Journal of
Production Research & Management

ISSN: 2249-4766 (Online)
ISSN: 2347-9930 (Print)
Volume 14, Issue 1, 2024
DOI (Journal): 10.37591/JoPRM

http://engineeringjournals.stmjournals.in/index.php/JoPRM/index

Research JoPRM

Research Challenges in the Era of AI and Digitization for Sustainable Supply Chains

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Abstract

Two main topics have an impact on the adoption of sustainability as a worldwide business mandate. The first is admitting that global supply networks have an impact on sustainability and that "greening" the chain as a whole is necessary. Technology, encompassing "big data," artificial intelligence (AI), and digitization, is the second. These ideas are now widely accepted. These innovations are transforming how firms design and manage their supply chains, which have a big impact on sustainability. In the following article, an overview of the most widely accepted concepts in sustainable supply chain research at the present time has been presented.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, sustainability, big data , supply networks, Global corporations

INTRODUCTION

Global corporations prioritize sustainability, evaluating success in social, economic, and environmental terms while managing resources responsibly for lasting value (Sanders and Wood 2019) [26]. However, achieving sustainability faces challenges from two converging trends. Firstly, global supply chains exert significant influence, shaping the sustainability landscape, with adverse impacts primarily originating from supply chain activities. Unlike past models, contemporary supply chains are strategically designed to support customer-centric business frameworks. Recognized as strategic assets, supply chains force managers at all levels to reassess their perspectives, emphasizing sustainability and transparency with partners for comprehensive performance evaluation (Min et al. 2019) [25].

The second major trend influencing corporate sustainability is the integration of technology, including digitization, artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and robotics. Digital platforms such as social media, mobile, analytics, and additive manufacturing hold significant promise for advancing corporate sustainability. The interconnectedness fostered by the Internet, social media, and web-centric software has linked customers, firms, and suppliers. Researchers and practitioners face the challenge of leveraging these technologies and the vast data they generate for performance measurement, transparency, and integrating digital platform capabilities into supply chain sustainability decisions. The term "big data" underscores these technologies, defined as large datasets collected in near real-time, presenting in various forms, and varying in trust levels. Three trends have fueled the Big Data revolution in the supply chain: an explosion of available data, increased instrumentation through sensors and smart devices, and advances in computing architecture facilitating easier storage, retrieval, analysis, sharing, and distribution of data and insights.

The term "big data analytics," will be employed referring to scalable methods and tools extracting meaningful insights, prescribing solutions, and predicting the future from large datasets (Sanders

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Received Date: April 18, 2024
Accepted Date: April 24, 2024
Published Date: May 24, 2024

Citation: Subhash Kumar Dwivedi. Research Challenges in the Era of AI and Digitization for Sustainable Supply Chains. Journal of Production Research & Management. 2024; 14(1): 1–10p.

2018) [26]. Digitization, converting information into a digital format, has profound implications for sustainable supply chains. It provides new insights about customers and the supply chain, fostering efficiency and transparency—crucial for sustainability. Additionally, digitization opens avenues for exploring new dimensions in supply chain management and has the potential to solve previously considered intractable multidisciplinary problems. This Special Topics Forum Issue aims to stimulate research at the intersection of digitization and managing sustainable end-to-end supply chains. We welcome diverse topics across industries addressing issues that leverage digital technologies and generated data for sustainable supply chains. Rather than focusing on technology itself, the emphasis is on how technology transforms sustainability management. Highlighting two representative papers, we aim to showcase emerging work in this area. The next section synthesizes dominant themes in big data applications, followed by insights into potential research streams and a summary of papers in the Special Topics Forum. The concluding section offers our final thoughts.

PRIMARY THEMES

The rise of big data and digitization has significantly deepened our understanding of environmental and social impacts within supply chains, offering unprecedented opportunities for sustainability improvements. However, it also introduces unforeseen challenges in these domains. With the widespread adoption and scale of digital technologies, they exert substantial influence, particularly in decisions related to sustainable supply chains. Sustainability, defined as simultaneous consideration of economic, environmental, and social aspects (Corbett 2018) [10], is intricately linked to big datasets, serving as the foundation for decision-making in the digital era. The effort to evaluate the environmental and social impact of these decisions, especially in supply chain contexts, results in an explosion of data in terms of variety, volume, and veracity. Despite the widespread applications of big data and digitization in the supply chain, they often remain fragmented and specific to each firm and industry, particularly concerning sustainability factors. Despite diverse interests, such as monitoring greenhouse gas emissions or assessing social impacts on workers, we categorize dominant themes into four broad supply chain functions: Demand Management, Manufacturing & Operations, Transportation, and Sourcing. While not exhaustive, this classification reflects common themes consistently at the forefront of logistics research in recent decades (Goldsby et al. 2019) [24].

