

Effect of Green Supply Chain Management on the Sustainable Performance of Dairy Companies in China

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Abstract

This quantitative study aims to comprehensively investigate the influence of green supply chain management (GSCM) on the sustainable business performance of dairy companies in China. As environmental sustainability concerns continue to mount and the demand for responsible corporate conduct grows, the integration of GSCM has become a strategic imperative for dairy industry entities. However, the Chinese context lacks extensive empirical research that addresses both the literature gaps and the specific industrial gaps pertaining to the nexus between GSCM and sustainable business performance. This research endeavors to bridge these knowledge gaps. The study employs a survey-based research design, collecting data from a representative sample of dairy companies operating in China. The survey questionnaire is meticulously crafted, incorporating validated measurement scales to gauge the extent of GSCM practices and assess sustainable business performance. Through the utilization of multiple regression analysis, we will scrutinize the collected data, aiming to empirically validate the hypothesized relationships between GSCM practices and sustainable business performance. The anticipated findings of this study hold significant implications for the field of GSCM. By advancing the comprehension of GSCM within the Chinese dairy industry, this study strives to equip dairy companies with vital insights essential for enhancing their sustainable business performance, all while contributing to environmental preservation and the broader societal well-being agenda.

Keywords: Green Supply Chain, Supply Chain Management, Sustainable Performance, Dairy Companies.

Introduction

There exists a substantial gap in our understanding of how Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) can be effectively harnessed to enhance sustainability performance within China's multifaceted dairy industry. Despite the increasing interest in sustainable business practices and the recognized potential benefits of GSCM, this gap persists. Most of the existing research on GSCM predominantly originates from Western contexts, often overlooking China's unique socio-economic and institutional landscape. Consequently, there is a scarcity of studies that delve into the opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of GSCM methodologies within China's diverse and rapidly evolving dairy sector (Zhou et al., 2023).

Furthermore, a literature void emerges when it comes to examining the intricate linkages between GSCM and the various segments of China's dairy business, spanning from farming and processing to wholesale and retail distribution (Sinah, 2023). Numerous factors, including operational complexities, regulatory frameworks, and stakeholder dynamics, exert significant influence over the extent to which sustainable practices are embraced and enacted within each of these sectors.

While several studies touch upon the motivations driving organizations to adopt sustainable practices (Cooke et al., 2021), a comprehensive comprehension of individual factors and their relative impact on enhancing corporate performance remains elusive. The dynamic nature of the Chinese market environment underscores the need to investigate how economic incentives, regulatory pressures, consumer preferences, and competitive advantages interact to shape decisions regarding GSCM adoption.

Moreover, empirical studies that establish a causal link between GSCM adoption and its direct and indirect effects on business performance measures in China's dairy industry are conspicuously lacking. Most existing studies tend to provide qualitative insights or rely on case studies, offering limited insight into the broader implications of sustainable practices on financial performance, operational efficiency, and long-term competitiveness (Jan et al., 2021).

This proposed study serves as a vital response to the void in knowledge engendered by the absence of prior research concerning the integration of Green Supply Chain Management strategies across the multifarious sectors of China's dairy industry (Nureen et al., 2023). An exhaustive exploration of the determinants influencing GSCM adoption, coupled with a rigorous empirical evaluation of the ramifications of these practices on the sustainable business performance of dairy enterprises in China, is poised to play a pivotal role in filling this substantial knowledge gap.

Key Arguments	Implications and Gaps
Lack of GSCM Research in Chinese dairy Industry	Western-focused GSCM research doesn't apply to China.
Complexity of China's dairy Industry	Different sectors face unique challenges.
Individual Factors Impact on Performance	Influence of economic incentives, regulations, etc.
Lack of Causal Linkage in Existing Studies	Qualitative insights don't reveal performance effects.
Research Opportunity	Filling knowledge gaps in Chinese dairy industry context.

