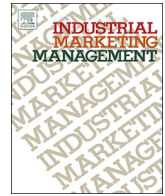




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Research paper

Supply chain management in industrial marketing—Relationships matter

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ABSTRACT

The focal research topics in industrial marketing management have evolved significantly since IMM was first published in 1971. Part of this evolution has been the inclusion of research in supply chain management, which is the focus of this paper. The purpose of this paper is to assess themes across the classic articles in supply chain management (SCM) published in IMM, and explore how the field of SCM has evolved since their publication. A systematic literature review was used to assess SCM research in IMM, identify themes and publication patterns, and use these themes to assess gaps in extant research and opportunities for future research. Results of the literature review show that over 58% of the SCM research published in IMM has focused on buyer-supplier relationships and other purchasing and supply management topics. These will continue to be key topics in IMM. In addition, our literature review suggests opportunities for more SCM research in IMM around sustainability, logistics, and manufacturing innovation. These areas within the SCM umbrella are under-researched, yet yield significant opportunities for future research in a time of constant change within companies' distribution models.

1. Introduction and background

Industrial marketing management (IMM) was first published in 1971. It has evolved significantly since that time. As an assessment of this evolution, authors from highly cited papers in IMM were recently asked to reflect on papers within their area of expertise; this paper was invited as a reflection on the papers that focus on supply chain management, including the following six articles among the most highly cited “classic” papers (Table 1):

This represents quite a range of issues. Supply chain management is an umbrella topic for the above articles, which cover areas such as buyer-supplier relationships, supply chain conceptualization and supply chain modeling. The definition we used in identifying the areas of supply chain literature to include in our review was based on the Council for Supply Chain Management Professional's definition of supply chain management (SCM):

Supply chain management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities. Importantly, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third party service providers, and customers. In essence, supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies (CSCMP, 2018).

The purpose of this paper is to explore the following questions:

1. What are the themes across the classic supply chain management articles published in IMM, and how has the field of supply chain management progressed in these areas since their publication?
2. What are the gaps in extant research that yield opportunities for future research?

The paper begins with a history and brief background of the development of SCM and an overview of some of the literature on SCM. Next, we provide an explanation of the structured literature review method used to gather and analyze the articles on SCM. The data are presented and discussed, along with implications for future research and the unique value proposition of Industrial Marketing Management related to SCM research.

2. History and literature reviews

Examining the landscape of research in areas related to the domain of supply chain management—specifically the areas of operations, purchasing and supply management (PSM), logistics, and supply chain management—much has changed since IMM's inception in 1971. The term supply chain management first appeared in scholarly literature in

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Table 1
“Classic” supply chain management articles published in IMM.

Year/title	Author(s)	Subtopic within SCM	Key focus
1997 A portfolio approach to supplier relationships	Olsen, R.F., Ellram, L.M.	BSR- relationship quality	Building on Kraljic's Matrix, a multi-step supplier segmentation process is built that specifically considers relationship factors.
2000 Issues in supply chain management	Lambert, D.M., Cooper, M.C.	SC trends & issues	Provides a framework for supply chain management, emphasizing the importance of cross-functional integration and the role of marketing
2000 The agile supply chain: Competing in volatile markets	Christopher, M.	Agility & responsiveness	Suggests that supply chain agility is essential for responsive supply chains, which needed to cope with increased global volatility.
2000 Making the most of supplier relationships	Gadde, L.E., Snehota, I.	BSR- IMP relationship quality	While forming partnerships with suppliers can improve performance, it is time intensive and must be used with a limited number of suppliers, and for very specific, diverse benefits.
2002 The role of trust and relationship structure in improving supply chain responsiveness	Handfield, R.B., Bechtel, C.	Agility & responsiveness	Building trust in buyer-supplier relationships, even in the absence of power, is critical to improve supply chain responsiveness. Suppliers should invest in site-specific assets, while buyers must not become too dependent.
2007 Modeling agility of supply chain	Agarwal, A., Shankar, R., Tiwari, M.K.	Agility and responsiveness	Building an agile supply chain is a function of many interrelated variables; It tools, central, collaborative planning and process integration are essential drivers of agility.

1985 (Alfalla-Luque & Medina-Lopez, 2009), used by John Houlihan (1985). The term supply chain management first appeared in an article title in IMM in 1997 (Kasouf & Celuch, 1997), and has appeared in an article title 72 times through 2017. The SCM terminology slowly gained traction through the 1990s when it became customary, though numerous name changes and various definitions have been suggested over time (Ellram & Cooper, 2014).

When the term SCM began to gain popularity, other functional areas claimed it as “part of their domain.” One such area is operations management (OM), which has existed in some form as long as there have been companies producing products and providing services. Because supply chain management provides linkages among those who provide all the resources to make things, OM had long been dealing with issues that are part of SCM, so over time it embraced SCM as part of its domain, or a subfield (Alfalla-Luque & Medina-Lopez, 2009; Pannirselvam, Ferguson, Ash, & Siferd, 1999). As late as 2016, there were still ongoing discussions among Academy of Management Operations Management group members about whether there was a need to change the name of the group from Operations Management to Operations and Supply Chain Management, since SCM was part of OM.

Prior to 1998, logistics also claimed that SCM was part of its domain, in that logistics and SCM were synonymous. In 1998, the Council of Logistics Management changed its definition of logistics to indicate that logistics is part of SCM, and then in 2005 changed its name to the Council for Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) (Alfalla-Luque & Medina-Lopez, 2009).

