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**The Impact of Supply Chain Management and Logistics on the
Competitive Advantage and Organizational Performance: A Field
Study in Tourism Organizations in Syria**

PHD DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This study was conducted with an objective of identifying the impact of supply chain management and logistics on competitive advantage and organizational performance in the case of four- and five-stars hotels in Damascus. Supply chain management and logistics have become a valuable way of securing competitive advantage and organizational performance since competition is no longer between organizations, but among supply chains. This research discusses the concepts of supply chain management and logistics, the dimensions of the competitive advantage and organizational performance, and tests the relationships between supply chain management, logistics, competitive advantage, and organizational performance. The descriptive and explanatory research design were used. The data for the study was collected from 116 employees of four- and five-stars hotels in Damascus based on their experience which offered a detailed and exact information. The relationships proposed in the framework were tested by Pearson correlation and the causal relations were analyzed by regression analysis method by using SPSS Software. From the result of the analysis, it is concluded that there is a strong relationship between supply chain management, logistics, competitive advantage, and organizational performance. Supply chain management and logistics have shown a positive and significant effect on the competitive advantage and organizational performance. Therefore, in order to achieve competitive advantages and organizational performance, it is frugal for the organization to give due emphasis to the constructs of supply chain management and logistics.

Keywords: Supply Chain Management (SCM), Logistics, Competitive Advantage, Organizational Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The world is witnessing many challenges, represented by intensive competition, lack of available resources, increasing societal needs. Which requires dynamic changes in all aspects of the organization to ensure survival and continuity in the light of these rapid changes. Therefore, the organization must continuously explore and identify the potential markets for its products, obtaining a distinct competitive position, expanding its market share, and accessing geographical places far from the organization's location whether within the borders of the country or outside.

Hence comes the importance of supply chain management and logistics, which has become a bond, linking the production sites with market and consumption sites, which is why the management of supply chains and logistics is considered as one of the vital factors that affect competitive advantage and organizational performance of the organization.

Based on the above, the need for supply chain management and logistics emerged, due to its ability to enable the organization to achieve competitive advantages and organizational performance, through its role in the relationships between the organization, suppliers, and customers. The supply chain management and logistics represents a mixture of science and art to improve the ways how the organization obtains the raw materials needed to provide the service, produce the products, and deliver or ship it to customers, which achieves the continuity and distinction for the organization in the market.

The present study seeks to test the impact of supply chain management and logistics on the competitive advantage and organizational performance in tourism organizations. The researcher will review the previous studies to identify the problem of research, its importance, and its objectives. The research methodology will be presented, the main variables will be defined, and their hypotheses will be developed.

1.2 Research Problem & Question

The problem of the study goes back to the fact that hotels in Syria are affected by many challenges, and the great damage in the tourism sector which has been affected by political and economic factors in Syria and the region, which contradicts the hotel's pursuit of achieving competitive advantages and organizational performance.

As most organizations operate in a work environment characterized by intensive competition, change in the needs and desires of customers and changing market conditions, Therefore the organization is required to build strong relationships with suppliers and customers through efficient and effective management of the supply chain, and work to secure the best types of logistics support to achieve the set goals. Which leads to achieve high levels of performance and thus achieving competitive advantages and distinction from other competitors so that the organization can survive and continue.

In the light of the above, the problem of research can be identified by the following main question:

To what extent do supply chain management and logistics affect the competitive advantage and organizational performance in tourism organizations?

1.3 Research Importance

The importance of the study stems from the importance of supply chain management and logistics, through the major role they play in the relationships between the organization, suppliers, and customers and the means how the organization obtains the raw materials needed to provide the service, produce the products, and deliver or ship it to customers, which achieves continuity and distinction for the organization in the market.

It also stems from the importance of competitive advantage and organizational performance, as it is the only way to achieve survival, profitability, and sustainability for the organization in the market.

