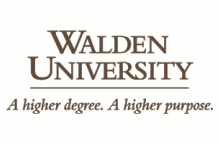

2020

Achieving Profitability in Global Small Business Supply Chain Management

Cheryl A. McCloud
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Cheryl McCloud

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Lisa Cave, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Carol-Anne Faint, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Robert Banasik, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

Achieving Profitability in Global Small Business Supply Chain Management

by

Cheryl McCloud

MS, DeVry University, 2016

BA, Old Dominion University, 1996

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April 2020

Abstract

Supply chain managers of small and medium-sized enterprises face cost inefficiencies in meeting human, physical, and technology capital requirements. Small and medium-sized enterprise supply chain managers who fail to implement cost-efficiency strategies risk jeopardizing profitability. Grounded in the chaos theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the successful strategies SME supply chain managers used to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable. Participants were 3 corporate supply chain managers of a small and medium-sized international enterprise located in central Florida who were successful at creating cost efficiencies to remain profitable. The data collection process included face-to-face interviews, a review of documentation, and physical artifacts. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data with 4 themes emerging to include leadership and organizational culture, visibility, policies and processes, and production and product sourcing. A key recommendation is that leaders fully embrace and work with department managers to implement strategies that integrate the development of all departments to ensure total organizational success. When small and medium-sized enterprises prosper, community economic conditions thrive, changing lives, homes, individuals, and communities.

Achieving Profitability in Global Small Business Supply Chain Management

by

Cheryl McCloud

MS, DeVry University, 2016

BA, Old Dominion University, 1996

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April 2020

Dedication

This research is dedicated to God from whom all blessings, honor and glory are realized as he is the one who places the desires in our hearts that ultimately allow us to create what he desires to give hope and a future to all mankind.

Acknowledgments

I am thankful to my chairperson Dr. Lisa Cave for her consistent support, encouragement, direction and guidance making this journey a pleasure through the difficult times. I would also like to thank my mother, Mrs. Pat McCloud who instilled in me as a child that all things are possible with the help of God. Finally, my friends and family members who believed in me and wished me well during this process.

Table of Contents

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Leaders of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face many challenges in global supply chain management (SCM) due to a lack of strong channel partners, unskilled labor, technology, access to finances, government roadblocks, regulations, and corruption, which all affect growth and profitability (Beske, Land, & Seuring, 2014). SME leaders need to have cost-effective SCM that supports flexibility, forecasting, resource planning, and reduced inventory for growth and competitive advantage (Chin, Hamid, Bakar, Rasil, & Baharun, 2012). Leaders in SCM can transform organizational processes with strategic planning to make better use of resources and assets to increase product demand, shareholder value, and profits (Wisner, Tan, & Leong, 2015). The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the strategies that supply chain managers of SMEs involved in global businesses implemented to create cost efficiencies and remain profitable.

Background of the Problem

Organizational leaders are always looking for new ways to enhance market entry by using a variety of approaches that incorporate technology, human skills, negotiation, partnerships, and production changes (World Economic Forum, 2017a). As a result of changing global market conditions and the opening of new markets, organizational leaders need to increase their control over costs to ensure robust economic stability against shifting global risks (World Economic Forum, 2017a). The current fluctuations in trade agreements, tariff rate changes, regulatory requirements, political events, and environmental issues have led to added chaos in an already chaotic global market, and

agile leadership is necessary to ensure the growth and survival of SMEs (Gweh, 2018). Supply chain managers of SMEs need strategies that include access to new approaches, new markets, and new technology to compete effectively in a global environment.

Strategic SCM market conditions require rapid decision-making demanding immediate visibility to avoid increased costs (Melnyk, Narasimhan, & DeCampos, 2013). SCM affects every aspect of the organization, demanding organizational leaders create innovative ways to meet the demands for changing global market conditions (Cannella, Canizares, & Ponte, 2018). Changing strategies bring both opportunities and challenges. The aim of this study was to evaluate how SCM managers of SMEs overcome human, physical, and technology operational disadvantages to take advantage of cost efficiencies and improve profitability.

Problem Statement

Owners of SMEs are challenged to maintain profitability due to the cost of meeting human, physical, and technology capital requirements (Bayramov et al., 2017). SMEs constitutes 40% of global economies and account for 95% of all firms but face a higher degree of risk in achieving global market gains (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2018). The general business problem was that SME supply chain managers who do not create cost efficiencies in human, physical, and technological expenses experienced lost profits. The specific business problem was that some SME supply chain managers lacked successful strategies to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the successful strategies SME supply chain managers used to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable. The targeted population consisted of three corporate supply chain managers of an international SME located in central Florida who have successfully implemented strategies to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable. The implications for social change included the potential for SME supply chain managers to learn about strategies to create cost efficiencies, thereby improving the profitability of their companies. SMEs that increase profitability may increase cash flow and contribute to economic growth in communities and the concomitant creation of jobs for individuals.

Nature of the Study

Qualitative researchers explore a phenomenon using the collection of data pertaining to a specific theme that connects ideas to determine how to create the right framework or design to support studies' conclusions (Mariotto, Zanni, & Marcondes De Moraes, 2014). I used the qualitative method to explore derivative themes that emerged from my study of the successful strategies. Researchers use the quantitative method to test theories or hypotheses by examining the relationships among variables (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). I did not use a quantitative method and did not test theories or hypotheses to examine successful strategies used by supply chain managers of SMEs to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable. Mixed method researchers use both qualitative and quantitative methods to apply inductive, deductive, predictable, and pragmatic

approaches for the development of generalized findings (Yin, 2018). Accordingly, the mixed method and quantitative methods were not appropriate for this study.

Researchers use a qualitative case study design to explore events, organizations, entities, or individuals using reporting and observation procedures to find answers to research questions (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). I used a single qualitative case study design to explore complex issues in the study of how supply chain managers of SME develop and deploy strategies for cost efficiencies and profitability and the reasons for difficulties in the decision-making process. Researchers use single case studies to apply a flexible approach to data collection in order to explore a problem in a single industry sector (Laurin & Fantazy, (2017). I used a single case study to conduct an in-depth exploration of the successful strategies of SCM managers within a single SME international company. The case study approach offers critical testing validity for theory building in the research process that is underutilized, and opportunities to prior inaccessible scientific observations that can support significant advances and findings (Yin, 2018). Researchers use an ethnographic design to describe the behavior and patterns of a larger group (Astalin, 2013), which was not the objective of this study. Researchers use a phenomenological design to study the perceptions, attitudes, and lived experiences of a specific group of participants about a specific occurrence (Padilla-Diaz, 2015), which was not the objective of this study.

Research Question

What successful strategies did SME supply chain managers use to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable?

Interview Questions

1. What successful strategies did you use to create cost efficiencies within your supply chain to remain profitable?
2. How did you determine the best strategies for creating supply chain cost efficiencies to remain profitable?
3. What strategies were not successful for creating cost efficiencies to remain profitable?
4. What key barriers did your organization encounter with the implementation of strategies for creating cost efficiencies to remain profitable?
5. How did your organization overcome these key barriers?
6. What additional information regarding strategies for creating cost-efficient supply chains to remain profitable would you like to share that we have not already discussed?

Conceptual Framework

The supply chain is comprised of many complex channel networks and relationships critical to organizational success (Sanial, 2014). Storey and Emberson (2006) noted that a formal theory is lacking to support managers challenged by performance and profitability requirements in the strategic planning process when entering the global market (Storey & Emberson, 2006). Accordingly, I selected the chaos theory as the conceptual framework for the study. Dr. Edward Lorenz published the original principles of the chaos theory as it applied to the natural sciences (Lorenz, 1963). The chaos theory has impacted and influenced multiple events and views including the

study of SCM. In sociology, chaos is a metaphor for how an individual in a system, through lack of knowledge and understanding, can make wrong decisions that creates chaos, and how a change in one small factor in SCM can change long-term outcomes. In the business world, chaos happens when unpredictability in patterns and behaviors affect a leader's vision, direction, and relationships (Wilding, 1998). Chaos theory was a lens to explore how SME supply chain managers assessed and responded to supply chain complexities to develop successful strategies to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable.

Operational Definitions

Chaos: Chaos describes how random disorder of even the smallest changes in a single variable can impact production and supply demands affecting costs and profitability (Wilding, 1998).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): Small and medium-sized enterprises are independent firms led by a diverse population of entrepreneurs employing up to 250 employees (OECD, 2018).

Strategic planning: Strategic planning is a growing practice that is purpose-driven in many industries using collaborated designs with deliberate actions and decisions involving top management to drive and enhance organizational market position, growth, and revenues (Ugboro, Obeng, & Spann, 2010).

Supply chain channels: Supply chain channels are the network of relationships between partners that create financial risk and innovation opportunities that enable shipping and production to be timely, avoid supplier failure, and relieve stress building

healthy collaborative end-to-end supply (Fawcett, McCarter, Fawcett, Webb, & Magnan, 2015).

Supply chain economies: Supply chain economies link technologies through innovation affecting global industries driving performance, innovation, services, manufacturing, and co-location of external economies (Delgado & Mills, 2018).

Supply chain management (SCM): SCM involves multiple players and activities requiring collaboration to create a value-chain through effective management to gain competitive advantage (Fan & Stevenson, 2018).

Supply chain manager: Someone who is the leader of a supply chain department and has the ability to make and implement decisions requiring collaboration and linking of the organizational activities internally and externally with partners, employees, customers, and suppliers (Abreu & Alcantara, 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In the following subsections, I outline the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations concerning the research study. The primary assumption was that SCM managers of SMEs want to participate and that the input provided a contribution to the industry through a published academic document. The second assumption presents an opportunity for the study results to encourage SCM managers in SMEs to develop strategies creating opportunities for stronger cost efficiencies and added profitability.

Assumptions

Researchers make assumptions about conditions based on an individual understanding of situations without evidence (Schoenung & Dikova, 2016). First, I

assumed that a qualitative single case was the appropriate methodology for exploring the research question. Second, I assumed that the participants answered the questions truthfully. Finally, I assumed that participants had the knowledge, interest, and understanding of the risks in the supply chain process to provide responses that contributed information of relevance to my research question.

Limitations

Limitations are the analysis of potential weaknesses in the research methods to determine advantages or disadvantages in the analysis of the phenomena (Queiros, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). Limitations are elements outside the researcher's control and can threaten the validity of the study (Smith & Noble, 2014). A limitation is the potential for participants to withhold vital information in the interview process that could be critical to the success of the conclusion creating gaps in the final data analysis. It is possible that these limitations rendered the findings of the study not useful to small businesses in other industries or that the findings were not generalizable to all businesses in all regions.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries established by the researcher for a study (Lynggaard, Manners, & Lofgren, 2015). Delimitations define the scope of the study to help the researcher gain-in-depth knowledge of the specific research under observation (Lynggaard et al., 2015). In this research, I limited the scope to SCM managers of SMEs and explored the successful strategies used to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable. Additionally, I interviewed and observed a single company in Florida with unique supply chain dynamics, which posed a level of geographic delimitation.

Significance of the Study

The study of SMEs in global SCM is important due to constant changes in the environment, prices, politics, government, and regulations. Managers are tasked with addressing the changes to improve pricing, competition, and distribution. Newer models are needed in the development of SCM strategies to support changing consumer demands to contribute to SMEs survival in a highly competitive global economy (Kumar, Singh, & Shankar, 2015). The results of this study provide insight into how some SME managers have been more successful than others through the analysis of various strategies developed that ensure profitability.

Contribution to Business Practice

SCM managers of SME may not understand the various issues that can affect their success or how to develop strategies to effectively compete and create financial advantages for continued growth, opportunity, and profitability. Strategies impact how goods are bought, sold, and/or distributed. Results of the study contributed to the development of strategies that provide SME managers with new ways to improve the many complex elements involved in SCM that drive higher profits and strengthen market competitive advantage.

Implications for Social Change

Corporate leaders must work to balance business decisions with positive social impacts. Rosi, Cvahte, and Jereh (2013) described the influence on corporate responsibility as the *triple bottom line* of "people, planet, profit". The triple effect of global decision-making can directly affect individuals, the environment, and ultimately,

business profits. Silvestre (2016) explored the concept of the *love of mankind* by taking the idea of the triple bottom line beyond the standard considerations of labor, health, and safety for the creation of improved efforts addressing the most significant opportunities for SMEs in the development of global economic growth that affects individuals and their impact on society. SME supply chain managers who increase profitability may increase cash flow and contribute to economic growth in communities and the concomitant creation of jobs for individuals.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The research problem and the purpose of the study are to understand how SME managers dealt with challenges in global SCM that affected profitability. The research question I addressed was what strategies SME retail supply chain managers used in SCM to remain profitable. Bayramov et al. (2017) stated that SMEs are key to the development of innovation and discoveries that drive global economic growth. I reviewed various theories and strategies that offered insight into why some organizational leaders were capable of increasing profitability while others struggled in the management of global supply chains.

The evolution of global retail SCM has given rise to new trends that require stronger ethics and humanitarian considerations that embrace all aspects of humanity linking sustainability and profitability (Lee & Rammohan, 2016). I used a qualitative single case study to identify observations, research, and information about the strategies that SCM managers of SMEs used to create cost efficiencies and remain profitable.

Strategy for Searching the Literature

I used the Walden Library database, ProQuest, Sage books and journals, multiple other scholar works from various global universities, scholarly journal articles, and multiple sources of electronic media. I reviewed 186 peer-reviewed references, 85% of which were published within 5 years of CAO approval date. I used keyword searches such as *global compliance, technology in SCM, innovation, SCM strategies, social impact of SCM, collaboration, SCM theories, corporate social responsibility, SCM profitability, Chaos theory, global management, economic predictions, logistics contract relationships and performance, procurement, the future of transport and retail, supply chain design, e-commerce,* and *the 4th industrial revolution in SCM,* including all pertinent subjects supporting research development concerning profitability as it relates to global SCM.

Chaos Theory

In 1961, Edward Lorenz presented the origin of the chaos theory phenomenon as a nonlinear chaotic system in weather conditions based on science and mathematics (Oestreicher, 2007). In 1975, James A. Yorke named the system the chaos theory (Oestreicher, 2007). Researchers apply chaos theory in SCM to understand why the creation of strategies is critical for systems to avoid chaos. Unstable events occur in logistic systems involving activities that can result in dysfunction due to incorrect decisions based on wrong data leading to chaos. Managers without strategic plans to control overreaction typically observe lower organization profitability (Wilding, 1998). Rzeczyski (2012) discussed the need for rationality in management for decision-making

to avoid chaos and develop SCM systems that focus on short-term forecasts by re-engineering strategies that support changing environments. Wilding (1998) introduced the idea of supply chain complexity as a triangle of interactions that produce uncertainty continually, not only between organizational leaders but also in how supply chains compete (Christopher, 1992). Supply chains are dynamic, change, move, and evolve. Organizational leaders respond to the dynamic nature of supply chains by using strategies that are agile and allow for proportional change and reactions to avoid disruptions and achieve sustainability and longevity (Rzeczyski, 2012).

The word *chaos* is a metaphor describing how individuals and groups in a system, through lack of knowledge and understanding, make decisions that create chaos (Rivera et al., 2007). Researchers use chaos theory to explain how a change in one variable can affect systems, deliveries, destinations, product structures, origins, and packing requirements that result in delays, increased costs, loss of goods, loss of customers, and loss of quality (Stapleton, Hanna, & Ross, 2006). Continuous major market disruptions have evolved from linear to complex with constant change creating chaos in leadership decisions and management strategies. Global SME managers are required to lead in times of unpredictability, macrotrends, chaos, unstable and volatile markets, and destabilization, using ethics and protecting the privacy of individuals.

The unique application of the chaos theory in the framework of SCM demonstrates how the process of decision-making affects relationships between supply chain variables impacting many areas of strategy, channel relationships, and costs (Michelman, 2016). Researchers and managers use chaos theory to identify conditions

within a system that creates disruption. SME supply chain managers apply the chaos theory to understand why the creation of strategies is critical to avoid chaos (Rzeczyski, 2012). Supply chain managers can apply chaos theory to SCM to support approaches in management decisions that explain how behavior can create unstable variables in operations that impact profitability (Rzeczyski, 2012).

Management overreaction on a behavioral level and, at times, with the use of wrong information creates mistrust, competitive leadership responses, and unnecessary interventions, all leading to further chaos and elevated distrust at leadership levels. Researchers use the trust-based rationalism theory to focus on collaboration and explore how trust is critical in the establishment of relationships. Organizational leaders build trust and establish relationships instead of monitoring employees and, in return, reduce costs and add economic value. Leaders that build trust can also add value through other indirect methods like reduced contracts based on behavior that enforces trustworthiness (Cao & Zhang, 2013). Trust is critical to avoid chaos and explore how the combination of various theories are needed to create strategies that align with processes that control and create efficiencies for organizational success and profitability.

In 1985, Michael Porter introduced the Porter theory to advance the concept of competitive strategy involving competition of industries, new entrants, product substitution threats, and the power of suppliers and customers for strategic value chain advantage and strategy development (Porter & Millar, 1985). The Porter theory in the development of customers, markets, and organizational benefits still impacts current innovative strategy developments. Porter and Millar (1985) recognized at the onset the

impact automation would have on competition, particularly with a model that incorporates evolving global effects. Porter incorporated within the five forces model every aspect of the supply chain and described how strategic alignment with technology creates a competitive advantage (Porter & Millar, 1985). Porter and Miller showed how the use of information extracted from big data technological developments has revolutionized how organizational structures cross industry lines, compete with rivals, and create strategies and business models.

No one theory in SCM covers all aspects of the industry as the use of many theoretical processes supports various models needed in this complex global business environment. Theorist Ronald Coase created the transaction cost economics (TCE) model in 1937 (Coase, 1960). Oliver Williamson refined the theory in 1975 (Fredkind, 2014). Both Coase and Fredkind discussed how distribution efficiency and costs affected risk, the environment, and currency. Theorist Jay Barney, the founder of the resource-based view in 1991, incorporated the transfer of knowledge capabilities and competitive advantage and supported the development of trust and mutual commitment to supply chain partners (Halldorsson, Katzab, Mikkola, & Skjott-Larsen, 2007). Stephen Ross and Barry Mitnick founded the principal-agent theory in 1976 based on performance measurement incentives and believed that the contracts in supply chains influenced partner positions and interests (Guston, 1996). Each of these theories has essential elements, and when researchers combine the different elements, each theory provides crucial aspects necessary to analyze behavioral assumptions, problems, relationships, and

partner interest required to ensure the most valuable framework for the management of the many complex issues that arise in SCM.

Supply chain managers, with added incorporated theories such as the relational view, resource dependence theory, and social exchange theory, added learning and knowledge perspectives to support individual strengths and weaknesses in SCM. The use of multiple theories supports expanded knowledge, trust, communication, cooperation, and sharing of resources, which are all vital to SCM success (Cao & Zhang, 2013). Cao and Zhang (2013) identified 10 theories and theoretical frameworks in supply chain collaboration, uncertainty reduction theory, transaction cost economics, resource-based view, relational dilemma theory, trust-based rationalism, and learning and knowledge perspective. For each theory, Cao and Zhang provided strengths and weaknesses in nature, norms, contents, and forces. Cao and Zhang further added that researchers who integrated each theory provided increased trust and diminished the need for tighter controls and monitoring. Members in a real partnership build collaboration between their skills and knowledge to improve their competitive advantage. Ziaullah, Feng, and Akhter (2015) stated that the supply chain is a "competitive weapon" in the global arena requiring collaboration and partnerships for competitive gains to understand its power and position for profitability. Partners using the social exchange theory obtain benefits such as collaborative power and social influence from interorganizational relationships as noncontractual benefits (Cao & Zhang, 2013). Partners who learn, develop knowledge, and build trust through communication lead to strength, cooperation, and cocreation of value that aligns goals, incentives, sharing of resources, and exchange of knowledge (Cao

& Zhang, 2013). Collaborative cultures are robust and vital in the supply chain process for success.

Severe global market changes require that managers and operational executives develop unique and new ways of thinking about SCM concepts, theories, and methods requiring the use of forward-thinking ideas (Magner & Yadau, 2017). Carter, Kosmol, and Kaufmann (2017) offered a theory of supply chain practice view (SCPV) with a combination of resource-based, relational view, practice-based view theories. Carter et al. created a more robust method towards SCM practices through inter organizational practices that provide market inimitability. An obvious concern is how managers who use multiple theories lack communication in the links. The lack of communication creates problems that results in other competitors gaining control and stipulates the importance of collaboration for a competitive advantage. Fredkind (2014) discussed how researchers struggle in the choice of a specific theory to apply to a study due to the many concepts and ideas available, noting the most used TCE. Researchers provide a critical evaluation of theories like TCE as a scientific theory which is not isolated from social influence allowing for co-evolution with other theories. Researchers use TCE in combination with other theories and examine a more significant phenomenon for maximizing the integration of specialized capabilities for increased efficiencies in SCM. Although communication is critical, it is also integral for managers to know what to share, to whom, when, and how to ensure market control for competitive advantage.

