

# A Systematic Literature Review Of Antecedents And Consequences Relationships Of Strategic Sourcing In Manufacturing Firms

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## ABSTRACT

Strategic sourcing primarily focuses on decision-making concerning a firm's procurement operations, including "spend analysis, capability sourcing, supplier selection and evaluation, contract administration, and relationship management" has emerged as an essential component of strategic management. In order to understand the link between causes and effects involving mediators and moderators in the field of "strategic sourcing" using a structured framework, this article will conduct a Systematic Review of Literature (SLR). It will then utilize that comprehension as a basis for projecting some possible future research areas. Because of the large number of research articles on strategic sourcing that have been published in a range of journals over the past twenty years, an overview of the literature was intended. Various antecedents and consequences involving the moderators and mediators were discovered to explore the possible areas for further work, and the research contributions of 250 papers published in peer-reviewed journals over a seventeen-year period were reviewed. In addition to laying

the groundwork for future research, this study examined potential mediators and moderators that could be applied in further empirical strategic sourcing investigations in the manufacturing sector.

Key words: strategic sourcing, procurement, supplier selection, supplier evaluation, supply chain performance, strategic supplier partnership

JEL Codes: M11, L25, L60, C52

## 1. Introduction

A strategic approach to sourcing has emerged as a consequence of operational and economic variables. Operations-wise, sourcing is now becoming increasingly crucial as a consequence of several improvements. It has been discovered from examining the cost structure of manufactured items over the past 30 years that firms spend more than 70% of their budgets on acquiring raw materials, machinery, and services. Enterprises are now under growing pressure to reduce costs, which compels businesses to do this even as the performance and quality of their items and components improve. The significance of strategic sourcing has increased in businesses as a consequence of these operational factors. To achieve its long-term objectives, a firm engages in strategic sourcing, which consists of procedures for planning, assessing, executing, and monitoring all sourcing activities (Carr and Smeltzer 1997). The main objective of strategic sourcing is to manage situations well when challenged with supply, competitive, and demand uncertainty (Milliken, 1987 and Johnson & Johnson, 1991). This goal is reached by establishing a set of processes that can be used to acquire some flexibility in the face of ambiguity. By providing benchmarks, emphasising supplier performance, and providing feedback to suppliers, strategic long-term partnerships, benchmarks, and strategic sourcing enable a firm to identify and choose suppliers. Furthermore, companies are competing in a globalised context and engaging in a range of regions and markets in today's modern business setting that adds more layers to the strategic sourcing process. With the advent of the Internet, new market forces in the digital realm have evolved, enabling buyers and sellers to make contact, identify products and prices fast, and conduct business in an efficient way. In manufacturing businesses, strategic sourcing aims to make

sure that procurement provides maximum value for dollars and the greatest services to please customers (Sharif et al., 2019).

The main objective of this paper is to investigate the relationship between the various antecedents and consequences of strategic sourcing in the manufacturing sector, in addition to the various mediating and moderating variables utilized in the earlier research, in order to anticipate some future prospective research in the field of strategic sourcing. Strategic sourcing is very vital for any company, but it is especially crucial for the manufacturing sector, which is one of the world's top industries and entails a large number of supply chain management functions. Regardless of the fact that empirical research on strategic sourcing remains in its infancy, when compared to other industries, manufacturing has a substantial amount of it. In order to investigate the link between the antecedents and consequences involving moderators and mediators related to strategic sourcing, the researchers have decided to perform a systematic literature review.

The framework of the article is as follows: The framework for analysing previous research in the field of strategic sourcing is developed in the next part, followed by the antecedents and consequences of the strategic sourcing relationship with moderators and mediators. In the next section, which provides as the article's conclusion, we make a few recommendations for additional research in the field of strategic sourcing. A few mediators and moderators in the antecedents and consequences links associated to strategic sourcing have been uncovered by our investigation of the literature.

