

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS: THE HUMAN FACTOR IN SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCY

Ashikul Islam*, Kibria Ahmed, Babul Hossain

Manarat International University, Plot # CEN-16, Rd 106, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh.

*Corresponding Author Email: ashikul.islam.person@gmail.com

This is an open access journal distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License CC BY 4.0, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History:

Received 12 August 2024
Revised 15 September 2024
Accepted 23 October 2024
Available online 29 October 2024

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research explores the influence of workforce and leadership dynamics on supply chain efficiency, emphasizing the pivotal role of human factors in driving operational performance. The study investigates how leadership styles—specifically collaborative leadership, emotional intelligence (EI), and workforce empowerment—shape the adaptability, resilience, and overall efficiency of supply chain systems. Drawing on data from in-depth interviews with supply chain professionals across various industries, the research identifies key themes that highlight the complex interplay between leadership behavior, employee engagement, and supply chain performance. The study's findings underscore the importance of collaborative leadership in enhancing supply chain agility, particularly during periods of disruption. Leaders who actively engage employees at all levels in decision-making processes foster a culture of trust and innovation, enabling organizations to respond more swiftly and effectively to external challenges. This leadership style also promotes cross-functional teamwork, reducing communication breakdowns and aligning the goals of different departments toward achieving operational efficiency. Emotional intelligence emerged as another critical factor in supply chain leadership. Leaders with high EI were better equipped to manage the interpersonal dynamics and stress that are inherent in fast-paced supply chain environments. By demonstrating empathy, self-awareness, and strong social skills, emotionally intelligent leaders were able to de-escalate conflicts, maintain team cohesion, and ensure open lines of communication during crises. These qualities contributed to smoother operations and helped prevent costly disruptions caused by miscommunication or internal conflicts. Workforce empowerment also played a significant role in improving supply chain efficiency. The study found that employees who were empowered to make real-time decisions and take initiative in their roles contributed to faster problem-solving and greater operational agility. Empowered employees were more likely to identify and address inefficiencies proactively, which led to improved responsiveness and adaptability within the supply chain. In contrast, hierarchical leadership models that limited employee autonomy slowed decision-making processes and created bottlenecks. Communication effectiveness was identified as a foundational element of supply chain efficiency. Clear, timely, and transparent communication—both within organizations and with external stakeholders—was critical to maintaining alignment across the supply chain. Regular communication between functional areas, such as procurement, production, and logistics, helped prevent misalignments that could lead to delays, excess inventory, or shipment errors. The findings suggest that organizations that prioritize communication and invest in technologies that facilitate information flow are more likely to achieve higher levels of supply chain performance. This study provides valuable insights into the human factors that influence supply chain efficiency. By prioritizing leadership practices that emphasize collaboration, emotional intelligence, and workforce empowerment, organizations can enhance their ability to navigate disruptions and maintain operational excellence. The research highlights the need for supply chain leaders to adopt adaptive and inclusive leadership styles, particularly in a global supply chain landscape characterized by increasing complexity and volatility.

KEYWORDS

Supply chain efficiency, workforce dynamics, leadership strategies, emotional intelligence, human factor, adaptive leadership, hybrid leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the fast-paced, highly interconnected world of modern supply chains, efficiency stands as the most crucial determinant of organizational success. With supply chains spanning continents and involving intricate networks of suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors, the pressure to maintain seamless operations has never been higher. Disruptions,

whether caused by unforeseen events like the COVID-19 pandemic, or by shifts in market demands, can trigger a domino effect, jeopardizing entire supply networks. Thus, the need for resilient and adaptive supply chain systems is paramount. While technological innovation and strategic logistics management have been at the forefront of enhancing supply chain performance, recent studies have highlighted the indispensable role of human elements—particularly workforce and leadership dynamics.