I chose the chaos theory due to the sufficiency of the theory as supply chain managers of SMEs are forced to make decisions knowing they might have to modify

direction at any point but that a strategy for an end destination is still absolute. Flexibility is critical, and at the same time, speed is essential. The combination of changing elements is creating a state of chaos at every level in operations for SCM managers of SME. It is predicted that by 2030 current business platforms will dramatically change with new and advanced technologies becoming mainstream. An example is the Internet of Things (IoT) which is used to connect both government and private sectors allowing an exchange of data and information (Magner & Yadau, 2017).

Organizational leaders can work to correct chaos by creating short-term forecasts that allow for short-term decision-making and focus on the customer (Rzeczyski, 2012). Organizational leaders can re-engineer models that are more flexible and adjust to changing environments to provide for greater human interference to help avoid unpredictable chaos that adds costs to the bottom line, therefore, affecting profitability. When changes in complex supply chains occur, and leaders enforce controlled reactions, proper forecasting allows for system changes that produce optimal results controlling costs that using system efficiencies add to profitability. The complexity and threats while difficult to avoid offer organizational leaders the opportunity to learn, discover, create changes, and innovate in the process (Wilding, 1998). Organizational leaders who apply lean approaches with strong communication channels interchangeable with technological systems that provide high visibility increase performance and avoid issues that increase disruption and chaotic spikes in operations. Therefore, changing business models in current management roadmaps and the impact of digitalization require balanced decision-making critical to managing chaos (Michelman, 2016).

History and the Fourth Industrial Revolution

The supply chain has evolved since the 1950s resulting in different challenges and benefits (Lu, 2011). The 1970's SCM models were based on unit cost and resource management, the 1980's models focused on competitive pricing leading to lower product costs, and the 1990's models moved towards relationship management as the essential factor (Lu, 2011). Large and small organizational leaders now require a knowledge-based infrastructure to remain successful and competitive as enhanced technology and global competitiveness lead to a more complex global systems change affecting the flow of goods (Alawneh, Abuali, & Almarabeh, 2009). Since the 1990s, combined aspects of previously fragmented specializations of logistics have led to total capsulation of all the elements now referred to as *supply chain management* (Lu, 2011). Organizational leaders consider the supply chain a competitive weapon in market growth and opportunities (Ziaullah et al., 2015).

There may be many different definitions of SCM, all of the definitions involve linking many different parts to make up the entire process (Naslund & Williamson, 2010). Sourcing, procurement, customer relations, distribution, manufacturing, marketing, product innovation, and laws and regulations of hundreds of countries create large links that cross and connect global trade SCM. In return company leaders must consider constant re-engineering of critical information for evaluation with the added complexities of demanding and changing technology and social considerations adding further complications to the management process (Attaran, 2004).

Chaos and turbulence in SCM leadership require the creation of both reactive and proactive strategies to combat changes due to risks with lack of visibility, network complexity, and increased uncertainty (Durach, Wieland, & Machuca, 2015). The fourth industrial revolution will bring new technological breakthroughs transforming business as new trends are disrupting the world (World Economic Reform, 2017a). The first industrial revolution occurred in 1760 with the invention of steam engines, the second in the 1900s with the invention of combustion engines, and the third in 1960 with oil and electricity (De Vries, 1994). In 2000, the fourth revolution began, which is still rapidly changing at a historical rate due to technology growth in the IoT's, 3D printing, and artificial intelligence (AI) all offering opportunities and challenges (World Economic Reform, 2017). The fourth industrial revolution is changing governance, management, and production, shaping and improving quality of life, and creating challenges in cybersecurity, income inequality, and ethical dilemmas (Schwab, 2017). Changing demands will require the addition of 1.4 million new supply chain jobs to support the solutions needed for complex problems and new technologies in global supply chain logistics in 2018 (Fisher, 2014). Knowledgeable and highly skilled workers must not only understand the complexities of forecasting, the positioning of products but also how to develop relationships with business partners that ensure success (Gunasekaran, Subramanian, & Rahman, 2017). Consumers are transforming the future of SCM by leading the demand in production, distribution concerning quality, product, and expectations and how innovation and technology play a role in the buying experience (Xu, David, & Kim, 2018).

De-globalization is taking place due to politics, economics, and financial changes while technology is impacting logistics, environment, jobs, and supply chain models. In 1998, China's gap in manufacturing has fallen forcing new shifts in manufacturing considerations along with the rise of global transportation costs (World Economic Forum, 2017b). Looking forward, changes will be forthcoming with the opening of closed markets, keeping migrants at home, enhancing local market expertise, cost structures, and quality control changing the dynamics between performance and profitability (World Economic Forum, 2017b). New networks using super grid systems with strong central tower oversight will enable the sustainability of small business with the implementation of digital technologies to transform and reduce costs providing increased revenues in manufacturing at 39%, logistics 17.8%, and retail 25.5% (World Economic Forum, 2017a).

SCM Models, Systems, Frameworks, and Redesign

Organizational leaders are faced with the demanding complexity of SCM in a new era of specialization beyond the flow of goods and services. Leaders are required to develop new levels of agility in design and plan and control risks in collaborative efforts to maintain competitive global market gains. Keith Oliver, a British logistician in 1982, first described SCM as a process of planning, controlling, and implementing support for customer satisfaction through efficiency (Oliver & Webber, 2012). Organizational leaders use creative designs and strategies to position themselves to gain market share over the competition.

The use of supply design, procurement, manufacturing, and product distribution planning offers many opportunities for cost control and reduction of risk determining the trade-off between cost and revenue. Organizational managers who are tasked with solving the complex problems in supply chain integration use an advanced planning system (APS) for strategy development to gather the information that supports organizational planning, optimization of global operations, and enhanced growth of integration in the supply chain links (Jonsson, Kjellsdotter, & Rudberg, 2007). Important areas for company leaders to review in the analysis of systems are software usage, organizational structure, data collection, and planning models. Leaders need innovation to create new approaches to integrate manufacturers, supply channels, warehouses, and retail stores to ensure the right quantities at the right time and locations to meet consumer demands while controlling costs for profitability (Khan & Sawicka, 2016).

Organizational leaders use supply chain integration (SCI) as a competitive advantage in supply chain practices to help support performance that avoids disruptions critical for success and profitability through the development of conceptual frameworks for partners, material flow, services, data and information availability (Ziaullah et al., 2015). In the development of high-performance supply chains, SME leaders struggle to overcome continuous changes in structure and strategy in marketing, sales, production, finance, purchasing, product development, demand and supply planning, and IT system changes. Many SME leaders do not have the financial capabilities to support all these functions and find themselves a part of unfair or unjust situations as stronger partners in the channels reap more of the benefits (Ziaullah et al., 2015).

SCM, SMEs, and Big Business

O'Byrne (2016) discussed how supply chain performance and success are inextricably linked, describing how poorly established channels increase costs and decrease profitability while high-performing channels contribute to growth and healthy profits. Large, medium, and small business leaders have high SCM expenditures and without strategic plans will fail without adequate design and understanding of the process. Strategy, network design, service performance, cost control, supplier performance, ethical procurement and corporate responsibility, supported by excellent inventory management systems are the seven keys to success (O'Byrne, 2016). Strategies that align the use of skills can overcome challenges that provide greater success. Managers who optimize networks that provide excellent service, control costs, and performance while mitigating risks create effective management for growth and success. Researchers who are developing SCM models require conceptual frameworks to ensure a higher level of justice for all partners concerning relationship commitment, information sharing, and process integration to create a substantial competitive advantage (Ziaullah, et al., 2015). Strong performers in the supply chain channel need to understand the importance of demand forecasting, critical points in operational interruptions, how to analyze logistics costs, information flow, and network design that understands the capabilities of each partner to control opportunities and threats (Rokonuzzaman, 2018). Another method or framework that managers can apply to supply chain systems to reduce time is Six-Sigma (Madhani, 2016). Managers use Six Sigma processes to measure time compression to achieve efficiency in the integration of business strategy and quality to

support production and service demands that increase organizational competitiveness (Madhani, 2016). Six Sigma was first launched in 1987 by the management of Motorola and from 1980 to the 1990's saved over 2 billion by application of the processes (Drohomeretski, Gouven da Costa, Pinheiro de Lima, & Garuio, 2013). Researchers continuously sought to improve the models and strategy helped evolve Six-Sigma to lean Six-Sigma (LSS) for a competitive advantage (Drohomeretski et al., 2013).

Researchers have developed many different models and frameworks to support the demanding global environment and continuous market changes that affect supply chains (Ziaullah et al., 2015). Managers of SMEs face challenges due to the difficulties with culture, knowledge, and collaboration and can find benefits in the total quality management (TQM) also referred to as the business excellence model to overcome challenges and find opportunities. (Foghani, Mahadi, & Omar, 2017). Managers consider BEMs essential as they apply these principles to support technological changes, encourage innovation, and provide a free flow of information vital to improving supply chain design (Foghani et al., 2017). The design and oversight of the supply chain is a substantial task in today's global environment with logistics accounting for almost 20% of the finished goods cost and retail executives spending $14 billion a year on inventory (Lu, 2011).

Relationships and Partnerships

Involvement in global business means organizational leaders must acknowledge the importance of relationships, risk assessment, and due diligence necessary for uncovering hidden risk. The unknown risk may occur through chain partners involved in

the supply chain process and result in penalties, fines, and loss of reputation (Harland, Brenchley, & Walker, 2003). Supply chain managers must understand the macrotrends of social, environmental, economic, and political phenomenon shifts taking place worldwide to create efficient and competitive SCM systems (Bell, Goldsby, & Autry, 2012). Chin and Paulraj (2004) addressed the need and importance of transformation in global relationships to create SCM avoiding manipulative and reactive behavior by creating partnerships that provide collaboration and alliance creating equality.

Transactional relationships in characteristic have no concern for partners, and pricing driven by relationship or market conditions (Williamson, 2008). Business leaders collaborate in SCM to take advantage of continuous improvements, fewer problems with supply chain disruptions, and the exchange of knowledge that enhances production and services (Banomyong, 2010) Additionally, collaboration in partnerships work to lower costs, expand technology, level risks, and reduce investment (Banomyong, 2010). Alliances in SCM are essential for ethics and the creation of designs that provide shared visions supporting future growth and expanded market shares for all partners (Banomyong, 2010). Positive supply chain partnerships create new opportunities and ignite the opening of new markets with the sharing of raw material for better pricing and negotiations, ensuring a win-win for all parties (Banomyong, 2010).

Dynamic SCM requires agile and flexible design due to economic market volatility so having multiple designs and response patterns incorporated into daily activities is necessary to ensure the availability of goods to match consumer demands (Han, Wang, & Naim, 2017). Supply chain operational systems require improved

performance, finances, quality, delivery efficiency, and effective communication and information sharing that at the same time provides visibility and the need for agility and flexibility for optional profitability creating success among partnerships (Han et al., 2017). Systems operating in the future will be powered by the agility to create an adaptive enterprise that architecturally provides quick responses to changing condition (Kilcourse, 2015). To be a winning retailer, the creation of visibility with real-time data is required to ensure consistent customer service (Kilcourse, 2015). Consumers are looking for instant gratification, digital, and in-store purchasing, and quality services with fulfillment centers onsite to enhance service capabilities. Technology allows for quick change response, lower costs, and high visibility vital for points of sale, forecasting, and optimization of the price (Kilcourse, 2015). Managers require innovative strategies in SCM to align costs, schedules, performance, and desired outcomes due to the magnitude of global disruptions taking place and continued risks with political and economic instability occurring globally.

Small and Medium-Size Enterprises (SME)

SME leaders face many obstacles due to the lack of infrastructure and technology, government roadblocks, unskilled labor, and corruption (OECD, 2018). Researchers show that leaders in some industries can overcome these obstacles by using alternative strategies when short-term programs do not work (OECD, 2018). Government regulations and laws are needed to support programs providing support in the development of skills, knowledge, finances, and technology to help SMEs remain successful due to their global impact in economic and social benefits on local

communities and economies (OECD, 2018). Leaders of SME involved in various industries show that different sectors develop capabilities to adapt to environmental changes allowing them to overcome economic recessions when operating in dynamic environments (Ramon-Jeronimo, 2107).

Leaders of SME face many difficult challenges globally to compete and remain in business. Added contention involves a lack of access to finance, regional or state labor laws, and infrastructure all creating roadblocks for opportunities in growth and longevity (Sitharam & Hoque, 2016). Lack of funding to expand operations hinder growth, labor laws and regulations can make it too expensive to hire, and poor geographic infrastructure including road, technology connection capabilities stifle development and performance. Additionally, lack of management skills, technology, crime, and competition make it harder for SME to survive (Sitharam & Hoque, 2016). Macroeconomic factors due to inflation affect business leaders and buyers further complicating survival in global market growth and expansion (Sitharam & Hoque, 2016). Large and small organizational leaders need a knowledge-based infrastructure as enhanced technology, and global systems change affect the flow of goods to remain successful and competitive (Sorbi, Zorriech, Jalilian, & Sani, 2017).

Innovative ways of doing business and creating partnerships for the sustainability and success of SME are taking place around the world. Many leaders of developing countries such as Ethiopia are struggling while other countries such as the Philippines are thriving due to innovative ways of connecting small and large business leaders to combat poverty at all levels of society (Sitharam & Hoque, 2016). Supplier relationships become

the strongest when each segment of the chain support unique services that complete the required processes and ensure the market is providing products that meet the local market demands (Ramon-Jeronimo & Herrero, 2017). Small business owners may use the links in SCM channels to control costs and offer a unique set of skills. Globally SME leaders offer opportunities for transformation and redistribution of assets among the disadvantaged. Economically SME leaders contribute to the reduction of unemployment, promote entrepreneurship, and reduce poverty (Sitharam & Hoque, 2016). Also, having the ability to make quicker decisions in changing market conditions to meet consumer demands offers significant advantages. A driving force for societies is family owned businesses which boost local economies (Ramon-Jeronimo & Herrero, 2017). Leaders of SME must be open to innovation, pursue, and continually work to stay ahead of change and be fair internally and externally to support growth and success.

Large Enterprise SCM and Global Economy New Market Entry

The history of retail has its roots in the French world "retaillier," growing out of the fashion industry to mass-production in the 18th and 19th centuries finishing with the 19th and 20th century giant retailers that we have witnessed the death of over the last 10 years (GT Nexus, 2016). Retail giants like K. B. Toys (87 years), Montgomery Wards (129 years), and store closures like Office Depot (223 stores), and Wal-Mart (154 stores) have continued to tell the tale of the death of retail (GT Nexus, 2016). Retailers are evolving and developing new strategies in this complex non-linear industry to meet consumer demands. Constant chaos and agile SCM are needed to deal with disruptors and opportunities critical with the consumer in control (GT Nexus, 2016). A significant

change is coming to the retail industry as new technological savvy generations command the market demanding new experiences and seamless operations as retailers struggle to embrace the new future with click and bricks as malls without walls reinvent retail spaces (Linklater, 2016).

The changing forces of bankruptcies, record store closures, and changing consumer purchasing patterns across the retail business in 2017 have brought dynamic changes in the way consumers purchase goods (Courtin, 2018). Brick-and-mortar stores are turning into temporary storefronts with management selling short-term seasonal inventory for quick turnovers (Courtin, 2018). Future store managers will need to be inventory focused with the flexibility to change quickly for demanding consumer wants and needs (Courtin, 2018). Future retailers will not look similar to those in the past and will require short-term labor and seasonal workers for distribution and logistics with more specific focused inventory for quick turnaround and profitability (Courtin, 2018). The future retailer will support change, speed, and agility requiring flexible and supply chain networks that support anytime, anywhere technology shopping experiences and expectations (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016).

Retail centers in 2019 and beyond will take on new designs with a combination of brick-and-mortar and malls without walls combining energy, environment, and unique experiences which will become the new rulers of retail (Sreedhar, 2017). Leaders developing retail strategies must incorporate technology to lower costs and increase profits while driving customer service against competitors for survival. Future leaders will need to create multi-enterprise collaboration for endurance and speed will be

paramount in the process controlling inventory, product flow, factory delivery, operational performance, and compliance avoiding bottlenecks and ensuring lead time for positioning and marketing. The future of retail will use artificial intelligence as guides on the shopping experience, provide platforms for payments, create consumer engagement, provide big data analysis, have unique distribution methods, and customer service interfaces combining online and brick and mortar. In order to survive SME managers will need to develop competitive strategies that create new ways of operating and providing consumer engagement that promotes loyalty.

The retail shopping experience of the future involves an entirely new look at how retailers will combine design, architecture, and planning. Retailers will use the environment and location to construct opportunities that affect psychological behavior creating a new kind of consumer service in the retail experience (Kim, Lee, & Ryu, 2018). Retailers refine space to create an atmosphere of mental and physical recovery for both active and passive zest (Kim et al., 2018. Retailers will offer indoor and outdoor retail space functions, using interactive designs and environment combined with stirring psychological behavior while shopping. Also, retailers will offer these new environments both online and offline (retail) platforms for small SME leaders to promote goods consisting of omnichannel, online malls, information brokerage services providing options, services, and human exposure with an expected growth of 23 trillion by 2020 (Kim et al., 2018).

Multicultural Trends and Government, Politics, and Environment

The global impact of many key elements of country politics, governments, use of the environment, and cultural trends can have a severe effect on SCM. The world's changing interaction with these elements can force immediate changes on global supply routes due to lack of access, increased costs, duty shifts, and country political instability. The development of multicultural global teams requires strategic processes using state-of-the-art communication technologies, exchange of knowledge, job exchange, shared values and understanding of the corporate vision and mission (Gassmann, 2001). Technology has changed the way business, and people develop relationships evolving and dissolving borders, and with the right people, tools, and processes teams and organizational leaders can acquire benefits that support quality work and performance (Heller et al., 2010). Organizational leaders use strategies to enhance communication that involve effective communication, setting ground rules, the establishment of a clear vision, and respect. Building a global village takes time, energy, unique skills, a heart, and respect that makes others want to follow, listen, and respect driving innovative ideas, creativity, and interactions that change the world (Neeley, 2015).

Governments need leaders who can cultivate human social responsibility and cross-cultural relations (Chuang, 2013). Kymlicka (2007) offered a unique insight into internationalization and debates on policies that minorities have rights to be protected and respected. The concept and ideas of human rights have continually changed, and with the growth of globalization, new emancipatory politics affect nations, countries, states, and organizations (Kymlicka, 2007). Policies for social change, exchange of information,

technology, growth, and development that provides frameworks that manage challenges through good practices creating practical solutions are needed. Social cohesion comes from all levels economic, social, and business reform and the government and global organizational leaders must continue to address multiculturalism and polarized politics to foster civil societies that bring human rights and dignity to overcome social tensions (Kymlicka, 2007). Government leaders can help through programs and education globally and regionally to exchange good practices that also provide training and opportunities supporting the exchange of information creating new leadership styles required globally at all levels of society.

Quality program managers in SCM have taken on new measures, improvement, processes, and controls adding new levels of requirements from the end-to-end supply in relationship needs and requirements (Borade & Bansod, 2007). Global issues involving soft costs concerning the environment, economics, politics, and culture are of more significance in consideration of success factors due to loss of reputation and damages that could cost millions (OECD, 2016). Therefore, making partnership selection even more critical and the role of the buyers in organizations more critical, demanding knowledge, and skills far beyond previous knowledge requirements.

Supply chain managers must understand the macrotrends of social, environmental, economic, and political phenomenon shifts taking place worldwide to create an efficient and competitive SCM system. Using technology to link all aspects of the chain can provide increased visibility to support problematic issues and ensure rapid responses to market and customer demand changes when needed. Small business leaders

lack these required channel links, and without them, trust, visibility, and commitment by partners for access to valuable resources to control compliance and useful resources are lost in the process. Small business leaders must balance new market threats and opportunities to support forecasting and planning for optimal operational performance and oversight. The use of technology by SME leaders can be very beneficial to overcome challenges in regional trade policies, connectivity, export and import regulations, and the establishment of customs procedures. Small business leaders are empowered by the added infrastructure to change players, cargo movement patterns, become open to new countries, and new product innovation and promote competitive advantage through trade facilitation knowledge.

