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Continuity in the Face of Disruptions: Purchasing and Supply Management Research's Persistence Amidst COVID-19

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Citation Details

Carnovale, S., & DuHadway, S. (2021). Continuity in the face of disruptions: Purchasing and supply management Research's persistence amidst COVID-19. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 27(4), 100720. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pursup.2021.100720>

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Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/pursup

Editorial

Continuity in the face of disruptions: Purchasing and supply management Research's persistence amidst COVID-19



Undoubtedly, the history books and future research will engage in serious retrospection of the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruptions that came in its wake. What were the key drivers and antecedents of the disruptions, and how were they managed? What effective tools for managing during a global disruption were developed, tested, and proven? While the true root causes will come out eventually, one thing is for certain: purchasing and supply management was the glue that held the global economy together during what was an otherwise chaotic time. Indeed, fields such as purchasing, supply chain management, and operations management have risen to public prominence and notoriety. As a result, rigorous scientific research that continues to ground our field is more important than ever.

This special issue of JPSM commemorates the conference that never was: IPSERA 2020. Interestingly, (and perhaps ironically), the theme of IPSERA 2020 was "Procurement Innovation", to coincide during a global pandemic where innovation has become more critical than ever. In retrospect, IPSERA 2020's conference schedule nearly mirrored the rapid global development and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference papers, both working and competitive, were due late January, and the conference itself was set to occur in early April. When the spread of the virus was entering its crescendo, so too was the work of the conference: reviewing papers, abstracts, organizing sessions, and so on. Then, when the global shutdowns became more and more frequent, the decision to postpone the conference was made, and a cache of papers were in our possession. Being shrewd procurement scholars wanting to minimize waste, this issue of JPSM was born.

Shifting working patterns brought the home office out of obscurity into the mainstream, dramatically altered consumer consumption patterns which then impacted procurement professionals' day to day lives. Purchasing managers were forced to quickly adapt to changing global situations, with regional impacts that occurred at different times and sectors internationally. While the pandemic put a halt to travel, in-person social interaction, and other routinely taken for granted mores of the 21st century, research did not stop. In this special issue, that has been made clear. We were fortunate to receive several submissions from the conference papers: both those that were submitted as competitive papers, as well as those that, at the time, were submitted as work-in-process and given more time to develop. Ultimately, of the 25+ submissions received, we accepted and published nine articles. These nine articles are categorized into critical areas for future research in purchasing & supply chain management – notably (1) Strategic considerations (2) Behavioral considerations (3) Relational considerations, and (4) supply chain finance.

1. Theme 1: Strategic considerations for purchasing & supply management

In a time where terms like 'sourcing' and 'supply chain' are becoming more ubiquitous, it is more important now than ever that purchasing and supply management rests on a solid foundation. [Ueltschy Murfield et al. \(2021\)](#) present a future for purchasing and supply management. They argue that, historically, purchasing was tactically focused and geared towards a cost focused identity. Yet, as the events of the present indicate, managing a firm's external resources is anything but tactical. Through a series of interviews, the authors leverage social identity theory to advocate a path forward for transforming the traditional view of purchasing, as explicitly cost focused, into one that is appropriately framed as strategic.

If purchasing and supply management is to (rightly) transition away from being viewed as a tactical function and into a strategic one, more important than ever is to ensure those employed on the front lines are trained correctly. This is what [Stek and Schiele \(2021\)](#) advance in their work. They identify that if purchasing professionals are to conduct their jobs successfully, the training that they receive is paramount. Through the use of a sizable survey of purchasing professionals' views on various core objectives of purchasing (i.e., cost reduction, on time delivery improvement, supplier satisfaction, etc.), the authors empirically distinguish between the 'necessary' and 'sufficient' skills for a successful purchasing professional. The results of this work provide important guidance for educators and managers for developing talent in this field.

2. Theme 2: Relational considerations for purchasing & supply management

At its core, purchasing and supply management is a relational endeavor as evidenced by behavioral operations becoming increasingly important as a field of study. Research that continues to expand and develop our knowledge in this space is critical. As editors of this issue, we were fortunate to have several exciting papers published in this space. The first of which addresses a critical issue: understanding the micro processes that underpin the development of supplier satisfaction within a buyer supplier relationship. In [Weller et al. \(2021\)](#), the team identifies several key insights. In this work the team leverages multiple case studies over time to show that alignment between expectations of behavior and actualized behavior in the buyer supplier relationship do not have a demonstrable effect on supplier satisfaction. Specifically, intra-organizational dynamics at the supplier can have a significant effect on the inter-organizational relationship between the buyer and the

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pursup.2021.100720>

Received 30 August 2021; Accepted 30 August 2021

Available online 3 September 2021

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