




THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH LOCAL SUPPLIERS FOR SUPPLY CHAIN SUSTAINABILITY

A IMPORTÂNCIA DAS ALIANÇAS ESTRATÉGICAS COM FORNECEDORES LOCAIS PARA A SUSTENTABILIDADE DA CADEIA DE SUPRIMENTOS

LA IMPORTANCIA DE LAS ALIANZAS ESTRATÉGICAS CON PROVEEDORES LOCALES PARA LA SOSTENIBILIDAD DE LA CADENA DE SUMINISTRO

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ABSTRACT

In an era marked by global disruptions, climate risks, and rising ESG demands, strategic alliances with local suppliers have emerged as a key enabler of supply chain sustainability. This paper explores how localized partnerships enhance environmental, social, and operational performance by improving supply chain agility, reducing carbon emissions, and fostering community development. Drawing on academic literature and real-world examples, the study highlights the role of relational capital, regulatory alignment, and co-innovation in making these alliances effective. The findings suggest that engaging local suppliers is not only a risk mitigation strategy but also a pathway to achieving long-term resilience and contributing to global sustainability goals such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The paper concludes with a call for further research on sector-specific and geopolitical variations in local sourcing strategies.

Keywords: Supply Chain Sustainability. Strategic Alliances. Local Suppliers. Relational Capital. ESG Performance.

RESUMO

Em uma era marcada por perturbações globais, riscos climáticos e crescentes exigências ESG, as alianças estratégicas com fornecedores locais surgiram como um fator-chave para a sustentabilidade da cadeia de suprimentos. Este artigo explora como as parcerias localizadas melhoram o desempenho ambiental, social e operacional, aumentando a agilidade da cadeia de suprimentos, reduzindo as emissões de carbono e promovendo o desenvolvimento da comunidade. Com base na literatura acadêmica e em exemplos do mundo real, o estudo destaca o papel do capital relacional, do alinhamento regulatório e da co-inovação para tornar essas alianças eficazes. Os resultados sugerem que envolver fornecedores locais não é apenas uma estratégia de mitigação de riscos, mas também um caminho para alcançar resiliência a longo prazo e contribuir para os objetivos globais de sustentabilidade, como os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS) das Nações Unidas. O artigo conclui com um

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apelo para mais pesquisas sobre variações setoriais e geopolíticas nas estratégias de abastecimento local.

Palavras-chave: Sustentabilidade da cadeia de suprimentos. Alianças estratégicas. Fornecedores locais. Capital relacional. Desempenho ESG.

RESUMEN

En una era marcada por perturbaciones globales, riesgos climáticos y crecientes exigencias en materia de ESG, las alianzas estratégicas con proveedores locales se han convertido en un factor clave para la sostenibilidad de la cadena de suministro. Este artículo analiza cómo las asociaciones locales mejoran el rendimiento medioambiental, social y operativo al aumentar la agilidad de la cadena de suministro, reducir las emisiones de carbono y fomentar el desarrollo de la comunidad. Basándose en la literatura académica y en ejemplos del mundo real, el estudio destaca el papel del capital relacional, la alineación normativa y la coinnovación para que estas alianzas sean eficaces. Las conclusiones sugieren que la participación de los proveedores locales no solo es una estrategia de mitigación de riesgos, sino también una vía para lograr la resiliencia a largo plazo y contribuir a los objetivos de sostenibilidad global, como los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) de las Naciones Unidas. El artículo concluye con un llamamiento a seguir investigando las variaciones sectoriales y geopolíticas en las estrategias de abastecimiento local.

Palabras clave: Sostenibilidad de la cadena de suministro. Alianzas estratégicas. Proveedores locales. Capital relacional. Rendimiento ESG.



INTRODUCTION

In an era defined by global disruptions, environmental pressures, and rising stakeholder expectations, the sustainability of supply chains has become a strategic imperative for firms across sectors. Among the many strategies employed to enhance the resilience and sustainability of supply networks, the formation of strategic alliances with local suppliers stands out as a particularly effective and multifaceted approach. These partnerships not only reduce exposure to international risks but also support local economic development, foster innovation, and improve environmental and social performance across the supply chain. The growing body of academic literature confirms that localized supplier relationships play a critical role in achieving both operational efficiency and long-term sustainability goals.