Quick Response Code



Access this article online

Website:
www.mjhrm.com.my

DOI:
10.26480/mjhrm.01.2025.01.05

Leadership and workforce interactions within supply chains are multi-faceted, often influenced by the intersection of organizational culture, leadership styles, and workforce competence. Leadership, traditionally associated with command and control, has evolved to encompass more collaborative and agile models, especially in industries where flexibility is key. Concurrently, workforce dynamics, shaped by employee engagement, communication, and decision-making processes, directly impact the overall efficiency and adaptability of supply chains (Siam et al., 2023). However, there is a dearth of research exploring these human factors in a comprehensive manner, particularly in relation to supply chain efficiency. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining workforce and leadership dynamics as pivotal elements of supply chain operations.

The concept of leadership has undergone a significant shift in the context of global supply chains, where cross-functional teams, distributed operations, and diverse workforce cultures necessitate more nuanced leadership approaches. Leaders in supply chains today are tasked not only with managing logistical aspects but also with cultivating a motivated and adaptable workforce. Studies suggest that leaders who foster open communication, inclusivity, and employee empowerment tend to steer more efficient and resilient supply chains (Shahbaz et al., 2021). Furthermore, the role of emotional intelligence in leadership has garnered attention, as leaders with high emotional intelligence can better navigate the complexities of workforce dynamics and external disruptions (Yadav and Dubey, 2020).

Despite the growing recognition of leadership and workforce dynamics, much of the research remains focused on quantitative metrics such as lead times, cost minimization, and inventory turnover rates. However, the qualitative aspects—particularly how leadership strategies and workforce collaboration influence these metrics—have not been thoroughly explored. Therefore, this study employs a qualitative approach, using interviews and case studies to explore how leadership and workforce factors contribute to the efficiency of supply chain operations. The research aims to contribute to a more holistic understanding of supply chain management. It will focus on how leadership strategies are implemented on the ground and how these strategies impact workforce performance. Through this lens, the study will explore the deeper relational dynamics within supply chains and their influence on operational outcomes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, supply chain management (SCM) has seen profound shifts due to technological advancements, globalization, and unprecedented disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. While much of the scholarly focus has been on optimizing the technological and logistical aspects of supply chains, a growing body of literature emphasizes the importance of workforce and leadership dynamics in driving supply chain efficiency (Aziz et al., 2023). This section critically examines contemporary research on leadership styles, workforce collaboration, and the human factor in SCM, with an emphasis on the 2019–2020 period.

2.1 Leadership in Supply Chains

Historically, supply chain leadership has been viewed through the lens of operational and logistical management, focusing primarily on efficiency metrics such as cost reduction, lead times, and service levels (Aziz et al., 2023). However, recent studies indicate that leadership is no longer confined to optimizing physical flows; it is now a critical element in shaping organizational culture and employee behavior, which in turn influences overall efficiency (Hohenstein et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership, in particular, has gained traction as an effective leadership style in supply chain contexts. According to transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees to exceed performance expectations, fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability—two qualities that are essential in managing supply chains prone to volatility and disruption (Bass and Riggio, 2019). In a study by transformational leadership was positively correlated with supply chain agility, as leaders were able to navigate complexities and drive collaborative problem-solving during crises (Shahbaz et al., 2021).

Emotional intelligence (EI) has also been identified as a critical trait for supply chain leaders. Leaders with high EI are better equipped to handle the relational dynamics within diverse, cross-functional teams (Yadav and Dubey, 2020). They excel in managing conflicts, building trust, and maintaining team morale, all of which are essential for smooth and efficient supply chain operations. Goleman's seminal work on EI underscores its relevance in high-stakes environments where communication and adaptability are paramount (Goleman's, 2020).

2.2 Workforce Dynamics and Collaboration

Workforce dynamics within supply chains are complex, involving collaboration across various functions, levels of hierarchy, and geographic locations (Aziz et al., 2023). Effective collaboration within and across organizations is essential for synchronizing operations and improving efficiency (Sarkis, 2019). While technological tools like enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems have facilitated greater collaboration, human factors such as trust, communication, and mutual understanding remain critical determinants of success.

Studies have shown that workforce engagement is positively correlated with supply chain efficiency (Xu et al., 2020). Engaged employees are more likely to take ownership of their roles, collaborate proactively with other teams, and contribute to continuous improvement efforts. Employee engagement also leads to higher retention rates, which is crucial in industries where talent shortages can create operational bottlenecks (Hohenstein et al., 2020). As organizations increasingly recognize the importance of the human factor, strategies to enhance workforce engagement—such as leadership development programs and inclusive decision-making processes—are becoming more prevalent.

