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Developing a lean supply chain performance framework in a SME: a perspective based on the balanced scorecard

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Abstract

To keep ahead of the completion, organizations look for continuous improvement in Supply Chain Management (SCM). Lean paradigm connected to SCM is a strategy based on cost and time reduction to improve the effectiveness. At the operational level, Lean Supply Chain (LSC) is focused on optimizing the processes of all supply chain, searching for simplification, reducing waste and reducing activities that do not add value. A well-defined lean supply chain measurement system increases the chance for success because it enables managers to see areas where supply chain performance can be improved, so they can focus their attention, and obtain higher levels of performance. There are a number of conceptual frameworks and discussions on supply chain performance measurements in the literature, however there is a lack of empirical analysis and case studies on performance metrics and measurements in the supply chain environment of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). This research aims to develop a conceptual framework for managing LSC, integrating both financial and non-financial performance dimensions and so it expands the existent knowledge and provides indication of how LSC performance can be assessed and improved in this and other kinds of organizations. The proposed framework has been implemented in a Portuguese SME operating in the food manufacturing sector. A case study was developed to better understand the suitability of this tool.

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1. Introduction

For many organizations it became clear that evaluating their performance is fundamental in order to achieve an efficient and effective Supply Chain (SC). The lean principles, concepts, tools and techniques expanded throughout the entire SC due to its benefits such as cost reduction, improved quality and flexibility, and just-