Marketing and purchasing were not as quick to stake a direct claim to SCM, or to declare that SCM was part of their domain. The term supply chain management has not necessarily been popular with marketing, as its very name places it emphasis on the upstream, supplier facing supply chain rather than the downstream, customer facing supply chain, though the definition of SCM embraces both. Marketing scholars have suggested that SCM represents an integration of marketing and logistics, coordinating information and product flow, with efficient consumer response as one key example (Alvarado & Kotzab, 2001). Marketing researchers have also suggested that a new term is needed for SCM—demand chain management, to properly reflect the merger of SCM and marketing strengths to focus on customer demand as driving the chain (Jüttner, Christopher, & Baker, 2007). We did not find evidence that marketing thought SCM was part of its domain, but rather is an approach for linking its domain with that of other functions to improve its service to the customer. Similarly, PSM has not staked a claim to supply chain management, but rather has used ideas from SCM to reconsider supply relationships and other aspects of supply management more holistically. A 35-year literature review of Journal of

Supply Chain Management¹ articles supports this notion, as only a few of the 764 articles had a specific focus on SCM. It was more common to see specific issues such as strategic alliances or purchasing strategy framed within a supply chain context (Carter & Ellram, 2003).

Many literature reviews have been conducted examining the trends in SCM publication, methods and theories. In their 2000 paper, Croom, Romano, and Giannakis. (2000) conclude that SCM research is dominated by descriptive empirical studies, and would benefit from greater theoretical development. This is consistent with findings by Carter and Ellram (2003) with regard to the Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management. Similarly, Rungtusanatham, Choi, Hollingworth, Wu, and Forza's (2003) study of 21 years (1980–2000) of OM journals found SCM topics to be the smallest of five operations categories, but one that was growing rapidly from the mid-1990s onward. This was supported by Kodali and Soni (2012), who studied empirical articles published in OM journals from 1994 to 2009 and concluded that it was rapidly increasing within OM. In general, early papers on SCM were frequently definitional in nature (Giunipero, Hooker, Joseph-Matthews, Yoon, & Brudivig, 2008). Giunipero et al.'s (2008) study covers nine purchasing, logistics and supply chain journals² from 1997 to 2006. Supply chain management topics grew dramatically in this timeframe. Out of 405 articles with SCM or supply chain in the abstract or the title, the top three topics were SCM strategy (23.5%), SCM frameworks, trends and challenges (18.3%), and alliances/relationships (16.3%).

SCM-related literature reviews continue to note the lack of conceptual theory development, even those on focused SCM subtopics, such as a 20-year literature review of sustainable supply chain management (Carter & Easton, 2011), and numerous other such literature reviews on sustainability in SCM (Miemczyk, Johnsen, & Macquet, 2012). The topic of SCM is simply too broad to conduct a general literature review of SCM research. Ellram and Cooper (2014) conducted a literature review of the definitions of supply chain management, and found that while there is some consensus on what a supply chain is, we

¹ The Journal of Supply Chain Management changed its name from The International Journal of Purchasing and Materials Management. It was very much focused on purchasing, with the subtitle: A Global Review of Purchasing and Supply. This subtitle was dropped around 2008 to reflect a broader focus embracing all aspects of supply chain management.

² 1) Journal of Supply Chain Management (JSCM), (2) International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management (IJPDLJM), (3) Journal of Operations Management (JOM), (4) International Journal of Logistics Management, (5) Journal of Business Logistics, (6) International Journal of Operations and Production Management, (7) Industrial Marketing Management, (8) Management Science and (9) Decision Sciences

still lack a standard definition for SCM.

3. Method

As a starting point, we did a systematic literature review of all of the SCM articles published in IMM since its inception, in order to get an understanding of how IMM's treatment of supply chain related topics had changed overtime. We applied a modified version of Denyer and Tranfield's (2009) approach to conducting a systematic literature review. Following their five-step method (question formulation, locating studies, study selection and evaluation, analysis and synthesis, and reporting and using results), we focused only on papers published in IMM. In addition, we looked for other systematic literature reviews focused on SCM, some of which are highlighted in the section above.

We applied the following steps in identifying relevant articles in the domain of SCM published in IMM:

1. Ensure topical relevance by reviewing the titles, abstracts and key words (when available) to determine whether the topic is in the broad domain of SCM. Include papers when not certain so that they could be reviewed further. These were all entered into a spreadsheet, which yielded 650 articles. In addition, full copies of all the articles included in this spreadsheet were uploaded.
2. After relevant articles were selected, two researchers each read and coded the same 100 articles. As part of the coding process, they developed a shared codebook with a list of codes and definitions that was continually modified and updated to reflect the article topics. The researchers then met to consolidate and compare codes and agree to the coding, discussing and resolving any differences. One primary code was selected for each article, with subcodes noted.
3. The coding continued on the remainder of the articles, with codes being modified and unrelated articles eliminated. The researchers met frequently during this process to resolve questions and issues.
4. As the coding progressed, the researchers realized that there were a large number of special issues related to the industrial marketing and purchasing (IMP) interaction approach, and that another researcher (Johnsen, 2018) has just published a paper on the IMP approach in IMM. Therefore, the authors decided to eliminate the SCM papers related to the IMP approach to the best of their ability. There is a possibility that some of these were missed. In addition, the classic SCM paper by Gadde and Snehota (2000) was included as one of the supply chain IMM classics, though it appears to follow the IMP approach. The 503 remaining articles are analyzed and included here.

