

Relationship Among Lean and Just-in-time (JIT) Supply Chain Management, Competitive Advantage, and Organizational Performance: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this study is to examine the relationship among lean and JIT supply chain management, competitive advantage, and organizational performance operating in the manufacturing industry.

Design/Methodology/ Approach: In this study a systematic literature review was done. We reviewed 306 articles on lean supply chain, Just-in-time supply chain, competitive advantage, and organizational performance and identified and finalized 49 articles for this study.

Findings: The research identified that lean and JIT supply chain management enhanced the performances of companies to a large extent. There is a significant relationship between lean and JIT supply chain management and organizational performance. The study also showed a substantial relationship between LSCM and JIT-SCM and Competitive advantage.

Originality/Value: The study finds that much research has been conducted on lean supply chain management, and organization performance but very limited study available on combinatory analysis of lean and JIT supply chain management and organizational performance. The study provides meaningful insights which can guide scholars seeking to explore further in this direction.

Paper Type: Review of Literature

KEYWORDS: Lean Supply Chain Management | Just-in-Time Supply Chain Management | Supply Chain Management
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Introduction

Lean and JIT supply chain management significantly influence the organization's performance. Organizations adopt LSCM and JITSCM into their business practices, achieving performance indicators like growth in sales revenue, greater margins, improved quality of product, enhanced productivity, control of inventory levels, overall cost, and high quality of service (Ross, 2010). Achieving these performance indicators enables the company to gain a competitive advantage. An organization that has a competitive advantage can create better value for the customer, hence contributing to firm performance (Hao Ma, 2000). Hence, organizational performance can be significantly influenced by competitive advantage.

The concepts of lean and just-in-time refer to the manufacturing methods and are commonly used for production management. Toyota was the first company to introduce these methods in their production process. These methods are so effective that these are widely used across industries. The term **lean** refers to minimizing cost and waste to deliver better value to meet the needs of customers. Whereas the term **Just-in-time** or JIT refers to a strategy based on which material or product are moved when they are needed resulting in reduced cost of storage or stock piled-up. Therefore, lean and JIT supply chain management is a set of SCM practices directly associated with the flow of goods, information, services, and other resources with an objective to reduce cost and minimize waste in production to deliver products right at the time when they are needed and can meet customers' needs. (Womack and Jones, 2007)

Lean and JIT supply chains enable SCM to reduce the operation cost at all stages of production and to meet customer needs. To achieve this, SCM must ensure optimum utilization of resources to complete the job. An effective and efficient SCM should consist of lean and JIT procurement, lean and JIT production, lean and JIT transport, lean and JIT supply, and lean and JIT warehousing. Lean framework will not employ secondary suppliers because it is costlier to manage. When all these factors are effectively implemented, it will minimize the supply chain operation cost and make it cost-effective in the long run, and a firm will gain a competitive edge. (Agarwal and Shankar, 2006)

An organization can deliver the best value to customers at a reasonable price only when the relationship between suppliers and the organization is positive and strong. Lean and JIT supply chain management practices play an important role in improving the relationship between the two and improving the overall organizational performance. Firms build a good reputation by means of delivering the best value to their customers by adopting lean and JIT supply chain

management practices into their business operation. There is a strong relationship between LSCM and JIT-SCM and OP; despite this, the relationships between these factors have not been exhaustively studied, except a few studies have been done in the underdeveloped countries in different industrial sectors (Barnes & Greenwood, 2006). Resultantly, the study aims to examine the relationship among LSCM and JIT-SCM and OP and between sectors. OP is predominantly in manufacturing sectors.

Research Methodology

The researcher did a comprehensive literature review to sum up the research observations from the published papers on the relationship among LSCM and JIT-SCM and OP, between LSCM and JIT-SCM and CA, and between CA and OP across the globe. The review literature was intended to aggregate the existing studies that helped to identify the research problem and set direction for future research and highlight the limitations of previous studies (Boell & Kuzmanovic, 2015; and Lame, 2019). To ensure a comprehensive and rigorous review of existing literature on the impact of LSCM and JIT-SCM on OP and CA on OP, the study adopted a four-step method process suggested by (Wolfskin et al. 2013). Steps consist of defining the scope of review, relevant literature search, identifying appropriate studies, and analyses of the findings.

