Structured literature reviews on strategic issues in SCM and logistics part 1
Systematic literature reviews (SLRs) have the potential to drive and direct future research. SLRs can identify what we currently know, analyze, and synthesize the extant literature, and propose directions for future research. This special issue was launched to acknowledge the tremendous response an earlier *IJPDLM* special issue of SLRs, that addresses strategic issues in SCM and logistics (Saenz and Koufteros, 2015), generated. As Special Issue Guest Editors, we were challenged to evaluate close to 70 manuscripts that were submitted for consideration in this special issue. While 12 papers were desk rejected, the remaining papers each underwent a rigorous review process and in some instances the authors benefited from as many as four peer reviews. Typically, papers included in this special issue have gone through three rounds of evaluation. We thank the reviewers for their time, effort, and wisdom.

The authors of prospective papers were asked to examine prior SLR special issues in *IJPDLM* and peer journals and to follow recent developments and guidance such as Durach *et al.* (2017), but also to be informed by classic papers such as Tranfield *et al.* (2003). Since there was such a great response to the call for papers, we have opted to publish two installments of the special issue. This first installment presents six original papers.

In the first paper, Stevenson and Fan focus their SLR on supply chain risk management (SCRM). Their review relies on 354 articles published between 2000 and 2016. The authors use descriptive, thematic, and content analysis to arrive at their directions for future research. Stevenson and Fan set three major objectives for this manuscript: to obtain a more comprehensive definition of SCRM, to assess the extant research across the four SCRM stages, that include risk identification, assessment, treatment, and monitoring, and to evaluate the deployment of theory in SCRM. The authors note the clear growth of research in this domain; 68 percent of the manuscripts were published in 2011-2016. However, the overwhelming majority of the papers utilize only one method in their research design. Furthermore, the majority of the papers only address one of the four SCRM stages. Out of 354 articles, only 45 manuscripts rely on theory and then typically via the lens of a single theory. Ultimately, the authors identify ten future research directions.

In the second paper, Friday, Ryan, Sridham, and Collins’ manuscript also focuses on SCRM. Specifically, their interest is on collaborative risk management, and their review assesses the extant literature over 21 years. Drawing on 101 articles identified via a SLR, the authors propose an agenda for future research and furnish six relational-based capabilities salient to collaborative risk management: risk information sharing, standardization of procedures, joint decision-making, risk and benefit sharing, process integration, and collaborative performance systems. The authors also propose a definition of collaborative risk management as “an interactive process based on mutual commitment between firms with a common objective to join effort and mitigate supply chain risks and related disruptions through co-development of strategic relational capabilities and sharing of resources.” Interestingly, more than 50 percent of the papers identified in the study were not published in operations/supply chain management journals.

In the third paper, Lusiantoro, Yates, Mena, and Varga’s SLR examines the relationship between information sharing and the performance of perishable product supply chains. The SLR is based on the authors’ assessment of 48 peer-reviewed articles published over the last 15 years. The authors identify four factors that shape the relationship between
information sharing and the performance of perishable product supply chains: relationship
uncertainty, environmental uncertainty, information-sharing capabilities, and perishable
product characteristics. Furthermore, the authors propose a theoretical framework to guide
future research by using the lenses of three theories: transaction cost economics,
organizational information processing theory, and contingency theory. The authors provide
directions for future research via nine propositions.

In the fourth paper by Larsen, Masi, Feibert, and Jacobsen, SLR of 112 papers published
since 1995 posits that reverse supply chain (RSC) activities contribute positively to firm
financial performance. To support their contention, the authors address three research
questions: how can the RSC contribute to firm financial performance? Which exogenous
contingency factors influence the size of the RSC’s contribution? And how do the
contingency factors relate to the RSC’s contribution. The SLR identifies 15 means by which
RSC contributes positively to firm financial performance as well as 56 contingency factors
that can influence the relationship between RSC activities and firm financial performance.
The contingency factors identified can be grouped into four categories: market
segmentation, customer behavior, product design, and the firm’s distributor network.

The fifth paper, authored by Lim, Jin, and Srai provides valuable practical insights into
how firms can effectively configure last-mile logistics (LML). The authors define LML as
“[…] the last stretch of a business-to-consumer (B2C) parcel delivery service. LML takes
place from the order penetration point to the final consignee’s preferred destination point.”
The authors examine the diverse roots of LML, that include city logistics, home delivery
and B2C distribution, and developments within e-commerce digital supply chains.
Three research questions are addressed by the authors: what is the current state of
research and practice on LML distribution in the e-commerce context? What are the
associated contingency variables that can influence the selection of LML distribution
structures? And how can the contingency variables identified be used to inform the
selection of LML distribution structures. The SLR examines 47 articles published between
2000 and 2017. Key contingency and structural variables are identified as well as
alternative configurations for LML operations within identified boundary conditions.
Future research areas are proposed that stem primarily from the digital evolution of
supply chains. Accordingly, the manuscript provides guidance for practitioners in their
development and deployment of LML.

In the final manuscript, Sengupta, Niranjan, and Krishnamoorthy systematically
review the extant literature on service triads. The authors describe service triads
as the relationships between three parties where a focal firm serves its customers via a
third part provider. The authors address three research questions: what are the main
themes of previous research on service triads? What are the research methodologies
and theories that have been used, and how are they related to those themes? And which
articles have been the most instrumental in developing the literature thus far, and which
research themes have received less attention than others and require further research?
A three-step research design from 2008 produced one review article and 31 research
articles of which approximately 45 percent of the articles are published in three journals.
The SLR reveals ten service triad research themes: relationships, interactions and
interconnectedness, management and control of service triads, servitising, customer
related, providers’ role and challenges, franchising, knowledge-intensive business
services, shareholders value implications, and contracting. The SLR indicates that the
first three themes have attracted considerably more attention in the extant literature.
Based on their findings, the authors highlight several themes that are under-researched
and propose directions for future research.

The six manuscripts published in the first of the two SLR special issues shed valuable
light on topical issues in the strategic SCM and logistics literatures and can therefore serve
as springboards for actionable future research (as has been case with the previous SLR special issue published in 2015 (Vol. 45, No. 1/2). We look forward to presenting the second installment of the SLR special issue later in 2018.

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