

Review Of Literature On Sustainable Supply Chain Management-An Emerging Economy

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Abstract

In both the business and academic arenas, there has been a significant increase in interest in sustainable supply chain management in recent decades. It is addressed in the growing number of articles, conferences, special publications, and websites dedicated to the subject. Sustainable development, on the other hand, has just recently begun to gain traction in emerging economies. From a global perspective, the goal of this essay is to examine the extant research on sustainable supply chain management (SSCM) in emerging economies. For this objective, a complete literature review was undertaken utilising a descriptive and content methodology on 39 papers published between 2007 and April 2020.

The findings are then shown, revealing that while SSCM is gaining popularity, emerging economies are lagging behind industrialised ones in terms of research. The findings demonstrate that the context is crucial when conducting empirical or case study research in developing countries. Furthermore, in the context of a growing economy, the integration of the three pillars of sustainability, as well as how they affect supply chain performance, becomes increasingly important to investigate. As a result, the work's flaws are examined, and further research opportunities, particularly in critical supply chain positions, are suggested.

Finally, the conclusion emphasizes the need for more research into various aspects of the supply chain, such as collaboration, sustainable practices innovation, sourcing, and supplier growth from the perspective of rising countries.

Keywords: sustainable supply chain management; sustainability; supply chain; emerging economies; developing countries;

Introduction

The goal of this study is to provide a wide overview of the literature on sustainable supply chain management (SSCM). The primary goal of this work is to conduct a review of relevant literature in order to offer theoretical context for the studied issue. Given the research phenomenon's multidisciplinary and interconnected nature. The fundamental goal of this research study is to build and empirically evaluate an SSCM drivers-practices-performance conceptual framework, and to do so, the relevant research clusters should be presented and synthesised.

Consumers, the government, the media, investors, and stakeholders are all putting pressure on businesses to demonstrate sustainable development in their operations [1-4]. Furthermore, it is becoming evident that a traditional approach to operations is unsustainable, and businesses must alter their processes to comply with rules and achieve long-term viability [5]. As a result, businesses have been highlighted as a way of facilitating the implementation of sustainable practises [6], in addition to the necessity to meet stakeholders' interests and provide competitive advantage for their business [7].

Industry and literature have used several phrases and techniques to explain sustainability. However, the concurrent method in its three aspects of performance: economic, environmental, and social, emerges as an unifying feature from several definitions offered by researchers and professional organisations.

Sustainable supply chain management (SSCM)

The concept of SSCM has increasingly become a popular topic among both practitioners and academics, due to various factors supporting its acceptance and favouring its adoption such as stockholder requests, heightened customer expectations, governmental legislation, social pressures on corporate image and reputation, competitor pressures, environmental concerns about pollution and the scarcity of natural resources, and so forth [8-10].

During the past few decades, firms have been trying to come to an approach that simultaneously deals with the economic, social and environmental challenges associated with their supply chains [11]. The SSCM approach can furnish firms of all sizes and segments with the successful integration of social, economic and environmental considerations, which is today deemed to be a key strategic issue for competing in the growing international marketplace (12-13).

Carter and Roger (2008, p. 368) use the complementary definition of SCM and an extensive

review of the sustainability literature to introduce their definition of SSCM:

“The strategic integration and achievement of an organisation’s environmental, social and economic goals in the systematic coordination of key inter-organisational business processes for improving the long-term performance implications of the focal firm and its supply chains.”

SSCM, which is based on the sustainable development dimensions, is conceptualised and depicted in Figure 1.