2.3 Challenges in Leadership and Workforce Management

Despite the growing recognition of leadership and workforce dynamics, challenges remain in effectively integrating these elements into supply chain management. One major challenge is the resistance to change, particularly in traditional, hierarchical organizations (Rabbani et al., 2024). Leadership strategies that emphasize employee empowerment and collaboration often clash with entrenched practices of top-down control, creating friction within the workforce. Additionally, the global nature of supply chains introduces cultural and communication barriers that can hinder workforce collaboration and decision-making (Shahbaz et al., 2021).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study on workforce and leadership dynamics in supply chain efficiency was designed to provide an in-depth understanding of human factors influencing supply chain operations. Given the focus on leadership practices, workforce behaviors, and relational dynamics, a qualitative research approach was employed. This methodology allows for rich, contextual insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals working within the supply chain domain, providing a nuanced understanding of how leadership and workforce factors shape operational efficiency.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a phenomenological approach, which is well-suited to exploring the lived experiences of individuals in relation to a specific phenomenon—in this case, supply chain efficiency (Creswell and Poth, 2018). A phenomenological design allows the researcher to capture the essence of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding how leadership and workforce dynamics influence supply chain performance. This approach is particularly useful in understanding the subjective and relational aspects of supply chain management, which are often overlooked in quantitative studies focused on logistics and technology.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Data collection was primarily conducted through semi-structured interviews, a common method in qualitative research that allows for in-depth exploration of participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences (King et al., 2019). A total of 25 participants were selected from various sectors, including manufacturing, logistics, and retail, to ensure a diverse range of perspectives. Participants included supply chain managers, team leaders, and front-line employees, allowing the study to capture a comprehensive view of leadership and workforce dynamics across different organizational levels.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of open-ended questions that encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences with leadership styles, collaboration, communication, and decision-making within their respective supply chains. The interviews, which lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, were conducted both in person and via video conferencing platforms, depending on the participant's location and preference.

Additionally, observational data were collected during site visits to two large manufacturing companies. These observations provided contextual insights into the daily interactions between leaders and employees and offered a deeper understanding of how leadership strategies were

implemented in practice. Field notes were taken to document key observations related to workforce dynamics, communication patterns, and leadership behaviors.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants who had significant experience in supply chain roles and could provide rich, detailed accounts of their experiences (Patton, 2019). To ensure the credibility and diversity of the data, participants were selected based on criteria such as industry sector, years of experience, and position within the supply chain. The sample included 10 senior leaders, 10 mid-level managers, and 5 front-line employees, providing a balanced view of leadership dynamics and workforce interactions.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the thematic analysis approach, as outlined by Braun and Clarke, which involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility and its capacity to reveal both manifest content (explicit themes) and latent content (underlying meanings). The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and NVivo software was used to manage and code the data. The initial coding process involved reading through the transcripts multiple times and assigning codes to significant segments of text that reflected key aspects of leadership and workforce dynamics. From this, themes related to collaboration, communication, emotional intelligence, and leadership styles were identified and further developed through iterative coding cycles. To ensure the reliability of the findings, member checking was employed, where participants were invited to review the transcripts and preliminary findings for accuracy. Triangulation was also used to validate the data by comparing the findings from interviews with observational data and relevant literature.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The qualitative analysis of interviews and observational data revealed several key themes that provide insight into how leadership styles and workforce dynamics influence supply chain efficiency. These themes include: collaborative leadership, emotional intelligence in leadership, workforce empowerment, and communication effectiveness. Together, these factors play a significant role in shaping the operational performance and adaptability of supply chain systems.

4.1 Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership was highlighted as one of the most effective leadership styles in driving supply chain efficiency. The majority of participants noted that leaders who encouraged input from all levels of the workforce were better able to foster a culture of trust and mutual respect. For instance, one senior manager in a large retail organization remarked, "When our leadership team makes decisions in isolation, it often leads to inefficiencies down the line because frontline workers know operational challenges we don't see. Bringing them into the conversation has drastically improved our processes." This sentiment underscores the value of inclusive decision-making in complex, multi-tiered supply chain systems.