In the First Step, the author, with an objective to define the scope of the review, framed a set of criteria for inclusion and exclusion to direct the search for relevant literature. The literature was identified based on five inclusive criteria, such as (1) the relevant keywords were used to select the literature; (2) literature selected based on research problem and question; (3) the papers published in English only were selected; (4) the literature published from 2003 to 2023 only were selected.

In the Second Step, the author searched for relevant literature; to achieve this, the author restricted his research only to open sources like Google Scholar.

In the Third Step, the author carried out a screening process to identify literature that can meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This process includes screening of the abstract and title of the identified literature and the screening of the full text of the literature that meet the inclusion criteria with a higher quality.

In the Fourth and Final Step, the author analysed the findings of the selected literature through a qualitative approach to identify common themes and patterns in the findings.



Literature Review

Lean Supply Chain Management

Lean supply chain management refers to a process of minimizing and removing waste and unproductive activities, encouraging efficiency, and streamlining the entire supply chain. Unproductive activities in a supply chain are those that offer negative or zero return on investment. The concept of lean supply chain management has been derived from the term lean principle (LP), is a powerful production technique, but over the years it has emerged as a manufacturing philosophy (Holweg and Rich, 2004). The impact of LP is so high that the organizations have adopted LP into their techniques, procedures, practices, and tools in supply chain management. The concept of lean supply chain management (LSCM) has been proposed by (Womack and Jones, 1994) in their study. According to (Anand and Kodali, 2008), the implementation of LP from production to SCM is a difficult process because (1.) manufacturing processes are more associated with material flow than information flow, and it is easier to identify and measure manufacturing waste, which is very difficult in the case of SCM. (2.) Employees and top management can control the manufacturing process, but in the case of SCM, it is difficult as it seeks attention from the entire supply chain, including manufacturers, suppliers, wholesalers, retailers, and customers, i.e., from the first to the last stakeholder in the supply chain.

Wastes in SCM are created by improper material flow, fund flow, and information flow. According to (Baum, 2004), inventory and information are dependent on each other and have a close relationship between the two. To limit the inventory in the system is one of the objectives of lean principles. Therefore, it is identified that the objective to eliminate information waste from SCM is to reduce the level of inventory in the organization. Improper information flow is the main source of waste in SCM across the globe. This has drawn the attention of many search scholars to implement lean principles in the field of SCM.

JIT Supply Chain Management

Just-in-time (JIT) integrated with lean supply chain management is a manufacturing technique that aims to minimize inventory and enhance efficiency by manufacturing products only when they are needed by the customers. This is a pull-based production system that is dependent on customer demand. Companies can minimize waste, enhance quality, and improve flexibility. This production technique has become a vital part of several industries, including retail, health care, and manufacturing. The major benefit of the JIT technique is to reduce inventory cost. Organizations can reduce the storage cost of excess inventory by manufacturing products only when they are needed. Companies can also minimize the risk of over production with the effective implementation of JIT, otherwise may lead to waste, and enhance overall cost

of production. JIT fairly decreases the possibilities of defects and errors and hence enhances the quality of the product. Since JIT refers to a production technique where goods are produced when it is needed, therefore, JIT is more useful for specific requirement of a customer so that it can exceed and meet customers' expectations (Choi et al., 2021). One more benefit of JIT is it increases flexibility. Organizations can quickly address the issue of change in market conditions and customer demand by manufacturing only those goods which are needed, and companies can simultaneously reduce delivery and lead time. JIT helps in anticipating future demand patterns more accurately and lowers the need for larger quantity orders, thus improving the relationship with their suppliers (Choi et al., 2021). We have discussed a few benefits of JIT, but its' implementation is not easy; rather, it needs careful planning and coordination and on the part of the company. A company can successfully implement JIT only when it has an accurate demand forecast, an efficient production process, reliable supplier partners, and an effective communication system to connect to customers in case of demand. to address a quick change in market conditions and customer demand.

Just-in-time supply chain management is an effective business practice that enables organizations to minimize cost, enhance quality, and increase agility. Strong planning and coordination are required for its effective implementation, bringing the benefits of JIT, which makes it a vital part of every business operation. The aim of JIT supply chain management is to minimize the inventory level and enhance efficiency by supplying goods just in time when they are needed. Many studies have been conducted on the application of JIT in supply chain management and empirically tested its effects on different aspects of supply chain management. Several researchers have investigated and established the effect of JIT on different aspects of supply chain management, such as (Lee et al., 2020), who examined the impact on inventory level and found that JIT can minimize the inventory storage cost significantly, and (Wu et al., 2020), who examined the effect on lead times and found it can result in shorter lead times that lead to faster delivery. Whereas (Choi et al., 2021) have studied the effect of JIT on environmental sustainability and found that JIT can significantly reduce waste and enhance environmental performance. The various studies conducted on the impact of JIT offer a strong recommendation that JIT can be an effective strategy for improving supply chain performance.