Supply chain managers link complex routing based on many issues concerning government policies, relationships, location, costs, and trade agreements all creating a unique comparative and competitive advantage for cost reduction strategies (Nicita, Ognivtsev, & Shirotori, 2013). Current trends in international trade flow depend on productivity capabilities, knowledge, skills, economic policies, and labor costs. Given the sophisticated infrastructure, global business leaders must analyze the risks associated with the various strategies to determine effectiveness, quality, risks, investments, foreign country stability, labor laws, and government commitments before opening doors to foreign countries. The global business environment requires intensive analysis to ensure success.

SME Strategies

Strategy. Entrepreneurial innovators support the creation of new ideas, business development, and new or improved services or products. Also, entrepreneurs with strong strategic planning motivate economic improvement and sustain competitive advantages for smaller organizations. Entrepreneurs that implement unique business strategies like the *platformisation* model offer principal value for new social trends identifying social, regulatory, infrastructure, and skills as elements to create value, build relationship channels, and new market growth (Gatautis, Vitkauskaite, & Reuver, 2017). Leaders of SMEs may find it challenging to deal with the rapid evolution of technology without substantial organizational support to ensure strategic alignment with innovation enhancement that fits global practices to provide proficiencies of value, information, and connections through multiple business channels to ensure success.

Burigan and Benic (2017), in the discussion of new trends provided a qualitative case study over six years involving 3700 firms in eight European countries on how strategic alliance in the retail sector impact profitability. Burigan and Benic found that retailers were significantly positively influenced through supply channels, market exposure, knowledge sharing, branding, and financial gain all lowering costs creating economies of scale and scope for SMEs in the retail sector. Burigan and Benic applied the dynamic panel methodology required for such a large-scale analysis. The retail store leader in alliance creates profitability by the creation of frameworks that increase employee efficiency, integrate decision-making, through active cooperation, and production of new products, innovation, and exchange of knowledge (Burigan & Benic,

2017). Retailers engaged in alliances paved the way for higher profits against rivals and providing the needs of customers through the environment, use of enhanced technology and new product innovation driving increased market share. Further retailers in strategic alliances gained positive synergies for performance through the dispersion of resources across firms.

SME leadership strategies. Global citizens require new ideas and systems that will allow the merging of societies to keep their individualism while ensuring harmony and unity as our global world of multicultural diversity continue to shift, touching every nation and organization. Conflict with language, religion, and education need to be secondary to global trends and dynamics that are driving individuals toward safety and security (Appelbaum, 1998). Nations, governments, cities, and community leaders need to work together to find policies and programs that will provide jobs, opportunities and freedom to those in need, not handouts, but ways that build self-esteem and character that bring unity in a world full of chaos and conflict (Appelbaum, 1998).

Managing teams across the globe due to time zones, distance, and culture are complicated but a necessity due to competing forces and growing global markets with industry, people, culture, and demands requiring strategies to achieve growth, sustainability, and profitability. Business leaders, both large and small, need to develop strategies that support efficiency in diverse work teams who motivate individuals to ensure creativity and team accomplishment. Every culture is different in its population's response to genders, decision-making processes, representation of power, conflict, and styles of communication. Many country populations are slow at decision-making, avoid

aggressive behavior, and seek harmony at all costs. An example of this is how the Japanese find harmony with nature, have a low emphasis on individualism, and high structure while Americans like control over life, high individualism, and little structure (Adachi, 2010).

Four barriers that interfere with the management of multicultural teams are communication styles, inability to understand accents, attitudes involving hierarchy, and conflicting ideas about decision-making processes (Brett, Behfar, & Kern, 2006). Savvy SME leaders must be culturally aware of the various ways in which business leaders from different countries conduct business and know when to speak, how to restrict body language, what to talk about and what not to talk about and be modest and reserve to ensure the best development of trust. In many cases, it takes long periods of relationship development building confidence before any final business decisions are made depending on the country and the individuals involved.

Global and political conflicts reflect problems in the decision-making process involving societies with conflicting views and ideas and do not necessarily reflect the interest of the people concerning human rights and dignity. Global SCM involves strategies that support the collaboration of many countries and people in the development of an (infra)structural frameworks to coordinate harmony. Huang (2015) believed the following three cultures have specific cultures that drive business and decisions: the Chinese, German, and U.S. cultures.

Exemplary leadership skills have a strong foundation in knowledge and intelligence needed in supply chain decision-making to improve, promote, and transfer

systems, value, and economic prosperity to all partners in the links. Managers require balance of data, logistics, and relationships with purchasing, manufacturing, planning, inventory control, distribution, and delivery (Sorbi et al., 2017). Managers require knowledge and skills as SCM systems are complex requiring managerial experience that ensures procedures are structured to meet all organizational goals. World leaders must keep up and while this might be more challenging for SME managers it an absolute to compete globally due to increasingly competitive market pressures and trade wars demanding SCM system changes and loss of profits.

Competition and competitive strategies for profitability. Firm leaders achieve competitive advantage when a firm leader offers a service or product to targeted customers that is better than its competitors creating advantage through product quality, value, or pricing (Porter & Millar, 1985). Organizational leaders who have a robust competitive advantage in the market offer better service, product quality, lower prices, and powerful marketing platforms. Organizational leaders rely on sustainable competitive advantage to maintain a favorable position in the long term and to boost a company's image in the marketplace (Porter, 1990).

In the discussion of competitive strategy, the failure to mention Porter's Five Forces model as the theory and foundation in business strategy would be amiss. Porter addressed the forces in a competition involving the threat of new entrants, bargaining power, product or service substitution, and industry rivals (Evans & Neu, 2008). In 1985, Porter wrote that information technology is having a profound effect on the rules of competition. In 2018 the foundation of this theory still holds merit as organizational

leaders face harsher decisions in a time of chaos and continuous changes in technology to align industry and technology for competitive advantage.

SME leaders find it even harder to compete as increased technology decrease opportunities to market entry due to supply chain complexities, access to materials, technology for visibility, and rivals fighting to keep out new competition. The increase of technology has also allowed different industry leaders to create added competitiveness using technology-based platforms that sell across industry lines. Ryall (2013) examined the characteristics of the new dynamics of competition adding to Pisano's (2015) comments that value-based strategies involving resource and transaction-cost economics must be expanded to strategic theory models for organizations to compete effectively. Small business leaders usually do not have the resources to create these value-based strategies and need value networks to form a more competitive landscape. Ryall (2013) proposed the value capture model (VCM) linking productive social network systems to better link suppliers, firms, and customers for creating stronger market value and recognition. Additionally, researchers observe different options in the VCM through supply chain network partnerships that are important for organizational growth and allow SME businesses to have competitive periphery needed for quantifying strategies in turbulent times of political, economic, and regulatory changes.

Technology and E-Commerce

Information technology has changed the world, and organizational leaders in the supply chain take advantage of enhanced information exchanges for increased profitability that leads to stronger market competitive advantages (Jadhav, 2015). To

survive and compete for profitability, organizational leaders must embrace information technology. The gathering of information affects every aspect of a business and ultimately support the customer's expectations, resources, and strategic planning. Planning managers should consider environment, structure, culture, and organization style in the development of information systems to create programs that support duties for best functionally. In the framework, one of the most critical aspects provided by the information systems is supply chain visibility. Since SME leaders have higher associated with raw materials, transportation, and manufacturing due to lower volumes having access to a linked system tower could provide a platform for survival that reduces costs, enhances information quality, and includes market advantage (Jones, 2017).

Ownership is a critical issue in organizational review to understand who in the link is responsible and must correct problems that arise in channel links of SCM. Organizational leaders operating without technology have no clear visibility of production, inventory, and distribution and lose their ability to effectively compete and overcome problems (Mishra, 2008). Many of these same organizational leaders look to partners to fill the gaps and find they too are not able to support the full visibility needed creating inefficiencies, communication gaps, cargo delays, inventory shortages, and ultimately higher costs for performance and poor customer service (Lu, 2011). Organizational leaders facing these deficiencies find it impossible to manage risks and create strategies involving value-added social programs to forecast profitability in the supply chain. Knowledge management and leadership with experience are needed today to maintain information flow with partners for promoting, improving, and competing

globally for success (Sorbi et al., 2017). Due to market changes organizational leaders are demanding the use of knowledge-based logistics involving big data, logistic strategies, and stronger relationships for the application of concepts to generate new opportunities.

The digital SCM trifecta effect includes competitive strategies that support connectedness, processes, and responsiveness results in improvements (Gravier, Roethlein, & Visich, 2018). Numerous company leaders globally are working on technology that will lower costs, provide better control systems and methods, and electric networks with better lead times, all providing better customer service and flexibility needed for competitive advantage. Many global leaders have yet to embrace the digital economy, and it is critical for supply chain development and the creation of optimum supply chain strategies (Habib, 2014). Global organizational leaders who make use of connections using the IoT, Artificial Intelligence (AI), provide an advantage in forecasting, production planning, compliance, and inventory controls creating advantages over other organizations (Habib, 2014). Supply chain managers who implement strategies that provide advantages involve the use of new technology approaches for visibility using information sharing and process automation in cloud-based platforms are changing SCM. Supply chain managers using newly developed platforms are offering pipelines for efficiency in the supply chain, ensuring rapid responses and decision-making based on consumer shifting market demands (Ambe & Badenhorst-Weiss, 2010). Strategic, operational improvements support avoidance of disruptions help control product quality, cargo transfer, and speed by information data collection (Manuj & Mentzer, 2008).

Researchers of SCM have gained considerable interest over the last few years due to company leaders recognizing the opportunities created in pricing and negotiation as the supply chain offers a business platform with non-fixed costs that provide competitive advantages (Naslund & Williamson, 2010). By the year 2025, IT development will be more stabilized with the creation of linked technologies through innovation, ultimately affecting every industry across the globe. This dynamic change is being called the 'supply chain economy' driving performance, innovation, services, industry links, and co-location of external economies (Delgado & Mills, 2018). The onset of a new millennium technological supply chain is under development that will be even more complex bridging geographical distances, economies of scale and economies of choice linking international networks for cost-effective optimization of efficiencies (Olah, Zeman, Balogh, & Popp, 2018).

A new global nervous system based on a cloud is creating a new world era of communication machines storing activities with the expectation of improving social and daily life (Rajiv & Sreenivas, 2017). The revolution of disruptive technologies is impacting global trade, production, developing countries, and economies while the revolution of digital technologies is transforming patterns and players of the global trade world accelerating SCM (Suominen, 2017). Organizational leaders will require new leadership skills to lead in this time of chaos requiring flexibility, rapid learning, courage, passion, and an innovative spirit creating new business models (Reeves & Deimler, 2011). The IoT has revolutionized visibility in SCM disrupting old business models sweeping change globally as new technology trends are the next industrial revolution to

the world creating a shared economy of equality and inter-connectedness for all humankind (Maple, 2017). In 2025, the IoT technology is expected to reach $6.2 trillion with real-time analytics of equipment and supply chains using connected devices to create what will be called the 'turbocharge' supply chain (GT Nexus, 2016). A supply chain spiraling out of control controlled by consumer demands connecting mobile devices, e-commerce, and social media are demanding the highest of standards for technology, product selection, service, delivery and tracking capabilities (GT Nexus, 2016). The fueling of digitalization in trade is driving the need for agility in SCM covering order cycles, inventory levels, processes, and market demands but not without challenges (O'Marah, 2016). These challenges involve regional trade policies, connectivity, export credit, and promotion of SMEs, and the need for skilled individuals (Suominen, 2017). Organizational leaders who develop efficient strategies establish cost controls and efficiencies to develop rules to govern data accessibility, partnerships, and payment controls to open trade facilitation using technology that will generate added competition offering opportunities to all globally, not just a few.

Dilemmas in the advancement of IT in SCM are the lack of an infrastructural grid required to meet the requirements for the shipping industry. Two organizations at the forefront of the shipping industry are Maersk Lines working with IBM and Transport International (MII), a UK based company operating to implement blockchain technology (Coleman, 2017). Each industry has its unique structural requirements to ensure seamless transactions requiring changes or additions to platforms that will bring added cost controls and efficiencies that create added profits, new partnerships, and data controls

that generate market gain and competitive value. Jabbar and Bjorn (2018) believed the introduction of an infrastructural grid as an extension of the blockchain will provide intersections needed to connect shipping elements involving consolidation and velocity. Also, it will foster the critical components of trust currently lacking and required for successful future partnerships in SCM. Multiple factors and connections are needed from the beginning to end in the production, handling, distribution, banking, finances, shipping, trucking, forwarders, and customs brokers that require linking due to document requirements, regulations, laws, and various payment methods to create the seamless transactions in global trade.

Digitalization has its challenges with the use of big data, security, and social media and with cybersecurity, specifically in SCM. Organizational leader's decision to move towards digitalization is a journey towards continuous improvement and business optimization (Sati, 2017). Organizational supply chain managers face issues with global regulations in the desire to create seamless integration, including product manufacturing and lifecycles. The promise of real-time analytics in the business model requires infrastructure, skilled employees, and knowledge to capture important security like manufacturers and freight costs to reach the improved costs reduction and operational efficiency status. Organizational leaders implement digitalization to obtain better quality assurance, enhanced product quality, operational efficiency all provided by visibility allowing for quicker decision-making on critical issues leading to cost reductions and increased organizational profitability. Organizational leaders also take advantage of the increased speed, global reach, agility, competitive advantage, and drive competitive

advantage generated through digitalization and not available through analog. Additionally, organizational leaders who digitalize offer consistency, real-time information, added security, controlled user rights, audit trails, and big data storage all of which create added value that controls costs and adds organizational and partnership profits gaining global market share.

Cyberinfrastructures and the advancement of digitalization on a global level require the development of sophisticated socio-technical infrastructure. Organizational leaders will be able to take advantage of the current developments in infrastructural grids to synergize all global activities making the use of the blockchain more attractive for channel partners requiring security and trust which IBM's Bluemix cloud service is working to develop fully (Jabbar & Bjorn, 2018). The development of many technologies is still undergoing rapid change and growth. Those organizational leaders at the forefront will have substantial competitive advantages over the market when the proper infrastructure is completed, linking every aspect of the supply chain channel allowing for maximum performance and profitability (Porter, 1985).

Big data usage by retailers has many benefits, no matter how defined. Big data has many meanings describing multiple ways in how information supports analysis, volume variety, and attribution and delivery data generation. Retailers visualize the benefits as support in pricing, demand patterns, improved availability, stock deployment at an SKU level, and identification of long-term trends to name just a few. Aktas and Meng (2017) provided an excellent overview of the application of big data in retail operations as a tool for the adaption of availability, assortment, pricing, and planning and

prerequisites challenges and benefits. Future retail organizational success will be driven by understanding risks, skilled talent, new technology applications, and changing management and cultural, retail operation practices. Sati (2017) stated that innovation is inevitable and that big data in SCM in partnerships with trust and values will possess valuable knowledge in customer behaviors, market needs and strategy development offering large market competitive advantages. Innovative use of technology will support productivity, efficiency, and quality management for sales, product forecasting, new product development, logistics decisions, and inventory controls. The current challenge is creating a team of channel partners that have a common purpose that will drive structure for connectivity that creates profitability in today's intensely competitive global market. The usage of big data provides economic values for storage, organization, and analysis that will help support decision-making, creating control in costs, speed, and higher performance, which directly impacts business margins. Since 2016, the Internet and use of the cloud has changed all data collection resulting in a 42% increase over 2014 (Sati, 2017). Big data is vital for the creation of competitive advantages in SCM and organizations are beginning to realize the opportunities in usage and benefits gained with the right partners, technologies, and strategies.

The power of collaboration and a new age of information technology will change the rules and development of strategies enhancing supply chain responsiveness and performance using digital business transformation to drive the future according to Johnson (2005). The collaboration will bring a new design for distribution, sharing of information, will drive knowledge, improve quality, and support long-term success.

Technology will link the business partners to create value that will sustain environments for mutual benefits. These new techniques already being used are helping control costs, make better decisions, and streamline supply chain values required for future technology development and change (Johnson, 2005).

It is expected that there will be 24 billion worldwide connected to transmitting devices by 2020 (Rajiv & Sreenivas, 2017). Core elements of digital technology for supply chain include robotics, sensors, mobile technology, cloud computing, drones, 3D printing, and inventory and network automation tools (Druehl, Carrillo, & Hsuan, 2018). Information technology has changed the world, and the gathering of information affects every aspect of the environment, structure, culture, and organization providing visibility resulting in a reduction in costs and enhanced information quality, driving world-class performance, leadership and processes for competitive advantage by creating costs controls and efficiencies. The emerging IoT and Internet of Everything (IoE) represent opportunities and challenges in our use of smartphones, networks, and data collection in our immediate future (Khaddar & Boulmalf, 2017). Smartphones will become the new 'sixth sense' providing both opportunities and challenges for tomorrow's global environment (Khaddar & Boulmalf, 2017). Also, future developments and trends in technology using pick by voice, vision, or light drones, predictive analytics, machine-to-machine communication, and wearable that provide bionic enhancement technologies are reshaping how global industries and the world connects.

Winston (2016) stated the influence of technology is not only a changing force but an enhancement force for business and social solutions globally when balanced in a

new era where society will demand more determining the success and failures of future organizations. The rapid evolution of technology makes it difficult for smaller organizations to grow without collaboration to ensure strategic alignment with innovation enhancement that fits global practice supporting the exchange of information, and connections through business relationships to promote success. Improvements balanced with risks and partners strengthen capabilities while controlling costs. SMEs have more challenges in generating innovations to reinforce or create new products and services with radical changes globally occurring needed to maintain a competitive edge. Cross-enterprise collaboration with complementary partners and the creation of environmental circumstances that provide IT systems, technology, networking, and business relationship development provide organizational capabilities supporting the enhancement of cross-enterprise collaborative global market competitive advantages (Wetering, Mikalef, & Pateli (2017).

SCM and Economic Value

Supply chain managers must embrace change to succeed due to tax reforms and digital transformation increasing GDP and job growth globally Focus on the supply chain is essential to enhance performance and drive productivity, collaborate with all transport networks, create transparency to mitigate disruption, ensure visibility, and use big data for smarter decision-making outcomes (Handfield & Linton, 2017). The years ahead will bring expansion, investment, communications to adapt and create new technology and emergence of new concepts that will develop solutions and disruptions at the same time. Industries, businesses, and individuals move towards digital transformation as significant

changes in innovation, data, challenges, problems, and solutions occur with the development of new devices and capabilities.

SME Challenges and Opportunities

The global market can be very volatile, as seen in the 2008 financial crisis, which brought both positive and negative results in global SCM (Medford, 2009). The financial crisis of 2008 lead to disruptions including trade gaps in the range of three-digit billions, decline of one-third of all global trade from 2008 to 2009, cost effects, financial access problems, and the bankruptcy of 67,000 factories in China (Medford, 2009). The 2008 recession brought about substantial global bankruptcies, failures, unemployment, economic instability, inventory shifts, manufacturing and production shifts, and consumer market control leading to an enormous reversal in market conditions. Further, outcomes from the recession lead to massive cutbacks on production and inventory, changing of supply chain partners, need for new stimulus programs, and shifting to "nearshoring," to cut costs of materials and transportation (Russo & Katzel, 2011).

Economic downturns force company leaders to reduce inventory, free up cash, face pressures from competition, and face shrinking customer orders, but for many, this is a time when partnerships grow, and new product innovation is growing. Economic downturns additionally impact cargo space, demanding shifts in cargo movement to meet market demand raising the costs in SCM (Medford, 2009). Organizational leaders require proactive decision-making and risk analysis to combat times of crisis. The crisis on 9/11 caused a global crisis due to the worldwide closure of and cargo backlogs, costing company leaders billions in losses and forcing some into bankruptcy (IATA, 2010). The

SME leader faces life or death situations due to global financial shifts that impact the flow of products to customers due to e-commerce and growing global market shipping requirements. Manager involved in strategic planning must consider the impact of a global financial boom or crisis scenario with the added impact of technological changes forcing movement through unchartered waters as the world enters its fourth industrial revolution in a state of chaos.

Goldsby, Autry, and Bell (2015) provided four key points for organizational leaders addressing macrotrends in social, political, environmental and economic shifts including adding stressors in risk, the assessment of threats, and forecasting leaving many organizations lost due to constant changes in global trade patterns all affecting SCM profitability. Geopolitical strains due to power manipulation are beginning to seriously affect lean manufacturer's ability to price and obtain profitability due to power controls over resources. Mandal (2016) provided an overview of social exchange and explained how the supply chain linking of four attributes power, trust, reciprocity, and commitment all affect logistical decisions and the ability for the supply chain managers to have agility. Trust comes before commitment and reciprocity respects the skills of each partner to balance power, but in many cases, the controller of resources determines this balance and in return, sourcing and supply chain costs from end-to-end. Supply chain managers are prevented from making rapid responses to control customer demands due to a lack of flexibility in leadership requiring more collaboration. Collaboration using technology creates added links to ensure market competitiveness for success that supports all partners in the supply chain, not just a few (Roy, 2016). Every aspect of life is impacted through

SCM from the clothes individuals wear to the food purchased and the electrically, power, gas, needed to manage daily life. It is evident that retailers are experiencing challenging times as individuals go to the stores and see empty shelves, fewer products, or too many products and find themselves having to shop at multiple stores to meet needs for the right price, size, style, commodity, or service. The market conditions represent a time of significant change bringing new opportunities and enormous challenges for retailers.