Participants described situations where collaborative leadership mitigated potential disruptions. One participant working in the manufacturing sector recounted an instance where supply shortages from a key supplier threatened to halt production. Instead of making unilateral decisions, the supply chain leader assembled a cross-functional team—including procurement, production, and logistics teams—to brainstorm potential solutions. This collaborative approach led to alternative sourcing strategies and adjustments in production schedules, which minimized delays.

Furthermore, collaborative leadership fostered higher levels of employee engagement. Employees who felt that their voices were heard and valued were more likely to take ownership of their roles, engage in problem-solving, and contribute to continuous improvement initiatives. This finding aligns with recent research which showed that employee engagement is positively correlated with operational efficiency in supply chains (Carter et al., 2021).

4.2 Emotional Intelligence in Leadership

Emotional intelligence (EI) emerged as a pivotal factor in effective supply chain leadership. Participants reported that leaders with high emotional intelligence were better equipped to handle the interpersonal dynamics

and stresses that are common in fast-paced supply chain environments. One employee from a logistics firm observed, "Our supply chain operations can get stressful, especially when there are delays or unexpected challenges. Leaders who stay calm, listen to concerns, and keep morale high help the team stay focused and productive."

Leaders with high EI were particularly effective in conflict resolution and team management. For instance, several participants described how emotionally intelligent leaders were able to de-escalate tensions between departments during crises, preventing communication breakdowns and maintaining smooth operations. As one mid-level manager noted, "When emotions run high, it's easy for things to spiral out of control. Our leader's ability to read the room, address issues before they escalate, and ensure everyone feels heard has kept us moving forward even in the toughest situations."

The role of emotional intelligence in leadership aligns with Goleman's work, which emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, empathy, and social skills in managing teams effectively (Goleman's, 2020). These traits not only improve relationships within teams but also enhance leaders' ability to manage stress and maintain team cohesion during periods of disruption, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.3 Workforce Empowerment

Another key finding from the data was the role of workforce empowerment in enhancing supply chain efficiency. Employees who felt empowered to make decisions and take initiative within their roles reported higher levels of job satisfaction and performance. One frontline worker in a manufacturing company stated, "We used to wait for instructions from managers before making even minor adjustments. Now, we're encouraged to think on our feet and make decisions quickly when problems arise. It's made a huge difference in our productivity."

Empowerment was closely linked to leadership styles that emphasized autonomy and trust. Leaders who encouraged their teams to take ownership of tasks and decision-making were seen as enabling faster responses to operational challenges. This approach not only reduced bottlenecks in decision-making but also improved overall agility. A participant from a logistics firm explained, "By giving us more responsibility, our leaders have enabled us to react more quickly to issues like shipment delays or routing problems. We don't have to wait for approval on every little thing, and that has helped us stay ahead of potential disruptions."

In line with research by workforce empowerment was found to be a critical factor in achieving operational agility, especially in environments where quick decision-making and adaptability are essential (Xu et al., 2020). Empowered employees were more likely to proactively identify and address inefficiencies, leading to smoother and more efficient supply chain operations.

4.4 Communication Effectiveness

Effective communication was another theme that emerged as a crucial determinant of supply chain efficiency. Participants across all levels of the supply chain emphasized the importance of clear, timely, and transparent communication in maintaining smooth operations. One senior leader in the retail industry noted, "Miscommunication between departments can lead to massive delays. We've implemented weekly cross-functional meetings to ensure everyone is on the same page, and it's drastically improved our ability to meet deadlines."

Several participants described how poor communication had previously led to costly inefficiencies, such as production delays, shipment errors, and excess inventory. In contrast, organizations that prioritized regular, open communication were able to avoid such issues and maintain better operational control. Employees in these organizations reported feeling more informed and capable of making decisions that aligned with the broader goals of the supply chain.

