

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Supply Chain Resilience of Food Banks: A Multiple-Case Study

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Abstract : This paper investigates how food banks have secured and improved their supply chain resilience to pursue their mission during COVID-19. More specifically, the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak on the food aid needs, donations, operations, and mission of food banks are explored. To develop an in-depth understanding of the reactions and actions that they have been taken, a qualitative approach has been adopted using a multiple case study design. Data from two focus groups, 12 semi-structured interviews with key informants covering all supply chain levels, and field notes from 7 workplace observations in donation points, food bank facilities, and community-based organizations in Québec (Canada) are triangulated. The results highlight that the pandemic has significantly and unpredictably increased the number of food aid demands, causing significant operational challenges for the food banks supply chain, as well as an unprecedented shortage of donations to food banks. Besides, the sanitary measures have required several adaptative strategies. These implications have caused food banks to enhance their operational flexibility, optimize their logistics operations, enhance their human resources management, and expand collaboration within their supply chain.

Keywords : supply chain resilience, food banks, food donations, food aid, COVID-19

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