Supply chain relationships create financial risk and innovation opportunities that enable shipping and production to be timely, avoid supplier failure and relieve stress, building healthy collaborative end-to-end supply (GT Nexus, 2016). Consumers want fast and cheap access to all products manufactured. The consumer demands place a strain on the supply chain managers when financial problems affect the manager's decisions further affecting the company's reputation. For example, when managers involved with partners using sweatshops, production of defective products creating costly recalls, shoddy work, and when buyers squeeze suppliers and prolong payments. Organizational leaders with healthy finances strengthen partnerships, lessen risks, and ensure timely production and delivery. Organizational leader enhances SCM through financing programs that offer early payment, purchase order financing, performance-based funding, export financing, and inventory financing (GT Nexus, 2016). The elimination of capital related risks strengthens partner relationships, power innovation, and lessen the stress on operations creating secure collaborative end-to-end networks that prevail in good and bad times.

Future Forecasts

SME executives that are leading are those that are taking advantage of the chaos that digitalization disruptions are creating and turning them into opportunities. Organizational executives take advantage of omnichannel supply chain systems to support competitive pricing and marketing advantages and ensure profitability demanding synchronized inventory and logistics for movement and seamless processes required by consumers. Forward-thinking SME executives should focus on greater visibility, speed, and big data collection to create balanced strategies to offer advanced network systems linking opportunities for competitive advantages ensuring profitability.

SME executives will face challenges and opportunities through technological advancement models and concepts like the IoT and the IOE. Public and private partners working together will find solutions to protect and defend digital economies that will drive new experiences and environmental changes. Organizational leaders must continue to develop and evolve business models providing ways for consumers to access goods in ways that contribute to the senses but in environments that offer entirely different experiences with unique distribution capabilities allowing for immediate pickup, global and domestic shipping, and online e-commerce capabilities and services. These models should support the development of SMEs, providing collaboration that allows for equal sharing in the economies and not just models that support the profitability of larger organizations.

Society is demanding new business practices for improved performance that support social, health, labor, and environmental concerns. The age of digitalization

includes practices of social responsibility providing security in the use of intelligence that promotes individual rights and privacy. Also, the linking of social issues in contractual arrangements will support methods that control how partners will gain access to higher profits by avoiding penalties and violations from lack of compliance. Ethics in business is at the core of social practices with leadership that educates, uses knowledge management, and works to control hazmat and pollutants in processes to ensure health and safety. Ethical respect and integrity for others are critical elements in supply chain responsibilities that are central in the development of methods that support improvement in design that make the difference in social, environmental and ethical standards driving economic growth globally. New trends must continue to evolve that incorporate stronger ethics and humanitarian consideration that embrace all aspects of humanity.

Current changes are revolutionizing and transforming the world. Powell and Snellman (2004) identified how the transformation of how goods are produced, sold, and distributed is due to the knowledge-based data-driven economy. The fourth industrial revolution (Schwab, 2017) is here, and the digital transformation with a knowledge-based economy will revolutionize business models and how products are distributed worldwide creating shifts and disruptions providing great promise, risk, and opportunity. Supply chain innovation is driving globalization, collaboration, and technology. Innovation is providing new strategies and business models development for efficiency, stronger global economic growth, and a more balanced economy that benefit the needs of many, not just a few. New technology trends are the next industrial revolution creating shared prosperity of equality and inter-connectedness for all humanity across the globe. The linking of all

aspects of the supply chain provides increased visibility to support problematic issues and ensure rapid responses to market and customer demand change. New-market threats and new market opportunities must be balanced to support forecasting and planning for optimal performance. Digital economies, new trade agreements, SMEs growth globally, and corporate social responsibility will drive new business models for added value and profitability. These digitized connections will provide unique experiences and environments in buying and selling of goods with the continuous evolution of business model designs, creating shifts in resources and economic powers. The risk and investments might be high but required for organizational competitiveness, success, and profitability as we move into a fourth industrial revolution globally, bringing unknown roads and grand visions of the future marketplace.

Transition

In Section 1, I provided a detailed review of the research concerning the significant events impacting and elements that SMEs involved in global SCM for consideration when strategizing SCM for profitability. Further, in Section 1, I provided the foundation of the study including the problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, research questions, conceptual framework and significance of the study. Additionally, the history of the fourth industrial revolution, SCM systems, partnerships, leadership, and technological challenges are all covered in Section 1, providing insight into what SMEs face in the development of strategies to create profitability. In the literature review, I included a detailed discussion on how supply chain managers require unique business models and strategies with partners that consider trends, politics,

environment, and global government stability requiring the use of agility with a targeted destination to create a competitive advantage for profitability. Special skills are needed to overcome challenges to create opportunities in the new global competitive environment in a time of transformation impacting politics, society, our environment, and economics to ensure profits and success.

In Section 2, I identify the main areas of my research, which include the purpose statement, research method, design, sampling, population under review, and importance of ethics in the research process. Additionally, I describe the qualitative research method and case study as the design, followed by the population and sampling, and an explanation of how I conducted ethical research. In Section 3, I present my findings and closing remarks on findings and recommendations for action based on the qualitative case interview and provided information to support the future studies of SMEs involved in SCM. Finally, in Section 3 I reflect on my DBA research experience.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the successful strategies SME supply chain managers used to create cost efficiencies in organizations to remain profitable. The targeted population consisted of three corporate supply chain managers of an international SME located in central Florida who successfully implemented strategies to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable. The implications for social change included the potential for SME supply chain managers to learn about strategies used to generate cost efficiencies and thereby improve the profitability of their companies. Leaders of SMEs who increase profitability may increase cash flow and contribute to economic growth in communities and the creation of jobs for individuals.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher acts as the primary instrument to collect, organize, and analyze data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). As the sole researcher in the qualitative case study, I was responsible for overseeing the interview process involving how supply chain managers of SME develop strategies to create profitability. I believed that my personal experience in global SCM involved in global transportation, customs brokerage, and compliance for over 25 years as a professional could create bias, so my goal was to mitigate any possible personal bias in my study results. Yin (2018) recommended that all biased views be put aside to produce the best-case study results. The face-to-face interview between the researcher and the participant enhances the reliability and validity of the case study (Qu, 2011). The interview process not only allows for the opportunity to gather data but also

opens the door to observation of organizational social phenomena adding support to the research process. Qu (2011) explained that social interactions add complexities in the interview process.

Yin (2018) recommended that researchers use an interview protocol as a way to standardize the interview process and reduce bias. I structured the interviews to solely focus on the specific interview questions (see Appendix A) established for this study guided by the interview protocol (see Appendix B) for consistency. Researchers who prepare with the proper tools such as location and recording devices followed by reflection before the final analysis will significantly support the final data analysis (Mwangi & Bettencourt, 2017). Also, researchers who use open-ended questions gain access to information in the interview protocol process not just to get answers but learn of lived experiences and see participants as individuals of interest and worth in the data collection process (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

The Belmont Report Protocol provides ethical guidelines required in research involving justice, beneficence, and the importance of respect for individuals supporting vulnerable participant research for minorities (Fischer, 2006). To ensure the protocol of the Office of Human Research (2016), I provided a nondisclosure agreement to protect those involved in the interview process to encourage and promote the sharing of data critical to the success of the study.

Participants

Sutton and Austin (2015) suggested the importance of having participants who have the experience and knowledge required to enhance the data collection and analysis

of the qualitative research. I interviewed three SCM managers from a SME organization who have been involved in SCM for a minimum of 10 years and who have an interest in the case study topic. The process of identifying participants who meet the criteria is vital to gain pertinent information that supports the research questions (Zubin & Sutton, 2015). Patel, Doku, and Tennakoon (2003) discussed how recruitment can be challenging and problematic, and that success can be reached more quickly by avoiding follow-up with uninterested parties. Upon gaining Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to interview participants, I accessed online resources, contacts, trade associations and communicated with professionals, using emails and phone calls to identify potential candidate organizations. It was critical to only recruit from companies that supported the criteria stipulated in my case study involving firms in central Florida that focused on the identification of new concepts, themes, and perspectives and new SCM strategies.

Relationship development can be critical in the process of recruitment when a level of trust is created to open the door to participation and communication to ensure rich data for analysis (Quinney, Dwyer, & Chapman, 2016). Gyure et al. (2014) discussed the importance of ethics and etiquette in the contact development stages to ensure nondisclosure and privacy critical to the process. I incorporated relationship development through the use of respectful and polite communication with participants. I considered the sensitivity and word choice in responses and continued relationship development in declining or accepting participants in the study. I first sent potential participants an invitation to participate in this study. Morse (2015) supported Gyure et al. in that trust is

critical in relationship development, adding riches to data saturation. I used a written and signed confidentiality agreement to provide added support to the relationship. Turcotte-Tremblay and Sween-Cadieux (2018) agreed on the importance of protecting the interest of the participants in the interview process concerning possible breaches of confidentially, the potential negative consequences and dissemination in the reporting of results.

Research Method and Design

I used a qualitative method to explore the various strategies supply chain managers of SME use to generate cost efficiencies for profitability. Specifically, I used a single-case study design to support my research, which included a sample population of three top supply change managers of a global SME organization. The following sections explains how I made my selection for the research method and design of the study.

Research Method

There are three different research methods available to researchers: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Schooneboom & Johnson, 2017; Yin (2018). Researchers use the quantitative method to test theories or hypotheses by examining the relationships among variables (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). Quantitative researchers use statistical analysis of information extracted through mathematical methods (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). The quantitative method did not meet the requirements of this study because I did not test theories or hypotheses to examine successful strategies used by supply chain managers of SMEs to create cost efficiencies and retain profitability.

Mixed method research combines qualitative and quantitative research elements involving broad purposes for data collection and viewpoints that can incorporate a team for collaboration or a single researcher (Schooneboom & Johnson, 2017). Mixed method researchers use both qualitative and quantitative methods to apply inductive, deductive, predictable, and pragmatic approaches for the development understanding of generalized findings (Schooneboom & Johnson, 2017). Because my research did not involve quantitative elements, the mixed methods design did not meet the requirements for my study.

Qualitative research involves exploration of a phenomenon using the collection of data on a specific theme that connects ideas to determine how to create the right framework or design to support the conclusion (Mariotto et al., 2014). Qualitative researchers use a lens of assimilation to enhance the credibility of a study using data triangulation for comprehensive findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). Qualitative researchers support the interpretation of attitudes, feelings, expression of knowledge, and experiences in the interview process (Qu, 2011). I used the qualitative method to explore derivative themes that emerged. McLeod (2017) stated that qualitative research methods are more suitable for focusing on human behavior, observation, the interview, and the informant's perspective of the phenomenon. My goal was to gain access to valuable knowledge of what strategies supply chain managers of SMEs use to identify strategies to retain profitability.

Research Design

Researchers select a design in order to provide a logical structure to connect data to the research question (Yin, 2018). Qualitative researchers can select from one of three main models of research: ethnography, phenomenology, and case study (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & De Lacey, 2016). Ethnographic researchers describe the behavior and patterns of a larger group (Astalin, 2013), whereas phenomenological researchers use perceptions, attitudes, and lived experiences of a specific group of participants to explain a particular occurrence (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Neither of these applications had the characteristics that would be useful to my study. Astalin (2013) noted that ethnographic researchers explore the behavior and patterns of larger groups. I did not intend to explore the behavior patterns of larger groups. Further, phenomenological researchers described the phenomenological design to study the perceptions, attitudes, and lived experiences of a specific group of participants about a particular occurrence (Padilla-Diaz, 2015), and this was not the objective of my study. The case study researcher uses a common approach and opportunity for a real-life investigation of a phenomenon (Stake, 1995).

Researchers use a qualitative case study design to explore events, organizations, entities, or individuals using reporting and observation procedures to find answers to research questions (Harrison et al., 2017). I chose a qualitative single-case study design to explore complex issues in the study of how supply chain managers of SME develop and deploy strategies for profitability and the reasons for difficulties in the decision-making process. Researchers use single case studies to apply a flexible approach to data collection to explore a problem in a single industry sector (Laurin & Fantazy, 2017). I

used a single case study to conduct an in-depth exploration of supply chain managers' strategies at one SME international company.

Researchers use a case study design in order to critically test validity for theory building in the research, document process that is underutilized, and take advantage of opportunities previously inaccessible to scientific observations that can support significant advances and findings (Yin, 2018). Case study researchers use triangulation of data collection to provide the validity required in research results (Yin, 2018). Data saturation is critical in the research process for richness and final reporting of results. I identified the qualitative method as the best approach for data collection to provide meaningful responses from interviews and document reviews. During the interview process I extracted as much information as possible from interviewees to ensure no new themes developed and I reached data saturation. In addition, I gathered information from the company's website, public information available, and other internal records in order to triangulate the data from the participant responses.

Population and Sampling

The sample for this qualitative study was a single case study of an SME involved in global SCM in Central Florida involving three supply chain managers. I achieved data saturation with a sample of three supply chain managers. It was important to select the right sampling to ensure the researcher avoids bias through their selection of a sampling plan (Martinez-Mesa, Gonzalez-Chica, Bonamigo, Bastos, & Duquia, 2016). Martinez-Mesa et al. (2016) explained that having knowledgeable experts in the field of study offers the best results. Therefore, my goal was to find the most suitable candidates with

knowledge in the field of SCM strategy development who had achieved global success. Leviton (2015) stated that the use of the purposive sampling rather than a possible section of random sampling is better suited as it is based on subjective considerations and provides a stronger test of external validity.

Researchers achieve data saturation when interview responses become redundant and accomplished through use of sources including interviews, observations, record and document review (Saunders et al., 2018). Adequate sampling for saturation requires the combining of all sampling for processing and final analysis of all data collected (Saunders et al., 2018).

The qualitative case study researcher provides rich data and quality which is more important than quantity. Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, and Young (2018) recommended qualitative researchers consider the scope, nature, and quality of data collected to ensure rich data collection when selecting a sampling method. This concept is supported by Dey's (1999) view that saturation is problematic in thinking in terms of being complete and that conceptual depth is another appropriate term for sufficient saturation. I reached data saturation when the respective data was captured and identified and responses to questions fail to provide new information.

Ethical Research

I used the Walden University IRB guidelines required for researching my study that ensure justice, benefice, and respect for persons (Office of Human Research, 2016). After obtaining the IRB approval number (10-31-19-0689788), I requested the participants sign a letter of cooperation as required from the participant company

executive. Following the approval from the corporation I sent the participant the informed consent form for review and response. The participants confirmed consent by returning the letter of cooperation form with signature signed via email. Yip, Han, and Sng (2016) stated that all documents and communications must stipulate the right to withdraw and or refuse to participate. I ensured that all potential interviewees understood that their involvement was voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time and with no penalty immediately upon verbal or written notice. Petrova, Camilleri, and Dewing (2014) recommended that various strategies are used to ensure confidentiality that supports data collection, transcription, recruitment of the participants, and the final data analysis. In the fulfillment of the case study requirements, a face-to-face interview, and a document review was done at a time that was convenient to the participants. Yip et al. (2016) established essential components of informed consent to include the purpose of the study, participants' risks, benefits, responsibilities, and rights. Das and Sil (2017) added that honesty is critical, and the researcher should ensure adherence to all ethical requirements in the research process. The consent form was used to support ethical requirements.

Yip et al. (2016) stipulated the importance of the Belmont Report concerning respect, beneficence, and individual and social justice to avoid misconduct in the protocol process. All documents have been maintained in a safe, secure location for five years to protect the rights of all participants. Qualitative researchers do not allow for complete anonymity because the researcher is aware of the participants, but confidentially is provided through the document control process (Kaiser, 2009). As the researcher, I

understood the importance of following the protocols of the Belmont Report and ensured all participants were provided the proper understanding and information before participating in the study. To follow protocol, I have stored all electronic data using a password safe USB drive and keep it in a secure place for five years and then destroy in accordance with Walden University requirements. The final documents show the Walden IRB approval number as an identifiable number for added confidentially and document control. Mandal, Acharya, and Parija (2011) discussed the history of confidentially and the 1948s first Nuremberg Coding system establishing voluntary contents as essential in the research process. All required ethical measures were considered for the study, interview, and document control process to ensure compliance with Walden University's code of ethics and ensuring that the documents did not include identifiable information concerning the participant's names and organization by using sequential codes and numbers as shown above.

Data Collection

Data Collection Instruments

I acted as the primary instrument for data collection. Yin (2018) stated that a researcher works directly in the data collected through the process of interviews and the collection of other evidence in case study research. In qualitative interviews, the researcher is the active instrument that collects information and has a privileged position that can create an imbalance of power creating ethical concerns between the researcher and participants (Raheim et al., 2016). I, as the researcher, was aware of my intentions in the data collection process and avoided the creation of bias or unethical actions.

In this study, I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions (Appendix A) as the primary source of data collection. Adhabi and Anozie (2017) stated the qualitative researcher approach provides for unstructured, and semistructured interview opportunities using open-ended questions in the interview process. The interviewer was the primary data collector in the process for exploration and justification of the phenomenon from the subject's point of view (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Researchers view the semistructured interview process for added flexibility, time to explore the issues, no rigid adherence, and significant ability to collect data required in qualitative studies (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017)

Researchers validate their findings through cross checking and evaluation of emerging themes to enhance the findings (Anney, 2014; Brit, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Researches use member checking to enhance the credibility and additionally provide each participant with a summary to engage and respond to the transcripts of the interview process (Brit et al., 2016). I followed the member checking process for validity which was done immediately after the interview and before the final analysis of data.

Data Collection Technique

In qualitative interviews the researcher is the active instrument that collects information and has a privileged position that can create an imbalance of power creating ethical concerns between the researcher and the one being researched (Raheim et al., 2016). Therefore, I as the researcher was aware of my intentions in the data collection process and avoided the creation of bias or unethical actions.

After Walden University IRB approved my research, and I worked to develop a relationship with potential participants and provided them with an invitation to participate in the study. Once the participant agreed to join the study, to further build the relationship and establish trust I sent them the informed consent form. Within the informed consent form, I described the participant's right to withdraw at any time and that their responses would be kept confidential for 5 years after which time I will destroy all data. Further within the form I indicated that the participants would receive a copy of the study results after CAO approval. Once the participant signed and returned the informed consent form, I scheduled an interview at a location suitable and comfortable to the participant. During the interview I audio recorded the interviewees and made note observations. I asked the participants semistructured open-ended questions.

In this study, I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions as the primary source of data. Adhabi and Anozie (2017) stated that the qualitative researcher may use unstructured and semistructured interview opportunities using open-ended questions in the interview process. The interviewer is the backbone in the primary data collection process to explore and justify the phenomenon from the subject point of view (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The researcher's use of the semistructured interview allows for flexibility, time to explore the issues, no rigid adherence, and significant ability to collect data required in qualitative studies (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

Yin (2018) stated that data collection techniques should include record reviews, observation, mapping, use of data collection software, analysis, and interpretation. The

proper use of data collection steps for analysis to ensure oversight and conclusions were critical and I ensured all ethical actions were taken during the interview process. Case study design has five components: (a) a study's questions; (b) its propositions, if any; (c) its unit(s) of analysis; (d),the logic linking the data to the propositions; and (e) the criteria for interpreting the finding.

In the interview protocol (Appendix B) I outlined the primary data collection tool used in this study to gather information during the interview process using a series of open-ended questions. Sutton and Austin (2015) stated that the ability to establish research questions that allow for the collection of data and thoughts and feelings is part of the qualitative research process. Advantages of the interview process is the opportunity to observe behaviors, environments, attitudes, and expressions (Opdenakker, 2006). Disadvantages of the interview process are cost, results that could be influenced by the dynamics of the environment, time allowance, and interactions between interviewees (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Secondary information considered in the form of observation and nonverbal communications were also critical in the process. Mehrabian (1972) in the development of the 7%-38%-55% analysis stated that 7% of communication represent words spoken, 38% the tone of words spoken, and 55% actual body movement. Mehrabian (1972) concluded that 93% of all communication is nonverbal. Therefore, I applied active listening skills during the interview process and took personal notes to support added information. The interview was face-to-face allowing for observation of words, movement, and body language and as indicated can provide both advantages and disadvantages.

