriented or goal-oriented. Effective and successful business management requires effective strategic planning that depends on the organisations' knowledge, experience, capabilities, beliefs, and available information.

Also, based on the researcher's knowledge of principles of Economy and interest in economic development and reform, the researcher established that the national and global economies are based on supply and demand. Public and private organisations provide essential or innovative products, services, and utilities against existing or expected demand. Accordingly, the researcher sees that two pillars should be integrated into the proposed framework, 'Supply Pillars' and Demand Pillars.

Similarly, individuals, societies, organisations, and nations need to focus on sustainable development. They need to be aware that they represent an integrated system of suppliers, customers, and stakeholders. They need to be aware that they are all dependent on each other by default, and they impact each other directly or indirectly. Moreover, they need to maintain their humanity and

social responsibility toward those in need. And finally, they must be aware that their communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration are inevitable to achieve their desired outcomes and achieve a better world.

G.3 The Structure of the Proposed Framework

The structure of the proposed framework is based on five main elements. These elements are Business Management Objectives and Goals, Supply Pillars, Demand Pillars, Business Relations Management Dimensions, and Management Fields (Figure 49). These elements are briefly explained below.

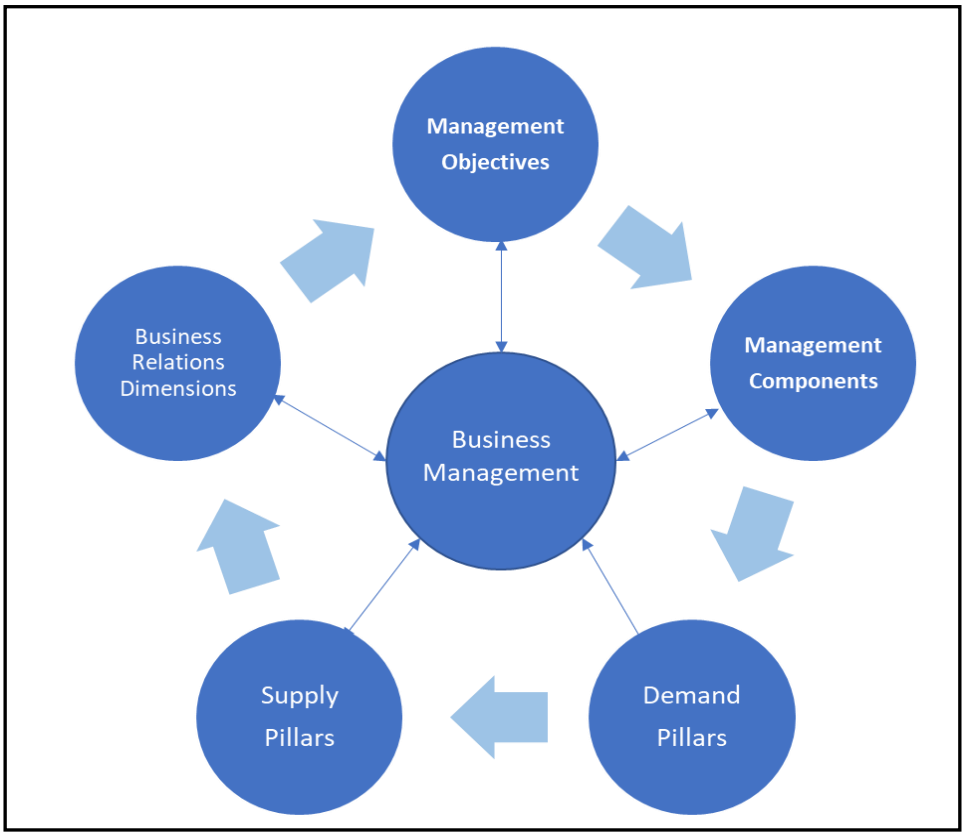


Figure 59 Business Management Framework Structure

G.3.1 Business Management Objectives

The business management objectives represent the developed theoretical model in this research. Nonetheless, the presented model does not show all

management objectives. Also, the researcher did not include the social objectives or values of management, such as Justice, Integrity, Credibility, Equity, Transparency, Loyalty, Trustworthiness, Reputation, and Reliability. Maintaining these values and objectives is essential to all organisations. Excellent organisations focus on achieving and maintaining customers' and employees' satisfaction, trust, and loyalty besides maintaining other stakeholders' satisfaction and trust. Therefore, maintaining social justice, integrity, and transparency builds a good reputation and increases reliability. Moreover, excellent organisations work on avoiding, preventing, and terminating any form of non-ethical or non-human practices, such as Opportunism, Discrimination, Deception, Monopolism, Prices Manipulation, Humiliation, and Racism.[136]

G.3.2 Management Field

Management fields are the typical business functions and management areas that require resources, planning, organising, control, monitoring, assessment, and continuous improvement. For example, the typical main management areas include Human Resources Management (HRM), Assets/Resources Management, Purchasing Management, Logistics Management, Production and Demand Management, Operations Management, Sales and Marketing Management, Risk and Business Continuity Management, Training and Knowledge Management, Health, Safety and Security Management, TQM, and the outcome of this research, Business Relations Management (BRM).