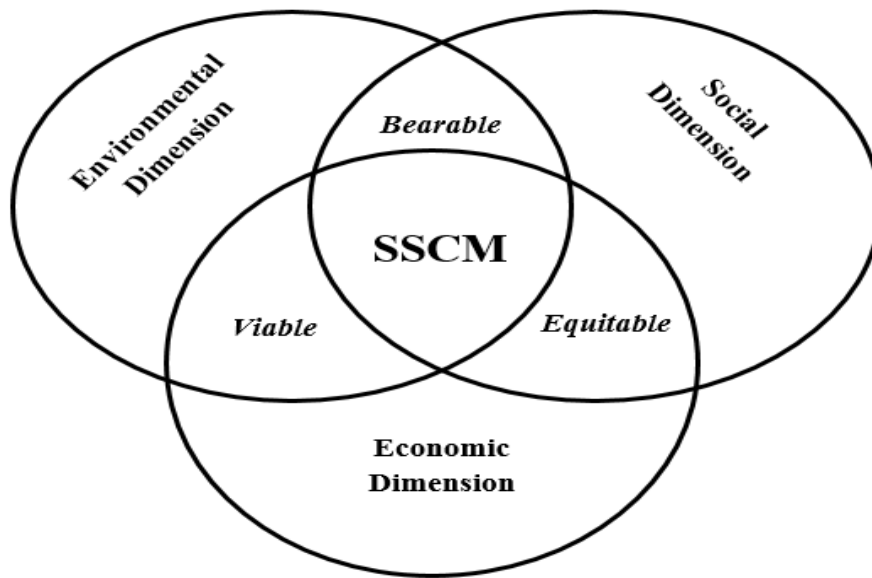


Figure 1: Conceptualization of SSCM (Carter and Rogers, 2008)

We adopted this conceptualization of SSCM, which from a holistic perspective, establishes the foundation of the sustainability notion within the supply chain context in this research. The intersection of the social, environmental and economic dimensions of this conceptualization represents a potentially powerful means of conveying what sustainability, at a broader level in general and within a supply chain setting in particular, means for an organization [11].

SSCM endeavours to undertake social and environmental activities associated with the supply chain, with a broader consideration of the firm’s overall economic objectives [14]. It directs firms to identify and engage in environmental and social activities falling inside the aforementioned intersection, which will improve or at least not harm the economic performance [11].

Overall, the environmental, social, and economic dimensions form various sub-intersections, 'bearable', 'equitable' and 'viable', and it is contended that SSCM falls into the core intersection at the centre. We argue that, from a holistic perspective, the SSCM concept simultaneously addresses environmental, social and economic objectives within the supply chain context. It represents the core intersection of the conceptualization shown in Figure 1, and causes the firm to endeavour to undertake economic, social, and environmental initiatives associated with the supply chain in a bearable, equitable and viable way [12]. Hypothetically, such bearable, equitable and viable undertakings may provide a 'win-win' opportunity with environmental protection and economic benefit [15]. This promises to allow firms to not only survive but to thrive when undertaking environmentally and socially related supply chain initiatives, as long as these undertakings follow the bearable, equitable and viable approach [11].

Background of the study

Literature frequently claims organizations and businesses need to implement initiatives towards environmental and social principles that promote sustainability [16]. Empirical analysis, evidence, case studies, and literature reviews point out that to achieve sustainable performance improvement, practices from a triple bottom line approach must be integrated along the supply chain [17, 18]. Research in emerging economies has argued sustainable solutions and managerial involvement are essential to remove losses across supply chain operations and improve business performance [19]. Demands from government regulations and stakeholder expectations have forced SSCM attention, and stimulated research to examine strategies on SSCM practices implementation in emerging economies [20].

Po-vital Role of Sustainability in Emerging Economies

The model of sustainability has also been called the "triple bottom line" (TBL), which consists of the intersection of the three components of the TBL (economic, environmental, and social) [21]. This theory appeared when it was recognized that companies focused mainly on economic topics and gave little or no consideration to their environmental and social issues. Nowadays, performance of the TBL can be sustained by firms' and their suppliers' processes and practices, listening to customers, and meeting market demands [22].

Another concept in this modern era, is the partial sustainability that can result from the intersection of two of the TBL components [23] or even just one of them being practiced. From this perspective, each dimension has its own emphasis. The environmental dimension of sustainability is related to the natural environment, which includes land, water, plants, and animals. Around the world, accomplishing environmental sustainability is observed as an urgent matter due to its direct

relationship to mankind's survival [24]. The social dimension of sustainability is related to human capital; improving this dimension involves developing and implementing practices that are fair and favorable for workers, the community, and the region where the company operates [25]. The economic dimension of sustainability is related to the economic benefits acquired by members of the chain, including the community, the region, and the nations where the operations are carried out [26].

Therefore, sustainable development has globally become an imperative objective due to its key role in economic, environmental, and social prosperity [27]. Furthermore, due to increased external pressures, organizations are required to implement sustainable practices to improve supply chain efficiency and increase competitiveness [22].