After the interview process, I used member checking to ensure proper interpretation of all data in the transcribing review. Brit et al. (2016) stated that member checking is critical for accuracy and validation. It was essential to exercise caution in my data analysis to avoid bias interpretation that could impact the results. Smith and Noble (2014) instructed researchers to not allow personal beliefs to interfere or influence information collected by selective hearing and interpretation. I used the member checking process to enhance the validity of my research by allowing the participants an opportunity to review a one to two-page summary of the interview for correctness. I manually recorded the data for reflections and accuracy important in the analysis and coding of themes. Researchers use manual processes as an effective and efficient way to record, code themes, and provide structure in qualitative data analysis. I used the manual analysis process to support my data collection to comply with all the requirements outlined in the interview process to ensure avoidance of bias and deliverance of valid and accurate results.

Data Organization Technique

I used a manual data system for the collection of data, storage, and retrieval to support my case study. I used the advice of Yin (2018) who advocated all data involved in the research process be stored and controlled, categorized, and organized. Yin (2018) stated electronic and hard copies of data in an organized manner ensures retrieval and easy access. Yin (2018) recommended organization of research information to ensure confidentially. I used a password-controlled USB device, rather than a hard drive and stored in a secure place for the required 5-year period after which I will destroy. Any

physical data gained in the research process was placed in a locked, secure cabinet file and will be destroyed by shredding five years after CAO approval.

Data Analysis

The researcher in the data analysis process interprets gathered notes, transcripts, coding, and observes observations to transform into interpretation (Seers, 2011). Seers (2011) stated that themes are developed from an understanding of patterns when information is categorized, ensuring the original data are maintained for depth and richness to support final decisions and analysis. I used methodological triangulation to identify the themes from the data gathered in the document and interview process. Researchers using methodological triangulation enhance the interpretation of analysis and findings using multiple sources to determine the phenomena under study (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). I followed the steps for data analysis and took the data and coded the concepts and ideas from the interview process into a manual process for evaluation. I identified themes with coding nodes, for the participant and organization using P1, O1, to protect the identities involved. Coding is critical and essential to classify and organize the information for analysis to ensure understanding of the phenomena (Van Kaam, 1959). I used the five-step data analysis recommended by Yin (2018) incorporating (a) compiling data, (b) disassemble data, (c) reassemble data, (d) interpret the meaning, and (e) conclusion of the data analysis. Qualitative researchers using triangulation ensure data themes and organizational documents are aligned for validity in the data analysis process. I used manual color coding to identify repetitive information from data collected. My goal in the data analysis was to align the data from all sources to understand and

demonstrate strategies that SMEs used in SCM for profitability and present a detailed presentation to support future research.

The researcher uses member checking to support the establishment of trust (Brit et al., 2016). Koelsch (2013) stated that validation in qualitative research is critical for researchers and supports change for problematic social conditions, thoughts, and behaviors needed to ensure subjective truth in the interview process. Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated that critical points in quality criteria for qualitative research credibility involve transparency, continuous data analysis, and editing for confirmability. As the researcher, I ensured quality criteria to develop a protocol for fair treatment by identifying patterns in the data analysis. Yin (2018) stated that triangulation of evidence collected should align. I crossed all collection points and used member checking for evaluation of data themes to cover how strategies and costing decisions are made. Yin (2018) stated that by aligning matching patterns validity in analysis is strengthened and predicted patterns emerge.

During data analysis the researcher interprets gathered notes, transcripts, coding and observation gathered in the research process to transform into interpretation (Seers, 2011). Seers (2011) stated that themes are developed from interpretation of patterns when information is categorized ensuring the original data is maintained for depth and richness to support final decisions and analysis. Researchers can use software tools such as NVivo to develop a coding system to help identify and classify patterns of significance from the interview process (Xu & Storr, 2012). I used methodological triangulation to identify the themes from the data gathered in the document and interview process. Qualitative

researchers rely on methodological triangulation to enhance and interpret the analysis and findings using multiple sources to identify the phenomena under study (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). In my study, I relied on the interview protocol (Appendix B) and asked the questions listed in Appendix A and any follow up questions as needed.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

In qualitative research the researcher determines reliability by exploring the data for consistency and repeatability in meaning and findings to access trustworthiness in conclusion (Krefting, 1991). The researcher determines the reliability through the actual interview questions to support the collection of data that accurately accesses the qualitative research process (Leung, 2015). Leung (2015) stated that reliability is enhanced with data comparison, use of tables, constant comparisons, and comprehensive analysis for accuracy. Yin (2018) stated that dependability in case studies comes from auditable documents which researchers use to enhance reliability for consistency and stability. I triangulated the data using member check summary from the interview and documents collected from the organization. Data saturation is critical to enhance reliability in the final analysis and supports analytical coding to strengthen the credibility of the research results. In order to ensure reliability, I ensured all efforts were made in the interview and data collection process to avoid errors in data classifications, coding, and misinterpretations in the final analysis.

Validity

The qualitative researcher establishes the use of validity through the use of the right tools and processes by choosing the correct methodology and design for data analysis that achieves the desired outcome (Leung, 2015). Yin (2018) explained that through the triangulation of resources, the researcher can achieve rigor and quality in research. Internal and external validity determined by the researcher in case studies requires the use of multiple resources. Leung (2015) explained that researchers experience difficulties to assess the validity of qualitative research due to the various philosophical perspectives from social interaction involving culture, context, and the impact on data collection and analysis. Quality case studies support validity by using techniques that involve use of transcribed notes, interviews, member checking, and rigor; all helping to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Zucker, 2009). I used a semistructured interview and documentary evidence as the two primary sources to support my qualitative case study to promote value and believability in the findings.

Data saturation is critical in the research process for richness and final reporting of results. Based on the above, I identified the qualitative method as the best approach for data collection to provide meaningful responses from the interview and document reviews in the discovery process. My plan in the interview process was to extract as much information as possible from interviewees to ensure no new themes develop to reach data saturation.

Credibility. The qualitative researcher establishes trustworthiness of their

findings through four aspects one of which is credibility. Researchers establish credibility through triangulation and member checking to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon (Anney, 2014). Researchers improve the credibility of their research through an investment in time, participation, observation, and multiple methods of data sources (Nowell, Noris, White, & Moules, 2017). The use of well-established research methods, such as prior comparable projects, and development of strategies that contribute to trustworthiness, such as the development of connections with participants to support confidence allows for more open and honest participation from the interview participants (Nowell et al., 2017). I enhanced my findings by seeking the right candidate, creating personal engagement, and using methods of observations to allow for triangulation methods.

Confirmability. Korstjens and Moser (2018) explained that researchers use confirmability to achieve neutrality in the audit trail. Researchers obtain neutrality when credibility, dependability, and transferability all align as audited records and documents create confirmation of trustworthiness (Cope, 2014). Anney (2014) explained that confirmability is the degree to which the researcher can collaborate results. The results cannot merely be interpretations but actual findings. Confirmability is achieved in the audit trail using visible evidence obtained in reflective documents, data collection, and analysis (Anney, 2014). The use of a reflective journal supports personal reflections, assessment, and perceptions required by the researcher (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I used an audit trail and reflective journaling to establish confirmability of the results of the study.

Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated that the creation of a strategy for engagement to allow for prolonged observation in the interview process tests for possible misinformation and supports gathering of rich data and confirmability. I was mindful of my personal biases and how it might influence my interpretations. I used a manual process to identify the emerging themes which will further distance my work from personal biases.

Transferability. Researchers use transferability to obtain and develop meaningful insights through the application of their research findings to other groups or settings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Korstjens and Moser (2018) described how experiences and behavior provide added context that is meaningful to collected data content critical in the analysis stage. Transferability by the researcher allows for the transfer of original findings under investigation, enabling judgment for the reader (Yilmaz, 2013). Transferring the context and events of the inquiry to enhance and enrich the results provides for transferability in qualitative studies. (Yilmaz, 2013). The qualitative researcher creates trustworthiness in the research process through transferability also requires the components of credibility, dependability, and confirmability to create trustworthiness in the qualitative research process (Nowell et al., 2017).

According to Anney (2014), the researcher's role is critical to facilitate transferability to ensure the creation of thick, rich sampling. To address transferability in my research I used collected data as evidence, combined with recording, all communications, and documentation review relative to my research to support external future research. It is important that transferability be applied so future researchers can

make informed decisions based on sufficient information and findings. Anney (2014) stated the importance of sufficient information in the chain of evidence be reviewed to ensure readers can transfer data for insight and applications to future research.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how SMEs seek to achieve profitability in global SCM. In the introduction, I provided a foundation of the qualitative case study, design, framework, and problem statement. I also reviewed the research discussion points that are critical to support global market conditions and the application of these conditions to global organizations involved in SCM. In Section 2, I reviewed the construction of the study process elements. The discussion on the role of the researcher covered valuable assessment of how the research would be collected, handled, recorded, and analyzed. In Section 2, I covered essential and critical analysis of how the researcher methods and design would support sampling, reliability, and credibility. In Section 3, I conclude the study presenting the case study findings and how they affect social change, as well as recommendations, reflections, for future study opportunities.

Section 3: Application for Professional Practice and Implications for Social Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the successful strategies that SME supply chain managers use to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable. The sample consisted of one SME in Florida that had implemented strategies to improve profitability. The case study participants were employees in positions of upper-level management consisting of CEO, vice president, and director of supply chain operations, each with over 10 years of experience in global SCM. The code names for the participants in this study are P1, P2, and P3. Each interview began with the participant's name, company name, and position. This section includes the detailed findings of the research questions and application to professional practice, recommendations for actions and future research, and my reflections with final concluding remarks.

For the data collection process, I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) to create a level of trustworthiness involving three SCM experts all from the same organization, who were asked the same six questions (see Appendix A) in the interview process. I also reviewed documents provided by the participants. In the analysis, several themes emerged: (a) leadership and organizational culture, (b) visibility, (c) policies and processes, and (d) production and product sourcing, all areas that are critical in the strategic planning process ultimately impacting an organization’s profitability. Each participant had different input based on their position, skills, and experience that helped the case study achieve data saturation. The discussion points created connection points across various levels of the organization, providing an in-depth insight into organizational

leadership, culture, systems, and processes impacting SME strategies for cost efficiencies.

Presentation of Findings

The research question was as follows: What successful strategies do SME supply chain managers use to create cost efficiencies to remain profitable? Upon receipt of the IRB approval, I recruited one SME in Central Florida and interviewed three top executive managers from the organization, using a semistructured interview process and open-ended questions. Researchers use open-ended questions in semistructured interviews for the collection of rich data using experienced participants to gain knowledge and development of information to reach data saturation (Weller et al., 2018). In the presentation of findings, I discuss the participants' responses to the questions designed for this study, themes that emerged, and data from the reports provided. In the findings, I elaborate on the themes that emerged, confirmation of data accuracy from participant review, and triangulation of data.

Theme 1: Leadership and Organizational Culture

All three participants mentioned the importance of how leadership interacts with organizational systems that impact the end-to-end processes and cultural development and/or changes needed and the impact on efficiencies that drive cost efficiencies for success. P2 provided examples and insight on leadership philosophy on market growth, the agility of product to market, and lack of cost controls through SCM. P2 stated that leadership lacks understanding of how SCM impacts profits and how delays in the decision-making process impact SCM cost efficiencies and operations. Ziaullah et al.

(2015) stated that the supply chain is a *competitive weapon* in the global arena requiring collaboration and partnerships for competitive gains to understand its power and position for profitability. Collaboration internally and externally provides the exchange of critical information and data sharing for success in the current complexity of global market share gain for profitability. Walden, Lie, Pandolfo, and Nemme (2019) stated that leaders of SMEs must adopt empowering leadership strategies and processes that engage ideas through the use of collaboration. The use of collective input helps organizations overcome the challenges of conventional practices hindering project design and implementation toward digital technology development required to compete in today's globalized market effectively. P2 stated, "barriers internally with leadership are impacting organizational culture and partnership relationship development." The development of trust is critical and a part of the problem in the process. Not providing insight and information creates internal chaos and prevents creation of strategies aligned with all departments for streamlining processes to create efficiencies for organizational success and profitability. The idea and application of the chaos theory in leadership are due to systems that lack knowledge and understanding, and the impact on decision-making, vision, and the ability to strategically ensure all followers understand the image leads to organizational chaos. The chaos theory implies how multiple events in complex channels challenge performance and profitability and how critical strategic planning and exchange of information are in the process (Wilding, 1998). The application of the chaos theory to complex systems is critical for change to influence and ensure the creation of transformation for success (Reigeluth, 2019). Organizational leaders must realize that

chaos is not a leadership style as it creates a system of discord, lack of consistency, and creates high-stress environments promoting burn out, negativity, and poor financial results (Wheatley, 1994). Therefore, it becomes more critical for leaders to identify system dynamics that will contribute to positive transformation (Reigeluth, 2019).

P1 stated, "leadership must have goals that are pushed down into the organization to properly communicate and manage process results, oversight, and system and process developments critical for organizational success." Leadership skills must have a strong foundation in knowledge and intelligence in supply chain decision-making to improve, promote, and transfer systems, value, and economic prosperity to all partners in the links. Information that provides a balance of data concerning relationships with purchasing, manufacturing, planning, inventory control, distribution, and delivery provides insight for success (Sorbi et al., 2017). P3 stated that "common sense is required for solutions to move goods between various global markets." Complex global trade systems require managerial experience that ensures procedures are structured to meet all organizational goals. Managers of SMEs face challenges in global trade due to increasingly competitive market pressures and trade wars demanding SCM system changes to avoid loss of profits.

The silo mentality, whether by company, department, or individual, controls information critical to operations and creates a "no trust" environment negating growth and expansion. The "I win" mentality must turn into a win-win mentality as an organization cannot effectively operate in isolation without consumption by its competitors (Donnellon, 1993). Partners who learn, develop knowledge, and build trust through communication lead to strength, cooperation, and co-creation of value that aligns

goals, incentives, sharing of resources, and exchange of knowledge (Cao & Zhang, 2013). Collaborative cultures are robust and vital in the supply chain process for success. Global market changes require that managers and operational executives develop unique and new ways of thinking about SCM concepts, theories, and methods requiring the use of forward-thinking ideas (Magner & Yadau, 2017). Walden et al. (2019) stated that leaders of SMEs must adopt empowering leadership strategies and processes that engage ideas through the use of collective input in order to overcome the challenges of conventional practices hindering project design and implementation of digital technology development required to compete in today's globalized market effectively.

Theme 2: Visibility

P2 stated that "most strategies have been reactive through trial and error due to not having a direct line of sight into net margins leaving little visibility into organizational costs." The purpose of transformation is to achieve all the benefits of visibility from access to internal records that provide leaders keen insight into total operational costs to expanded technology that leads organizational processes towards more significant market share, better customer service, and higher profits. Bag, Wood, Xu, Dhamija, and Kayikci (2019) indicated that digitalization and big data analytics create operational excellence that supports sustainable supply chain performance, management capabilities, green product development, and employee development critical for SME operational innovativeness. SME leaders face many challenges in global SCM due to (a) a lack of reliable channel partners, (b) unskilled labor, (c) limited technology,

(d) insufficient access to finances, (e) government roadblocks, (f) regulations, and (g) corruption, which all affect growth and profitability (Beske et al., 2014).

P1 stated, “culture change driving the importance of having skilled individuals/people to achieve known corporate strategies will be critical for process improvement, planning, management, and continuous improvement.” Leaders in SCM can transform organizational processes with strategic planning to make better use of resources and assets to increase product demand, shareholder value, and profits (Wisner et al., 2015). The use of intelligent logistics will require capable, skilled management personnel who can work with and understand artificial intelligence and big data analysis (Dong & Zhou, 2019).

P2 stated that continued work to enhance systems involving “suppliers, quality measurements, product quality, logistics, carriers, and warehouse locations and inventory control are key performance indicators that must be reviewed for enhancement and create key metric data for leadership review.” Also, P2 stated that these key indicators would support development in customer service, service policy, product flow, and forecasting critical to driving the lowest cost, right quantity, and delivery time. O’Byrne (2016) discussed how supply chain performance and success are inextricably linked, describing how poorly established channels increase costs and decrease profitability while high-performing channels contribute to growth and healthy profits. Large, medium, and small business leaders have high SCM expenditures and will fail without strategic plans, adequate design, and an understanding of the process. Strategy, network design, service performance, cost control, supplier performance, ethical procurement, and corporate

responsibility, supported by excellent inventory management systems, are the seven keys to success (O'Byrne, 2016). Strategies that align the use of skills can overcome challenges that provide more significant success.

P1 stated, "upper management buy-in" critical to barrier changes for the development of change needed to move SMEs forward. Business leaders who collaborate involving SCM techniques take advantage of continuous improvements, fewer problems with supply chain disruptions, and the exchange of knowledge that enhances production and services (Banomyong, 2010). Additionally, collaboration in partnerships works to lower costs, expand technology, level risks, and reduce investment (Banomyong, 2010). Alliances in SCM are essential for ethics and the creation of designs that provide shared visions supporting future growth and expanded market shares for all partners opening new marketing and sharing of raw materials for better pricing, negotiations, and ensuring a win-win for all parties (Banomyong, 2010).

The development of roadmaps to establish strategies require initiatives to determine goals and what specific functions are required for organizational success (Tummala & Schoenherr, 2008). The roadmaps and strategy frameworks should include elements assessment of sustainability, manufacturing, sourcing, quality product controls, service controls, engineering, financial capabilities, customer service demands, exchange of information for expanded awareness, and supply chain cost analysis to optimize operational efficiencies (Reefke & Sundaram, 2010). Established roadmaps guide the end purpose even if changes are made along the way to obtain the final goal and insight to leaders when problems occur and how challenges are dealt with, providing knowledge

critical to organizational visibility, avoiding severe disruptions, thus leading to positive change and efficiencies (Reefke & Sundaram, 2010). The nature of organizational culture, work, and interaction of leadership if changing requiring leadership change (Saloni, 2019). It's not just about naming a system internally "chaotic" but understanding how to apply, motive, and develop employees with visible steps that improve productivity and service quality. Leadership must create new stabilities and patterns that lead to change for the span of organizations life to meet future goals that avoid chaotic systems of instability (Thietart & Forgues, 1995). Visibility is required throughout every aspect of the organization so leaders can gain stronger bonds with the real purpose and life of the organization balancing power with clarity to ensure the emergent of many possibilities avoiding chaos to create predictable order that leads to profitability and stronger bonds with followers (Wheatley, 1993).

Theme 3: Policies and Processes

Walters and Helman (2019) examined partnerships finding the pathway to cash flow, revenue growth, and competitive value varied depending on the organization's ability to achieve objectives from strategic partnering that ensures cost-effective opportunities. P2 stated, "assessment in every area of the current business model has been critical for strategy and process developments." Before an organization can create performance measurement goals, it must have controls over its internal processes. P1 stated that "internal operations must first be aligned before external partners can be aligned." Further stating that people, leadership, and systems must have strategy alignment through assessment overviews that monitor, manage, and seek improvement to

strengthen weaknesses in systems to drive continuous improvement. The next generation of tools in SCM will require widespread adoption of planning and training with skilled transportation professionals to implement future SCM models bringing significant change, challenges, and opportunities to the transportation industry (Kochar, 2019). Once process controls have been established internal metrics can be provided to leadership covering cost, quality, delivery, responsiveness, environment, and technology needs to establish continuous improvement strategy processes and programs to ensure everyone involved understands the requirements (Kochar, 2019). Relationships with the most significant value exhibit characteristics of joint resourcing, trust, and the development of personal relationships leveraging the team's expertise and technologies to create competitive advantage based on commitment, collaboration, and coordination (Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002). P1 stated, "processes drive lean management" and support long term planning development. Organizational leaders who apply lean approaches with active communication channels interchangeable with technological systems that provide high visibility increase performance and link strategic and operational activities leading to the better establishment of key performance indicators (Bucolo, Wrigley, & Matthews, 2012). Therefore, changing business models in current management require balanced decision-making critical to managing chaos (Michelman, 2016). Leaders in SCM can transform organizational processes with strategic planning to make better use of resources and assets to increase product demand, shareholder value, and profits (Wisner et al., 2015). Trust is critical to avoid chaos and create strategies that

align with processes that control and create efficiencies for organizational success and profitability.

P3 stated, “that the development of global websites for delivery and customer service is critical to avoid global market expansion disruptions.” Information technology has changed the world, and the gathering of information affects every aspect of the environment, structure, and culture. Organizations using technology create visibility that lowers costs and enhances performance. Information technology creates a platform for world-class performance, changing global market landscapes, societies, economies, and politics as a strategic tool that enhances competitive advantages (Berisha-Shaqiri, 2015). Since 911 global security has taken on new heights of organizational requirements and concern. All global companies must now consider risks and potential disruptions in the supply chain and what actions will be taken if one occurs. Technology developments create higher risks due to potential cyber-attacks on cross-border e-commerce but imperative for promotion of products globally (Mou, Cui, & Kurcz, 2019).