The importance of the present study is summarized as follows:

- 1) Identifying supply chain management and logistics, which is one of the most important resources that contribute to achieve competitive advantage and organizational performance.
- 2) Identify the importance and impact of supply chain management and logistics in organizations and the role they play to achieve competitive advantage and organizational performance.
- 3) The importance of this study lies in the possibility of applying the results and proposals to the relevant organizations, which contributes to enhancing the positive impact of supply chain management and logistics on competitive advantage and organizational performance.

1.4 Research Objectives

This research aims to shed the light on the impact of supply chain management and logistics on the competitive advantage and organizational performance in tourism organizations. Therefore, the objectives of the research are as per the following points:

- 1) To introduce the concepts of supply chain management and logistics and its importance.
- 2) Clarify the concepts, dimensions, and sources of competitive advantage and organizational performance.
- 3) Test the impact of supply chain management on the competitive advantage and organizational performance.
- 4) Test the impact of logistics on the competitive advantage and organizational performance.

1.5 Definitions of Terms

- **Supply Chain:** The supply chain is expressed as a chain of activities that cover enterprise functions from the ordering and receipt of raw materials, raw material handling, manufacturing of products, to the distribution and delivery of final product to the customer (Li et al., 2006, p.93).

- **Supply Chain Management (SCM):** SCM encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities, including coordination and collaboration with suppliers, intermediaries, third-party service providers, and customers. Thus, the supply chain encompasses all activities involved in the production and delivery of a final product or service, from the supplier's supplier to the customer's customer at the right cost, at the right quantities, at the right time, to the right places and customers (Fugate et al., 2010, p.52).

- **Logistics:** Logistics is that part of Supply Chain Management that plans, implements, and controls the efficient, effective forward and reverse flow and storage of goods, services and related information between the point of origin and the point of consumption in order to meet customer's requirements, it includes four major components: Procurement, Warehousing, Inventory and Transportation (Fugate et al., 2010, p.54).

- **Competitive Advantage:** is the ability of the organization to create a defensible position over its competitors, it comprises capabilities that allow an organization to differentiate itself from its competitors, and it has five dimensions: cost, quality, delivery, flexibility, and innovation (Li et al., 2006, p.111).

- **Organizational Performance:** Organizational performance refers to how well an organization achieves its market- oriented goals as well as its financial goals (Yamin, 2009, p.56).

- **Services:** Services are intangible solutions that are also an exchange between buyer and seller, unlike products, services cannot be touched, owned, or stored for later use, another defining feature of a service is the client is typically a part of the service experience (Albrecht et al., 2023, p.308). For example, the hospitality service, a client spending the night in a hotel and using the hotel facilities is a service, clients cannot own the room or the facilities, they cannot store it for later, nor will they have a tangible object representing the service, imagine booking a room in a hotel, you will have to attend at the hotel to realize the full benefit of the service experience.

1.6 Research Community, Sample & Limits

The research community consists of tourism organizations in the hospitality industry, Hotels as a case study (Four & Five stars).

The research sample consists of the employees in the departments of supply chain management (Staff & Management) at these hotels.

Those employees were chosen as a sample for this study because they are an excellent basis for the questionnaire for several reasons. They have firsthand, day-to-day experience with the supply chain processes, from procurement to distribution. Their insights can offer detailed and exact information about the challenges, successes, and potential areas for improvement within the supply chain, they also possess operational knowledge about how the supply chain functions within the specific context of hospitality.

As individuals directly involved in the supply chain operations, their input can reflect practical realities and ground-level issues. The employees' perspectives are vital. Their feedback on the feasibility and potential obstacles to supply chain management and logistics can ensure the practicality and effectiveness of it.

Involving employees in the questionnaire ensures a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies and practicalities of supply chain management and logistics within the specific context of the hospitality industry in Syria. Their insights can enrich the study and provide a solid foundation for recommendations and improvements.

The research time limit was from February 2023 until June 2023.