## **2. Strategic Sourcing- A General Literature Review**

A generic model for sourcing decisions (Quinn & Hilmer, 1994; Arnold, 2000) is backed by "Transaction Cost Economics (TCE)" (Commons, 1934; Coase, 1937 and Williamson, 1975; 1981; 1985) and "Resource-based View (RBV)" (Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). A sourcing study can result in any of three outcomes for a firm: the classic "make or buy" alternative (Coase, 1937; Arrow, 1962); or the option to share operations with competing firms in order to achieve production potential savings. According to TCE, "hierarchy (make), market (purchase), and hybrid (share/co-opetition)" institutional structures match such three options.

The 1980s and the majority of the 1990s have seen a focus on the factors that affect the make vs. buy decision during the initial line of research. In addition to the economics of SS decisions in a transaction cost perspective, these articles focused on how SS decisions affect competitive advantage (Freeman & Cavinato, 1990; Welch & Nayak, 1992). This pragmatic, goods-centric approach to sourcing restricted suppliers and customers to being only receivers and senders of those goods, while procurement specialists handling paperwork and executing non-value-adding operations (Monczka et al., 2011). The second stream of research emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s as SS was broadened to incorporate "relational and customer satisfaction" components. The concepts of "whole-of-chain orientation" (Mowat & Collins, 2000) and relational supply chain orientation (Maloni & Benton, 2000), which underlined the necessity of buyer-supplier linkages, challenged the traditional paradigm in SS (Narasimhan & Das, 1999). Early in the 2000s, a third stream of research centered on the multidimensional nature of the concepts that underpin SS practice.

According to Lewicki et al. (2002), "sourcing and strategic sourcing" are crucial steps in the acquisition of goods and services, and firms should examine vendors and the goods and services they provide before taking a decision. "Strategic sourcing" refers to a comprehensive method for gathering information and fostering strategic partnerships to achieve the long-term goals of the firm (Smeltzer et al. 2003). Kocabasoglu and Suresh evaluated the concepts and underlined the following four necessary aspects of strategic sourcing: "the strategic role of purchasing, internal coordination with the purchasing function, information sharing with vendors, and supplier development and supply management" (Kocabasoglu & Suresh 2006).

Searching for alternative sources, monitoring recent information, and exploring markets for possible inputs are all components of strategic sourcing (Vollman et al., 2004). Burke (2005) also recognised that a successful firm sourcing strategy must be constructed upon three fundamental, interrelated decisions: "the standards for creating a supplier base, the standards for selecting the suppliers from which the enterprise will source its products, and the quantity to be purchased from each sourced vendor". A complex sourcing effort is one that involves handling the unique raw materials, components,

parts, interconnections, devices, products, machines, and supplies, in addition to as services proliferate and the number of participants in the process are progressing (Duffie & Koester, 2005). One purchase choice could have an impact on a variety of corporate operations or units, including "production, acquisition, distribution, marketing, sales, or customer service," according to Duffie and Koester (2005). Many businesses have realised the need to transition from traditional procurement to modern strategic sourcing for value addition across the supply chain since these risks of acquiring the improper goods, services, or from the inappropriate supplier can now have a significant effect and have a knock-on effect across the whole business. The consequences may impact the competitiveness of the market and may range from delivery delays to complete service encounters accountability. A deliberate, fact-based approach to strengthening the overall value proposition and improving an organization's supply base is "strategic sourcing". It focuses on the "Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)", which takes into account the customer requirements, goals of the organisation, market trends, and getting the greatest product or service at the highest deal, rather than simply negotiating vendor rising prices, according to Lewicki et al. (2002). This is addressed by employing a systematic and collaborative approach (Amajor, Smith, & Moreland, 2015). Moreover, it considers all feasible methods for cost-cutting, making decisions based on extensive analysis and market research, and is an iterative process. The basic objectives of "strategic sourcing" are to optimize expenditure across the firm, evaluate supplier ties across the company, and lower costs while conserving or enhancing a good or service's quality (Su, Dyer, & Gargeya, 2009).