Additionally, risks grow due to language barriers, regulations, customs laws, trade complexities and tariff shifts among nations, and government instability (Mou et al., 2019). The creation of strategies and standardized management systems using collected data analysis can be critical for supply chain operations due to the many changing factors. Useful supply chain risk management (SCRM) systems can have positive impact to control risks and budget potential known risks (Zimon & Madzik, 2019). Christopher (2004) stated that the mitigation of risk due to turbulent market conditions can be increased through the development of business models that adopt lean practices that

improves end-to-end visibility. P2 stated, "current operations require more time overseeing poor performance," due to lack of established controls and procedures throughout various levels of the organization impacting levels of oversight requirements. Poor processes and policies require new efforts of change that identify options and strategies that will lead to controls and modification of behaviors and attitudes that derail management plans through internal chaos. (Chang & Lin, 2019) state that policy change is critical not only for company growth but for an individual's health and the avoidance of diseases from overworked-related and psychological factors that become occupational related hazards. The development and oversight of the right processes from end-to-end the SME business model are critical to understanding disruptions and finding solutions. Nichols (2018) noted that choosing business solutions and mapping for the comprehensive business management that structure processes and workflow is essential for SMEs to reach their full potential**.**

Theme 4: Production and Product Sourcing

P3 stated, "no risk-free business growth" under lessons learned in global expansion. Adding "no one divisional voice can drive decision making." Savvy SME leaders must be culturally aware of the various ways in which business leaders from different countries conduct business on how to communicate to ensure the best development of trust (Tripp, 2016). In many cases, it takes long periods of relationship development, building confidence before any final business decisions are made depending on the country and the individuals involved. The global impact of many key elements of country politics, governments, use of the environment, and cultural trends

can have severe impacts on many critical areas of life and systems (Goryakin, Lobstein, James, & Suhrcke, 2015). In SCM, these impacts involve production, duties, marketing, packaging, product formulas, and website development for sales. The world's changing interaction with these elements can force immediate changes on global supply routes due to lack of access, increased costs, duty shifts, and country political instability. The development of multicultural global teams requires strategic processes using state-of-the-art communication technologies, exchange of knowledge, job exchange, shared values, and understanding of the corporate vision and mission (Gassmann, 2001).

P3 added that "proactive versus reactive steps are required to calculate risks for global growth, ensuring the best possible partners to avoid disruptions, delays, and added costs in new market entry." Organizational leaders involved in global expansions must use strategies to enhance communication that involves effective communication, setting ground rules, the establishment of a clear vision, and respect with new strategic partners to create positive returns, customer service, and product development to gain new market share. Business leaders who collaborate with team leaders across divisions take advantage of continuous improvements, fewer problems with supply chain disruptions, and the exchange of knowledge that enhances production and services (Banomyong, 2010) Additionally, collaboration in partnerships work to lower costs, expand technology, level risks, and reduce investment (Banomyong, 2010). Wilding (1998) stated that thriving on chaos describes responsive or reactive structures, and small change amplified impacting the more extensive system as the "butterfly effect," creating a tornado of events leading to misunderstanding and behavior complexities. Predictable

systems, practices, policies, and related developments are required to ensure on-time production and inventory controls to ensure service levels. Alliances in SCM are essential for ethics and the creation of designs that provide shared visions supporting future growth and expanded market shares for all partners (Banomyong, 2010). Positive supply chain partnerships create new opportunities and ignite the opening of new markets with the sharing of raw material for better pricing and negotiations, ensuring a win-win for all parties (Banomyong, 2010).

P2 stated, "it is difficult to manage the flow of inventory and costs due to leadership ideas of agility and lack of understanding of flow to market." It is critical that SMEs balance customer demand, the agility of speed to market with new product trends, production, purchasing and marketing, and the ability to accurately track demand activity with forecasting. The use of strategies that support matching supply and demand is critical to avoid stockouts, loss of sales, and dissatisfied customers. Forecasting is a vital element of demand management for planning and making critical business decisions impacting costs and profitability (Acar & Gardner, 2012). The goal of forecasting is to minimize any deviations between actual demand and the forecast to predict the right future of distribution needs that impacts partners, labor, and customers. When the right forecasting plans exist, organizations experience the benefits of lower inventories, better production planning, reduced transport costs, improved customer service, and reduced stockouts (Acar & Gardner, 2012). The balance is critical as poor communication and collaboration between all partners in the channel internally and externally, resulting in higher costs, material shortages, inability to react to market conditions, and lost sales. All

of these elements impact the budget organizational reputation, macroeconomic developments, ability to compete, market position, and profitability (Kuenzel, Papageorgiou, & Christofides, 2019). The creation of techniques using strategies that include methods of surveys, salesforce knowledge, avoidance of high-risk considerations, better visibility into inventory ensures maximum service levels. Collaboration, Planning, forecasting, and replenishment (CPFR) concepts enhance supply chain integration for visibility and replenishment using shared information for efficient and continuous processes supporting all trading partners (Caridi, Cigolini, & De Marco, 2007). The use of CPFR has many benefits, including stronger relationships, joint planning, customer purchasing patterns, and key performance metrics, all increasing revenues (Caridi et al., 2007).

All three mentioned the importance of external partners and that sometimes the price is not the only critical factor in the final decision-making process. Change in the country can impact sourcing, production, formula's, inventory, order quantities, and sales all impacting costs and final costs to customers. Strategies for each country requires understanding of each global market condition demanding more time, engagement, involvement, oversight, and knowledge to avoid disruptions impacting the customer. P2 stated, "leadership must be flexible" to ensure changes in controls, processes, systems, workflows, and accountability to open up barriers impacting opportunities. Information gathering can be a useful tool supporting the development of cultural environments, structure, processes, and organizational decision-making. The visibility furthers the creation of controls and performance standards needed for superior efficiencies driving

world-class production performance, new sourcing opportunities, expanded global partnerships built on trust, and competitive advantage.

Application to Professional Practice

The current status of the global market is creating chaos in the decision-making process for SCM leaders. Innovative strategies are critical to the future of SCM. SMEs face unique struggles due to lack of technology, financing, and skilled labor to successfully ensure changes and profitability. SCM must be more experienced in various aspects of logistics than ever before, involved in the education process continues, and willing to have a flexible team for success. Chaos does not keep supply chain managers from success; it just amplifies the importance of having an intended destination but willingness to make changes along the path to get there. This study confirms that SCM practices are critical to organizational performance enhancement. Organizations that create practices can significantly improve internal and external relationships achieving better performance. Jermsittiparsert and Rungsrisawat (2019) stated that information sharing helps integration of global business activities to increase competitive advantage, effectively manage to change global business marketing, and ensure long-term success.

It is better to work towards future proactivity that we choose, not one that we wait to see based on historic waves (Winston, 2019). Green, Zelbst, Meacham, and Bhadauria (2012) stated that integration of business practices that support the entire supply chain from manufacturing, logistics to systems must ensure green SCM applications. A new world, that SMEs must embrace and understand developing critical connections, and collaborations, and partnerships critical for survival. Strategy development that targets

performance models including marketing, finances, and supply chain create a positive impact on value creation and process development resulting in stronger sales and market share growth for return on investment leading to higher profits (Green, Whitten, & Inman, 2008). When decisions and organizational information flow throughout all organizational levels driving collaboration, focus, and new mindsets that consider all departments equal, ultimately ensuring improved customer service.

This case study results have sufficient importance to SMEs operating globally and the many challenges that occur both internally and externally along the SCM path. Logistics links all processes from materials, manufacturing to supply chain partners, finances, and even human resources are critical to ensure improved customer service. Strategy involvement and leaders that work to create value-driven performance results are ultimately those that create a platform that is difficult for competitors to duplicate. Strategy development must include technological platforms that link efficient processes supporting modern systems to reduce costs and time (Farshchi & Haghighi, 2015). This case study supported the fact that many SMEs do not have in place strategic processes throughout the organization internally or externally for success. The future of success in SME business practice development will come from leadership that fully understands how sharing of information from top down and development of teams that work towards common goals are the ones that will grow and provide the best customer service. The idea of holding onto old business relationships that once worked but are no longer working are detrimental to growth. Business strategy development for success continues to change demanding new ideas, new partners, new product development, and strong

leaders who are engaged at all levels of an organization. The results of this case study are critical for SMEs to wake up and see that change is not ahead of us; it is here now. Strategies to combat changes using proactive steps, not just looking at one or five years down the road but ten years, are required to prepare and defend their competitive position for survival. Open minds and highly skilled and trained employees must work with leaders to prepare for the new tomorrow that has now arrived.

Implications for Social Change

The levels of change across our globe have reached a new level. The human race is being challenged at every corner of the globe and impacting governments, communities, organizations, and individuals. Governments and politics are shifting trade with tariff wars impacting how cargo is moving globally, shifting supply chain partners, raw material sourcing, manufacturing locations, and the final price to consumers in communities across the globe. Trade is a significant factor as nothing happens without first the idea of a product, then design, need for raw materials, the decision on where to the manufacturer, how to ship, how to distribute, and finally, who will consume. Many individuals and organizations are impacted along the way, creating a channel and link of organizations impacting both large and small companies. The impact of technology has had both positive and negative impacts on society. Technological changes have severely impacted the SMEs, and due to the rapid fast-paced changes happening globally, many are going to be left behind without the right partnerships. In global trade, 3PL organizations have worked to connect the points to support global SMEs, but it is not enough due to the changing ability to gain access to manufacturers and raw materials that

impact the bottom-line for profitability. New channels are required to sustain the growth and needs of SMEs to ensure they continue to grow due to the value they have on economies, communities, and individuals.

The goal of this research was to provide strategies that will enhance and give insight into how these goals can be accomplished and give newly added insight into direction companies must take to bring about change and business connections and communications for the catastrophic changes getting ready to take place globally in all industry sectors. The changes will be profound and require collaboration, cooperation, and communication at new levels bringing all levels of SCM under a new order. For those that embrace the future and look for new ways to connect they will find themselves involved in grander opportunities that will provide new links and partners adding stability, connections for more significant impacts on the environment, sustainability, use of materials and pricing that will support social needs for growth and profitability never seen in our prior history. Organizations and institutions will continue to need to look for new business models that incorporate social responsibility methods to eliminate risk and backlash from consumers (Cruz, 2009). The need to protect the environment is at the forefront as individuals, cultures, and societies push harder for solutions and strategies for the integration of environmental, social responsibility.

Supply chains continue to become more complex as globalization expands, and companies look for ways to combat issues in countries involving reduced labor, working conditions, wages, and product quality. In reverse, globalization can offer enormous opportunities for developing countries forcing government systems to change to support

new business opportunities. The push requires developing countries to change for gain, which is enormous for individuals who are working under poor conditions and low wages, and in many countries, little to no job opportunities forcing them to leave their homes for work. In the expansion, companies must understand risks and impact on brand name and global reputation that can severely impact the bottom-line. Amini (2016) stressed that the prioritization of skills and knowledge becomes critical to fulfillment in the development and oversight of strategies when working to achieve success in global expansion. Corporate social responsibility risks will continue to be rise with global expansion; requiring established corporate global ethic practices to avoid personal interests, adverse and even destructive consequences can result (Amini, 2016). Leadership skills must consider communication, cultural, social, spiritual, ethical and emotional intelligence, conflict management, political behavior, and performance assessment based on country location (Amini, 2016). Shakerian, Dehnavi, and Shateri (2016) stated that knowledge management becomes the vital element in managing supply due to the impact each decision can have on an organization.

We are living in an amazing time of change requiring a new vision from leadership working to bring about new ways of doing business, supporting the development of SMEs that have always been the cornerstone of economic growth and social change. The evolution and development of strategies and practices to compete in dynamic international markets, ensuring value and profit involve critical coordination and information sharing. Organizations must work with highly skilled and knowledgeable individuals in the decision-making process due to potential future implications, which

could be negative or positive (Habib, 2014). The right organizations will require the right individuals to support these processes, ensuring positive impacts across cultural communities and societies for change that benefits many. It is an exciting time for those who see have a vision and want to push forward ensuring a safer and healthier future in our rapidly changing world where visionaries are needed to prepare and protect our nations, land, societies, businesses, people, and future generations.

Recommendations for Action

Supply chain managers must take the role of alignment with partners seriously. Technology is going to play a critical role in future logistics, and organizations without visibility are not going to be positioned for success. Proactive and advanced initiatives are required to set organizations apart from others as industry leaders, creating reliable services for competitive advantage, engaging in full collaboration with continuity plans to quickly recover from supply chain disruptions. Organizations with proactive initiatives create management that oversees security, avoiding exposure to risks, and actively participate in learning and training to enhance employee skills and knowledge. Organizations using advanced initiatives focus on the development of products that increase revenues, enhance cash flows, provide added working capital for growth, and increase service and customer levels in the process. Organizations that do not have proactive or advanced strategies end up reacting to global disruptions delaying decision-making due to lack of visibility and ultimately end up with costs and losses impacting the entire organization and reputation.

Integration of processes and strategy development create value through coordinated efforts of all channel partners with trust that shares information in collaborative relationships improving services and saving costs. The benefits of the jointly managed process with trading partners are significant. The use of mapping processes and networks supports partner performance measurement reviews, established review of marketing, manufacturing, and logistics strategies that become the foundation for annual reviews. Raw material sourcing and collaboration with other partners to lower costs will become critical for price control against growing competitors. Global expansion and changing trade agreements will continue to impact manufacturing location and distribution points for price line controls in expansion initiatives. Also, annual reviews are necessary as partners, growth, new product, new market, and service levels are continuously changing, demanding review, updating, and analysis for continued growth and profitability.

Business owners, managers, and desk-level operations all need to pay attention to process development and application to ensure data collection, follow-up, and communication to the right internal and external partners. Collaboration and communications jointly managed can avoid costly disruptions. The collection of data using advanced technology processes supports established contractual arrangements and agreements. Bosche, Crawford, Jackson, Schallehn, and Schorling (2018) expected the realization of integration of systems involving software and hardware and data from the IOTs to grow to $520 billion by 2021. Lowering of barriers in cheaper investments in cloud-based technology for operations and systems will bring more organizations

together for enterprise success. Cloud-based providers allow a more straightforward implementation creating tremendous opportunities as SMEs can interface current systems with added security and partner platform integrations collecting data to support strategic processes to enhance, engage, and grow businesses using end-to-end solutions that drive profits and support return on investments (Bosche et al., 2018). The use of acquisitions for future access to end-to-end systems can be a link to growth, vendor expansion, partnership development, and expansion of sustainability policies that will be critical for profitability and competitive advantage.

My recommendation for leaders of SMEs are (a) investment in education, (b) training, (c) shared knowledge, (d) development of strategy's with flexibility, (e) expand partnerships in the SCM channels from production and manufacturing to logistics, and finally (f) development in human resources that ensures the best person is hired for a position. The establishment of these objectives will become critical parts of organizational success. Future employees will be required to work along-side collaborative robotics, a significant change from the animate showcased on GM's floor in 1961 (Satell, 2016). Collaborative robots will be critical to supply chain operations working with precision and accuracy along-side humans. Lean manufacturing will intertwine robots to manufacture just-in-time methods to switch off and adjust orders instantly, avoiding overproduction, and saving millions in inventory (Satell, 2016). Flexibility with safety allowing training and skills of operational staff to take on entirely new roles from the manufacturing facility through distribution to the drones making the final delivery to end customers. Technology advancements preforming grunt work will

require collaborative work human assistance at new levels driving new demands inhuman work knowledge critical to productivity and future economies.

Leaders of SMEs need to work closely with organizational managers developing trust for long-term relationships that are critical for survival and competition for global market expansion. Many organizations start at one point and expand due to many economic changes or market demands but at some point to take on new expanded growth and succeed in becoming a global brand name they must be willing to take on new internal and external risks, with controls and consideration of risks to move forward. If SMEs must take on new levels of thought and allowances for collaborations and the development of trust, with an understanding of risk, for expanded growth requiring insight and willingness for ingenuity sometimes only seen by another generation. As P3 stated there is no such thing as “risk free” and everything comes at price but without change, open minds, new strategies, visions, goals, and the constant oversight and determination of leaders to achieve them they will never been realized. Metcalf (2019) states leadership skills required for 2020 will be humbling for those who help organizational succeed demanding mission-driven commitment driving goals and actions with purpose, being a 360-degree thinker, drawing knowledge from others, promoting friendly cultures with values and authenticity that inspires through challenges for organizational gain. Also, ensuring collaboration to solve problems and create market-leading solutions. These attitudes and actions will transform competitive space and provide process leadership and continuous innovation. Use of these leadership skills along with the essential qualities of integrity, enthusiasm, loyalty and decisiveness (Fries,

2018) in SME organizations will drive growth into the future leaving a legacy's for generations to come.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies that SMEs need for profitability. The case study data collection supported the importance of the study and the importance of further research to overcome any limitations within this study. Future researchers might consider conducting studies involving multiple cases against the findings of this single case study with a different population and multiple participants to gain greater insight into findings for future consideration. Limitations in this study and the need for added research could potentially uncover information not obtained in this study that could be critical to the success of another organization critical to their ongoing success and profitability. Additionally, I recommend the use of other research methods for an opportunity to collect more in-depth data concerning SME strategies that would create stronger partners, strategies, and profitability. Finally, a quantitative study could provide additional insight into how SME's strategy developments determine profits or losses through organizational structures in SCM oversight. Many areas of supply chain still need to be researched as it's an area many organizational leaders do not understand. The lack of understanding of the supply chain process directly impacts the entire organization. Until leaders fully embrace and work to implement strategies that partner with all department's success will continue to be limited, creating added risks and challenges as part of the day to day operations — the results loss of profits and market share.

Leaders of SMEs, consultants, global institutions and organizations, and community economic development centers could all benefit from the findings of this study. The participants in this study could all benefit through the creation of successful strategies incorporating the four themes: (a) leadership and organizational culture, (b) visibility, (c) policies and processes, and (d) production and product sourcing. I believe that leaders could be more successful through the alignment of these four themes identified in this study to establish and create profitability through structure and established controls involving trust, communication, and full organizational involvement and collaboration.

Future SCM teams will need to work closely with all divisions of a company to ensure success. Active supply chain managers will have greater success through the continuous efforts of research that supports the needs of SMEs. The competitive advantage of using tower control concepts and strong partnering teams will change and enhance opportunities as new products flood the market globally. Border operations open up seamlessly into new country markets, offering more significant opportunities for the economy of scale and distribution of wealth. Further investigation into the use of strategies that incorporate tower control concepts that extend technology, distribution, financing, raw material pricing for competitiveness, and oversight are critical to ensure success and would bring added benefits to the study of SMEs involved in global SCM. These studies would provide insight into specific challenges that impact profitability and growth.

Reflections

At the end of this challenging journey of education, unlike anything ever experienced in the BA or MBA programs, I know the completion of this journey has not been without overcoming one of the most significant challenges of my life. The completion of this program required I expand my knowledge of SCM in an unbiased and ethical manner.

My love for SCM has its roots in my family blood as we built the first ships for the kings of England in Norfolk, Virginia, where I was born and continued to remain the lifeblood of my family for many generations. As a woman in the family and not being so interested in working on ships my personal love was law and so I became interested in the area of trade law. At the very beginning of my career in global SCM, I obtained my license as a U.S. Customs Broker under the Department of Homeland Security by studying and passing a test involving the trade regulations.

At the time of establishing my own international global transportation company, I begin to have a vision of a future business model that would impact the success of many SMEs. The model required to future use of advanced technology not available in trade and logistics but was in the process of development. It was critical for the business model and support of major evolving health concerns in society due to mental illness, foods loaded with chemicals, the saddened state of our global environment, need for pure medicines, and many other issues involving social reform that demand change to ensure a better future of the health and mind of our society. It’s now time to move forward and create the next level of success in my life that I have worked hard for and desire to see

become a reality. The case study provided a greater insight into the challenge's society is facing and areas that seriously need reform critical to the future of our communities and country. In this process of change in thinking I hope to not only have an impact on the success of many small companies in global supply chain but through the vision impact social change to enhance the lives and health of families and communities through economic growth changing and giving hope to many who are looking for direction, opportunity, and a better tomorrow.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies supply chain managers use to achieve profitability. I obtained a participant through purposeful sampling to identify possible candidates and gathered data through semistructured interviews with three experienced supply chain managers from one global supplier organization. Each individual of the qualified participant provided answers to the six designated questions and provided data to support the information. The information and data collected allowed for enhanced reliability, use of member checking, and data analysis that support the development of four themes (a) leadership (b) visibility, (c) processes, (d) production, and product sourcing.