Globalization of Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Globalization and intensive world-wide competition along with the technological advancements create an entirely new business environment for the manufacturing organizations. Initially, manufacturing companies have accomplished massive productivity gains through the implementation of lean production in response to this intensifying competition. The "waste" has eliminated from many different local operations for the sake of better productivity. Currently such type of massive productivity improvements for many manufacturing organizations is very limited. Instead, there is a huge improvement potential to reduce the inefficiencies caused by the poor performance of the suppliers, unpredictable customer demands, and uncertain business environment. An integrated supply chain has a clear advantage on the competitiveness of the individual companies.

During these days SCM plays an critical role in global economies, and thus requires a comprehensive assessment, underlining the relationships between its participants [28]. As a consequence, organizations that have managed their supply chain operations have encountered ways to respond and recover from potential global risks [29]. Hence, SCM has moved to more complex scenarios, not only pursuing economic benefits but also including sustainable development in its operations [30].

As a result there has been an increasing interest about SSCM among researchers, academia, and managers [31]. Also, SSCM practices are becoming a widespread business trend for sustainable development in industry [32]. This need for sustainability achievement and improved supply chain performance in organizations has encouraged sustainable supply chain (SSC) development, which encompasses operations from a three dimensional approach (economic, social, and environmental).

Sustainable Supply Chain Management and Emerging Economies

Global markets have encouraged emerging economies to be a topic of increasing interest in sustainable supply chain operations. Although there is no general agreement on the emerging economy definition, researchers have used the emerging and developing economies concepts interchangeably [33]. These economies are characterized by their lower per capita income and business or industrial activity, limited infrastructure, similar or higher economic growth rates than developed countries [33, 34].

From a social sustainability perspective, literature has also acknowledged the relationship of social issues to business operations [5]. Tang [35] argued that corporate social responsibility was connected to supply chain operations in emerging markets. Empirical studies have examined the extent of use of supply chain management initiatives amongst businesses in developing countries, and recognized the vital part sustainability plays in their effectiveness [36, 37]. Silvestre [38] explored the case of a Brazilian oil and gas supply chain, from the focal company perspective, and how it has succeeded in transforming its chain, when implementing sustainable practices. Furthermore, Silvestre [39] provided a glance on supply chain characteristics in developing economies, by exploring sustainable practices and how these are implemented in similar economies.

Research Methods and Materials

In this section, the research methodology is defined, and the steps taken are described in the following subsections.

Sources for Data Information, Inclusion and elimination Criteria

Firstly, for the purpose of this study, a systematic literature review was chosen to be conducted, since it reduces bias and errors in the research process, by precisely defining inclusion and elimination criteria for the selection of articles. The systematic literature review process began by choosing the databases for research; due to the goal of this study and access availability, the databases that were chosen are: Elsevier, MDPI and Springer, which provide excellent peer-reviewed journals. Secondly, the period for analysis was determined. A complete decade was chosen, as it provided a good glance for the idea of the study. This also included the first months of 2021 as part of the investigation. Therefore, the analysis time frame runs from 2007 to December 2020, and includes documents written in English only. Also, the search was limited to research and review articles only, excluding books or book chapters, technical reviews, conference papers, and editorials.

Keywords and Articles Search

To find the associated articles centering on sustainable supply chain, the databases search began by article title containing the combination of words: “supply chain” and “sustainab*”. An asterisk sign was included at the end of the “sustainab” to address sustainability or sustainable topics in any combination. As a result, 820 articles were found (598 Elsevier, 131 MDPI, and 91 Springer). The next validation step was to examine the 820 articles’ title, abstract, and keywords section, for specific words related to developing countries, which included a variety of associated and combined keywords. The chosen developing countries related keywords were: “developing countr*”, “developing nation*”, “developing econom*”, “developing market*”, “emerging countr*”, “emerging econom*” and “emerging market*”. An asterisk sign was included at the end of specific words, mainly to identify singular and plural descriptions (e.g., countr*: country and countries). Thus, search strings were generated to perform the search in the database, by using simple operations and Boolean logic; resulting in 39 articles (31 Elsevier, four Springer and four MDPI); duplicated results were taken out. Table 1 shows the list of keywords, and Table 2 shows the applied search strings.

Table 1. List of keywords researched in articles.

Step	Area of Search	Keywords
1	Title	Supply chain, sustainability, sustainable
2	Title, Abstract, Keywords	Developing country, developing countries, developing nation, developing nations, developing economy, developing economies, developing market, developing markets, emerging country, emerging countries, emerging economy, emerging economies, emerging market, emerging markets

Table 2. Search strings and Boolean operators used for the research.