The research geographical limit is the hotels in Damascus city in Syria, as per the following:

Table 1: Research Community

Hotel	Classification
Four Seasons Hotel	5 Stars
Sheraton Hotel	5 Stars
Dama Rose Hotel	5 Stars
Cham Palace Hotel	5 Stars
Armetage Hotel	4 Stars
Omayya Hotel	4 Stars
Blue Tower Hotel	4 Stars
Fardous Tower Hotel	4 Stars

Prepared by the researcher

1.7 Research Hypotheses & Variables

In the light of the research problem and question, the hypotheses are formulated as follows:

- First Hypothesis H1:

"There is a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on the competitive advantage in five stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

- Second Hypothesis H2:

"There is a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on the competitive advantage in four stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

- Third Hypothesis H3:

"There is a statistically significant impact of logistics on the competitive advantage in five stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

- Fourth Hypothesis H4:

"There is a statistically significant impact of logistics on the competitive advantage in four stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

- Fifth Hypothesis H5:

"There is a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on organizational performance in five stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

- Sixth Hypothesis H6:

"There is a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on organizational performance in four stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

- Seventh Hypothesis H7:

"There is a statistically significant impact of logistics on organizational performance in five stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

- Eighth Hypothesis H8:

"There is a statistically significant impact of logistics on organizational performance in four stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)".

1.8 Research Variables & Model

The present study relied on supply chain management as a first independent variable (X1), and on logistics as a second independent variable (X2), and the first dependent variable (Y1) is the competitive advantage, and the second dependent variable (Y2) is the organizational performance. In the light of the above, the model of the study of the relationship between variables in this research will be as follows:

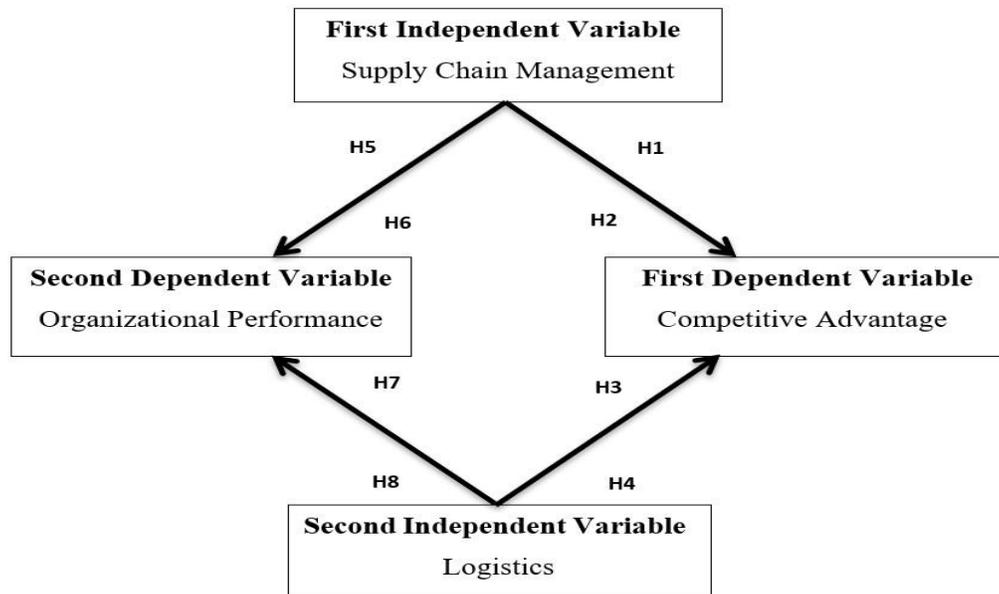


Figure 1: Research Model
Prepared by the researcher

1.9 Research Methodology

The researcher will use the analytical descriptive method to describe the problem of the study. Using the deductive method with a questionnaire designed for this purpose with 5th Likert scale including statements for each variable, then analyzing it by using the statistical program (SPSS) and suitable statistical tests to reach the results and then developing the suggestions, some of these

tests are: (Cronbach's Alpha, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, Levene's Test, Multicollinearity Test, Pearson Correlation, Independent Sample T-test, One-Way Anova, Simple Regression Analysis).