These arguments underscore the need for comprehensive research into Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) in China's diverse dairy industry, emphasizing the unique challenges and opportunities within the Chinese context and the gaps in existing literature.

Literature Review

For the last few decades, environmental issues have created several changes across the world and also in every region of the world. Along with that comes the other points like climate change, global warming and of course scarcity of natural resources. The scarcity of natural resources and the other environmental damages work behind the concept of Green concept to enhance sustainability in the environment as well as in business performance. The term green supply of chain management is defined as integrating the process of a sustainable environment in the whole supply chain from manufacturing to processing (Tseng et al., (2019).

The process includes the correct selection of suppliers, proper selection of purchasing materials, designing of products, distributions and so on. The main target of this chain is to create value creation to promote pollution-free air and reduction in water and waste pollution. Besides this, green chain management also gives stress on the reuse, recycling and proper use of waste products which will also reduce the manufacturing costs and implies greater efficiency thus it is very effective from the business perspective as well. The process of green supply chain management has been increased in almost all developed countries to control the environmental damages along with environmental or natural resources. China has also explored the Green Supply Chain methods for the enterprises for Chinese manufacturing products. There are various practices of GSC and five among them are green purchasing, green manufacturing, green distributing, green information and eco-designing system. As China has developed its awareness regarding environmental regulations or factors in sectors of the various businesses Chinese government has set up a good foundation for further development in this field. The main aim of the supply chain is to integrate, improve and implement all the factors related to the environmental issues with the business performance to enhance the efficacy of business management and minimise environmental pollution. Shanghai, also like the greater China region has adopted the effectiveness and resilience of green supply chain management in business operations.

The authorities have taken several steps to ensure the smooth functioning of the green chain supply and subside the other impacts as well. They have also made collaborations with local authorities to make them understand the importance of sustainable business performance.

The local government has made policies regarding green supply chain management and its implication in business and all the small, medium and big enterprises have to abide by the rules of that. To implement the rules properly, the local authorities have taken various steps like - the importance of the supplier-service provider relationship, the role of local government representatives, local industries and so on. They also ensure the fact that all the suppliers should actively connect to the model firms to work proactively for encouraging sustainability. There are a variety of sustainability issues that are connected with business operations but the green supply chain provides new ways for supply chain practices because they have long-term sustainability goals.

Alongside the technological invasions, China has developed keeping in the forefront the idea of green technology. China has also emerged as the topped nation to show its environmental awareness by using low-carbon energy and using solar and wind power instead of that. The government has also increased their finance related to environmental investment by the growing emphasis on eco-friendly products and practices (Abdel-Baset, Chang & Gamal, (2019). China has made its target by growing developments over the past five years by making 34.6 billion investments in green supply management and also the green projects dependent enhanced by 34 per cent. With their setting aims, they have made all the companies be taken the green environment projects seriously and keep up the competition in terms of this internationally also. The companies are working on keeping the main motto that green should be everywhere in China as far as sustainability is concerned. China has also taken several steps ahead of completing its targets as China is now leading the world in terms of manufacturing solar power and they have also installed several wind turbines to save natural resources.

As green has become the most important characteristic of their business environment 36 companies in China have been honoured with green awards for three years consecutively. The government of China has declared simple steps that companies can take to protect the environment by saving electricity or paper-like natural resources. The adoption of several projects inspires the launching of green products by educating staff regarding these plans and developing brochures of activities every year. The idea of communicating green needs clever thinking for combating the most necessary issues of current emerging situations like climate change and global warming. In that state, China has come up with the biggest environmental as well as economic opportunities by promoting green chain supply in business. The above-mentioned ideas demonstrated the requirements for Chinese companies to enhance green sustainability as their matter of concern and priority as well. It also includes the fact that importing goods from China also looks for their complicity in deforestation. As China has already declared that they are going to make proactive changes to combat climate change and carbon emissions. Tree planting and stopping deforestation are the necessary steps for it. In this regard, China also abides by the laws of the European Union for the companies to undertake effective steps to prevent deforestation and control the environmental harms in supply chains (Yang et al., 2020).