Step	Area of Search	Keywords	
Step	Area of Search	Search String	Articles Output (qty)
1	Title	(Supply chain &	820

		Sustainab*)	
2	Title, Abstract, Keywords	(Developing countr* OR developing nation* OR developing econom* OR developing market* OR emerging countr* OR emerging econom* OR emerging market*)	67

Selection Process and Review of Articles

Subsequently, the search was restricted to carefully read and review each of the 67 articles: Title, keywords, abstract and entire article content, focusing on the combination of sustainability and supply chain topics in emerging economies, following the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and considering the relevance of each paper to the purpose of this article, to guarantee pertinence of the study. As a result, a total of 39 papers were identified (31 Elsevier, four Springer and four MDPI) for this literature review. It is important to highlight that the main characteristics of the 09 papers taken out on this last step included: Lack of focus on emerging economies, papers not related to the critical subject of developing countries, conference papers and an editorial issue being classified as articles, documents not meeting the inclusion or exclusion criteria. Certainly, some papers mentioned in their abstract related keywords to developing countries, however they did not apply their research on this specific topic of study.

Therefore, out of 820 papers found, dated from 2007 to 2020, 39 articles are related to sustainable supply chain in emerging economies, contributing to 4.76% of the total papers.

Analysis of Articles

In this step, the 39 chosen articles were analyzed and classified according to different categories based on their characteristics and content. First, the descriptive analysis which included: Year of publication, industry sector, country of research application, and research methodologies being used. Within this analysis, the different tools and techniques being used to solve the stated problem in each paper were also classified as part of the research methodologies content examination. Second, the content analysis which included the classification of sustainability dimension or combination of dimensions being addressed, and topics being discussed. Therefore, the results of the descriptive and content analysis

provide the basis for the following research steps.

Analysis of Articles by Year of Publication

Figure-2 illustrates the distribution per year of the 39 articles. As it is shown, there is an increase in publications related to sustainable supply chain in emerging economies in the last 10 years, indicating an interest in the area. There seems to be a stable publication until 2017, it is visible there is an exponential growth in 2018. Also, it is important to point out, there are no publications between the years of 2019.

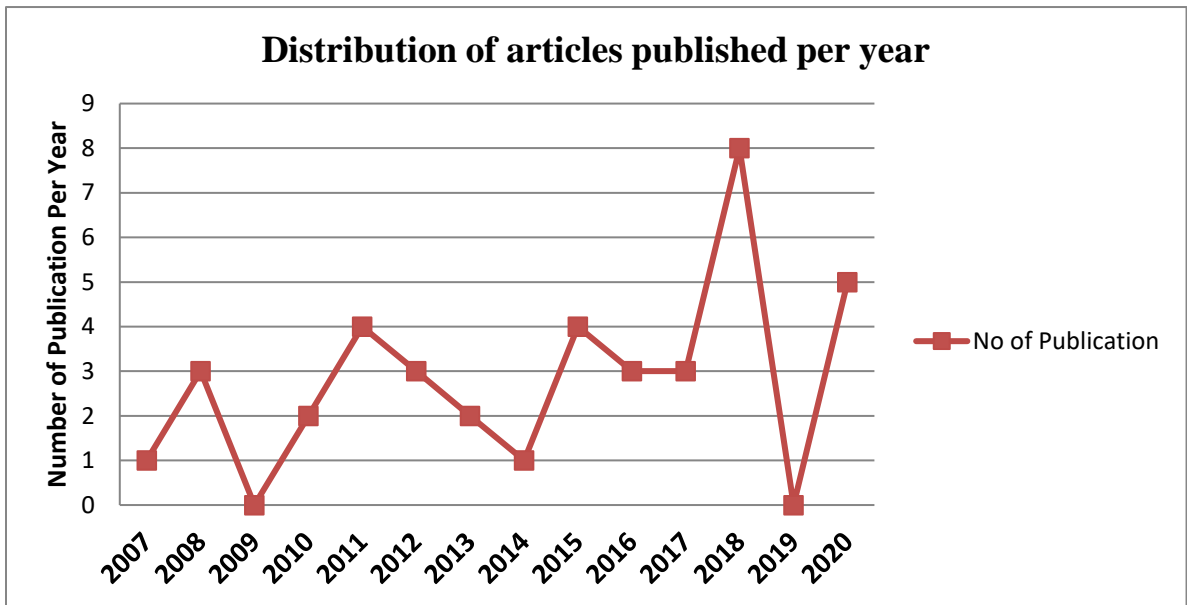


Figure 2. Distribution of articles published per year.