1.10 Previous Related Studies

1.10.1 The following are some studies done by other researchers related to this study.

A- (Mirabi, M, 2019) Study:

Title: (The Impact of supply chain management on customer satisfaction and competitive advantage in two factories of Fars Industrial Town)

This study aims to test the impact of supply chain management on customer satisfaction and competitive advantage in two factories in Fars Industrial City, and according to the research topic, the following variables were identified: Supply chain management, competitive advantage and customer satisfaction.

The descriptive analytical approach was adopted, and the questionnaire was distributed to 110 respondents. The research community included two factories in Fars Industrial City. The results confirmed the hypotheses, as the study proved the existence of a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on both customer satisfaction and competitive advantage, which includes cost, quality, flexibility, and delivery advantage.

B- (Kumar, V, 2017) Study:

Title: (The Impact of Supply Chain Integration on Organizational Performance in food industry in UK)

This study aimed to show the impact of the supply chain integration on organizational performance in the food industry in the United Kingdom. The study found that integration with suppliers, internal integration, integration with customers, and information integration are positively related to supply chain performance and affects organizational performance, such as production flexibility, inventory turnover, demand saturation rate and total costs for logistics, and showed that information integration is the center of chain operations and the driving force for good performance.

C- (Suhong, L, 2016) Study:

Title: (The Impact of Logistics Management on Organizational Performance in Small and Medium Enterprises in USA)

This study aimed to identify the effects of logistics management on organizational performance in small and medium enterprises in the United States of America. The study was implemented in the state of Ohio and come up with three dimensions of logistics management: the relationship with suppliers, the degree of information sharing, and the relationship with customers. It concluded that there is a positive impact of logistics management on the performance of the organization.

There are variety of previous studies which dealt with several concepts and topics related to supply chain management, logistics, competitive advantage, and organizational performance. Some of them focused on supply chain management practices, some focused-on supply chain management success factors, some on supply chain management strategies, and others focused on logistics activities. Some studies also dealt with competitive advantage and organizational performance, its sources, and its relationship to other elements in organizations. The researcher noticed some aspects that are compatible with his research topic.

This research is similar to previous studies in dealing with the concepts of supply chain management, logistics, competitive advantage, and organizational performance as the influencing factor in the organization, as most of the previous studies considered it a factor affected by multiple elements, and other studies considered it a factor affecting the administrative and organizational elements of the organization, but there is no study to the best of the researcher's knowledge, which is considering the impact of supply chain management and logistics on the competitive advantage and organizational performance in tourism organizations.

This research agreed with some previous studies that supply chain management and logistics have an impact on the performance of organizations, competitive advantages, and their continued prosperity, because it is based on seizing new opportunities and dealing with them with a new vision far from traditional methods.

1.10.2 What distinguishes the current study from previous studies?

As far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, there is no empirical study on the impact of supply chain management and logistics on the competitive advantage and organizational performance in tourism organizations in Syria.

What distinguishes this research from other previous studies is that it is dealing with different variables that previous studies had dealt with, in addition, to taking the tourism organizations and sector as a field study which differs from the fields that previous studies had taken.

In the current study, the supply chain management and logistics were taken as independent variables, While the competitive advantage and organizational performance were taken as dependent variable.

In order to test the impact of supply chain management and logistics on the competitive advantage and organizational performance, the researcher will test the impact between the components of this research, and ensure that tourism organizations give supply chain management, logistics, competitive advantage, and organizational performance the required importance.

1.11 Structure of the Research

The rest of the dissertation is organized as the following:

The second chapter is about literature reviews which include theoretical literature, empirical literatures, and conceptual framework.