After this process, 503 articles remained, which are discussed in more detail below. At that point, we still had 23 topical categories, which were too many to discuss meaningfully, and some categories substantially related to the others. Therefore, we consolidated some of the more detailed subcodes into larger categories. Appendix A shows the initial topical coding categories and sub-categories. There were many SCM related subcodes captured. The way that these subcodes were grouped into categories is shown in Tables 4 through 7.

In order to further analyze the major topics, the articles were analyzed by time period, as discussed and shown in Tables 4 through 7 in the next section. An overview of articles published by the time periods used is provided in Table 2, which shows a very uneven spread of articles across time. Due to the increase in articles published in later years, we chose to use smaller time periods for examining the more recent articles so that more detail could be extracted about the evolution of research during those time periods.

Finally, our initial systematic review of the IMM literature indicated that the area of supply chain management was dominated by the IMP's conception of supply networks, including 19 special issues from IMP conferences since 1998 (Lichtenthal, Tzempelikos, & Tellefsen, 2018).

Table 2
SCM articles published in IMM by time period.

Time period	Total articles
1970–1985	78
1986–1995	46
1996–2005	93
2006–2010	89
2011–2015	138
2016 & 2017	59
Total	503

IMM recently published an excellent literature review covering the IMP Interaction approach by a scholar that utilizes the IMP interactive approach (Johnsen, 2018), so that work is not recreated here.

4. Results

Table 3 shows the major categories of supply chain related articles covered in *Industrial Marketing Management* since its inception. A notable 3129 articles have appeared in *Industrial Marketing Management* since 1971, with 1346 articles published since 2008 (Lindgreen & Di Benedetto, 2018). The number of articles published in IMM has increased significantly over the years, as has the number of academic articles published in general (Lichtenthal et al., 2018), so it is difficult to compare one year to the next. As the data reveal, in the area of supply chain management, and its constituent parts of operations, logistics and purchasing and supply management, PSM-related topics have been an area of focus for supply chain-oriented papers in IMM. We coded 503 articles as fitting in the SCM domain, or about 16% of the total articles published in IMM. This does include articles published before the term SCM was in use.

As indicated in Table 3, the largest category of articles in the SCM domain is articles on buyer-supplier relationships, comprising 166 articles, or about 33% of the total SC articles. This category includes research focused on relationship quality, collaboration, trust, power, and value creation within buyer-supplier relationships. The next category, “PSM topics excluding buyer-supplier relationships” adds another 122 articles or about 24.3% of the total. Thus, combined, PSM topics account for over 58% of the SCM-related articles published in IMM since its inception. Specific topics and trends are discussed in more depth below. The next category, “Integrated SCM” covers a breadth of issues, including SC agility & responsiveness, SC networks, SC structure, SC trends and issues, SCM & e-commerce and sustainability in SCM, accounting for about 14% of the papers.

The topic categories fall off relatively quickly after that, with Industrial Distribution (46 papers or 9.2%), Logistics and Innovation next (around 4.8% and 4.6% respectively). The remaining categories are relatively minor, ranging from about 3.5% to 1.4%, with manufacturing coming in at just 1.4% of the SCM-related research published in IMM. We also examined the research by category and time period, but the only major noticeable trend was that there was a high level of PSM articles beyond those focused on buyer-supplier relationships in the earlier years (see Appendix B). There was also slightly more of a focus on manufacturing related research in earlier time periods, after which the focus moved to other topics.

At a high level, this distribution of articles is not surprising, given the nature of IMM and its audience. Industrial marketers' customers are industrial buyers, so of course there would be a strong focus on many aspects of buyer-supplier relationships. The other PSM topics are also heavy with topics of interest to industrial marketers, such as buyer traits and level of involvement, industrial buyer behavior, supplier selection and more. The industrial distribution or channels research was a precursor to supply chain management, with an emphasis on configuring downstream distribution channels (customer facing) more so than on upstream (towards suppliers) channel issues. Not surprisingly, the

Table 3
SCM articles published in IMM by category (1971–2017).

Category	Number of articles	Specific topics
Buyer-supplier relationships	166	Relationship quality, power, collaboration, trust, governance, opportunism, value creation, global issues, & other (contracts, negotiations, IT, trends)
PSM topics excluding buyer-supplier relationships	122	Buyer traits & involvement, Industrial buyer behavior, supplier selection, supplier relationship management, supplier development, specialty purchasing, sourcing strategy
Integrated SCM	78	SC agility & responsiveness, SC networks, SC structure, SC trends and issues, SCM & e-commerce, sustainability in SCM
Industrial distribution	46	Channel relationships, channel design & governance, industrial distribution trends and issues, satisfaction, channel coordination & strategy, distributor motivation & performance, channel roles (manufacturers, resellers & distributors)
Logistics	24	Logistics role in business & SC; DC location decision/analysis; inventory issues & stockouts; 3PL services & usage/ logistics outsourcing; logistics performance measurement; global logistics services; reverse logistics
Innovation	23	New product development; SC control of development process; supplier innovation; leveraging SC network for innovation
Integration and cross-functional collaboration in SC	17	Marketing/logistics integration; marketing/purchasing coordination; organizational norms & cross-functional collaboration; supply chain integration
Global issues	9	Global SCM; impact of culture on relationships, supplier preferences; global SC relationship profitability; information sharing in global SC
Manufacturing	7	Capacity management; MRP; materials management; production planning; failure recovery
Outlying topics	11	Corporate culture, product life cycle, customer satisfaction & value creation, purchasing performance measurement, marketing communication to buyers, IT
Total articles	503	

logistics focus is also customer facing.