Analysis of Articles by Industry Classification

Figure 3 depicts the breakdown of publications assessed by industry sector. As can be seen, 14 (35.9%) of the 39 articles are focused on multiple industry sectors, followed by the manufacturing sector with 06 (15.38%) articles, the mining sector with four (10.26%) articles, the agriculture sector with three (7.69%) articles, and the remaining papers include a variety of different industry sectors (30.77 percent). Manufacturing's position as the second most investigated industry could be attributable to the triple bottom line, which has become a critical component of company management.

Table 3: Industry Classification

S.No.	Industry Classification	No of Publication	%
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1	Multiple Sector	14	35.90
2	Manufacturing	6	15.38
3	Mining	4	10.26
4	Agriculture Business	3	7.69
5	Human Health	2	5.13
6	No Specific Sector	2	5.13
7	Electricity & Gas	2	5.13
8	Retail Sector	2	5.13
9	Water Supply & Waste management	2	5.13
10	Construction	2	5.13
	Total	39	100

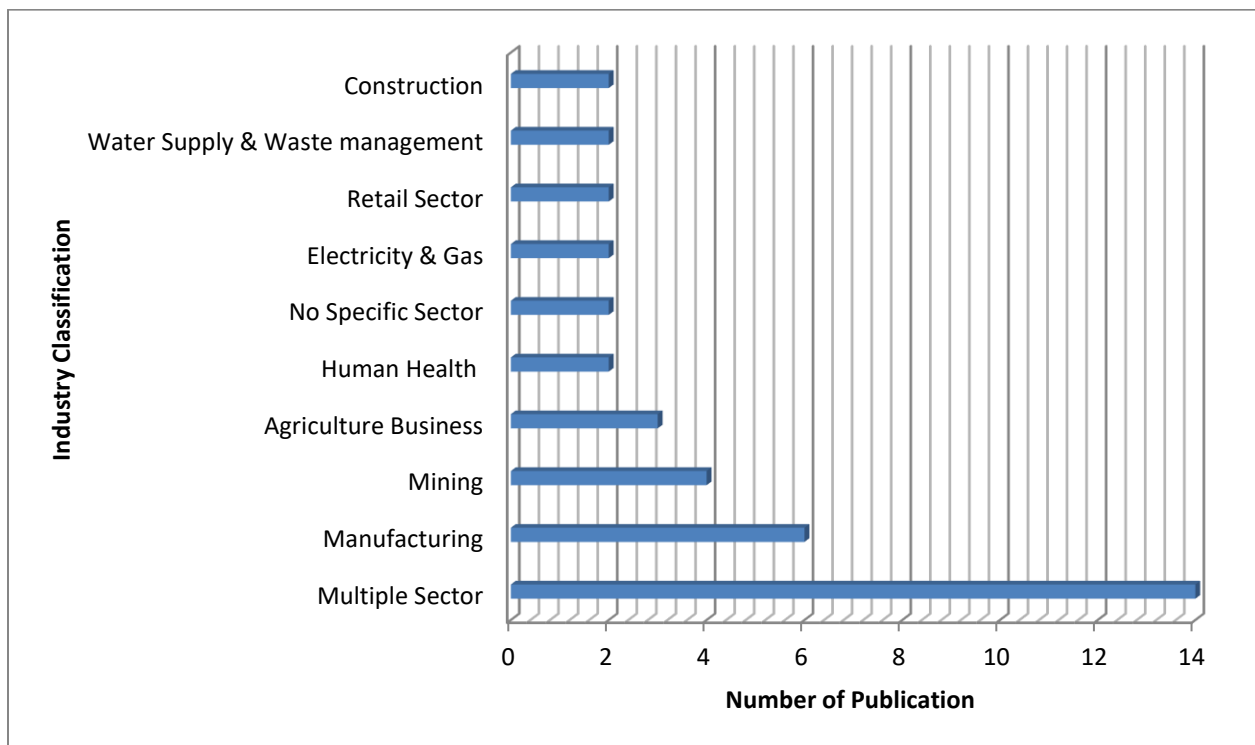


Figure 3. Distribution of articles published by Industry Classification

Analysis of Research Methodologies

Table 4 shows the research approaches used to investigate sustainable supply chains in emerging economies; empirical studies account for 53.85% of total articles, while case studies account for 23.08 percent. It is vital to note that interviews and surveys are commonly used to acquire information. Mathematical and systematic literature reviews, on the other hand, accounted for 15.38 percent and 7.69 percent of papers, respectively.