Management of Demand

A plethora of data is now accessible as customers progress through each stage of their decision journey. Customer clickstreams, social media interactions, and online searches inform the discovery and evaluation of products. In-store technologies, such as beacons, tags, virtual rails, and engagement kiosks, meticulously track individual buying behavior. Modern transactional systems not only monitor real-time sales but also seamlessly connect with inventory and customer databases across various channels. Technologies facilitate the emergence of the "omni- channel" experience, allowing consumers to effortlessly navigate between channels for evaluation, purchase, returns, or assistance with products and services.

This detailed data enables real-time personalization, delivering tailored products, offers, and prices to customers based on attributes like demographics, location, or browsing history. At an aggregate level, customer micro-segmentation tailors products and incentives for specific sets of customers. For instance, retailer Neiman Marcus utilizes behavioral segmentation and a multitier membership rewards program to identify top-spending customers, resulting in significantly higher-margin purchases.

Pricing decisions can now be made in near real-time, drawing from various data sources such as competitor pricing, demand and supply economics, and customer characteristics. For example, Uber employs "surge" pricing based on demand characteristics, while Kroger experiments with electronic shelf edges to personalize prices for individual customers.

Big data tools also enhance demand forecasts by tracking inventory and customer buying patterns in near real-time, enabling more accurate sales projections. The incorporation of user- generated content from social media and online searches into product forecasts further refines predictions. Examples like these indirectly impact sustainable supply chains by making promotions more efficient, optimizing product stocking, and improving accuracy in forecasting and replenishment processes.

Production & Operation

In the realm of production and operations, the integration of sensors and connected applications has revolutionized data generation, offering real-time insights into processes. This capability not only facilitates the design of more efficient processes but also allows for prompt monitoring and response to changes, enhancing both quality and productivity. Moreover, these extensive data streams are instrumental in implementing scalable solutions, enabling enterprises to extract valuable insights across their entire operations. Specific examples include:

Labor Environment

Firms are increasingly focused on comprehending labor conditions within their supply chain facilities. Unlike traditional methods involving periodic assessments by auditors, modern approaches incorporate connected sensors and devices to monitor crucial sustainability metrics, such as resource usage and emissions, in real time. Workers are empowered to use smartphones to report working conditions and hazards, fostering global communication. Some companies, like Marks & Spencer, Walmart, and Adidas, are proactively engaging with individual workers in their suppliers' factories, demonstrating a commitment to monitoring and improving working conditions.

3D Printing

Big data accelerates innovations in the physical world, exemplified by 3D printing or additive manufacturing. This technology holds the promise of sustainable mass production through quick prototyping, often using recyclable materials and producing minimal waste. While energy requirements depend on the materials used, ongoing developments in plastics and microwelding technologies, along with the growing infrastructure for distributed manufacturing, position 3D printing as a potential game-changer. Manufacturers are preparing for potential transformations in plant setups, supply chains, and the shift toward customer-centric, locally focused plants.

Anthropomorphic Robots

The integration of big data has given rise to smart sensing robots with anthropomorphic features, capable of working alongside humans. These robots, equipped with cameras and sensors, enhance productivity and safety in fulfillment centers, as seen in Amazon's use of robots for order picking. The adoption of robotic fulfillment systems extends to distribution centers, with retailers like Target, Walmart, and Kroger experimenting with robots for pallet handling. Anthropomorphic robots also play a role in manufacturing, handling tasks deemed unsafe or repetitive. Efforts are underway to make these robots more human-like, contributing to increased efficiency and sustainability in supply chain operations. Despite concerns, we remain optimistic that intelligent robots will positively impact supply chains by making them more efficient and sustainable.

Transportation

The integration of sensors, such as cameras, telemetry detectors, and automated toll booths, in the transport system, combined with location and telemetry data of vehicles, has revolutionized the visualization and real-time utilization of transport networks (Cohen, 2018, Section 3.1). A notable example is Google Maps, which allows users to access navigation, traffic information, and estimated trip times using a cell phone. Additionally, user-generated content, as seen in the Waze App, enhances traffic and navigation data by allowing real-time updates on traffic incidents (Cohen, 2018). Freight and personal vehicles equipped with various sensors, including cameras and GPS, analyze real-time data on vehicle performance and the surrounding environment, contributing to enhanced safety and efficiency in the transport network (Cohen, 2018). Furthermore, sensors on shipping containers, box cars, and tractor trailers not only provide location information for tracking freight but also ensure the security of the freight during transit (Cohen, 2018). The data generated by mobile devices and GPS sensors in vehicles also plays a crucial role in linking location and trajectory data to individuals, giving rise to the sharing economy exemplified by services like Uber and Lyft (Cohen, 2018) [29].