Research by Christopher et al. (2009) offers several insights into numerous interconnected strategic sourcing concerns by examining strategic sourcing through the prism of ten organisational theories, which include "how to manage sourcing partnerships, how many and which suppliers to use, and when to produce, purchase, or collaborate." In the investigations of Kocabasoglu and Suresh (2006) through Chiang et al., "SS" is seen as a multifaceted second-order phenomenon that impacts both clients and suppliers (2012). The three research streams convincingly demonstrate the notion that SS is a complex, multifaceted concept. There are several different sourcing strategies developed, including "single-sourcing, multiple-sourcing, dual-sourcing, delegated

sourcing, parallel sourcing, network sourcing, and triadic sourcing" (Bildsten, 2015). Using "strategic sourcing", a firm can concentrate on its biggest competencies that provide it a competitive edge while also exploring more effective or efficient ways to deal with challenging industry trends (Kihanya et al. 2015). The "strategic sourcing" decisions made have various economic consequences for the acquiring firm, the associated suppliers, and other stakeholders in the business network (Hkansson et al., 2009 & Gadde et al., 2010). According to study by Kihanya et al. (2015) regarding the impact of strategic sourcing on organisational performance, strategic sourcing has an impact on the performance of the firm. Several studies have found a link between effective "strategic sourcing" and manufacturing "firm performance" (Su, 2013 & Chowdhury et al., 2019).

In their study, Uma Kausik & B. Mahadevan (2012) examined the reviews of 225 papers that were published over a 14-year period, from 1997 to 2010, and identified some potential areas for future investigations, including "reliability of global supply chain networks, development of strategies for responding effectively to major disruptions in the supply network, and understanding the behavioural issues related to supply chains."

The researcher had a difficult time finding any recent SLR studies that evaluated the linkages between the consequences and causes of strategic sourcing that involved moderating and mediating relationships. Therefore, an effort was made to conduct an SLR in order to examine the aforementioned link and determine the potential for subsequent research involving similar interactions.

### **3. Methodology**

Since the majority of the research on strategic sourcing was only done after 2006, the review included predominant empirical studies on "mediators and moderators" in antecedents and outcomes relationships of strategic sourcing in the manufacturing sector published in peer-reviewed journals over the 17 years from 2006 to 2022. To discover the literature on strategic sourcing research, databases like "Google Scholar, Research Gate, and Scopus" have been used. The terms "strategic sourcing, antecedents, consequences, mediators, moderators, and firm's performance" alone or in combination were utilized in the search.

### 3.1 Inclusion criteria

Empirical research with a peer review procedure and at least one of the main topics as the primary focus had to meet the inclusion criteria.

- (1) Mediators between strategic sourcing and antecedents
- (2) Moderators in the connections between antecedents and strategic sourcing
- (3) Links between strategic sourcing and outcomes and the mediation effect
- (4) Moderating Effects in Strategic Sourcing and Outcome Relationships
- (5) Combination of mediators and moderators in the links between antecedents or dimensions and strategic sourcing, and also between strategic sourcing and outcomes

### 4. Findings

We identified a total of 250 potentially relevant full-text articles in databases using the approach. 195 duplicate studies were removed from the analysis. Out of them, 55 publications were picked for further review based on their titles and abstracts, and 15 were retained due to "their substance and applicability to the manufacturing industry's context." Six further articles were also dropped after full-text reading of the 15 published articles. Although strategic sourcing was mentioned in multiple places in the article, it was not given enough attention, either because it was compared to other forms of sourcing, such as "buying" and "sustainability," or because the sector was not clearly stated. In addition to the computerised search, the reference lists of noteworthy articles on the topic were manually searched. After finding this initially confined sample, a "snowballing" approach was used to discover additional publications that satisfied the criteria for inclusion in the reference lists of the papers found through the well-known repositories. This strategy led to the identification of an additional three studies that met the criteria for inclusion, bringing the total number of articles accessible for the study to 12.

According to the systematic research's findings, "Firm's environmental engagement" should be considered when analysing the links between "strategic sourcing" and its antecedents in the manufacturing sector-specific "strategic sourcing" literature. However, in the manufacturing-related strategic sourcing research, "degree of competition, market turbulence, firm size, stage in the product life cycle, institutional pressure, strategic flexibility, buyer-supplier relationships, and supplier evaluation" were employed as mediators and moderators to analyse the connections between outcomes.