The next sub-sections of the results will dive deeper into four main categories of supply chain management research published within IMM: buyer-supplier relationships, other PSM topics, industrial distribution, and Integrated SCM topics. Articles in each of these areas were coded with sub-topics that are more detailed in order to examine the evolution of research within each main category, which is discussed next.

4.1. Buyer-supplier relationships

A literature review of how buyers extract value from buyer-supplier relationships, covering four journals (Journal of Supply Chain Management, Journal of Operations Management, Academy of Management Journal and Strategic Management Journal) for 20 years (1986–2005) showed a steady rise in the number of articles focused on buyer-supplier relationships during that time period (Terpend, Tyler, Krause, & Handfield, 2008). This analysis indicated an increased emphasis over time on mutually deriving value based on integration with the supplier.

Similarly, buyer-supplier relationships is the largest group of SCM articles published in IMM. Within the buyer-supplier relationship research reviewed, Table 4 shows that relationship quality is the biggest issue covered in IMM. In the period of 1971–1995, only five articles on relationship quality were published, and these focused on selecting and assessing suppliers based on the relationship, and also encouraging

buyers to take a marketing-orientation in working with suppliers. In the next 10 years, 13 articles were published that focused on having buyers and suppliers take a market or customer orientation, respectively, and on viewing their suppliers from a portfolio perspective, tailoring the supplier relationship to the circumstances. Additionally, two of the IMM classics were published during this period. Olsen and Ellram (1997) posit that the type of supplier relationship desired, as well as the buyer's attractiveness to the supplier is important in successful PSM portfolio management. Gadde and Snehota (2000) use a portfolio approach to demonstrate that only a few supplier relationships are really worth investing many resources in, so successful firms should choose a variety of differentiated relationships. Thus, a common thread among these two classics is the view of a portfolio approach to considering supplier relationships. They both emphasize that not all supplier relationships should be equal, and there should be careful segmentation considering what both sides have in determining the nature of buyer-supplier relationships.

Themes focused on how to enhance relationship quality in the 2006–2010 period, when 9 articles were published. The next period of 5 years (2011–2015) yielded 15 articles on relationship quality, with an emphasis on the idea that the nature of relationships affects outcomes, and that it is desirable to be a preferred customer as suppliers are willing to invest more, and this can support new product development, innovation and other successful outcomes. This builds on the theme of the two classic articles mentioned above. In the past two years

Table 4
Evolution of buyer-supplier relationship literature in IMM.

Year range	Total articles	Focal topics within BSR literature									
		Relationship quality	Power	Collaboration	Trust	Governance	Opportunism	Value creation	Global issues	Other BSR issues ^a	
1971–1985	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1986–1995	9	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
1996–2005	36	13	3	5	2	0	0	3	5	5	5
2006–2010	39	9	3	6	7	2	1	2	6	3	3
2011–2015	53	15	7	4	3	6	4	7	2	5	5
2016 & 2017	27	10	2	5	0	2	1	1	0	6	6
Total	166	52	16	20	12	10	6	13	13	24	24
Subtopic % of total		31.33%	9.64%	12.05%	7.23%	6.02%	3.61%	7.83%	7.83%	14.46%	

^a The “Other BSR Issues” category here is other categories related to buyer supplier relationships includes 12 topics that have very few articles. Issues included: Merger and acquisition impact (1), trends(3), BSR dependence (1), buyer service quality (1), contract (3), IT in BSR (4), relationship type (2), relationship dissolution (1), relationship orientation (1) negotiation (5) and time pressure (1).

Table 5
PSM research excluding buyer-supplier relationships in IMM.

Year range	Total articles	Focal topics within PSM literature beyond BSR						
		Supplier selection	Supplier relationship management	Supplier development	Specialty purchasing	Sourcing strategy	Industrial buyer behavior	Buying traits & involvement
1971–1985	50	12	2	0	4	4	19	9
1986–1995	15	3	0	1	5	3	0	3
1996–2005	10	1	3	0	1	4	0	1
2006–2010	16	0	2	0	4	7	0	3
2011–2015	24	2	7	4	2	9	0	0
2016 & 2017	7	1	1	0	2	1	0	2
Total	122	19	15	5	18	28	19	18
Subtopic % of total		15.57%	12.30%	4.10%	14.75%	22.95%	15.57%	14.75%

(2016–2017), the themes are similar, with the addition of the “dark-side” of buyer-supplier relationships, emphasizing that too much dependence upon a supplier can actually diminish performance. Thus, the problems mentioned in the classic articles of supplier-over-dependence come to the forefront in these dark-side papers.

Examining other trends in BSR literature in IMM reveals that collaboration became an issue of interest in the late 1990s, and has been a focal topic in IMM since about 2006. Other growing relationship issues include power, governance, value creation and opportunism. While research appears to have slowed slightly in the areas of trust and global BSR issues, it is clear that the interest in buyer-supplier relationships is still very high in IMM, emphasizing both the positive aspects of collaboration and value-creation, and the downsides of power and opportunism in relationships.