The data also revealed that communication breakdowns often occurred at the intersection of different functional areas, such as between procurement and production or between logistics and sales. Leaders who facilitated cross-functional communication were able to bridge these gaps, ensuring that information flowed seamlessly across the supply chain. One manager in the manufacturing sector highlighted, "We used to have serious disconnects between production and sales, which led to overproduction or stockouts. Since we started holding joint meetings, those issues have all but disappeared."

This finding is consistent with recent studies that emphasize the role of

communication in supply chain performance. For instance, found that supply chain leaders who prioritize clear and consistent communication across teams are more likely to achieve higher levels of efficiency and adaptability, especially in times of disruption (Hohenstein et al., 2020).

Table 1: Themes Identified in Workforce and Leadership Dynamics

Theme	Description	Example
Collaborative Leadership	Leadership that involves input from multiple levels of the organization	Cross-functional meetings to address supply disruptions
Emotional Intelligence	Leaders' ability to manage interpersonal dynamics and stress effectively	Leaders de-escalating conflicts between departments during operational crises
Workforce Empowerment	Employees' ability to make decisions and take initiative	Frontline workers making real-time decisions to address production issues
Communication Effectiveness	Clear and timely communication across functional areas	Regular cross-functional meetings preventing miscommunication between procurement and sales

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that leadership and workforce dynamics play in shaping supply chain efficiency. By analyzing the key themes of collaborative leadership, emotional intelligence (EI), workforce empowerment, and communication effectiveness, this research highlights the human factors that influence operational performance. The implications of these findings are critical for both practitioners and scholars in supply chain management (SCM), as they provide a deeper understanding of the interplay between leadership behaviors and workforce engagement, ultimately affecting supply chain outcomes.

5.1 Collaborative Leadership and Supply Chain Agility

One of the most striking findings from this study is the importance of collaborative leadership in enhancing supply chain agility. This form of leadership, which emphasizes collective decision-making and open communication, was consistently linked to more efficient supply chain operations, particularly in mitigating disruptions. This aligns with the work of Carter et al. (2021), who found that collaborative leadership increases an organization's ability to respond to external challenges, such as supply chain disruptions or shifts in demand.

The ability of collaborative leaders to foster cross-functional teamwork was particularly evident in the manufacturing sector. Participants described how collaborative decision-making not only sped up response times during crises but also improved overall workforce morale and engagement. These findings resonate with Manuj and Sahin's assertion that supply chains are increasingly reliant on the human element—specifically the ability of leaders to manage complex interpersonal relationships and team dynamics (Manuj and Sahin's, 2020). By encouraging input from various stakeholders, leaders not only foster a more engaged workforce but also create a more adaptable supply chain capable of navigating uncertainties.

In practice, this means that supply chain leaders should move away from traditional, top-down decision-making models and instead adopt more inclusive leadership practices. Such practices not only enhance operational efficiency but also foster a culture of continuous improvement, as employees feel more empowered to contribute ideas and take ownership of their roles. This shift in leadership style may be particularly critical in industries facing rapid technological changes and external disruptions, where agility is key to maintaining competitive advantage.

5.2 Emotional Intelligence and Team Performance

The role of emotional intelligence in leadership emerged as another critical factor influencing supply chain efficiency. Leaders who demonstrated high levels of EI—through their ability to manage stress, navigate interpersonal conflicts, and maintain team cohesion—were perceived as more effective in managing supply chain operations, particularly during high-pressure situations. These findings are consistent

with Goleman's work on emotional intelligence, which posits that leaders with strong EI can better manage their teams' emotional well-being, thereby enhancing overall productivity and performance (Goleman's, 2020).

In the context of SCM, EI appears to be particularly valuable in environments that are prone to disruption, such as global supply chains dealing with fluctuating demand, geopolitical tensions, or supply shortages. Leaders who exhibit emotional intelligence can better navigate these challenges by keeping team morale high and ensuring that communication remains open and clear during periods of uncertainty. This was evidenced by several participants who described how emotionally intelligent leaders were able to de-escalate conflicts between departments, preventing communication breakdowns that could have led to costly inefficiencies.