**Table 4.1: Summary of literature**

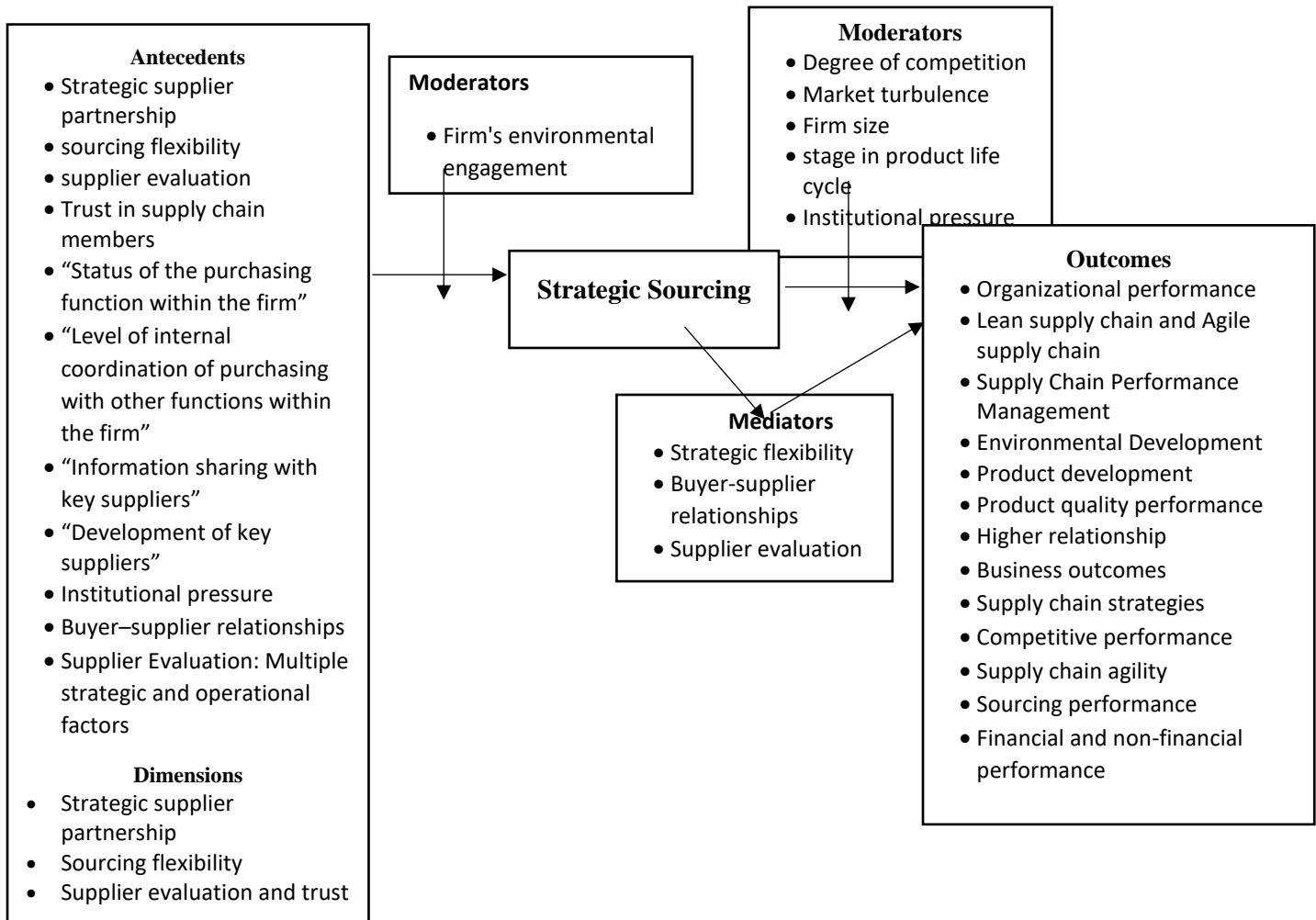
S. No	Author/ Year	Type of study	Industry/ Country	Antecedents/ Dimensions	Consequences	Mediators	Moderators	Results
1	Canan Kocabasoglu, Nallan C. Suresh, (2006)	Empirical	Manufacturing, US	“Status of the purchasing function within the firm, Level of internal coordination of purchasing with other functions within the firm, Information sharing with key suppliers, Development of key suppliers”.	NA	NA	NA	Strategic sourcing is strongly influenced by: "the state of the purchasing function within an organization, the extent of internal coordination between purchasing and other operations within the firm, information sharing with key suppliers, and the development of key suppliers".
2	Paul D. Cousins & Benn Lawson, (2006)	Empirical	Manufacturing firms, U. K	“Buyer–supplier relationships”	“Higher relationship, Business outcomes, Firm performance”	NA	NA	While leveraged sourcing techniques directly impact these identical performance goals, key sourcing strategies necessitate collaborative supplier partnerships to obtain good relationships and business outcomes.