G.3.3 Business Relations Management Dimensions

These are the dimensions of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration within and across organisations and other stakeholders. The researcher's purpose of listing these dimensions separately, as the researcher presented, is to emphasise the value of managing business relationships for any business sector and outline the general framework of communication, cooperation, collaboration, and integration that organisations should consider.

[136] The reader may see that the researcher is talking about perfection and an ideal business world, which is impossible to achieve. However, the researcher admits that achieving an ideal business world is not feasible, yet people should aim at being perfect.

However, besides the four presented dimensions (internal, customer, supplier, and stakeholders), the researcher sees that public relations management is part of business relations management. The public can be considered as stakeholders. Also, the communication between organisations and the media, or the non-profit or voluntary organisations, is part of public relations management[137].

G.3.4 Supply Pillars

The supply pillars in the proposed framework were adopted from two frameworks, the Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) and Design Chain Operations Reference (DCOR), where the later covers one of the shortcomings of the former (research and design phase) (APICS, 2019).

As the researcher illustrated, the SCOR model structure consists of six main processes: Plan, Source, Make, Deliver, Return, and Enable. On the other hand, the DCOR model structure, as suggested by APIC (2019), focuses on the products' design operations. The model consists of five main processes: Plan, Research, Design, Integrate, and Amend.

Based on these two frameworks and the researcher's knowledge[138], the researcher suggests that the main supply pillars should include the typical supply management processes in any organisation. These pillars are 1) Research and Design, 2) Test and Evaluation, 3) Source, 4) Make, and 5) Deliver. However, managing all these processes requires strategic and managerial planning. Strategic and managerial planning is the core task of management, as the researcher presented; therefore, the researcher did not include the planning process under these pillars. Moreover, it is worth recalling the objectives of SCOR and DCOR models as mentioned by APICS (2019), which are Responsiveness, Flexibility, Cost, Reliability, Agility, and Efficiency.

G.3.5 Demand Pillars

[137] The researcher suggests that Business Relations Management (BRM) concept and Public Relations discipline can be integrated in one discipline: Business and Public Relations Management (BPRM). However, this suggestion requires further academic discussion.
[138] Acquisition Management, Production Management, and TQM.

The demand pillars are based on the researcher's knowledge, beliefs, convictions, values, and interests in Strategic Management, Economy, Sociology, Social Responsibility, Politics, and Law. Also, the idea behind the demand pillars emerged from the researcher's knowledge of the PESTEL analysis framework and Maslow's Hierarchy/Ladder of Needs.

The PESTEL analysis framework or tool is used in strategic planning. The framework focuses on external factors that affect organisations. These factors are the Political, Environmental, Social, Technological, Economic, and Legal factors (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008). However, the researcher sees that these factors also represent the major demands to be considered, including the technological factor[139]. For example, the political and legal demands are the governmental policies, laws, and regulations to be followed and implemented; economic demands include providing jobs, saving scarce resources, and low-cost products and services; the environmental demands include saving the environment through producing recyclable products, reducing the Carbon footprint, and safe disposal of chemical or hazardous wastes; the technological demand, as foot-noted, represents vital requirement in all businesses; and the social demand represents, for instance, the social or ethical needs of people. However, there are other needs to be considered besides the social demand; these are the Psychological, Emotional, Physiological, Cultural or Religious, and need-to-know or intellectual demands. These demands pillars emerged from the researcher's beliefs, values, and personal life experience, besides the researcher's knowledge of the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs, which focuses on the basic needs of human beings.

Accordingly, the researcher established that the mentioned demand pillars are the key drivers of the satisfaction of customers, employees, suppliers, and other stakeholders. Therefore, the researcher suggests that manufacturers, producers, services, and utility providers should consider the primary pillars of demand.

[139] Technology became a vital demand in all sectors. For example, information technology improves the speed of services in all sectors. It also reduces time and efforts of employees. The bottom line is that the use of technology leads to faster services and responsiveness, which in return, increases customers', employees, and other stakeholders' satisfaction.

These are the Primary/ Basic Demands or the products, services, and utilities to be supplied or provided, the Personal or Human demands or needs (Social or Ethical, Psychological, Physiological, Cultural or Religious, and intellectual), the Environmental Demand, Economic Demand, Technological Demand, and the Political and Legal Demand. These demand pillars are the key drivers of the satisfaction of customers, employees, suppliers, and stakeholders.