Competitive Advantage

The term competitive advantage refers to a set of abilities, procedures, and measures that enables an organization to offer or sell products and services consistently to its customers (Coyne, 2016). According to (Poirier, 2009), it refers to the capacity of an organization to offer products that can meet the customers' requirements and are better than competitors.

To develop a competitive advantage, a company should gain deeper insight into certain markets and build a strong mechanism to counter competition. A company willing to build a competitive advantage over its' competitors should strike a perfect balance between its internal and external factors (Barney, 2011). A company able to deliver goods and services to its customers to meet their requirements by exceeding its competitors can gain substantial competitive advantage. Companies with a competitive advantage provide goods or services consistently with a quality that matches most of the buying criteria for most of the customers in a market (Meihami and Meihami, 2014). This includes achieving economic value and superior performance over an extended period in the market. It also involves continuous adjustments to business environment, the ability to overcome all odds and to adopt business practices to discourage competitors to duplicate firms' competitive advantage.

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to the achievement that is measurable against predetermined objectives. According to the concept, how well a company can set its objectives and achieve its' financial goals (Ly sons and Farrington, 2006). The objective of lean and JIT supply chain practices can be broadly categorized into two, such as short-term and long-term objectives. The short-term objective is concerned with increasing production, minimizing cost, and reducing lead time. Whereas a long-term objective is intended to maximize ROI, market share, and profits for all the stakeholders in the entire supply chain.

Now the question raises as to how to measure company performance. The answer for the same is key performance indicators, abbreviated as KPI. KPIs are used as an effective tool to evaluate and asses company performance and measure its' success. To measure a company's performance, organizations include certain parameters in KPIs, like the flexibility of business processes, quality of products, resource utilization, and customer satisfaction. Employees play important role in organizational performance; therefore, employees must be a part of target setting for different parameters of KPIs. These targets should be realistic, clear, achievable, and timely (Taylor and Gibbon, 1990). An organization willing to achieve desired performance must do its' SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). Organizational performance can be an effective tool to communicate business strategies, provide direction, and monitor the strategy implementation. Organization performance enables a company to identify the link among the performance of individual employees, sub-units, and the general organization. It helps to synchronize all the business processes by promoting organizational learning.

The most frequently used tool to measure organizational performance across industries is Balance Score Crad (BSC);

(Kaplan and Norton, 2001). The BSC covers various measurement perspectives, consisting of customer, internal business, financial, and innovation and learning perspectives. The performance prism model is another powerful tool to measure organizational performance. The performance prism model focuses equally on all stakeholders and does not concentrate on a group (LY sons and Farrington, 2006).

Lean Supply Chain Management and Organizational Performance

Many empirical studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between lean supply chain management and organizational performance (Lee, Lee, and Schneiderman, 2011; Zacharia, Nix, and Lusch, 2009; Chong, Chan, Ooi & Sim, 2010; Wong & Wong, 2011). Companies that implement lean methods into their business operations and adopt this into their organizational culture are expected to post good results. According to (Ross, 2010), organizations using lean supply chain management overachieved their key performance indicators that include increased sales volumes, increased profit, high quality, efficiency, productivity, inventory reduction, overall cost, and high service level. The lean supply chain management outcomes are used as a key performance indicator by top management for their business reviews. The success and failure of the company are determined by the LSCM outcomes. According to (Demirbag et al., 2006), performance rating of a company can be done in both monetary and non-monetary terms. Monetary indicators include profit, ROI, and growth in sales, whereas non-monetary indicators consist of the goodwill of the company, increased market share, quality improvement, innovation, and resource management. From the above existing literature, it can be concluded that lean supply chain management has numerous impacts on all organizational performance; according to (Jung, 2007), lean supply chain management results in reduced inventory levels, reduced lead time, minimized cost, consistent delivery of good quality, and higher customer satisfaction.

Just-In-Time (JIT) Supply Chain Management and Organizational Performance

The organization's performance can be measured from the following indicators, such as the ability to develop new products, increase market share, increased productivity, and to meet customer expectations. According to (Spears, 2002), JIT is closely related to organizational performance. JIT implementation in supply chain management will result in better market performance. In research conducted by (Prayheogo & Devie, 2013), it is revealed that JIT implementation in supply chain management improves company performance.



