

Inter-Personal and Inter-Organizational Relationships in Supply Chain Integration: A Resource Orchestration Perspective

Authors : Bill Wang, Paul Childerhouse, Yuanfei Kang

Abstract : Purpose: The research is to extend resource orchestration theory (ROT) into supply chain management (SCM) area to investigate the dyadic relationships at both individual and organizational levels in supply chain integration (SCI). Also, we try to explore the interaction mechanism between inter-personal relationships (IPRs) and inter-organizational (IORs) during the whole SCI process. Methodology/approach: The research employed an exploratory multiple case study approach of four New Zealand companies. The data was collected via semi-structured interviews with top, middle, and lower level managers and operators from different departments of both suppliers and customers triangulated with company archival data. Findings: The research highlights the important role of both IPRs and IORs in the whole SCI process. Both IPRs and IORs are valuable, inimitable resources but IORs are formal and exterior while IPRs are informal and subordinated. In the initial stage of SCI process, IPRs are seen as key resources antecedents to IOR building while three IPRs dimensions work differently: personal credibility acts as an icebreaker to strengthen the confidence forming IORs, and personal affection acts as a gatekeeper, whilst personal communication expedites the IORs process. In the maintenance and development stage, IORs and IPRs interact each other continuously: good interaction between IPRs and IORs can facilitate SCI process while the bad interaction between IPRs can damage the SCI process. On the other hand, during the life-cycle of SCI process, IPRs can facilitate the formation, development of IORs while IORs development can cultivate the ties of IPRs. Out of the three dimensions of IPRs, Personal communication plays a more important role to develop IORs than personal credibility and personal affection. Originality/value: This research contributes to ROT in supply chain management literature by highlighting the interaction of IPRs and IORs in SCI. The intangible resources and capabilities of three dimensions of IPRs need to be orchestrated and nurtured to achieve efficient and effective IORs in SCI. Also, IPRs and IORs need to be orchestrated in terms of breadth, depth, and life-cycle of whole SCI process. Our study provides further insight into the rarely explored inter-personal level of SCI. Managerial implications: Our research provides top management with further evidence of the significance roles of IPRs at different levels when working with trading partners. This highlights the need to actively manage and develop these soft IPRs skills as an intangible competitive resource. Further, the research identifies when staff with specific skills and connections should be utilized during the different stages of building and maintaining inter-organizational ties. More importantly, top management needs to orchestrate and balance the resources of IPRs and IORs.

Keywords : case study, inter-organizational relationships, inter-personal relationships, resource orchestration, supply chain integration

Conference Title : ICSCLM 2017 : International Conference on Supply Chain and Logistics Management

Conference Location : Osaka, Japan

Conference Dates : October 09-10, 2017