Each theme is critical in the development of strategies critical for SMEs to create and maintain profitability that leads to long term stability and success. The creation and implementation of strategies can be difficult and time-consuming due to the many challenges SMEs face with skilled labor, finances, and creation of relationships critical for long term success both internally and externally. The success of SMEs evolves around

the skills of individuals; therefore, SMEs must provide stable working conditions that contribute to individuals, which ultimately creates satisfied customers, community growth, and stable economies, improving social conditions for everyone. Leaders must be savvy as they play a crucial role in more than just the company's bottom-line as they represent how business success and profitability can impact the surrounding community. When SMEs win communities, society, and economic conditions thrive, changing lives, homes, individuals, and communities.

References

Abreu, A. D., & Alcantara, R. L. C. (2015). Supply chain managers: Professional profile and the role in the cross-functional integration of supply chain management. *Independent Journal of Management and Production, 6*, 2236-2269. doi:10.14807/ijmp.v6i1.246

Acar, Y., & Gardner, E. S. (2012). Forecasting method selection in a global supply chain. *International Journal of Forecasting, 28(*4), 842-848. doi:10.1016.ij.ijforecast.2011.11.003.

Adachi, Y. (2010). Business negotiations between the American and the Japanese. *Global Business Languages, 2*(4), 20-30. Retrieved from https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl/vol2/iss1/4/

Adhabi, E., & Anozie, C. B. (2017). Literature review for the type of interview in qualitative research. *International Journal of Education, 9*(3), 86-97. doi:10.5296/ije.v9i3.11483

Aktas, E., & Meng, Y. (2017). An exploration of big data practices in the retail sector. *Logistics, 1*(2), 1-28. doi:10.3390/logistics1020012

Alawneh, A. A., Abuali, A., & Almarabeh, T. Y. (2009). The role of knowledge management in enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). *Communications of the IBIMA, 10*(13), 98-109. doi:10.1.1.410.9608

Ambe, I. M., & Badenhorst-Weiss, J. A. (2010). Strategic supply chain framework for the automotive industry. *African Journal of Business Management, 4*, 2110–2120.

Retrieved from http://www.academicjournals.org/ajbm

Amini, A. (2016). Prioritization of general skills of managers in impact on fulfillment of corporate social responsibility from experts' Point of view (A case of Nectar Industry of Urmia City) *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 230*, 396-404. doi:10/1016/j.sbspro.2016.09.050

Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies, 5(2)*, 272–281. Retrieved from jeteraps.scholarlinkresearch.org

Appelbaum, S. (1998). The management of multicultural group conflict. *Team Performance Management, 4*(5), 211-234. doi:10.1108/13527599810234173

Astalin, P. K. (2013). Qualitative research designs: A conceptual framework. *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research, 2*(1), 155-160. Retrieved from http://indianresearchjournals.com

Attaran, M. (2004). Exploring the relationship between information technology and business process reengineering. *Information and Management, 41*, 529–684. doi:10.1016/S0278-7206(03)00098-3

Banomyong, R (2018), "Collaboration in Supply Chain Management: A Resilience Perspective", *International Transport Forum Discussion Papers*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Bag, S., Wood, L. C., Xu, L., Dhamija, P., & Kayikci, Y. (2019). Big data analytics an operational excellence approach to enhance sustainable supply chain performance. *Science Direct 153*. doi:10.1016/j.resoconrec.2019.104559

Banomyong, R. (2010). *Supply chain* dynamics *in Asia* (ABDI Working Paper No. 184). Retrieved from SSRN website: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol13/papers.cfm?abstract id=1592794

Bayramov, V., Hasanov, R., Aghayarli, L., Kadyrov, Z., Aghahasanli, I., & Isayev, S. (2017). *A comparative study on development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Azerbaijan.* Retrieved from Center for Social and Economic Development website: http://cesd.az/new/wp-content/uploads/2017/11 /CESD_SME_Research_Paper.pdf

Bekhet, A. K., & Zauszniewski, J. A. (2012). Methodological triangulation: An approach to understanding data. *Nursing Research, 20(*2), 40-43. doi:10.7748/nr2012.11.20.2.40.c9442

Bell, J. E., Goldsby, T. J., & Autry, C. W. (2012). *Global macrotrends and their impact on supply chain management: Strategies for gaining competitive advantage*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: FT Press.

Berisha-Shaqiri, A. (2015). Impact of information technology and internet in businesses. *Academic Journal of Business, Administration, Law and Social Sciences, 1*(1), 73-79. Retrieved from https://lipccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ajbals-73-79.pdf

Beske, P., Land, A., & Seuring, S. (2014). Sustainable supply chain management practices and dynamic capabilities in the food industry: A critical analysis of the literature. *International Journal of Production Economics, 152*, 131–143. doi:10.1016/j.ijpe.2013.12.026

Borade, A. B., & Bansod, S. V. (2007). Domain of supply chain management: A state of

art. *Journal of Technology Management & Innovation, 2*(4), 109–121. Retrieved from https://www.jotmi.org/index.php/GT/article/view/421

Bosche, A., Crawford, D., Jackson, D., Schallehn, M., & Schorling, C. (2018). *Unlocking opportunities in the internet of things*. Retrieved from Bain & Company website: https://www.bain.com/insights/unlocking-opportunity-in-the-internet-of-things/

Brett, J., Behfar, K., & Kern, M. C. (2006). Managing Multicultural Teams. *Harvard Business Review 84*(11), 84-91. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2006/11/managing-multicultural-teams

Brit, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1802-1811. doi:10.1177/1049732316654870

Bucolo, S., Wrigley, C., & Matthews, J. H. (2012). Gaps in organizational leadership: Linking strategic and operational activities through design-led propositions. *Design Management Journal, 7*(1), 18-28. doi:10/1111/j.1949-7177/2012.00030.x

Burigan, N., & Benic, D. (2017). The impact of membership in strategic alliances on the profitability of firms in the retail sector. *Croatian Economic Survey, 19*(2), 47-82. doi:10.15179/ces.19.2.2

Cannella, S., Canizares, R. D., & Ponte, B. (2018). Evolving trends in supply chain management: Complexity, new technologies, and innovative methodological approaches. *Complexity 2018*, 1-3. doi:10.1155/2018/7916849

Cao, M., & Zhang, Q. (2013). *Supply chain collaboration*. London, England: Springer-Verlag. doi:10.1007/978-1-4471-4591-2_2

Caridi, M., Cigolini, R., & De Marco, D. (2007). Improving supply-chain collaboration by linking intelligent agents to CPFR. *International Journal of Production Research, 43*(20), 4191-4218. doi:10.1080/00207540500142134

Carter, C. R., Kosmol, T., & Kaufmann, L. (2017). Toward a supply chain practice view. *Journal of Supply Chain Management, 53*, 114-122. doi:10.1111/jscm.12130

Cascio, W. F., & Montealegre, R. (2016). How technology is changing work and organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 3*, 349–375. doi:10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-041015-062352

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *Qualitative Report, 21*, 811–831. Retrieved from https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/

Chang, H. H., & Lin, R. T. (2019). Policy changes for preventing and recognizing overwork-related cardiovascular diseases in Taiwan: An overview. *Journal of Occupational Health, 61*(4), 278-287. doi:10.1002/1348-9585.12046

Chin, I. J., & Paulraj, A. (2004). Towards a theory of supply chain management: The constructs and measurements. *Semantic Scholar, 12*(2), 119-150. doi:10.1016/j.jom.2003.12.007

Chin, T., Hamid, A., Bakar, A., Rasil, A, & Baharun, R. (2012). Adoption of Supply Chain Management in SMEs. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 65*, 614–619. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.173

Chuang, S. F. (2013). Essential skills for leadership effectiveness in diverse workplace development. *Journal for Workforce Education and Development, 6(*1), 1-23.

Retrieved from https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ojwed/vol6/iss1/5/

Christopher, M. (1992). *Logistics and supply chain management.* London, England: Pitman.

Christopher, M. (2004). Mitigating supply chain risk through improved confidence. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, 34*(5), 388-396. doi:10.1108/09600030410545436

Coase, R. H. (1960). The Problem of Social Cost. *Journal of Law and Economics, 3*, 1-44. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/724810

Coleman, L. (2017). The world's largest shipper partners IBM to tap blockchain technology. Retrieved from https://www.ccn.com/maersk-ocean-line-partners-with-ibm-and-pyperledger-to-boost-supply-chain-efficiency

Cope, D. G. (2014). Methods and meanings: Credibility and trustworthiness off qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum, 41*, 89–91. doi:10.1188/14.onf.89-91

Courtin, G. (2018). In the future, retail is all about embracing 'temporary.' *GT Nextus.* Retrieved from http://www.gtnexus.com

Cruz, J. (2009). The impact of corporate social responsibility in supply chain management: Multicriteria decision-making approach. *Decision Support Systems, 48*(1), 224-236. doi:10.1016/j.dss.2009.07.013

Das, N. K., & Sil, A. (2017). Evolution of ethics in clinical research and ethics committee. *Indian Journal of Dermatology, 62*, 373–379. doi:10.4103/ijd.IJD_271_17

Delgado, M., & Mills, K. G. (2018). *The supply chain economy: A new framework for understanding innovation and services (Working paper 18-071)*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School.

De Vries, I. (1994). The industrial revolution and the industrious revolution. *Journal of Economic History, 54*(2), 249-270. doi:10.1017/S00220507000144

Dey, I. (1999). *Grounding grounded theory: Guidelines for qualitative inquiry*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Dong, X., & Zhou, B. (2019). Research on teaching reform for logistics management major under the guidance of intelligent logistics. 4*th International Conference on Education & Education Research* (EDUER 2019).

Donnellon, A. (1993). Crossfunctional teams in product development: Accommodating the structure to the process. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 10*/5, 377-392. doi:10.10116/0737-6782(93)90096-5

Drohomeretski, E., Gouven da Costa, S. E., Pinheiro de Lima, E., & Garuio, P. A. R. (2013). Lean, Six Sigma and Lean Six Sigma: An analysis based on operations strategy. *International Journal of Production Research, 52*, 804–824. doi:10.1080/00207543. 2013

Druehl, C., Carrillo, J., & Hsuan, J. (2018). *Technological innovations: Impacts on supply chain.* Cham, Springer International Publishing. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-74304-2_12

Durach, C. F., Wieland, A., & Machuca, J. A. D. (2015). Antecedents and dimensions of supply chain robustness: A systematic Literature review. International Journal of

Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, 45(1)*,* 118-137. doi:10.1108/IJPDLM-05-2013-0133

Evans, G. E., & Neu, C. (2008). The use of strategic forces to understand competitive advantages provided by information technology. *Journal of International Technology and Information Management, 17*(2), 137-152. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/jitim/vol17.iss2/5/

Fan, Y., & Stevenson, M. (2018). A review of supply chain risk management: definition, theory, and research agenda*. International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, 48*(3), 205-230. doi:10.1108/IJPDLM-01-2017-0043

Farshchi, F., & Haghighi, M. (2015). Impact of information technology on supply chain management (case study: Behnosh cola factory). *Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences, 5,* 3656-3665. Retrieved from https://cibtech.org/sp.ed/fls/2015/01/jls.htm

Fawcett, S. E., McCarter, M. W., Fawcett, A. M., Webb, G. S., & Magnan, G. (2015). Why supply chain collaboration fails: The socio-structural view of resistance to collaboration strategies. *Supply Chain Management, 20*, 648–663. doi:10.1108/SCM-08-2015-0331

Fischer, B. A. (2006). A summary of important documents in the field of research ethics. *Schizophrenia Bulletin, 32*, 69–80. doi:10.1093/schbul/sbj005

Fisher, A. (2014). Wanted: 1.4 million new supply chain workers by 2018. *Fortune.* Retrieved from http://fortune.com

Foghani, S., Mahadi, B., & Omar, R. (2017). Promoting clusters and networks for small

and medium enterprises to economic development in the globalization era. *Sage Open, 7*(1), 1-9. doi:10.1177/2158244017697152

Fredkind, T. (2014). Transaction cost economics as a contributing theory to supply chain management an assessment and application on a theoretical basis. *University of Twente,* 1-17. Retrieved from http://purl.utwente.nl

Fries, K. (2018, February 8). 8 essential qualities that define great leadership. *Forbes.* Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimberlyfries/2018/02/08/8-essential-qualities-that-define-great-leadership/#2b4172903b63

Gassmann, O. (2001). Multicultural teams. Increasing creativity and innovation by diversity. *Creativity and Innovation Management, 10*(2), 88–95. doi:10.1111/1467-8601

Gatautis, R., Vitkauskaite, E., & Reuver, M. (2017). Use of Facebook and Google platforms for SME's business model innovation. *BLED 2017 Proceedings, 38*, 1-764. doi:10.18690/978-961-286-043-1

Goldsby, T., Autry, C., & Bell, J. (2015). Thinking big! Incorporating macrotrends into supply chain planning and execution. Foresight: T*he International Journal of Applied Forecasting, 37*, 13–16. Retrieved from https://www.foresight.forecasters.org

Goryakin, Y., Lobstein, T., James, W. P. T., & Suhrcke, M. (2015). The impact of economic, political and social globalization on overweight and obesity in the 56 low-and-middle income countries. *Social Science & Medicine, 133*, 67-76. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.03.030

Gravier, M., Roethlein, C., & Visich, J. (2018). The competitive advantages of the digital economy require a digital mentality. *European Business Review, 1*, 50-53. Retrieved from https://www.europeanbusinessreview.com

Green, K. W., Whitten, D., & Inman, R. A. (2008). The impact of logistics performance on organizational performance in a supply chain context. *An International Journal, 13*(4), 317-327. doi:10.1108/13598540810882206

Green, K. W., Zelbst, P. J., Meacham, J., & Bhadauria, V. S. (2012). Green supply chain management practices: impact on performance. *An International Journal, 17*(3), 290-305. doi:10.1108/13598541211227126

GT Nexus. (2016). The future of retail – It's all about commerce. *GT Nexus*, 1-12. Retrieved from http://www.gtnexus.com

Gunasekaran, A., Subramanian, N., & Rahman, S. (2017). Improving supply chain performance through management capabilities. *Management of Operations, 28*(6–8), 473-477. doi:10.1080/09537287.2017.1309680

Guston, D. H. (1996). Principal-agent theory and the structure of science policy. *Science and Public Policy, 23*(4), 229–240. doi:10.1093.spp/23.4/229

Gweh, B. B. (2018). *The impact of strategic management on the growth of SMEs* (Thesis). Retrieved from https://www.theseus.fi

Gyure, M. E., Quillin, J. M., Rodriguez, V. M., Markowitz, M. S., Corona, R. A., Borzelleca, J. F., & Bodurtha, J. N. (2014). Practical considerations for implementing research recruitment etiquette. *National Institute of Health, 36*(6), 7–12. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4324645

/_pdf/nihms-572116.pdf

Habib, M. (2014). Supply chain management (SCM): Its future implications. *Open Journal of Social Sciences, 2*, 238-246. doi:10.4236/jss.2014/29040

Halldorsson, A., Katzab, H., Mikkola, J. H., & Skjott-Larsen, T. (2007). Complementary theories to supply chain management. *Copenhagen Business School, 12*(4), 284-296. Retrieved from https://www.researchage.net

Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & De Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: When to use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction, 31*, 498–501. doi:10.1093/humrep/dev334

Han, J. H., Wang, Y., & Naim, M. (2017). Reconceptualizaiton of information technology flexibility for supply chain management: An empirical study. *International Journal of Production Economics, 187*, 196–215. doi:10.1016/j/ijpe.2017.02.018

Handfield, R., & Linton, T. (2017). *The living supply chain the evolving imperative of operating in real time.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Harland, C., Brenchley, R., & Walker, H. (2003). Risks in supply networks. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Chain Management 9*(2), 51-62. doi:10.1016/51478-4792(03)00004-9

Harrison, H., Birks, F. R., & Mills, J. (2017). Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 18*, 1–17. Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs

Heller, R., Laurito, A., Johnson, K., Martin, M., Fitzpaatrick, R., & Sundin, K. (2010).

Global teams: Trends, challenges and solutions. *Cornell Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies (CAHRS)*, 1-100. Retrieved from https:www://est05.esaletrack.com/eSalesTrack/Content/Content.ashx?file=4578f59e-21b3-4a2c-bbfe-63e53af3f5dc.pdf

Hoare, Z., & Hoe, J. (2013). Understanding quantitative research: Part 2. *Nursing Standard, 27*(18), 48–55. doi:10.7748/ns2013.01.27.18.48.c9488

Hox, J. J., & Boeije, H. R. (2005). Data collection, primary vs. secondary. *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement, 1*, 593-599. doi: 10.1016/B0-12-369398-5/00041-4

Huang, J. (2015). The challenge of multicultural management in global projects. *Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 226, 71–81. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.06

International Air Traffic Association. (2010). *The impact of September 11, 2001 on aviation.* Retrieved from https://www.iata.org/pressroom/documents/impact-9-11-aviation.pdf

Jabbar, K., & Bjorn, P. (2018). Infrastructural grind: Introducing blockchain technology in the shipping domain. *GROUP* 18 Proceedings of the 2018 ACM Conference on Supporting Groupwork, 297-208. doi:10/1145/3148330.3148345

Jadhav, V. V. (2015). Role of information technology in supply chain management. *International Journal of Management Research & Review, 5*, 369–379. Retrieved from https://www.ijmrr.com

Jermsittiparsert, K., & Rungsrisawat, S. (2019). The supply chain management and information sharing as antecedents of operational performance: A case of SMEs. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews, 7*(2), 495-502.

doi:10.18510/hssr.2019.7258

Johnson, M. N. (2005). Digital business transformation (DBT): The journey must begin now – Part 3. *Supply Chain Resource Cooperation (SCRC)*, 10. Retrieved from https://scm.ncsu.edu

Jones, L. (2017). *Small to medium sized enterprises sustainability through green supply chain management* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from scholar works.waldenu.edu/dissertations

Jonsson, P., Kjellsdotter, L. & Rudberg, M (2007). Applying advanced planning systems for supply chain planning: three case studies. *International Journal of Physical distribution & logistics Management, 37*(1), 816-834. doi:10.1108/09600030710848932

Kaiser, K. (2009). Protecting respondent confidentiality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 19*, 1632–1641. doi:10.1177/104973230935087

Khaddar, M. A. E., & Boulmalf, M. (2017). *Smartphone: The ultimate IoT & IoE device*. *Intech Open.* doi:10.5772/Intechopen.69734

Khan, S. A., & Sawicka, H. (2016). Redesigning supply chain network of a lubricant company: An innovate approach. *Scientific Journal of Logistics, 12*(2), 165-180. doi:10.17270/J.LOG.2016.2.6

Kilcourse, B. (2015). Achieving profitability in an omnichannel fulfillment model executive perspective. *GT Nexus*. Retrieved from https://www.mktforms.gtnexus.com

Kim, H., Lee, D., & Ryu, M. H. (2018). An optimal strategic business model for small

businesses using online platforms. *Sustainability, 10*(79), 1-11. doi:10.2290/su10030579

Kochar, A. (2019). Digital supply chain transformation: Taking the first step. *CSCMP's Supply Chain Quarterly, 13/3*, 42-48. Retrieved from https://www.supplychainquarterly.com/topics/technology/20191024-digital-supply-chain-transformation-taking-the-first-step/

Koelsch, L. E. (2013). Reconceptualizing the member check interview. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 12*, 168–179. doi:10.1177/160940691301200105

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*, 120–124. doi:10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Krefting, L. (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 45*, 214–222. doi:10.5014/ajot.45.3.214

Kuenzel, J., Papageorgiou, C., & Christofides, C. (2019). Forecast in times of crisis. *International Journal of Forecasting, 35*/3, 1143-1159. doi:10.1016/ij/ijforecast.2019.04/001

Kumar, R., Singh, R. K., & Shankar, R. (2015). Critical success factors for implementation of supply chain management in Indian small and medium enterprises and their impact on performance. *IIMB Management Review, 27*(2), 97–-104. doi:10.1016/j.iimb.2015.03.001

Kymlicka, W. (2007). *Multicultural odysseys: Navigating the new international policies*

of diversity. Oxford, N.Y., University Press

Lach, D. (2014). Challenges of interdisciplinary research: Reconciling qualitative and quantitative methods for understanding human landscape systems. *Environmental Management, 53*, 88–93. doi:10.1007/s00267-013-0115-8

Laurin, F., & Fantazy, K. (2017). Sustainable supply chain management: A case study at IKEA. *Transnational Corporations Review, 9*(4), 309–318. doi:10.1080/19186444.2017.1401208

Lee, H. L., & Rammohan, S. V. (2016). Improving social environmental performance in global supply chains. *Sustainable Supply Chain 4*, 439-464. Cham, Springer Link. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-29791-0_20

Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine: Primary Care, 4*, 324–327. doi:10.4103.2249-4863.161306

Leviton, L. C. (2015). *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). San Diego, CA: Elsevier.