Lean and Just-in-time Supply Chain Management and Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage refers to a leading edge a firm holds against its competitors; it enables a company to generate greater profit or gain a leading position in the market (Sulistyo & Ayuni, 2020). There are various factors contribute to competitive advantage of a companies like better customer service, fast delivery time, unique business model, reduced cost, quality product or services (Crute et al., 2008). To sustain competitive advantage, organizations should consistently evolve and adapt to changing market conditions. Such as expanding into new markets, improving business operations, or investing in new technologies. Organizations that can maintain their competitive advantage possibly achieve greater profits and long-term success (Garcia et al., 2023).

Quality improvement is one of the benefits of LSCM adoption in the business practices. Waste elimination and consistent improvement in LSCM enable companies to identify issues in the supply chain and enhance the product quality by reducing the risk of defects. By reducing delivery time and improving quality, companies can concentrate on improving customer experience, leads to greater customer satisfaction (Tawy & Gallear, 2011). Lean supply chain management enables companies to produce and deliver products only when they are needed by the customers, hence avoiding the situation of overstocking or understocking. This can lead to increased sales and greater customer loyalty. Lean supply chain management enables organizations to attain competitive advantage by minimizing cost, enhancing customer satisfaction, and improving quality (Baysan et al., 2013).

Competitive Advantage and Organizational Performance

An organization that has a competitive advantage can create better value for the customer, hence contributing to firm performance (Hao Ma, 2000). Organizations can gain competitive advantage by reducing costs and creating differentiation advantages (Porter, 1980), flexibility (Sanchez, 1983, 1985), and speed (Stalk, 1990). When a company restrict its cost and sell its product at a price lower than its' competitors gets a lead over its competitors. With speed, firms can deliver a product in minimal time that improves the customer's experience, which can again lead to a competitive advantage for a firm. Lean and JIT supply chain management can significantly minimize costs by eliminating waste from the entire supply chain system. An efficient supply chain management can deliver quality products that can meet customers' expectations and lead to customer satisfaction; hence, firms achieve competitive edge. Meeting customers'

expectations enables firms to increase their market share, which is one of the dimensions of a firm's performance (Thomas & Ramaswamy, 1996, and Gimenez, 2000).

Research Findings

The finding of the study clearly revealed that companies that integrated lean and JIT supply chain management practices into their business operations have improved their organizational performance significantly and gained a competitive edge over their competitors existing in the manufacturing industry. This is evident from the existing studies that companies adopting lean and just-in-time supply chains can gain a competitive edge that helps in improving organizational performance. Many studies have examined that lean and JIT supply chain management directly impact organizational performance; some studies have also examined that competitive advantage directly influence organizational performance. Therefore, we can conclude by saying competitive advantage plays a mediating role between lean and JIT supply chain management and organizational performance. Lean and JIT supply chain management also directly impact the organization's performance; therefore, competitive advantage plays a partial mediating role and not the full mediation. In the existing literatures, lean and JIT concepts have been studied as combinatory factors, but very few studies have studied both concepts as different concepts.

Managerial Implications

Managers of the organizations must pay attention to the adoption of lean and JIT supply chain management to gain a competitive advantage to outperform their competitors. To sustain competitive advantage, they should focus on continuous improvement in their business process. By reducing waste, managers can deliver quality products to their customers in the market, leading to increased market share. Delivering products when they are needed, managers can increase customer satisfaction. These differentiating factors create a competitive advantage for an organization. Whenever a new product has been introduced in the market, competitors can immediately duplicate the product by using technology and innovation. Therefore, managers must always look for continuous improvement in the business processes.

Limitations and Further Research Directions

The study made a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge; despite this, the study suffers from certain limitations. (1) The study is limited in scope because most of the study was conducted on firms operating in the manufacturing industry and excluded other industries. (2) A resource constraint was a major challenge; the study included

literature that are available only in open domains like Google Scholar, and access to the premium resources was difficult. (3) The methodology of the study is the literature review method; therefore, the study provides a qualitative perspective and is lacking in quantitative perspective. An empirical study can be conducted by the future researchers since it is lacking empirical testing. Most of the researchers have examined the concept of lean and JIT as one concept in supply chain management, but very few studies can be found that considered both concepts as different concepts; hence there is a wide scope of research in (Baliga et al., 2020) this direction. This study showed the perspective of developing nations; a similar study can be conducted in developed nations.