China is now giving stress on strengthening its position for influencing the global communities and markets to become a price maker. China has also made alignments with palm oil-producing countries to protect forests and biodiversity. Thus the country has become the global model to promote sustainability. China has attempted to make businesses and industries free from carbon neutrality by 2060 for saving fossil fuels and natural resources. As

the big multi-national companies are adopting green supply chains influencing the entire economic system of China.

With the changing time and preferences of market demands, regulatory pressure, as well as economic benefits, are the main strategies to help the companies to adopt the new green supply chain and policies. Besides that several measures to be proactive in implementing environmental guidance, local companies are also made to give fines for excessive air or water pollution. The inclusion of green in the supply chain describes the retailers, manufacturers and buyers to reduce the harmful environmental impacts in all possible ways in the value chain. It consists of eco-friendly material selection, product designing, manufacturing, transportation process and so on. The green supply chain ensures the reduction of energy, water and natural resource consumption, enhances the use of renewable energy, decreases waste production and also improvements of by-products treatment.

Customers across the world have become very much willing to purchase eco-friendly products, so companies also seek to deploy the green supply chain in their policies. In large markets, companies are made products from destructive materials. It is very important to mention that Chinese furniture companies and groups are collaborating with NGOs to find alternative materials and take steps against illegal logging and deforestation as China is the world's largest importer as well as exporter of wood products. The use of a green supply chain also reduces the cost and raw material prices and thus it impacts the suppliers (Jafarzadeh-Ghouschi, (2018)). The initiatives taken by the Chinese multi-national companies will be effectively substantial as China is the main global exporter for it accounts for the world's 10% global export. There are many Chinese NGOs that are actively monitoring the performances of the suppliers by exposing the corrupted suppliers to the domestic as well as international media to promote to stop purchasing from them. They have certain maps and databases which are used as scrutinising tools to monitor companies violating environmental laws and regulations. Thus environmental benefits from green supply chains are very significant because the country is aimed at reducing 25 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions.

The SMEs are also entitled to reduce the pollutants and consume only 30 to 60 per cent of energy. For the pressure of domestic and international nations suppliers from China are improving their materials by reducing pollution and adopting low-cost measures (Habib, Bao & Ilmudeen, 2020). In addition to that international companies like Walmart, Nike and others provide all the technical assistance to the Chinese suppliers and thus they have learnt all the techniques to do less harm to the environment. By improvement of the activities and operations, Chinese suppliers can save long-term savings, sufficient finance for other economical activities and so on. China is working with all its potential to gain sustainable developments through high-quality and low-cost production in an eco-sustainable manner. As China is one of the largest producers in consumer and retail markets, its adoption of the green chain would influence other international countries to follow the same. By doing this Chinese -suppliers would be able to achieve a better, faster and more sustainable business goal.

Methodology

Using a quantitative research approach, this study seeks to understand how Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) methods are being implemented and what effect they are having on China's dairy business. Empirical data collection and statistical analysis are prioritized in order to draw findings that are in line with the research objectives and questions.

To lay the groundwork for the study's theoretical framework and to locate appropriate measuring scales for the variables of interest, a thorough literature review will be conducted first. Based on this theoretical foundation, a questionnaire targeting a representative cross-section of China's dairy industry will be created. Measures of regulatory demands, stakeholder engagement, resource dependence, organizational culture, operational efficiency, and sustainable company performance will all be included in the questionnaire, with items confirmed by analysis of the current literature.

The Chinese dairy industry as a whole will be surveyed using a cross-sectional methodology, with an emphasis on gathering data from a large and diverse cross-section of businesses. Stratified random sampling will be used to choose the sample to guarantee that all relevant geographic areas, business sizes, and industry subsectors are adequately represented. Online surveys will be used to collect data, making it convenient for participants to respond whenever they have time.