4.2. PSM topics excluding buyer-supplier relationships

The PSM topics excluding buyer-supplier relationships were grouped as shown in Table 5, including supplier selection, supplier relationship management, supplier development, specialty purchasing (services, capital, and MRO), sourcing strategy, industrial buyer behavior, and buying traits and involvement. We observe the following trends and patterns. First, this was the largest area of interest in the 1971–1985 period, with 9 papers on buyer traits, 12 on supplier selection and 19 on industrial buyer behavior. This was the only period in which articles on industrial buyer behavior appeared, and the peak period for supplier selection and buying traits. In this early period of IMM publication, PSM papers were focused on understanding fundamental issues related to execution of industrial purchasing. This tactical approach was necessary to achieve competency before moving on to more strategic activity. The focus shifted away from the buyer towards the supplier, or buyer-supplier interaction about the same time that the SCM concept started to rise. As PSM has continued to mature and develop, the emphasis has been more on topics related to sourcing strategy (beginning in 1996 period and continuing), supplier management and supplier development, taking a longer time horizon. This is in contrast to the rather immediate, tactical, operational topics in the early PSM research in IMM. This is consistent with other researchers' observations on the direction of PSM research (Ellram, Harland, van Weele, et al., 2019).

4.3. Industrial distribution

The area of industrial distribution is one that has transformed during the tenure of IMM. As seen in Table 6, there were 46 articles published in the area of industrial distribution since 1971. Digging deeper into the specific articles and evolution of industrial distribution in IMM, Table 6 shows much more of a focus on industrial distribution in the early years, with 10 articles published between 1971 and 1985, and 15 articles in the period 1986–1995. Of these 25 articles,

approximately 50% focused on channel relationships, channel design and governance. These are also key topics in supply chain management. However, the term supply chain management was just emerging in the late 1980s to mid-1990s. Other focal themes that arose within the articles on industrial distribution include channel coordination and strategy, distributor performance and motivation, and roles of various channel parties. An earlier focus on channel design and governance examined appropriate distribution channel design and setup, as well as incentives and reward programs with distributors. This was more of a command or directive approach to channels. In contrast, the more recent articles published in IMM in the Industrial Distribution theme are more focused on channel coordination across multiple channels, governance and strategy of adding ecommerce channels and changing distribution options accordingly. There is more of a shared governance perspective today. The shift away from channel relationships to broader buyer-supplier relationship issues occurred as supply chain management became more accepted, as discussed in the overview of buyer-supplier relationship research in IMM. Although the industrial distribution focused articles published in IMM have tapered off slightly, we expect to see a continued focus on channel coordination and design during a time of continued evolution and unique challenges with omnichannel fulfillment and distribution (Ishfaq, Defee, Gibson, & Raja, 2016).

4.4. Integrated supply chain management topics

The view of IMM regarding SCM is unique versus that of other journals. IMM was a little later to take interest in the topic of SCM than operations management journals, with only four articles broaching related topic areas (see Table 3 for topics) prior to 1995. However, four of the six classic articles in the SC Domain were all in the subareas classified as Integrated SCM. Thus, this is an influential area of study within IMM.

As shown in Table 7, in the 1996–2005 time block, interest in SCM grew significantly at IMM, with 22 articles published, including three of the classics. First, Lambert and Cooper's (2000) paper is the most highly cited. Recalling that SCM was first included in an article title in IMM in 1997, Lambert & Cooper's work was an early SCM paper in the marketing literature. This paper presents a conceptual framework for SCM, complete with figures illustrating the concept. It provides a detailed, process-oriented approach and discusses cross-functional integration of marketing with SC areas. It mentions the word marketing 44 times, including references. It provides an important foundation for industrial marketers' understanding of SCM. It also provides a perspective on trends, issues and challenges in SCM. Of the 22 SCM articles published during this period, eight focused on supply chain trends and issues, and another six delve into ecommerce-related topics. The ecommerce topics appeared in the latter part of that period.

Two additional classics appear in this time block, both fitting into the area of agility in SCM. Martin Christopher's (2000) piece is a call for

Table 6
Evolution of industrial distribution research in IMM.

Year range	Total articles	Focal topics in industrial distribution research						
		Channel relationships	Channel design & governance	Trends & issues	Satisfaction	Channel coordination & strategy	Distributor motivation & performance	Roles
1971–1985	10	1	2	2	0	1	3	1
1986–1995	15	5	4	1	1	1	0	3
1996–2005	6	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
2006–2010	5	2	0	0	1	2	0	0
2011–2015	7	1	3	2	0	1	0	0
2016 & 2017	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Total	46	11	15	5	2	5	3	5
Subtopic % of total		23.91%	32.61%	10.87%	4.35%	10.87%	6.52%	10.87%

creating more responsive supply chains in order to adapt to an increasingly risky, turbulent world. [Handfield and Bechtel \(2002\)](#) also call for more responsive supply chains, but suggest building trusting, long-term relationships with suppliers as an important way to do so. These articles both explicitly recognize the importance of being responsive to customer demands, and the essential role that SCM plays in agility/responsiveness.