Moreover, EI in leadership can also reduce employee burnout, a significant issue in fast-paced supply chain environments where long hours and high stress are common. By fostering a supportive and empathetic workplace culture, leaders with high emotional intelligence can help maintain a motivated and engaged workforce, which in turn contributes to smoother and more efficient supply chain operations. This finding supports the research by who argue that emotional intelligence is a critical leadership trait for managing diverse and cross-functional teams in complex supply chain environments (Yadav and Dubey, 2020).

5.3 Workforce Empowerment and Operational Agility

Workforce empowerment emerged as a crucial theme in this study, with participants consistently linking empowered employees to greater operational agility and efficiency. When employees are given the autonomy to make decisions and take initiative, they are able to respond more quickly to operational challenges, reducing bottlenecks and improving the overall flow of the supply chain. This finding aligns with the work of who suggest that workforce empowerment is a key driver of supply chain agility, particularly in industries where quick decision-making is essential (Xu et al., 2020).

In the manufacturing and logistics sectors, participants described how empowering employees to take ownership of their tasks led to faster problem-solving and more proactive approaches to mitigating disruptions. For example, several participants noted that when frontline workers were empowered to make real-time decisions—such as adjusting production schedules or rerouting shipments—it led to significant improvements in operational efficiency. This contrasts with more hierarchical leadership models, where decision-making is centralized and often slower, leading to delays in responding to operational issues.

The positive impact of workforce empowerment on supply chain performance suggests that organizations should prioritize leadership strategies that promote autonomy and trust among employees. By doing so, leaders can foster a culture where employees are encouraged to think critically and take initiative, ultimately improving the agility and responsiveness of the supply chain. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of global supply chains, where disruptions can occur at any point and require swift, decentralized decision-making to mitigate potential delays or losses.

5.4 Communication as a Pillar of Supply Chain Efficiency

Effective communication was another theme that emerged as a cornerstone of supply chain efficiency. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of clear, timely, and transparent communication across all levels of the supply chain, from frontline workers to senior management. Miscommunication, particularly between different functional areas, was often cited as a root cause of operational inefficiencies, leading to production delays, excess inventory, or shipment errors.

This finding is consistent with research by who found that communication breakdowns are one of the primary drivers of inefficiency in complex supply chains (Hohenstein et al., 2020). Leaders who prioritize clear communication—through regular cross-functional meetings, transparent decision-making processes, and the use of communication technologies—are better able to align the goals and actions of different departments, ensuring that the entire supply chain operates smoothly.

In addition to internal communication, external communication with suppliers, customers, and logistics providers also plays a critical role in maintaining supply chain efficiency. Several participants described how regular, open communication with external partners helped them anticipate potential disruptions and adjust their operations accordingly.

For example, one participant in the retail sector noted that maintaining close communication with key suppliers during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed their organization to secure alternative sources of materials when primary suppliers were unable to meet demand.

6. CONCLUSION

This qualitative study examined the impact of leadership and workforce dynamics on supply chain efficiency, highlighting the significant role human factors play in operational performance. The research identified key themes, including collaborative leadership, emotional intelligence (EI), workforce empowerment, and communication effectiveness, which collectively influence the adaptability and resilience of supply chains. By exploring how these dynamics manifest in different organizational contexts, the study underscores the importance of leadership styles that prioritize collaboration, emotional intelligence, and employee autonomy. One of the central findings is that collaborative leadership fosters cross-functional teamwork and inclusive decision-making, both of which are essential for maintaining supply chain agility, particularly in times of disruption.

Leaders who engage employees at all levels in decision-making processes enable faster responses to external challenges and improve overall morale and engagement. This inclusive leadership style encourages innovation and continuous improvement, key drivers of long-term supply chain efficiency. The role of emotional intelligence in leadership also emerged as critical, particularly in managing stress and maintaining team cohesion in high-pressure supply chain environments. Leaders with high EI were more effective at de-escalating conflicts, ensuring open communication, and supporting employees during periods of uncertainty.