The third chapter is data and methods, which discusses the research methodology of the study which includes description about research design and data analysis, population and sampling, response rate, data type and collection techniques, method of data analysis, model specification, tests of normality, reliability and validity analysis, internal consistency validity, multicollinearity test, Levene's test, correlation analysis, demographic analysis of respondents, descriptive analysis.

The fourth chapter includes the test of hypotheses using simple regression analysis.

The fifth chapter presents conclusion, findings, new scientific results, recommendations, limitation, and further Studies.

1.12 Conclusion of the Study

1.12.1 Summary of Major Statistical Findings

According to the data analysis in the previous sections, summary of the findings presented as follows:

- The majority responses on supply chain management scores a mean greater than (3.4) which implies the fact the concerned hotels implement the concepts and practices of supply chain management.
- The majority responses on logistics scores a mean greater than (3.4) which implies the fact the concerned hotels implement the concepts and practices of logistics.

- The majority responses on competitive advantage scores a mean greater than (3.4) which implies the fact the concerned hotels implement the concepts and practices of competitive advantage.
- The majority responses on organizational performance scores a mean greater than (3.4) which implies the fact the concerned hotels implement the concepts and practices of organizational performance.
- The result from the study shows that there is significantly strong correlation between supply chain management and logistics, with correlation coefficient of (0.630) ($r=0.630$) and significance value less than (0.01). This implies that supply chain management is positively contributing to the logistics and there is a genuine positive relationship between supply chain management and logistics.
- The result from the study shows that there is significantly strong correlation between supply chain management and competitive advantage, with correlation coefficient of (0.583) ($r=0.583$) and significance value less than (0.01). This implies that supply chain management is positively contributing to the competitive advantage and there is a genuine positive relationship between supply chain management and competitive advantage.
- The result from the study shows that there is significantly strong correlation between logistics and competitive advantage, with correlation coefficient of (0.574) ($r=0.574$) and significance value less than (0.01). This implies that logistics is positively contributing to the competitive advantage and there is a genuine positive relationship between logistics and competitive advantage.
- The result from the study shows that there is significantly strong correlation between supply chain management and organizational performance, with correlation coefficient of (0.564) ($r=0.564$) and significance value less than (0.01). This implies that supply chain management is positively contributing to the organizational performance and there is a genuine positive relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance.
- The result from the study shows that there is significantly strong correlation between logistics and organizational performance, with correlation coefficient of (0.528) ($r=0.528$) and significance value less than (0.01). This implies that logistics is positively contributing

to the organizational performance and there is a genuine positive relationship between logistics and organizational performance.

- The finding from simple linear regression analysis between supply chain management and competitive advantage in five stars hotels shows the correlation coefficient (R) is (0.610), which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between supply chain management and competitive advantage, which means there is a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on the competitive advantage in five stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).
- The finding from simple linear regression analysis between supply chain management and competitive advantage in four stars hotels shows the correlation coefficient (R) is (0.502), which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between supply chain management and competitive advantage, which means there is a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on the competitive advantage in four stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).
- The finding from simple linear regression analysis between logistics and competitive advantage in five stars hotels shows the correlation coefficient (R) is (0.588), which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between logistics and competitive advantage, which means there is a statistically significant impact of logistics on the competitive advantage in five stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).
- The finding from simple linear regression analysis between logistics and competitive advantage in four stars hotels shows the correlation coefficient (R) is (0.402), which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between logistics and competitive advantage, which means there is a statistically significant impact of logistics on the competitive advantage in four stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).
- The finding from simple linear regression analysis between supply chain management and organizational performance in five stars hotels shows the correlation coefficient (R) is (0.619), which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance, which means there is a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on the organizational performance in five stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