Finally, the last classic, [Agarwal, Shankar, and Tiwari \(2007\)](#) is the only modeling piece among these classics, and continues with the agility focus. It appears in the 2006–2010 timeframe along with nine other SCM papers across a broad brush of topics, including four focused on supply chain networks. This classic paper models the variables that affect supply chain agility and responsiveness, and provides insights into improving agility.

It is interesting to note that half of the supply chain classics (three of six) are within the topical area of SC agility, yet only four papers on SC agility have been published during IMM's tenure. Agility is all about dealing with uncertainty and being responsive—to the customer, to market dynamics, to whatever changes the firm faces. Marketing is about being responsive to the customer, and agility is an important link with marketing and supply chain management, emphasizing the criticality of a flexible and responsive supply chain in order to adjust to the market and customers' changing needs. Within IMM, it appears that supply chain agility is a context in which industrial marketing operates rather than a core topic to be investigated in its own right. It is a consideration in much of the research insofar as it affects marketing processes, outcomes and behaviors, hence the high citation rates. Yet, little more has been done in IMM with agility as a focus.

Another big shift in IMM was the interest in sustainability in the supply chain. Prior to 2012, there had been only one article on supply chain sustainability in IMM ([Oliver & Rothman, 1975](#)), focusing on recycling. In 2011–2015, 13 of the 31 SCM papers focused on SC sustainability, with nine on SC networks. The sustainability articles had a focus on green marketing, as featured in a special issue on green marketing in 2012, and integrating marketing and operations for sustainability in 2014. This appeared to encourage submission of papers on

this topic for regular issues. In 2016–2017, seven of the 10 papers within the Integrated SCM group were on sustainability, and two on networks. Sustainability articles cover topics such as value co-creation, sustainability issues in different countries, green marketing and the impact of sustainability on buyer-supplier relationships. The network focus is also growing. The early network papers focus on going beyond the buyer-supplier dyad, while later papers consider a variety of topics such as networks of suppliers, value creation and co-creation, roles, and more. This appears to be an important area for future research.

4.5. Additional topics

As seen in [Table 3](#), additional topics under the umbrella of supply chain management do not receive the same level of attention in IMM as PSM topics, integrated SCM and industrial distribution. Logistics, which is a key interface between marketing and the customer, has only 24 articles, with a focus on the role of logistics, logistics (3PL) services and outsourcing, measurement, and global and reverse logistics. The logistics-marketing interface was recognized as an essential linkage to tackling marketing problems back in 1973 ([Christopher, 1973](#)), but has not taken a center stage in IMM research as of yet. However, one could argue that much of the industrial distribution literature within industrial marketing could be classified as a special type of logistics research, as much of it focuses on distribution channel design, governance, and relationships with distributors. Similarly, though manufacturing is a core area of SCM, only seven articles have been published in IMM focused on manufacturing concepts, mainly related to very specific manufacturing topics. Finally, articles on innovation (23) focus mainly on new product development and the role of the supplier or SC in successful innovation (refer to [Table 3](#) for details).

4.6. SCM in IMM and Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP)

A significant number of articles using the Industrial Marketing & Purchasing (IMP) interaction approach have appeared in IMM since its inception, including 19 special issues, which we excluded from our

Table 7
Evolution of integrated SCM topics within IMM.

Year range	Total articles	Focal SCM Topics						
		SC trends & issues	SC networks	SC structure	SC agility & responsiveness	SCM & E-commerce	Sustainability in SCM	SC strategy
1971–1985	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
1986–1995	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
1996–2005	22	8	1	2	2	6	0	3
2006–2010	10	1	4	0	1	3	0	1
2011–2015	32	3	9	3	1	1	13	2
2016 & 2017	10	0	2	0	0	1	7	0
Total	78	13	16	7	4	11	21	6
Subtopic % of total		16.67%	20.51%	8.97%	5.13%	14.10%	26.92%	7.69%

analysis. These were excluded because [Johnsen \(2018\)](#) conducted a systematic literature review of IMM articles using an IMP interaction approach as his theoretical foundation. In his paper, "Purchasing and Supply Management in an Industrial Marketing Perspective," he discusses the potent influence of the evolving IMP interactive approach to PSM and networks, suggesting that this approach has a strong emphasis on interactions within buyer-supplier relationships and the embeddedness of dyadic relationships within inter-organizational networks. He suggests three primary angles for future research in PSM and supply networks within IMM: (1) develop theory about the concept of supply networks, (2) revisit the notion of management of supply networks, and (3) debate established best practices in purchasing and supply management.

The IMP interaction approach represents a school of thought regarding the way interactions occur between buyers and suppliers ([Johnsen, Miemczyk, & Howard, 2017](#)). The original research by the IMP group resulted in the interaction model ([Hakansson, 1982](#)) that conceptualizes relationships between industrial buyers and suppliers, and the exchange processes between the two parties, divided into short-term exchanges and long-term adaptation and institutionalization. The interactions take place within a relationship atmosphere that includes, for example, power, cooperation and conflict. While the original interaction model ([Hakansson, 1982](#)) focused on dyadic buyer-supplier relationships, later IMP research extended the focus beyond dyads into industrial networks, highlighting the importance of understanding dyadic relationships as part of inter-connected networks, where what happens in one relationship positively or negatively affects what happens in other connected relationships.³ Given the strong relational focus of IMM, and the importance of context we have observed in articles published in IMM, the IMP interactive approach is a good fit for framing research. Note that IMM does consider research not directly framed in the IMP approach in articles it publishes.

