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# Understanding supply chain management: critical research and a theoretical framework

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## Abstract

Increasing global cooperation, vertical disintegration and a focus on core activities have led to the notion that firms are links in a networked supply chain. This strategic viewpoint has created the challenge of coordinating effectively the entire supply chain, from upstream to downstream activities. While supply chains have existed ever since businesses have been organized to bring products and services to customers, the notion of their competitive advantage, and consequently supply chain management (SCM), is a relatively recent thinking in management literature. Although research interests in and the importance of SCM are growing, scholarly materials remain scattered and disjointed, and no research has been directed towards a systematic identification of the core initiatives and constructs involved in SCM. Thus, the purpose of this study is to develop a research framework that improves understanding of SCM

and stimulates and facilitates researchers to undertake both theoretical and empirical investigation on the critical constructs of SCM, and the exploration of their impacts on supply chain performance. To this end, we analyse over 400 articles and synthesize the large, fragmented body of work dispersed across many disciplines such as purchasing and supply, logistics and transportation, marketing, organizational dynamics, information management, strategic management, and operations management literature.

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