3	Arif K. Khan & Rajesh K. Pillania, (2008)	Exploratory	Manufacturing firms, India	<b>Dimensions:</b> "Strategic supplier partnership, sourcing flexibility, supplier evaluation and trust in supply chain members"	NA	NA	NA	"Supplier evaluation, flexible sourcing, strategic supplier alliances, and supply chain member trust" are the four elements of SS. Demonstrated the major impact of SS and its components on supply chain effectiveness and company performance.
4	Haim Hilman Ari Warokka, (2011)	Empirical	Manufacturing Firms, Malaysia	NA	"Financial and non-financial performance"	NA	NA	Performance in both the financial and non-financial sectors is significantly impacted by sourcing strategies.
5	Su and Gargeya, (2012)	Quantitative survey-based research method	US textile Manufacturing and apparel industry	NA	"Firm's performance"	NA	NA	Strategic sourcing increases the focus on sourcing capabilities and improves the company's overall performance.
6	Chiang et al., (2012)	Empirical	Manufacturing Firms, US	NA	Firm's "supply chain agility"	Strategic flexibility	NA	"Supply chain agility" within the company was strongly connected to both "strategic sourcing" and "strategic flexibility."
7	Su, 2013	Empirical	Textile and apparel industry, US	NA	"Sourcing performance"	"Buyer-supplier relationship"	NA	Relationships between buyers and suppliers, supplier assessment, and the sourcing performance of buying firms are

						ps, Supplier evaluation"		all significantly impacted by strategic sourcing.
8	Tobias et al., (2014)	Empirical	Manufacturing industry, US	"Institutional pressure"	"Environmental, Product development, Product quality performance"		Antecedent relationship: "environmental engagement" Consequence relationship: "Institutional pressure"	"Environmental engagement" is a critical process component that links "institutional pressure" with "strategic environmental sourcing (SES)". Institutional pressure's capacity to enhance "product performance and quality" during product development deepens the link between SES and consequences.
9	Kim et al., (2015)	Empirical	Manufacturing firms, US		Firm's Performance		"Degree of competition, market turbulence, firm size and stage in product life cycle"	The performance of a firm is positively impacted by "e-procurement and SS". Business characteristics and the environment, especially "the level of competition, market turbulence, company size, and stage in the product life cycle," strongly impact these linkages.
10	Yildiz Çankaya, (2020)	Empirical	Manufacturing firms, Turkey		"Supply chain strategies and competitive performance"			Agile and lean supply chain techniques are both positively impacted by SS.

								These ideas work well for enhancing competitive performance.
11	Imma et al., (2021)	Empirical	Manufacturing firms, Turkey	“Who and how many will make the item; in cases of outsourcing, kind of relationship between buyer and supplier(s); and where the item is to be made, characteristics of the context, demand and product, and the relevant evaluation criteria to evaluate”				A multi-step process that takes into consideration the three strategic sourcing options' three dimensions: "who and how many will produce the product; in instances of outsourcing, the nature of the relationship between buyer and supplier(s); and where the product will be manufactured; as well as context, demand, and product characteristics; and the relevant evaluation criteria."
12	Luay Jum'a, (2021)	Empirical	Manufacturing firms, Germany		“Financial Performance”			"Strategic purchasing, internal integration, and the growth of important suppliers" have a substantial impact on the financial performance of manufacturing firms during COVID-19.