Table 4: Research Methodology

S. No.	Research Methodology	Number of Papers	%
1	Empirical Model/Analysis	21	53.85
2	Case Study	9	23.08
3	Methodological, Analytical, Mathematical	6	15.38
4	Systematic literature review	3	7.69
	Total	39	100

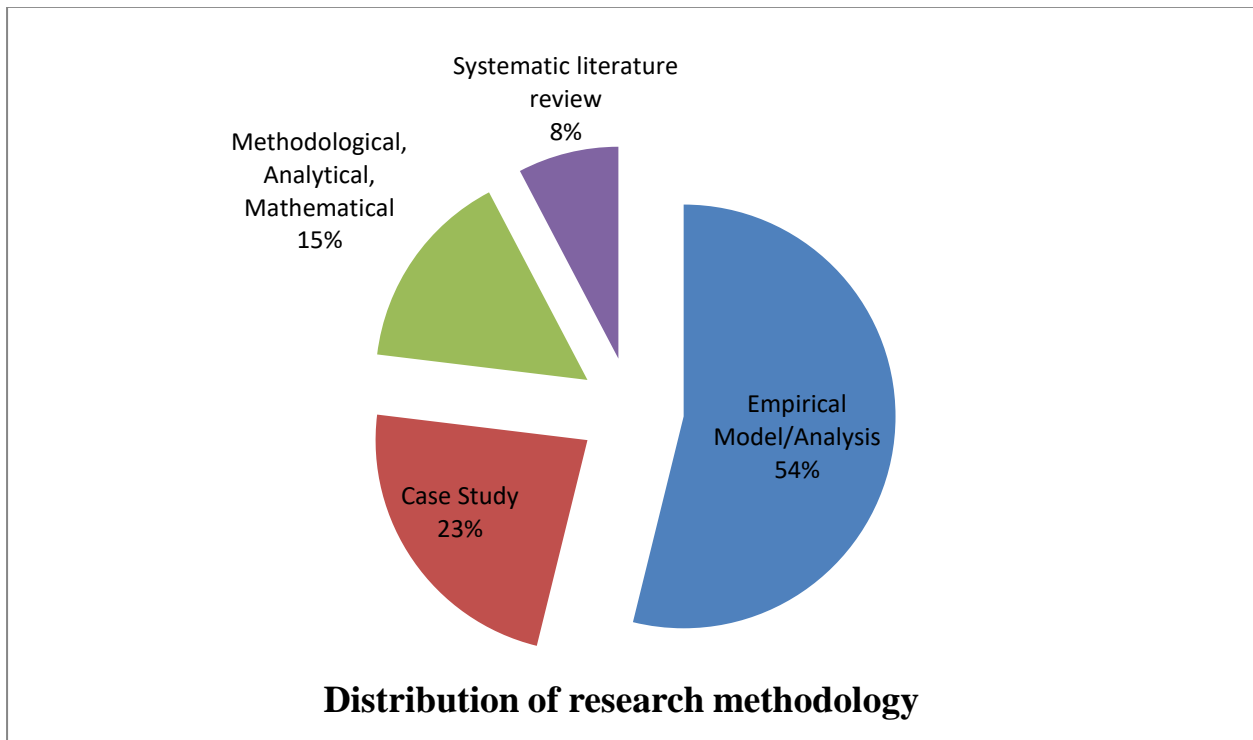


Figure 4. Distribution of articles by research methodology

Distribution of Article with respect to Sustainable Dimensions

For the investigation, the idea of sustainability in all three dimensions has been universally recognised. As a result, the publications were categorised based on the sustainable strategy being investigated. Figure 5 depicts the article distribution in terms of the sustainable strategy. The sustainable economic dimensions are shown in 54% of these papers, followed by the environmental and social dimensions, which are shown in 15% and 31% of these articles, respectively, indicating that they play a major role in research.