Autonomous Driving Vehicles/Drones

The emergence of newer data-driven technologies has permeated the realm of physical transportation, particularly in the domain of autonomous driving vehicles (ADVs) for personal and commercial use (U.S. DOT, n.d.). Major players in the transportation sector, including Uber, are heavily investing in this technology, signifying a significant shift in the industry (U.S. DOT, n.d.). ADVs offer various advantages, such as reducing labor costs by operating for extended hours with fewer drivers and achieving fuel efficiency through platooning (U.S. DOT, n.d.). Uber's recent deal with Volvo for a fleet of self-driving vehicles underscores the growing importance of this technology (U.S. DOT, n.d.). However, the widespread adoption of ADVs may lead to economic and social challenges, including job losses for truck drivers and potential closures of truck stops. Additionally, public acceptance, regulatory frameworks, and concerns about accountability in case of accidents pose significant hurdles to the full-scale implementation of ADVs (U.S. DOT, n.d.) [15]. Drones, another data-driven innovation, have found applications in supply chain inventory, asset monitoring, inspection, quality control of physical supply chain infrastructure, and disaster management. Insurance companies, for instance, utilized drones to assess damage and facilitate insurance payments in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. Drones are also being employed for routine deliveries, with companies like DHL making medical deliveries to islands in the North Sea. The potential of drones in the "last mile" delivery of small packages, as exemplified by Amazon Prime Air, offers the prospect of remarkably short delivery times and reduced costs, though regulatory restrictions, safety concerns, privacy issues, and public skepticism present barriers to widespread implementation (Eadicicco, 2016; Keeney, 2015).

Sourcing

New technologies have brought about substantial transformations in sourcing practices, influencing firms in four key ways. Firstly, these technologies utilize data to provide an integrated view of "spend," facilitating firms in optimizing contracts (Piluso et al., 2016). Secondly, supply chains are witnessing increased transparency, making it easier to monitor the environmental, social, and economic performance of suppliers, thereby enhancing risk management. Thirdly, the widespread adoption of sensing technology enables the tracking and tracing of products, leading to improvements in efficiency and safety. Lastly, collaborative planning technologies, exemplified by Collaborative Planning, Forecasting, and Replenishment (CPFR), are addressing the historical challenge of poor information availability, consequently improving customer service (Piluso et al., 2016).

Blockchains

A significant technological advancement on the horizon is the "Blockchain," originally designed for tracking and securing bitcoin transactions. The Blockchain functions as a distributed ledger, comprised of a growing list of cryptographically linked records or "blocks," shared among computers globally. Each block is electronically linked with a timestamp and transaction date, making transactions verifiable and resistant to retroactive alterations. This inherent security makes Blockchain transactions safe, fast, and automated, with a built-in consensus mechanism allowing direct transactions without third-party involvement. Given that supply chains involve networks of entities engaging in transactions, Blockchains hold the potential to revolutionize supply chain transactions, particularly in transportation and purchasing. The use of distributed ledgers ensures instantaneous settlement times, and Blockchains have the capacity to eliminate the need for third parties, including financial institutions and certain third-party logistics providers (3PLs), through the implementation of "smart contracts."

Journal of Production Research & Management
Volume 14, Issue 1
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NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH

Novel Prospects for Utilising Data

Data calibration

Data calibration is a critical aspect in the era of advanced data analysis, posing essential questions for decision-makers that extend beyond sustainability (Smith, 2020) [14]. Key considerations include determining the optimal strategy for data acquisition, ensuring proper data collection methods, evaluating data representativeness, and assessing the presence of the desired signal (Jones & Brown, 2018) [4]. Commonly referred to as Data Calibration, this process involves segregating the signal from the noise (Smith, 2020) [14]. Established standards and protocols for collecting and calibrating large datasets are prevalent in fields such as life sciences, medicine, and engineering (Johnson et al., 2017) [5].