**Chart 4.1: Synthesis of the main antecedents and consequences of Strategic Sourcing, and its main mediators and moderators**



## 5. Discussion

Overall, the results indicate that mediators and moderators are more extensively researched in links involving strategic sourcing and outcomes than they are in those involving antecedents and strategic sourcing. Other potential aspects that might assist in illuminating the key underlying mechanisms of the phenomenon also include connections between antecedents, strategic sourcing, and consequences.

### 5.1 Role of mediators and moderators in antecedents and strategic sourcing relationships

"Strategic supplier partnership, sourcing flexibility, supplier evaluation, trust in supply chain participants, the status of the purchasing function within the firm, the level of internal

coordination of purchasing with other functions within the firm, information sharing with key suppliers, the development of key suppliers, institutional pressure, the firm's environmental engagement, buyer-supplier relationships, and supplier evaluation: multiple strategic factors" are antecedents of strategic sourcing, according to the literature review.

"Strategic sourcing" is based on variables including the "status of the purchasing function within the firm, the level of internal coordination of purchasing with other functions within the firm, the sharing of information with key suppliers, and the development of key supplier relationships without a moderator or mediator relationship," according to Canan Kocabasoglu & Nallan C. Suresh (2006). Paul According to D. Cousins and Benn Lawson (2006), leverage sourcing techniques significantly impact these same performance outcomes, whereas critical sourcing strategies require collaborative supplier partnerships to gain better relationships and business results. The four key elements of strategic sourcing are "strategic supplier partnership, sourcing flexibility, supplier evaluation, and trust among supply chain participants." Furthermore, the findings showed that "strategic sourcing" and its elements have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of organisations and the agility of their supply chains (Arif K. Khan & Rajesh K. Pillania, 2008). Environmental engagement (EE) is a crucial process component between institutional pressure and strategic environmental sourcing, as per Tobias Schoenherr et al. (2014). Therefore, the association between the antecedent and strategic outsourcing was moderated by environmental engagement. In a multi-step process, Imma Ribas et al. (2021) took into consideration "characteristics of the context, demand, and product and the relevant criteria to evaluate them" in addition to "who and how many would produce the product; during outsourcing, the type of partnership between buyer and supplier(s); and where the product is to be produced."

## **5.2 Potential mediators and moderators in antecedent and strategic sourcing relationships**

Burke (2005) stated that the three key, interconnected decisions for "building a supplier base, selecting suppliers, and quantifying products to order from each source selected" should be the features of a successful firm's sourcing strategy. According to Duffie and Koester (2005), a single purchasing decision could have an effect on a variety of business

operations or domains, including "production, receiving, distribution, marketing, sales, or customer support". Many firms have realized the need to upgrade their conventional procurement function to contemporary strategic sourcing for value addition all across supply chain since a risk of choosing the inappropriate goods, services, or supplier can have significant impacts and have consequences across the entity (Duffie & Koester, 2005). From late delivery to complete service failure accountability, the consequences may vary and thus have an effect on market competitiveness. As a consequence, "supplier base, ordering quantity, supplier quality assurance, supply lead time, supplier service quality, and environmental consciousness" are among the moderators and mediators that could be utilised in further research.

### **5.3 Mediators and moderators in strategic sourcing and outcomes relationships.**

According to research on strategic sourcing in the manufacturing industry, outcomes of strategic outsourcing include "organisational performance, lean supply and agile supply chains, supply chain performance management, environmental development, product development, product quality performance, higher relationships, business outcomes, supply chain strategies, competitive performance, the firm's supply chain agility, sourcing performance, and financial and nonfinancial performance."

While leveraged sourcing techniques directly impact these identical performance goals, key sourcing strategies necessitate collaborative supplier partnerships to obtain good relationships and business outcomes (Paul D. Cousins & Benn Lawson, 2006). However, sourcing decisions have a big impact on both financial and non-financial performance (Haim Hilman & Ari Warokka, 2011). Without any evidence of moderator or mediator relationships, strategic sourcing increases the focus on sourcing capabilities and improves firm performance (Su and Gargeya, 2012). According to Kim et al. (2015), "strategic sourcing and e-procurement" have a favourable impact on firm's performance, with factors including "degree of competition, market turbulence, firm size, and stage in the product life cycle" operating as moderators. SS was substantially linked with the firm's supply chain agility, with the relationship being mediated by the firm's strategic flexibility (Chiang et al., 2012).