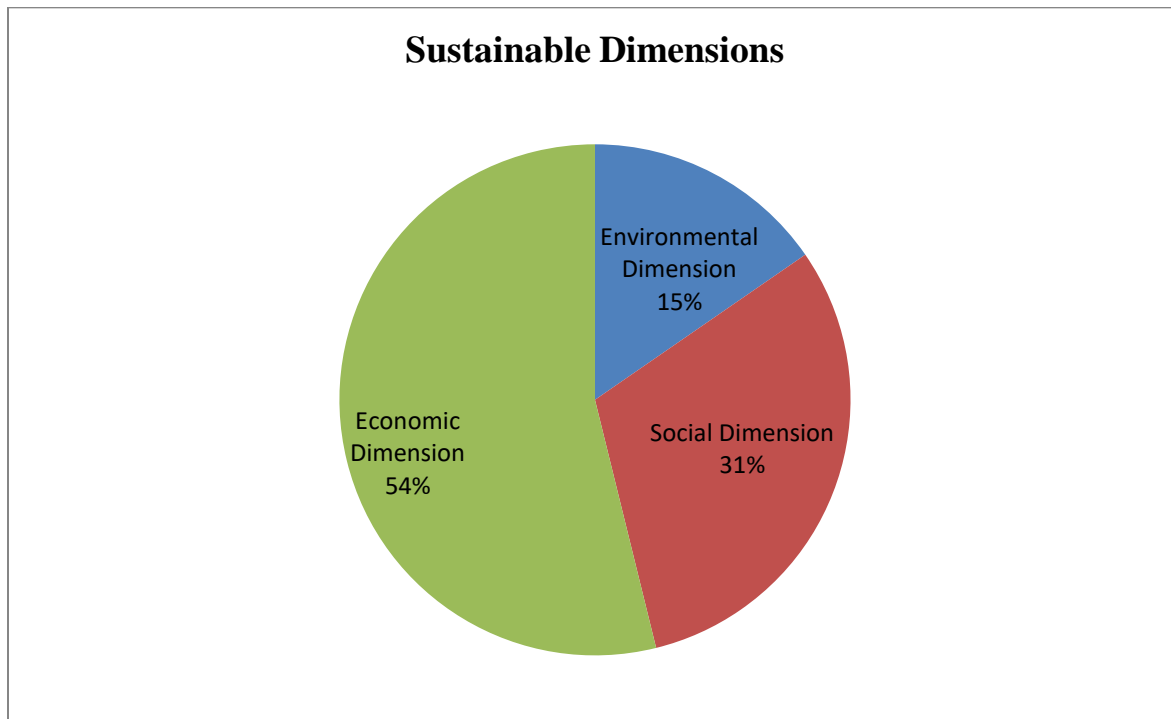


Figure 5. Distribution of Article with respect to Sustainable Dimensions

Key Findings

Researchers have steadily been more aware of and interested in sustainable supply networks in emerging economies; nonetheless, study findings show that, despite their importance in global marketplaces, many supply chain stakeholders are unfamiliar with the notion of a sustainable supply chain [40].

Empirical research approaches dominate the research on SSCM in emerging nations, accounting for 54 percent of the 39 articles. To address research questions, articles use a hybrid technique approach. For

data gathering and analysis, researchers used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Thirty-six percent of the studies are conducted in multiple sectors, as it gives a more general idea on SSCM in emerging economies.

Conclusions

In recent years, SSCM research in emerging economies has begun and progressed, but it is still in its early phases when compared to research in developed countries. By conducting a literature review of articles published in various databases over the last decade, this study intends to add to the field's expertise. This literature review presents a supply chain integrative method targeted at assuring long-term performance improvement. According to this report, sustainable supply chains are expanding into new sectors, such as the utilisation of new technologies and resources on a global scale. The creation of resilient grounds, as well as the installation of integrated systems, all have a direct impact on developing market operations and performance.

Scope for Future Research

It might be argued that sustainable development has evolved into a term that incorporates more than just economic considerations, as it also takes into account environmental effect, resource usage, and social implications. As a result, this paper informs readers about the current status of research in the field of emerging country sustainability while also making recommendations for future research. In order to achieve a truly sustainable balance in emerging economies, it is necessary to address the context of developing countries in supply chain management, to emphasize the social importance of operations, and to investigate the interconnections between the three dimensions within a supply chain.

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