5. Conclusions- Where do we go from here?

Continuing on the network line of thinking, the notion that supply chains are really networks is probably as old as the term supply chain management. As [Ellram \(1991\)](#) noted, "The use of the term *chain* in supply chain management is an oversimplification. Supply chain management really represents a *network* of firms interacting to deliver a product or service to the end customer, linking flows from raw material supply to final delivery" (p.13). We agree that a network perspective is important. Buyer-supplier relationships, a key SCM topic in IMM, operate within the broader context of supply networks, or perhaps supply chain networks, considering both upstream and downstream aspects of the network.

Over time, terminology from supply chain research has supplanted much of the research in industrial distribution. While supply chain management is supposed to focus on end-to-end flows, from earliest suppliers to end customers and eventual disposal, to this point it has focused in one direction or the other: buyer-supplier relationships or relationships in the distribution channel to the customer, rather than both directions.

Like research on the SC-specific topics such as SC agility and SC trends, IMM researchers focus on these topics in relationship to some aspect of industrial marketing. The interest is not in networks or supply chains for their own sake, as it may be in another journal. Rather, the focus of SCM research in IMM is on how various elements of the external environment affect companies' ability to be successful in the marketplace.

One of the key, evolving topics in IMM since its inception is the

notion of relationships. The focus within relationships have shifted over time, with early focus in industrial distribution relationships giving way to buyer-supplier relationships for industrial buyers in general, or related to inputs. As we expand our knowledge based on research and practice, this research has gained more depth, considering specific issues such as relationship quality, trust, collaboration, performance and relationship risks. There still appears to be a large focus on getting relationships right. With this in mind, we propose the following research agenda for the area of SCM within IMM.

1. *Position the buyer-supplier relationship literature more holistically, as part of a dyad, triad or network.* Much of the early research focused on buyer-supplier relationships through the perspective of either the buyer or the supplier. Today, we increasingly see dyadic analysis including both the buyer and supplier company perspectives, to provide a more holistic approach. While only two articles published in IMM specifically include the term "triad" (e.g. for triadic relationships) in their key words, it is clear that many papers look at triadic relationships. Examples include marketing-purchasing with the customer or supplier ([Smirnova, Henneberg, Ashnai, & Naude, 2011](#); [Tate, Ellram, Bals, Hartmann, & van der Valk, 2010](#)), in public purchasing with the buyer, government agency, and private firm ([Keränen, 2017](#)) and more. This perspective should continue, in order to better understand relationships, with data gathered from all three nodes of the triad whenever possible. It is important to position the research in the right context, as part of a larger network whenever feasible ([Johnsen et al., 2017](#)). Increasingly, the relationship and influence extends beyond the buyer and supplier. In order to be successful, other stakeholders must be coopted and considered. This is not quite the same as the traditional buying center research, which incorporates one or more parties outside of the focal organization. Research conducted by the IMP framework takes such an approach, but there are additional perspectives to be added.
2. *Provide a more strategic-level focus in the IMM literature.* This literature review revealed a very small number of papers that considered or focused on supply chain strategy and higher-level strategic topics within the supply chain. While there are papers in the SCM domain published in IMM that use the term "strategic", they tend to use the term interchangeably with the term "important" or "critical" (e.g. strategic customer; strategic alliance, strategic network, strategic change) rather than in terms of the high-level corporate strategy that drives the firms' vision, mission and value proposition(s). This strategy is more at a functional or executional level than a corporate or vision level. Considering supply chains through more of a network perspective, it is important for researchers to assess higher-level strategic issues as well as operational phenomena, so as not to limit the contributions of the research conducted on SCM and networks.
3. *Encourage more research on sustainability in a business-to-business setting.* Another popular topic that would benefit from more research from an industrial marketing perspective is sustainability. It has been a huge supply chain topic in other journals, and it grew in IMM after the special issues in 2012 and 2014. Much of the research in green marketing in general is focused primarily towards consumers rather than industrial markets ([Cronin, Smith, Gleim, & Martinez, 2011](#); [Kumar, 2016](#))? Green labeling and green affiliations have been studied from a consumer market perspective. Will consumers pay more and follow through with their buying behaviors? Do these also affect industrial markets, and how so? As the leading journal in industrial marketing, there is opportunity to better understand the importance, influence and role of sustainability in industrial marketing, and to look beyond environmental issues to growing areas of concern in social and ethical aspects of business. While the role of suppliers in sustainability has been extensively studied in the supply chain literature ([Carter & Easton, 2011](#)), are there differences for

³ The authors thank Dr. Thomas Erik Johnsen for his explanation of the IMP interaction approach for purposes of this paper. Any misinterpretations of his comments are the sole responsibility of the authors.

suppliers to consumer markets versus industrial markets that have not yet been studied?