According to Su, J. (2013), supplier evaluation and relationships between buyers and suppliers have a substantial impact on how well buying companies' source. "Institutional pressure" strengthens the link between Strategic Environmental Sourcing (SES), and both "product quality and product development performance" (Tobias Schoenherr et al., 2014). In the absence of any moderator-mediator relationship, SS favourably influences agile and lean supply chain approaches, and these concepts are beneficial in enhancing competitive performance (Yildiz Ankaya, 2020). Additionally, in the absence of any moderator mediator relationships, strategic purchasing, internal integration, and the development of important suppliers have a substantial impact on the financial performance of manufacturing enterprises during COVID-19 (Jum'a, Luay, 2021).

#### **5.4 Potential mediator and moderator strategic sourcing-outcomes relationships**

This section has analysed the literature support offered by the research carried out in other industries, as well as potential mediators and moderators that may be employed in investigating the links between strategic sourcing outcomes. In order to properly manage their manufacturing operations, manufacturers must have frequent contact between the purchasing department and other departments, as well as training in the formation of cross-functional teams. Furthermore, manufacturers should offer important suppliers as much technological and financial support as they can to guarantee that they are able to provide the level of service they anticipate. Additionally, manufacturing companies ought to facilitate the quality-related training of important suppliers' employees (Jum'a, Luay, 2021). As a result, the relationship between strategic sourcing and outcomes can be moderated or mediated by the "information system architecture, technological and financial assistance, and training of important suppliers." Further, "technology, employee abilities, and organisational structure" (Sathit Parniangtong, 2016) are a few moderators and mediators that could be used in further research.

#### **6. Managerial Implication**

According to Bildsten (2015), companies nowadays must employ a variety of sourcing strategies when procuring complementary goods and services since such decisions might



have a variety of economic effects on the acquiring firm (Hkansson et al., 2009). When sourcing, businesses should take into account the correct customer requirements, such as timely delivery and high-quality goods. According to a study by Duffie and Koester (2005), buying the wrong good or service or procuring it from the wrong vendor can have a significant impact on the products and services produced by manufacturing companies. Strategic sourcing also enhances an organization's supply chain and strengthens partnerships amongst them. Therefore, the companies must implement strategic sourcing techniques to increase the effectiveness of their supply chains as a whole. In this regard, the study would add to the body of knowledge regarding the many causes and effects of strategic sourcing, whether or not moderator/mediator relationships are present. The managers and executives would be able to enhance their supply chain management processes, which in turn would lead to an overall improvement in the company's performance, with the help of a thorough understanding of the components involved in the strategic sourcing process. Furthermore, strategic sourcing can be extended and applied to business models that will determine how much of a company's income is realised and how competitively priced it is. Procurement can play a crucial role in the firm's search for value growth by improving the sourcing process and coordinating capabilities with corporate purchasing requirements (Matthew G. Anderson and Paul B. Katz, 1998). In order to link supplier networks with a company's operational performance and financial objectives, strategic sourcing is responsible for managing and developing them. As a result, strategic sourcing decisions also involve integrating and forging long-term partnerships with suppliers in addition to evaluating and choosing suppliers (Talluri and Narasimhan, 2004). These strong supplier connections may help companies maintain a competitive advantage, particularly in highly competitive and unstable markets such as COVID-19 (Ankaya, 2020).

## **7. Conclusion**

A thorough analysis of the causes and consequences of strategic sourcing from prior empirical research in the manufacturing industry has been carried out through this study. It is currently hard to determine which theoretical viewpoints are most likely to be useful for ongoing development since strategic sourcing is still a relatively new

discipline. This study provides researchers with a platform to investigate the literature on the mediators and moderators of strategic sourcing (as well as its drivers and effects) in order to better comprehend the field before organising the existing studies on them. Second, we recommend new potential moderating and mediating variables, backed by strong theoretical considerations, that might be investigated in future research on the connections between antecedents and outcomes of strategic sourcing.

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