- The finding from simple linear regression analysis between supply chain management and organizational performance in four stars hotels shows the correlation coefficient (R) is (0.512), which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between supply chain management and organizational performance, which means there is a statistically significant impact of supply chain management on the organizational performance in four stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).
- The finding from simple linear regression analysis between logistics and organizational performance in five stars hotels shows the correlation coefficient (R) is (0.576), which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between logistics and organizational performance, which means there is a statistically significant impact of logistics on the organizational performance in five stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).
- The finding from simple linear regression analysis between logistics and organizational performance in four stars hotels shows the correlation coefficient (R) is (0.412), which is greater than zero, that indicates to a positive relationship between logistics and organizational performance, which means there is a statistically significant impact of logistics on the organizational performance in four stars hotels at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

1.12.2 New Scientific Results

This study contributes to a better understanding of the impact of supply chain management and logistics on the competitive advantage and organizational performance in four- and five-stars hotels in Damascus.

Based on the data analysis in the previous sections and the summary of the statistical findings, the following new scientific results are given:

- This study found that supply chain management has significant positive effect on the competitive advantage and organizational performance in four- and five-stars hotels in Damascus, through seeking to build long relationships between the hotels and their suppliers in the upper segments of the Syrian hospitality industry, involving the suppliers in planning and development, building relationships with the suppliers based on trust,

commitment and mutual benefits, measuring and evaluating continuously the supplier's satisfaction and informing the suppliers in advance of changing needs.

- This study found that logistics has significant positive effect on the competitive advantage and organizational performance in four- and five-stars hotels in Damascus in the upper segments of the Syrian hospitality industry, through purchasing the required materials through tenders and quotations, offering a fair competition to the suppliers and choosing the best offers, purchasing the required materials in a timely manner to reduce the warehousing costs and to ensure the continuity of the service.
- First study in the tourism and hospitality industry in Syria, which empirically demonstrates the rigorous influencing role of logistics and supply chain management in competitive advantage and organizational performance, although this strong relationship is already evident today, in the 21st century, but this study has managed to prove, strengthen, and enforce it with real data from a specific industry in a specific country.
- In the light of the great damage in the tourism and hospitality industry in Syria, facing political, security and infrastructure challenges, in addition to the critical economic conditions and lack of available resources due to sanctions imposed on Syria, this study will help the organizations in the tourism and hospitality industry in Syria to overcome and address these unique challenges in the field of supply chain management and logistics.

1.13 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the researcher forwards the following recommendations:

- The organizations must focus on supply chain management and logistics practices in order to achieve their competitive advantages and organizational performance by establishing the practices at hotels, departments, and staff levels.
- In order to make supply chain management of the hotels efficient and effective, hotels have to develop long strong supplier relationships based on trust, commitment, and mutual benefits by focusing on key and very important suppliers.
- In order to have an efficient and effective logistics in the hotels, hotels have to develop a purchasing mechanism which offers a fair competition based on tenders and quotations.

1.14 Limitation and Further Studies

Although this study makes significant contributions to academic research and practices, it has several limitations that open up avenues for future studies.

First, the researcher conducted this study using four- and five-stars hotels in Damascus and thus the findings are more meaningful in this field context. Hence, it is not clear how supply chain management and logistics practices are used to achieve competitive advantages and organizational performance in different contexts, such as in different organizations. Future studies can investigate this issue in other companies or conduct cross-company studies.

Second, this study used a cross-sectional design and cannot reflect the lag time or long-term effects of supply chain management and logistics on competitive advantage and organizational performance. Therefore, future studies could conduct longitudinal studies to examine the relationship between supply chain management, logistics, competitive advantage, and organizational performance.

Third, this study only examined the moderating effect on the relationship between supply chain management, logistics, competitive advantage, and organizational performance.

Future studies could investigate the causal effects of competitive strategies on the qualitative facets of supply chain management and logistics. For example, they could explore what kinds of supply chain management and logistics, such as types of information sharing, should be emphasized under various strategies.

Finally, by focusing on the hotels, the researcher developed a broad picture of the relationship between supply chain management, logistics, competitive advantage, and organizational performance. However, this relationship may not be the same for all companies, industries or regions, so future researches should investigate the effects of these contextual factors in different industries and regions.

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