4. *Extend the scope of global research on changing supply chains.* Traditionally, the global focus in IMM has been contextual, with research taking place in a global context, for example global purchasing, supplier relationships, global product development. There has also been much research in a country-specific context. This should continue to be an important perspective in papers published in IMM. Much is changing in supply chains now, some of which may come from changes in tariffs and import/export policies and incentives. This can change supplier alliances, sourcing strategy, distribution and logistics, access to customer markets and more. It is a rich potential area of future research.
5. *Break new ground in researching cutting-edge trends and their impact on industrial marketing.* Many big topics would seem to be of interest to industrial marketers that have received very limited coverage in IMM. For example, logistics is facing huge changes in terms of the impact of ecommerce, and new technologies like robots, artificial intelligence, and block chain for provenance, tracking as well as transaction security. Yet, relatively few papers have been published in IMM that focus on logistics issues, despite the fact that there is an acknowledgement of the importance of logistics to marketing success (Christopher, 1973; Ellinger, 2000). In addition, the role of logistics in sustainability is still understudied overall (Ellram & Murfield, 2017), yet the impact of logistics is growing with the growth of ecommerce in both business and consumer markets. What are these impacts, and can they be limited? Further, as more items are purchased via ecommerce, returns increase dramatically. This makes reverse logistics more important than ever. Research is needed to better frame the importance of reverse logistics in B2B relationships. From an industrial distribution view, what is the role of distributors and other supply chain members as returns and reverse logistics increase and become a huge cost center and/or a source of competitive advantage? In addition, what is the role of third-party logistics providers in facilitating customer service, through CRM or otherwise, especially on a global scale, where logistics services are often fragmented? Where should inventory be held in these new models, or should it be held at all? That brings us

to the next topic, manufacturing.

There are cutting-edge issues in manufacturing that should be of interest to industrial marketing. The manufacturing side of supply chain management has traditionally received very little attention in IMM literature. This is not surprising, as marketing is more closely aligned with purchasing, and even logistics. However, as 3D printing expands as a viable production model, it could change the nature and structure of supply chain design. It also opens additional connections with innovation and NPD, which is another area that has more room for research in IMM in the context of SCM.

Another emerging area that has received limited attention is the area of supply chain finance (SCF) and shifting trade credit to extend payment terms. Tax issues are also in the forefront of SCF practice. SCF is an area that has been well exposed in the popular press, and has the potential to have a strong negative or positive impact on buyer-supplier relationships. Supply chain finance also has implications for who holds and owns inventory. Given the importance of buyer-supplier relationships in IMM, this area seems like a ripe and highly relevant topic for research in IMM.

The above ideas expand upon the many contributions that IMM has made to the field of industrial marketing under the board umbrella of supply chain management. Many areas that have received very little coverage in IMM are important emerging topics that could be of interest to industrial marketing researchers. IMM has made significant contributions to advancing theory and practice regarding supply chain management issues in industrial marketing since its founding. There is much more that can be done in the dynamic and exciting realm of industrial marketing and supply chain management.

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Appendix A. Initial topical coding categories and sub-categories

Buyer-supplier relationships

Supplier selection- specifically mention vendor or supplier selection

Supplier relationship mgmt.

- Supplier evaluation & monitoring- specifically mention on-going, or a supplier that they are using—not evaluating a new source to decide if to use; that is selection
- Supplier integration, collaboration
 - Supplier development- helping supplier improve
 - Specialty Purchasing
- Public Purchasing- government purchasing, military, public schools, etc.
- Services, CapEx, MRO Purchasing- often called indirect purchasing
- JIT Procurement- Purchasing issues when company adopts JIT/goes lean
 - Buying Traits & Involvement
- Buyer traits
- Buyer involvement/role in purchasing
- Buying Center- this deals with all the various people involved in buying/influence
 - Industrial buyer behavior.
 - Sourcing Strategy
- Single sourcing, multi-sourcing
 - Make-Buy/Outsourcing—including offshoring, reshoring Logistics
- Inventory issues
- 3PL/LSPs
- Performance Measurement
- Role
- DC Location
 - Innovation- new product development, other innovation.

Industrial Distribution- called industrial distribution, distributor, and channel design.

SC Trends & Issues (Broad perspectives, trends, challenges, outlook articles).

SC Structure

- SC Design
- Purchasing Organization Structure (centralized vs. decentralized)
 - SC Networks.
 - SC Agility & Responsiveness.
 - SCM Strategy.
 - Sustainability in SCM.
 - SCM & E-commerce
- Logistics e-commerce
- E-Procurement
- Multi-channel distribution design
 - Global issues (culture, global purchasing, etc.)
 - Manufacturing
- Capacity mgmt.
- MRP
 - Cross-functional collaboration in SC
- Purchasing-Marketing
- Logistics-Marketing interface
 - Other
- Corporate culture
- Product life cycle
- Customer Satisfaction and value creation
- Purchasing Performance Measurement
- Marketing communication to buyers
- IT

Appendix B. SCM articles published in IMM by category and time period

Year Range	BSR	PSM topics (excl. BSR)	SCM	Industrial distribution	Logistics	Innovation	Int. & CFCollab.	Global issues	Manufacturing	Outlying topics	Total
1970–1985	2	50	1	10	4	0	0	0	5	6	78
1986–1995	9	15	3	15	2	1	0	0	0	1	46
1996–2005	36	10	22	6	7	3	1	5	1	2	93
2006–2010	39	16	10	5	5	6	6	2	0	0	89
2011–2015	53	24	32	7	5	8	5	1	1	2	138
2016 & 2017	27	7	10	3	1	5	5	1	1	1	59
Total	166	122	78	46	24	23	17	9	7	11	503

BSR = Buyer-supplier relationships; Int. & CFCollab = Integration & Cross-Functional Collaboration in SC.

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