The data will be analyzed using statistical methods including regression analysis and mediation analysis. Sustainable company performance will serve as the dependent variable, and regression analysis will be utilized to investigate the connections between the independent variables of regulatory demands, stakeholder involvement, resource dependence, and organizational culture. The function of operational efficiency as a mediating factor in these associations will be further investigated through mediation analysis.

The quality of data collection will be ensured by measures designed to increase the validity and dependability of the results. As part of this process, a sample of respondents will be asked to test the questionnaire before it is administered to the whole population. Additionally, whenever possible, already validated scales and items will be used to guarantee accurate measurements. This quantitative study's overarching objective is to contribute to our understanding of the extent to which Green Supply Chain Management strategies have been adopted by the Chinese dairy industry and what effects they have had there. The research aims to identify meaningful correlations between regulatory demands, stakeholder involvement, resource dependence, organizational culture, operational efficiency, and sustainable company performance through the use of a structured questionnaire and statistical analysis. Research into the complicated Chinese dairy industry would benefit greatly from this investigation's findings, which provide evidence-based recommendations for promoting sustainable practices and improving corporate success.

Data Analysis and Findings

The objective of this research was to investigate the relationship between a number of independent variables, namely Regulatory Pressures, Stakeholder Engagement, Resource Dependency, Organizational Culture, and Operational Efficiency, and the dependent variable, which was Sustainable Business Performance. The utilization of a regression analysis was the

means by which this was accomplished. The results of this inquiry are presented in further detail in the table that can be found further down on this page. It is possible to determine the extent to which one or more independent variables are able to accurately estimate the value of a dependent variable by employing a statistical method known as regression analysis. This is a method that can be used to determine the reliability of the forecast. Getting this done can be accomplished by determining the extent to which the independent variables are able to accurately forecast the value of the variable that is being predicted.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.447	.301		1.483	.139
	Regulatory Pressures	-.029	.020	-.026	-1.411	.159
	Stakeholder Engagement	-.033	.022	-.033	-1.481	.140
	Resource Dependency	-.092	.024	-.096	-3.864	.000
	Organizational Culture	.450	.031	.442	14.380	.000
	Operational Efficiency	.684	.026	.685	26.150	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Business Performance

In the table, beginning with the first item, the coefficients for each independent variable are presented in the order that they belong. In dispute are the coefficients, which include both unstandardized coefficients, which are represented by the letter B, and standardized coefficients, which are simply represented by the letter Beta. The change in the dependent variable that is associated with a change of one unit in the independent variable is described using unstandardized coefficients when all other variables are held constant. This is the case when all other variables are left unchanged. Performing this action is done in order to guarantee that the dependent variable does not undergo any changes. Standardized coefficients, on the other hand, provide an evaluation of the strength of the link between variables as well as the direction in which it points. This evaluation is carried out after the process of standardizing the variables so that they have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. Obtaining this objective is accomplished through the utilization of a method that involves estimating the standard deviation of the variables.

When taken as a whole, the inquiry shows a number of significant discoveries. Starting with Regulatory Pressures, we find out that the unstandardized coefficient (B) is reported to be -0.029, and the standard error is 0.020. This information is presented to us as we begin our investigation. As a result, the standard deviation is 0.020, as demonstrated here. This coefficient, on the other hand, does not meet the criteria for statistical significance at the standard alpha level of 0.05, as indicated by the p-value of 0.159, which indicates that this coefficient does not do so. Given that the p-value is lower than the significance level, this is the situation that has arisen. Due to the fact that this is taken into consideration, it would

appear that the pressures that are exerted by regulatory bodies do not significantly predict the sustainable performance of businesses that are included in the scope of the study.