G.3.6 Other Included Concepts and Elements

The other concepts and elements included in the proposed framework are the supply and demand base, the various flows of Information (actual or forecasted demand, marketing, instructions/ facts, and feedback), inventory and services, financial flow, and the value types. Furthermore, the framework visualises all business sectors, including non-profit organisations. Therefore, the researcher incorporated the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility and the value of voluntary and humanitarian efforts toward achieving social solidarity and sustainable development.

G.4 The Proposed Business Management Framework

Figure 48 shows the researcher's proposed framework of Business Management. However, providing a general discussion about the proposed framework or comparing it with the existing SCM frameworks is beyond the thesis scope.

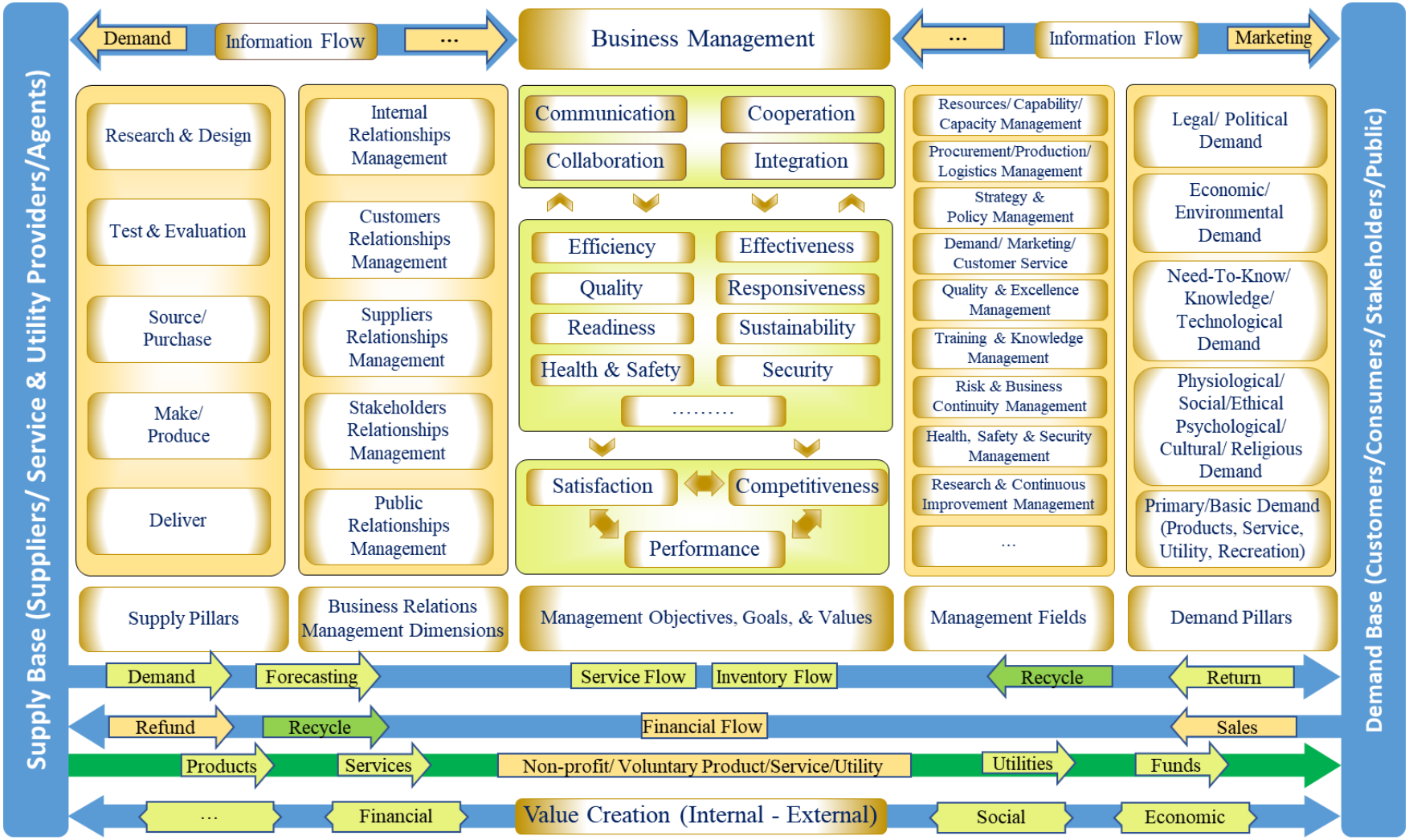


Figure 60 Business Management Framework