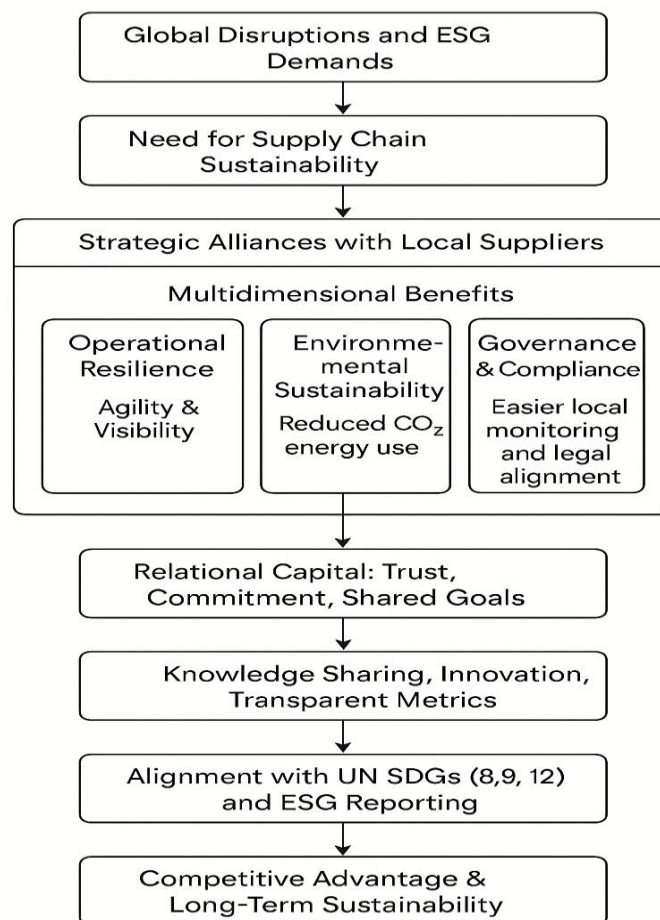
Strategic alliances with local suppliers allow firms to enhance supply chain visibility and agility, two factors that are increasingly vital in the context of global uncertainties such as pandemics, geopolitical tensions, and climate-related disruptions. According to Christopher and Peck (2004), resilient supply chains depend on the ability to identify vulnerabilities and respond quickly to unexpected events. Local suppliers offer geographical proximity, which facilitates real-time coordination, faster lead times, and reduced transportation emissions. These characteristics contribute not only to risk mitigation but also to environmental sustainability through the minimization of carbon footprints and energy consumption associated with logistics operations.

In addition to environmental benefits, alliances with local suppliers contribute to social sustainability by strengthening local communities, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and promoting equitable economic growth. As noted by Pagell and Wu (2009), supply chains that integrate social objectives into sourcing decisions can create shared value, particularly when firms invest in capacity-building, fair labor practices, and inclusive procurement strategies. Strategic alliances enable companies to engage more directly with their suppliers, facilitating knowledge transfer, skill development, and co-innovation—all of which are essential for embedding sustainability into the supply network.

The flowchart titled "*Strategic Alliances with Local Suppliers for Supply Chain Sustainability*" illustrates the logical progression from global disruptions and ESG pressures to the strategic formation of local supplier partnerships. It outlines how these alliances generate multidimensional benefits, including operational resilience,

environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and improved governance. By leveraging geographic proximity, firms gain supply chain agility, reduce carbon emissions, and strengthen local communities. The chart emphasizes the role of relational capital—trust, mutual commitment, and shared goals—in enabling knowledge sharing, innovation, and transparent performance metrics. Ultimately, these alliances support alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and provide companies with a sustainable competitive advantage.

Figure 1. Strategic Alliances with Local Suppliers for Supply Chain Sustainability.



Source: Created by author.

Moreover, local alliances often enhance governance and compliance, especially in regulatory environments with strong local enforcement mechanisms. Engaging with nearby suppliers reduces the complexity of monitoring practices and standards across jurisdictions, making it easier for firms to uphold ethical, environmental, and quality standards. According to Porter and Kramer (2011), firms that embed sustainability into core business practices—rather than treating it as a compliance issue—can achieve a



competitive advantage. By aligning with local partners who share sustainability values and comply with local regulations, companies can build more cohesive and responsible supply networks.

However, the success of such alliances depends on the development of trust, mutual commitment, and shared objectives between firms and their local partners. Research by Cousins et al. (2006) emphasizes that relational capital—defined by open communication, long-term orientation, and collaborative problem-solving—is a key determinant of supplier performance in strategic partnerships. This means that companies must invest time and resources in nurturing supplier relationships, including offering technical support, fair contract terms, and transparency in performance metrics. Strong alliances are not purely transactional; they require a cultural shift towards integration and partnership-based procurement.

It is also important to recognize the role of local supplier alliances in meeting broader sustainability frameworks, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, strategic local sourcing can contribute to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Multinational enterprises increasingly face pressure from investors and regulators to report on their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance, and strategic local partnerships are one way to demonstrate a concrete commitment to these global priorities (Eccles, Ioannou & Serafeim, 2014).

In conclusion, strategic alliances with local suppliers are not only beneficial from a cost-efficiency or logistical perspective but are central to building resilient, responsible, and sustainable supply chains. These alliances serve as a mechanism for integrating environmental and social considerations into sourcing strategies while promoting local development and strengthening risk management capabilities. As global supply chains become more complex and more vulnerable to disruption, firms that prioritize local collaboration will be better positioned to meet the evolving expectations of consumers, regulators, and shareholders. Future research should explore sector-specific applications of local supplier alliances and assess the long-term performance impacts of such partnerships in diverse geopolitical contexts.



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