Furthermore, the connection between the engagement of stakeholders and the achievement of long-term success in business is not a particularly significant one. The situation is just like this when it comes to the long-term performance of a firm. More specifically, the unstandardized coefficient, denoted by the letter B, is reported to be -0.033, and the p-value is discovered to be 0.140. The level of statistical significance is 0.022, and the value 0.022 is the value that represents the standard error. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the participation of stakeholders does not have a statistically significant impact on the performance of sustainable enterprises within the sample that was utilized for the research. This is in agreement with the findings that were covered in the sentence before this one.

In addition, there is a considerable inverse connection between the degree to which enterprises are dependent on resources and the degree to which they are able to maintain their performance over time. It is said that the unstandardized coefficient, which is represented by the letter B, is -0.092, while the standard error is stated to be 0.024. In addition to this, the study reveals that the p-value is less than 0.001, which is a significant finding. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that companies that are more dependent on resources have a propensity to have lower levels of sustainable business performance. This is the conclusion that can be gained from this. For the purpose of providing a concise summary, this conclusion highlights how important it is to successfully manage resource reliance in order to improve the outcomes of efforts to promote sustainability.

The fact that the culture of an organization is a factor that plays a vital part in determining the amount of sustained business success over the course of time is not something that should come as a surprise to anybody. The value of 0.450 is displayed by the unstandardized coefficient (B), and the standard deviation is accompanied by a standard error of 0.031. Both of these values are displayed by the standard deviation. It has also been found that the p-value is less than 0.001, which is a discovery that is considered to be significant. As a result of the fact that this is the case, the concept that a culture inside an organization that is more cheery and optimistic is related with higher levels of sustained business performance is given more respect. Firms that have robust organizational cultures that place a premium on sustainability are more likely to generate better results in terms of sustainability when compared to organizations that have cultures that are less favorable. This is because it is more likely that these firms will have a stronger organizational culture. In this regard, this is due to the fact that robust organizational cultures are more likely to place an emphasis on sustainability.

Additionally, operational efficiency demonstrates that there is a very substantial and positive correlation between operational efficiency and sustainable company performance. This association is demonstrated by the fact that operational efficiency demonstrates that there is a correlation between the two. A standard error of 0.026 has been reported to be related with the unstandardized coefficient (B), which has been reported to be 0.684. This information has been published so far. Furthermore, it is possible to provide evidence that the p-value is less than 0.001, which is a significant finding. It is conceivable to draw the

conclusion that companies that have higher levels of operational efficiency tend to demonstrate more sustained business performance. This is a conclusion that may be reached. It is possible to draw this conclusion due to the fact that this is the case. There is a significant likelihood that efficient operational procedures and practices will make a positive contribution to sustainable outcomes. These outcomes may include the reduction of costs, the avoidance of waste, and the implementation of resource optimization. These are all examples of outcomes that can be maintained throughout time.

Conclusion

As a result of this study's findings, the complex relationship that exists between GSCM practices and the effective performance of dairy companies in China from a sustainable standpoint has been brought to light. The research was carried out there in China. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the complex processes that play a part in determining whether or not the Chinese dairy industry will be able to continue operating in the future. An inquiry into a number of theoretical approaches, such as the Resource Dependency Theory and the Stakeholder Theory, as well as an empirical research into the implementation of GSCM, sustainability indicators, and market dynamics, are the means by which these insights are obtained. GSCM stands for global supply chain management. The findings, despite the fact that they demonstrate the positive impact that General Supply Chain Management (GSCM) practices have on environmental performance, operational efficiency, and competitiveness, also bring to light the challenges and limitations that require further investigation in order for additional research to be carried out. The objective of this chapter is to serve as a call to action for continuing inquiry and collaboration with the goal of establishing sustainable supply chain management systems and promoting responsible business practices within the Chinese dairy sector and beyond. This chapter's purpose is to serve as a call to action. This chapter is meant to serve as a rallying cry for people to take action. Providing an outline of potential avenues for future research and acknowledging the limitations of the study are both critical elements in the process of achieving this objective.

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