Linklater, J. (2016). The future of retail in stores now. *Sweet IQ Analysis Corp,* 1-40. Retrieved from https://getviafly.com/assets/docs/future-of-retail.pdf

Lorenz, E. (1963). Deterministic nonperiodic flow. *Journal of the Atmospheric Sciences, 20*, 130–141. doi:10.1177/0309133315623099

Lu, D. (2011). Fundamentals of supply chain management. *University of the People.* Retrieved from https://my.uopeople.edu.pluginfile.php/57436/mod_book /chapter/ 121631/BUS5116.Lu.Fundamentals.Supply.Chain.Mgmt.pdf

Lynggaard, K., Manners, I., & Lofgren, K. (2015). *Research methods in European Union studies*. London, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Madhani, P. M. (2016). Application of Six Sigma in supply chain management: Evaluation and measurement approach. *The IUP Journal of Supply Chain Management, 13*(3), 34–53. Retrieved from https://www.econbiz.de

Magner, M., & Yadau, P. (2017). Designing global health supply chains for the future. *William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan*, 1-40. Retrieved from https://wdi.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/Supply-Chains-of-the-Future_FINAL_2017-07-03.pdf

Mandal, J., Acharya, S., & Parija, S. C. (2011). Ethics in human research. *Tropical Parasitology, 1*, 2–3. doi:10.4103/2229-5070.72105

Mandal, S. (2016). Towards and integrated logistics capabilities model of supply chain flexibility: A social exchange perspective. *Romanian Economic and Business Review, 11*(3), 44–67. Retrieved from https://www.rebe.rau.ro

Manuj, I., & Mentzer, J. T. (2008). Global supply chain risk management strategies. *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, 38*, 192–223. doi:10.1108/09600030810866986

Maple, C. (2017). Security and privacy in the Internet of things. *Journal of Cyber Policy, 2*, 155–184. doi:10.1080.23738871.2017.1366536

Mariotto, F. L., Zanni, P. P., & Marcondes De Moraes, G. H. S. (2014). What is the use of a single-case study in management research? *SciElo, 54*, 358–369. doi:10.1590/S0034-759020140402

Martinez-Mesa, J., Gonzalez-Chica, D. A., Bonamigo, R. R., Bastos, J. L., & Duquia, R. P. (2016). Sampling: How to select participants in my research study? *Annals of Brasilian Dermatology, 91*, 326–330. doi:10.1590/abd1806-4841.20165254

McLeod, S. (2017). What's the difference between qualitative and quantitative research? *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from http://www.simplypsychology.org/qualitative-quantitative.html

Medford, R. (2009). The financial crisis and global supply chains. *AIB Insights, 9*(3), 8–11. Retrieved from https://repository.usfca.edu/fe/11/

Mehrabian, A. (1972). *Non-verbal communications*. Chicago, Illinois: Transactions Publishers.

Melnyk, S. A., Narasimhan, R., & DeCampos, H. A. (2013). Supply chain design: Issues, challenges, frameworks and solutions. *International Journal of Production Research, 52*, 1887–1896. doi:10.1080/00207543.2013.787175

Metcalf, M. (2019). Seven off the top leadership skills for 2020. *Forbes.* Retrieved from https://www.forbes,com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/03/30/seven-of-the-top-leadership-skills-for-2020/#6604c6366cc9

Michelman, P. (2016). Leading in an unpredictable world. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 58*(1), 53-57. Retrieved from http://mitsmr.com/29SMULS

Mishra, D. (2008). The last 100 feet of the supply chain. *Graziadio Business Review, 11*(3) 1-12. Retrieved from https://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/08/the-last-100-feet-of-the-supply-chain

Morse, J. M. (2015). Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative

inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research, 25*, 1212–1222. doi:10.1177/1049732315588501

Mou, J., Cui, Y., & Kurcz, K. (2019). Trust, Risk and Alternative website quality in B-buyer acceptance of cross-border E-commerce. *Journal of Global Information Management* (JGIM), *28*/1, 22. doi:10.4018/JGIM.2020010109.

Mwangi, C. G., & Bettencourt, J. M. (2017). A qualitative toolkit for institutional research. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 174*, 11–23. doi:10.1002/ir.20217

Naslund, D., & Williamson, S. (2010). What is management in supply chain management? A critical review of definitions, frameworks and terminology. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice, 11*(4), 11-28. Retrieved from http://lup.lub.lu.se/record/1762212

Neeley, T. (2015). Global teams that work. *Harvard Business Review, 10*, 74-81. Retrieved from https://hbr.org

Nichols, C. (2018). Top 5 considerations for SMEs adopting end-to-end business management solutions. *The New Economy*. Retrieved from https://www.theneweconomy.com/strategy/top-5-consideratins-for-smes-adopting-end-to-end-business-management-solutions.

Nicita, A., Ognivtsev, V., & Shirotori, M. (2013). *Global supply chains: Trade and economic policies for developing countries*. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations.

Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing, 18*, 34-35. doi10.1136/eb-2015-102054

Nowell, L. S., Noris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*, 1–13. doi:10.1177/1609406917733847

O'Byrne, R. (2016). 7 reasons why the supply chain matters to business success. *Logistics Bureau, 10*. Retrieved from http://www.logisticsbureau.com

Oestreicher, C. (2007). A history of chaos theory. National Center for Biotechnology Information 9(3), 279-289. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17969865

Office of Human Research (2016). *The Belmont report. U.S. Department of Health & Human service*. Retrieved from https://www.hhs.gov

Olah, J., Zeman, Z., Balogh, I., & Popp, J. (2018). Future challenges and areas of development for supply chain management. *Scientific Journal of Logistics, 14*, 138–147. doi:10.17270/J.LOG.2018.238

Oliver, R. K., & Webber, M. D. (2012). Supply-chain management: Logistics catches up with strategy. *EconBiz*, 5, 183–194. Retrieved from https://www.econbiz.de

O'Marah, K. (2016). Digitization embracing change with agility. *Forbes.* Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com

Opdenakker, R. (2006). Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 7*(4), 13-26. Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research_net/indes.php/fqs/

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2016). *Quantifying the costs,*

benefits, and risks of due diligence for responsible business conduct. New York, NY: OECD Publishing.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018). *Fostering greater SME participation in globally integrated economy.* Paris, France: OECD Publishing.

Padilla-Diaz, M. (2015). Phenomenology in educational qualitative research: Philosophy as science or philosophical science? *International Journal of Educational Excellence, 1*(2), 101–110. Retrieved from https://umet.suagm.edu.international_ journal_educational_excellence

Patel, M. X., Doku, V., & Tennakoon, L. (2003). Challenges in recruitment of research participants. *Advance in Psychiatric Treatment, 9*, 229-238. doi:10.1192/apt.9.3.229

Petrova, E., Camilleri, M., & Dewing, J. (2014). Confidentiality in participatory research: Challenges from one study. *Nursing Ethics, 23*(4), 442-454. doi:10.1177/0969733014564909

Pisano, G. P. (2015). You need an innovation strategy. *Harvard Business Review, 6*, 44-54. Retrieved from https://www.hbr.org

Porter, M. E. (1985). *Competitive advantage creating and sustaining superior performance.* New York, NY: The Free Press.

Porter, M. E. (1990*). The competitive advantage of nations.* New York, N.Y: The Free Press.

Porter, M. E., & Millar, V. E. (1985). How information gives you competitive advantage.

Harvard Business Review, 63(4), 149-160. Retrieved from https://bhr.org/1985/07/how-information-gives-you-competitive-advantage

Powell, W. W., & Snellman, K. (2004). The knowledge economy. *Annual Review of Sociology, 30*, 199-219. doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100037

Qu, S. Q. (2011). The qualitative research interview: *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management, 8*, 228–264. doi:10.1108/11766091111162070

Queiros, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Education Studies, 3*(9), 1–19. doi:10.5281/zenodo.887089

Quinney, L., Dwyer, T., & Chapman, Y. (2016). Who, where, and how of interviewing peers: Implications for a phenomenological study? *Sage Open, 6*(3), 1-10. doi:10.1177/2158244016659688

Raheim, M., Magnussen, L. H., Sekse, R. J. T., Lunde, A., Jacobsen, T., & Blystad, A. (2016). Researcher–researched relationship in qualitative research shifts in positions and researcher vulnerability. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Health and Well-being, 11*, 1-13. doi:10.3402/qhw.v11.30996

Rajiv, K., & Sreenivas, M. (2017). IoT and its smart applications. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Computer Science, Engineering and Information Technology, 2*, 2456–3307. Retrieved from http://www.ijsrcseit.com

Ramon-Jeronimo, M. A., & Herrero, I. (2017). Capturing firm's heterogeneity through marketing and IT capabilities in SMEs. *Sustainability, 9*(12), 1-24. doi:10.3390/su9122180

Reefke, H., & Sundaram, D. (2010). A strategy framework and roadmap for sustainable supply chain management. *The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability: Annual Review, 6*(2), 1832-2077. doi:10/118848/1832-2077/CGP/v06102/54753

Reeves, M., & Deimler, M. (2011). Adaptability: The new competitive advantage. *Harvard Business Review***,** Retrieved from https://www.hbr.org

Reigeluth, C. M. (2019). Chaos Theory and the sciences of complexity: Foundations for transforming educational systems. *Learning, Design, and Technology*, 1-12. Cham, Springer. doi:10.1007/978030319017727-4_95-1

Rivera, E. T., Wilbur, M., Frank-Saraceni, J., Roberts-Wilbur, J., Phan, L. T., & Garrett, M. T. (2007). Group chaos theory: A metaphor and model for group work. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 30*, 111–134. doi:10.1080/01933920590925968

Rokonuzzaman, M. (2018). The integration of extended supply chain with sales and operation planning: A conceptual framework. *Logistics, 2*(8), 1-21. doi:10.3390/logistics2020008

Rosi, B., Cvahte, T., & Jereh, B. (2013). The influence of corporate social responsibility on supply chain management. *Ideas, 13*, 41–47. Retrieved from https://ideas.repec.org/a/osi/bulimm/v13y2013p41-47.html

Roy, J. (2016). Sales forecasts for the consumer chain: Are we kidding ourselves? *Foresight: The International Journal of Applied Forecasting, 43*, 38–41. Retrieved from https://www.foresight.forecasters.org

Russo, T. A., & Katzel, A. J. (2011). *The 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath: Addressing the next debt challenge* (Occasional Paper No. 82). Retrieved from Group of Thirty website: https://group30.org/images/uploads/publications /G30_2008FinancialCrisisAftermathDebtChallenge.pdf

Ryall, M. (2013). The new dynamics of competition. *Harvard Business Review, 6*, 33-35. Retrieved from https://hbr.org

Rzeczyski, A. (2012). Analysis of the applicability of chaos theory in supply chain logistics strategies. *Research Gate*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321262651_Analysis_of_the _applicability_of_chaos_theory_in_supply_chain_logistics_strategies

Saloni, D. (2019). The changing nature of work, leadership, and organizational culture in future ready organizations. *CMC senior theses, 2064*. Retrieved from https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/2064

Sanial, G. (2014). Exploring U.S. coast guard organizational preparedness through chaos and complexity theories. *Emergence: Complexity and Organization, 16*(4), F1-F16. doi:10.17357.9919d403ac7986cc852f13fac5def0f0

Satell, G. (2016). How rethink robotics sees the future of collaborative robotics. *Forbes* Retrieved from https://www.forbes/com/sites/gregsatell/2016/08/14/how-rethink-robotics-sees-the-future-of-collaborative-robots/#71912bbe23b0

Sati, Z. E. (2017). Evacuation of big data and innovation interaction in increased supply chain competencies. *Universitepark Bulten, 6*(2), 88–102. doi:10.22521/unibulletin.2017.62

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingston, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity, 52*, 1893–1907. doi:10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

Schoenung, B., & Dikova, D. (2016). Reflections on organizational team diversity research: In search of a logical support to an assumption. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 35*, 221–231. doi:10.1108/EDI-11-2015-0095

Schooneboom, J., & Johnson, R. B. (2017). How to construct a mixed methods research design. *Kolner Zeitschrift Fur Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie, 69*, 107–131. doi:10.1007/S11577-017-0454-1

Schwab, K. (2017). *The 4th Industrial Revolution*. New York, N.Y.: Crown Publishing.

Seers, K. (2011). Qualitative data analysis. *Evidence-based Nursing, 15*(1), 2. doi:10.1136/ebnurs.2011.100352

Shakerian, H., Dehnavi, H. D., & Shateri, F. (2016). A framework for the implementation of knowledge management in supply chain management. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 230*, 176-183. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.09.022

Silvestre, B. (2016). Sustainable supply chain management: Current debate and future directions. *SciELO, 23*(21), 235–249. doi:10.1590/0104-530x2202

Simatupang, T., & Sridharan, R. (2002). The collaborative supply chain. *International Journal of Logistics Management, 13*(1), 15-30. doi:10.1108/09574090210806333

Sitharam, S., & Hoque, M. (2016). Factors affecting the performance of small and medium enterprises in KwaZuluu-Natal, South Africa. *Problems and Perspectives in Management, 14*, 277–288. doi:10.21511/pm.14(2-2).2016.03

Smith, J., & Noble, H. (2014). Bias in research. *Evidence-based Nursing, 17*, 100–101. doi:10.1136/eb-2014-101946

Sorbi, S., Zorriech, S., Jalilian, I., & Sani, M. M. S. (2017). The role of management in the evolution of the company's supply chain. *European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies, 2*(3), 176-187. doi:10.5281/zenodo.106Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. London, England: Sage.

Stapleton, D., Hanna, J. B., & Ross, R. R. (2006). Enhancing supply chain solutions with the application of chaos theory. *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal, 11*, 108–114. doi:10.1108/13598540610652483

Storey, J., & Emberson, C. (2006). Supply chain management: Theory, practice and future challenges. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management, 26*, 754–774. doi:19.1108/01443570610672220

Suominen, K. (2017). Fueling trade in the digital era. The global landscape and implications of Southeast Asia. *International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development.* Retrieved from https://www.ictsd.org

Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy, 68*(3), 226-231. doi:10.4212/cjhp.y68i3.1456

Thietart, R., & Forgues, B. (1995). Chaos theory and organization. *Organization Science*

6(1), 19-31. doi:10.1287/orsc.6.1.19

Tripp, C. (2016). *Savvy Leadership: How to inspire engagement and ignite high performance.* USA, Fioriel Press

Tummala, V. M. R., & Schoenherr, T. (2008). Best practices for the implementation of supply chain management initiatives. *International Journal of Logistics Systems and Management, 4*(4), 391-410. Tummala, Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263594990_Best_Practices_for_the_Implementation_of_Supply_Chain_Management_Initiatives

Turcotte-Tremblay, A. M., & Sween-Cadieux, E. M. (2018). A reflection on the challenge of protecting confidentiality of participants while disseminating research results locally. *BMC Medical Ethic, 19(1),* 90-96. doi:10.1186/s12910-018-0279-0

Ugboro, I. O., Obeng, K., & Spann, O. (2010). Strategic planning as an effective tool of strategic management in public sector organizations: Evidence from public transit organizations. *Administration & Society, 43*, 87–123. doi:10.1177/0095399710386315

Van Kaam, A. L. (1959). Phenomenal analysis: Exemplified by a study of the experience of "really feeling understood." *Journal of Individual Psychology, 15*, 66–72. Singapore, Springer. doi:10.1007/978-981-13-2679-0_3

Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterizing and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: Systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research*

Methodol, 18(1), 1-18. doi:10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7

Walden, R., Lie, S., Pandolfo, B., & Nemme, A. (2019). Developing strategic leadership and innovation capability for manufacturing SMEs transitioning to digital manufacturing technology. *Leadership Styles, Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship in the Era of Digitalization, 26*. doi:10.4018/978-1-7998-1108-4.ch007

Walters, D., & Helman, D. (2019). Partnerships: Managing intra-and interorganizational relationships – The global value chain network. Cham, Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-22944-3_8

Weller, S. C., Vickers, B., Bernard, H. R., Blackburn, A. M., Borgatti, S., Gravlee, C. C., & Johnson, J. C. (2018). Open-ended interview questions and saturation. *PLoS ONE, 13*(6). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0198606

Wetering, R. V., Mikalef, P., & Pateli, A. (2017, September 4–5). *How strategic alignment of IT flexibility: A firm's networking capability, and absorptive capacity influences firm innovation.* Paper presented at the 2017 Mediterranean Conference on Information Systems, Genoa, Italy.

Wheatley, M. J. (1993). *Leadership in the new science*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Wheatley, M. (1994a). *Leadership and the new science, learning about organization from an orderly universe.* San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Wilding, R. D. (1998). Chaos theory: Implications for supply chain management. *International Journal of Logistics Management, 9*, 43–56. doi:10.1108/09574099

810805735

Williamson, O. E. (2008). Outsourcing transaction cost economics and supply chain management. *Journal of Supply Chain Management, 44*(2), 5-16. doi:10.1111/j.1745-493X.2008. 00051.x

Winston, A. S. (2016). Tackling the world's challenges with technology. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 58*(1), 26-27. Retrieved from http://www.mitsmr.com

Winston, A. S. (2019). The next economy: The World in 2030: 9 Megatrends to Watch. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 60*(4), 1-5. Retrieved from http://www.mitsmr.com

Wisner, J., Tan, K. C., & Leong, G. (2015). *Principles of supply chain management: A balanced approach.* Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

World Economic Forum. (2017a). *Impact of the 4th industrial revolution on the supply chain.* Retrieved from https://www.https://www.weforum.org/whitepapers/impct-of-the-fourth-industrial-revolution-on-supply-chains

World Economic Forum. (2017b). *The global risks report 2017*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum Publishing.

Xu, M., David, J. M., & Kim, S. H. (2018). The Fourth Industrial Revolution: Opportunities and challenges. *International Journal of Financial Research, 9*(12), 90-95. doi:10.5430 /ijfr.v9n2p90

Xu, M. A., & Storr, G. B. (2012). Learning the concept of researcher as instrument in qualitative research. *Qualitative Report, 17*(21), 1–18. Retrieved from https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr

Yilmaz, K. (2013). Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research traditions; epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of Education, 48*(2), 311-325. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/34318327/Comparison_of_Quantitative_and_qualitative_Research_Traditions_epistemological_theoretical_and_methodological_differences

Yin, R. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yip, C., Han, N. L. R., & Sng, B. L. (2016). Legal and ethical issues in research. *Indian Journal of Anesthesia, 60*, 684–688. doi:10.4103/0019-5049.190627

Ziaullah, M., Feng, Y., & Akhter, S. N. (2015). The synergistic and complementary effects of supply chain justice and integration practices on supply chain performance: A conceptual framework and research propositions. *SciELO, 18*(4), 519-533. doi:10.171559/2222-3436/2015/V18N4A6

Zimon, D., & Madzik, P. (2019). Standardized management systems and risk management in the supply chain. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management 37*(2), 305-327. doi:10.1108/IJORM-04-2019-0121

Zubin, A., & Sutton, J. (2015). Qualitative research: Getting started. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy, 67*(6), 436-440. doi:10.4212/cjhp.v67i6.1406

Zucker, D. M. (2009). How to do case study research. *Teaching Research Methods in Social Sciences, 2*, 1-17. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/nursing_faculty_pubs/2

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What successful strategies do you use to create cost efficiencies within your supply chain to remain profitable?
2. How did you determine the best strategies for creating supply chain cost efficiencies to remain profitable?
3. What strategies were not successful for creating cost efficiencies to remain profitable?
4. What key barriers did your organization encounter to the implementation of strategies for creating cost efficiencies to remain profitable?
5. How did your organization overcome these key barriers?
6. What additional information regarding strategies for creating cost efficient supply chains to remain profitable would you like to share that we have not already discussed?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview preparation

1. Request support from local business community for potential organizations that might be interested in supporting my DBA program requirements.

2. I will follow-up and contact via email and phone all potential organizational referrals for support and communications.

3. All interviews will take place at the business location of the company that agrees to supporting the interview process.

Interview process

1. Meet, greet and thank interview party for time and support.

2. Go over the agreed confidentially and process of recording and transcription of records required for meeting the DBA requirements.

3. Ask if anyone has any questions before the recording begins.

4. State the required time, date, organization name, and participants' names at the beginning of the recording.

5. Ask all questions in accordance to the requirements set forth in my DBA study.

6. Finalize by thanking the organization for time and support and that a final copy of the study will be provided to them after Walden University has approved for the completion of the DBA, global supply chain management program.