



BUSINESS SCHOOL

Identifying service sourcing risk mitigation strategies for service supply chains in the aftermath of Covid-19

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Project Description:

As the world economy is becoming increasingly service oriented, service businesses' activities and the service transactions within and between different entities have grown significantly (Wang et al., 2015; Giannakis, 2011; Arlbjørn et al., 2011), and this have drawn the attention from both scholars and practitioners. Service Supply Chain (SSC) is defined by Baltacioglu et al. (2007, p.112) as "*...the network of suppliers, service providers, consumers and other supporting units that performs the functions of transaction of resources required to produce services; transformation of these resources into supporting and core services; and the delivery of these services to customers.* As any other supply chain, SSCs faces uncertainties from supply and demand side due to several risks. The World Economic Forum annual releases a global risks report that might cause great impacts on global SCs (WEF, 2022). Identifying such risks and the potential mitigation strategies for them are critical to theory and practice, especially to respond to unprecedented disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Major supply chain risks (*e.g.* transportation failures, supply shortages, and demand fluctuations) have been reported by companies as a result of the recent COVID-19 pandemic (Ali et al., 2022; Ivanov & Dolgui, 2020; Sharma et al., 2020). However, some industries tend to be more exposed to supply chain risks than others (Berg et al., 2020; ILO, 2020). This is the case of those embedded in SSCs (Belhadi, et al. 2021), considering the wide range of service characteristics, including its intangible and perishable nature (Baltacioglu et al., 2007; Ellram et al., 2004).

Although there has been a scholar interest in supply chain risk management (SCRM) in the service context, especially post COVID-19 (*e.g.* Hohenstein, 2022; Belhadi, et al. 2021; Ajmal et al. 2021), particular focus has not been devoted to SSCs risks and mitigation strategies by covering different service sectors. Thus, the aim of this project is twofold:

- a) identify and classify the sourcing risks for SSCs, in the context of different service sectors such as tourism, healthcare, education, logistics and professional services;
- b) determine the relevant sourcing risk mitigation strategies, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Thus, the research objectives of this project are:

- To examine if current sourcing strategies might be applicable to the service businesses as they are, or do they need to be adapted for service supply chains, especially post COVID-19,
- To determine viable sourcing risk mitigation strategies for the members of service networks and service supply chains in the aftermath of COVID-19,
- To develop a service supply chain performance measurement system in the context of sourcing risk mitigation.

Proposed methodology:

The proposed methodology can be based on multiple case studies from different service sectors such as tourism, healthcare, education, logistics and professional services, to identify and explore key SSC risks and the relevant mitigation strategies. This will allow for a mixed-method approach using a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques since it is well structured and justified. Data can be collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, field observations, survey questionnaire, and/or archival data. You will be based on the Department of People and Organisations, Business School.

Research impact

By addressing the present research gap, results of this project will provide useful and timely guidance to service business managers by highlighting key service sourcing risk mitigation strategies in the aftermath of COVID-19, additionally to clarify best ways to implement them and show their contribution to the SSC economy.

Proposals should provide a justification on how this aim can be successfully achieved, along with its impact and potential to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in the ever-growing service supply chain field.

About the Supervisors:

Dr Ozgur Yurt's research interests are service supply chains, buyer-supplier relations, service networks, food supply chains and sustainable supply chains, procurement management, and business to business marketing.

Dr Carla Pereira's research interest covers the area of risk, resilience, and sustainability in supply chain, food supply chain, humanitarian operations, lean thinking and urban resilience.

Dr Nicoleta Tipi's research interests are supply chain design, supply chain complexity, analytics and modelling in supply chains and supply chain performance measurement systems.

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