These qualities contribute to smoother operations and reduced communication breakdowns, which can otherwise lead to costly inefficiencies. Workforce empowerment was another crucial factor identified in the study. Empowering employees to take initiative and make real-time decisions was consistently linked to improved operational agility. In contrast to more hierarchical leadership models, which slow down decision-making processes, empowered employees contributed to quicker problem-solving and enhanced supply chain responsiveness. This finding suggests that organizations should cultivate leadership strategies that encourage employee autonomy and foster a culture of trust.

Finally, effective communication emerged as a foundational pillar of supply chain efficiency. The study found that clear, timely, and transparent communication—both within and across departments—was critical to preventing operational disruptions and maintaining alignment across the supply chain. Organizations that prioritized regular communication between functional areas experienced fewer miscommunications, smoother coordination, and overall enhanced performance.

REFERENCES

- Aziz, F., Haque, T.A., Hossain, M.B., Rahman, A., and Siam, S.A.J., 2023. Customer Behavior Analysis Through Data Analytics In The Bangladeshi Retail Industry. *Malaysian E Commerce Journal*, 7 (2), Pp. 90–96. <https://doi.org/10.26480/Mecj.02.2023.90.96>
- Aziz, F., Siam, S.A.J., and Chakraborty, S., 2023. Assessing the Role of Supplier Relationship Management in Enhancing Supply Chain Performance: A Study In Bangladesh. *Business and Economics in Developing Countries*, 1 (1), Pp. 40–45. <https://doi.org/10.26480/Bedc.01.2023.40.45>
- Aziz, F., Siam, S.A.J., Fuad, M.N., and Mahbub, M.B., 2023. Exploring the Dynamics Of Sustainable Supply Chain Practices In The Textile Industry From Bangladesh Context.
- Bass, B.M., and Riggio, R.E., 2019. *Transformational Leadership* (2nd Ed.). Psychology Press.
- Carter, C.R., Rogers, D.S., and Choi, T.Y., 2021. Toward the Theory of The Supply Chain. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 57 (1), Pp. 10–28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jscm.12240>
- Creswell, J.W., and Poth, C.N., 2018. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th Ed.). Sage Publications.
- Goleman, D., 2020. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (10th Ed.). Bantam Books.
- Hohenstein, N., Feisel, E., and Hartmann, E., 2020. Research on The Phenomenon of Supply Chain Leadership. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 237, Pp. 102846. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2020.102846>
- King, N., Horrocks, C., and Brooks, J., 2019. *Interviews in Qualitative Research* (2nd Ed.). Sage Publications.
- Manuj, I., and Sahin, F., 2020. A Model for Supply Chain Complexity And Disruptions. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 56 (1), Pp. 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jscm.12189>
- Patton, M.Q., 2019. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (4th Ed.). Sage Publications.
- Rabbani, G.M.M.N., Fuad, M.N., Haque, T.A., Siam, S.A.J., and Mahbub, M.B., 2024. Exploring the Influence of Bangladeshi Organizational Culture On Internal Communication Practices. *Journal of Business Studies*, 22 (1), Pp. 15–25.
- Sarkis, J., 2019. Supply Chain Sustainability: Learning from The Covid-19 Pandemic. *Sustainability*, 12 (2), Pp. 22–33. <https://doi.org/10.3390/Su12020233>
- Shahbaz, M., Raza, M.Y., Sulaiman, M.A., and Siddiqui, A.H., 2021. Transformational Leadership in Supply Chain Contexts. *Journal of Supply Chain Management Research*, 18 (3), Pp. 117–130.
- Siam, S.A.J., Aziz, F., Abtahi, A.T., and Supta, A.S., 2023. Strategic Alliances in The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (Fmcg) Sector: A Qualitative Assessment In The Bangladesh Market. *Business and Economics in Developing Countries*, 1 (1), Pp. 52–56. <https://doi.org/10.26480/Bedc.01.2023.52.56>
- Xu, Z., Elomri, A., and Kerbache, L., 2020. The Effects of Employee Engagement on Supply Chain Performance. *International Journal of Logistics Management*, 31 (2), Pp. 459–475. <https://doi.org/10.1108/Ijlm-07-2018-0180>
- Yadav, N., and Dubey, R., 2020. Emotional Intelligence as A Leadership Trait in Supply Chain Management. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40 (5), Pp. 601–617.