Conclusion

This study intended to investigate the relationship among Lean and JIT supply chain management, competitive advantage, and organizational performance. We did a substantial review of 49 articles, and found that Lean and just-in-time supply chain management, and Competitive advantage can significantly impact organization performance through various factors like, minimizing waste, reducing cost, improving quality of product, reducing lead time, reducing delivery time, production when customer needed. The study further identified that CA mediates the relationship between LSCM and OP. But still there is a gap in the literature relating to the nature of the relationship between Lean and Just-in-time supply chain management and organizational performance and the mediating role of CA between LSCM and OP.

Empirical studies may be conducted to address this gap by exploring the relationship between LSCM, JITSCM, CA, and OP to identify other factors that can impact these relationships in future studies. There is a need for more research on the implementation of Lean and JIT supply chain management in different industries and contexts. This study provides useful insights for practitioners and managers on how to implement the LSCM and JITSCM to achieve OP by gaining CA. Finally, this study contributes to the existing knowledge through a substantial review of the factors that impact OP in the context of LSCM, JIT-SCM, and CA.

The observations of the studies recommends that LSCM and JIT-SCM can be a valuable tool to attain OP and highlighted the significance of focusing on both internal and external factors before implementing LSCM and JIT-SCM into their business strategies. Moreover, additional studies are required to validate findings.

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Annexure 17.3.9

Submission Date	Submission Id	Word Count	Character Count
22-July-2025	4695745 (DrillBit)	5158	36195

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1	How do GHRM practices influence firms economic performance A meta-analytic investigation of the r, by Carballo-Penela, Adolfo, Yr-2023	<1	Publication
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Reviewers Memorandum



Reviewer's Comment 1: The paper addresses an important and well-established theme in supply chain management by integrating lean and JIT practices with competitive advantage and organizational performance. The focus on treating lean and JIT as distinct yet related concepts is a noteworthy contribution. However, the conceptual framework could be articulated more clearly, particularly in explaining how competitive advantage partially mediates these relationships. Strengthening theoretical grounding would enhance the study's scholarly impact.

Reviewer Comment 2: The systematic review of 306 articles, narrowed to 49 relevant studies, demonstrates a rigorous screening effort. The methodology is appropriate for synthesizing existing knowledge in this domain. Nevertheless, the paper would benefit from greater transparency in inclusion–exclusion criteria and review protocols. A structured reporting approach (e.g., PRISMA-style flow) could further improve methodological clarity and replicability.

Reviewer Comment 3: The findings consistently highlight the positive influence of lean and JIT supply chain practices on organizational performance and competitive advantage. Managerial implications are practical and clearly articulated. However, the conclusions occasionally reiterate existing literature rather than offering deeper synthesis. While limitations are acknowledged, clearer directions for empirical validation and cross-industry comparison would strengthen the paper's future research agenda.

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Editorial Excerpt



The article has 06% plagiarism, which is within the accepted percentage as per the norms and standards of the journal for publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks, the paper had some minor revisions, she was communicated promptly to the authors (Manoj and Anurag), and all necessary corrections were incorporated as and when directed. The comments related to this manuscript are closely aligned with the theme “**Relationship Among Lean and Just-in-time (JIT) Supply Chain Management, Competitive Advantage, and Organizational Performance: A Literature Review**” both subject-wise and research-wise. This manuscript presents a comprehensive literature review examining the relationships among lean supply chain management, just-in-time practices, competitive advantage, and organizational performance within the manufacturing sector. The study is timely and relevant, particularly given the growing emphasis on operational efficiency and competitiveness in global supply chains. The authors demonstrate diligence in reviewing and synthesizing prior studies, and the identification of competitive advantage as a partial mediator adds conceptual value. After thorough reviews and the editorial board's remarks, the manuscript has been categorized and approved for publication under the “**Review of Literature**” category.

Acknowledgement



The acknowledgement section is an essential part of all academic research papers. It provides appropriate recognition to all contributors for their hard work and effort taken while writing a paper. The data presented and analysed in this paper by the authors (Manoj and Anurag) were collected first handily and wherever it has been taken the proper acknowledgment and endorsement depicts. The author is highly indebted to others who facilitated accomplishing the research. Last but not least, endorse all reviewers and editors of GJEIS in publishing in the present issue.

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