In specific domains like astronomy, researchers face challenges in capturing signals from deep space objects while contending with various sources of noise, such as light pollution and sensor-related artifacts (Roberts & White, 2016) [7]. Astronomers employ techniques like taking multiple exposures ("lights") and stacking them to enhance the signal, along with capturing "darks" and "flats" to subtract camera noise (Roberts & White, 2016) [7]. This method ensures a cleaner signal and the production of high-quality images of celestial objects located thousands of light years away (Johnson et al., 2017) [5].

The principles of data acquisition and processing strategies utilized in various scientific disciplines provide a valuable research area for the supply chain community (Lovelace et al., 2016) [6]. For instance, in analyzing retail flows into a shopping mall, researchers can adopt a triangulation approach by utilizing diverse data sources such as mobile phone data, social media interactions, and surveys (Lovelace et al., 2016) [6]. Cross-validation of data sources and the establishment of filters are crucial for assembling datasets with high signal-to-noise ratios (Smith, 2020) [14].

However, the challenges faced by large datasets are not exclusive, as they share common issues with smaller datasets, including biases and representation concerns (Jones & Brown, 2018) [4]. Factors like the device used for data collection and the method of collection can introduce biases into the dataset (Boone et al., 2019) [9]. An illustrative example is the case of the City of Boston's "Street Bump" App, which inadvertently reported a disproportionate number of potholes in wealthier areas due to smartphone ownership patterns (Boone et al., 2019) [9]. Such instances highlight the need for conscious efforts to address biases and promote inclusivity in data collection initiatives (Jones & Brown, 2018) [4].

In the pursuit of collecting and utilizing big data, smaller datasets may be overlooked, omitting crucial information. Corbett (2018) [10] emphasizes the importance of considering what is not captured in data analysis. For instance, volunteered "big" data, can be misrepresentative if not appropriately calibrated (ITF, 2015) [11]. The data from the cycling app Strava, depicting the usage of public roads and bike trails in Washington DC, is invaluable for urban planning, but it lacks information about the proportion of Strava users who are commuters (Boone et al., 2019[9]; Lee, 2018[13]). Corbett (2018) [10] and others warn against "big data hubris," highlighting the misconception that big data alone can replace traditional data collection and analysis methods (Lazer et al., 2014) [12].

Opportunities abound for the supply chain community to develop and refine applications leveraging newly available data sources. One avenue is enhancing the prediction of existing models using reliability theory, as modern sensors can detect subtle changes in variables, such as engine vibration or heat (Boone et al., 2018) [8]. This research stream holds potential applications in sustainability, including calibrating machines to reduce emissions and optimizing transport management for fuel conservation. Another avenue involves detecting patterns and associations through data mining or pattern recognition, which can be applied in trend projection, fraud detection, and customer segmentation (Boone et al., 2018) [8]. Exploring the mechanisms behind observed correlations or patterns, as suggested by Boone et al. (2018) [8]., presents a valuable scientific inquiry, challenging the notion that actionable insights do not require an explanation but add value.

Theory Testing in Research

Theory testing is a fundamental aspect of the scientific method, wherein scientists formulate testable hypotheses to build models explaining phenomena in various disciplines, including supply chain management. These models undergo scrutiny through observations and experiments, either validating or refuting the proposed theories (Smith et al., 2019) [19]. Notably, some of the most influential theories originate from limited initial data. Einstein's general theory of relativity, for instance, predicted the bending of light by the Sun's gravity, and its validation required empirical evidence during the 1919 eclipse expedition led by Dyson and Eddington (Dyson et al., 1920) [17].

The advent of large datasets and digitization challenges the traditional scientific method by advocating a reductionist perspective on big data. This viewpoint suggests that the abundance of real-time data can mirror real-life complexities, potentially freeing scientists from the need for underlying theories or models (Jones & Brown, 2018) [4]. While this notion may seem radical, it presents a research avenue wherein the vast volume of data can be employed to interrogate and challenge existing supply chain models and management theories. Techniques such as A/B testing enable empirical investigations in real-time, offering valuable insights that can contribute to theory-building (Smith et al., 2019) [19].

For example, a study involving an online retailer revealed unexpected customer behavior concerning shipping costs for a premium food item. Contrary to the intuitive assumption that high shipping costs led to cart abandonment, empirical testing with a small experiment demonstrated that customers did not object to a higher product cost with free shipping. This case illustrates how empirical tests can inform pricing and consumer behavior theories, challenging conventional wisdom (Ram et al., 2020) [18].

Moreover, large datasets empower researchers to propose seemingly inconsistent theories that defy existing knowledge but exhibit high predictive value. This situation raises questions about the boundary between pure empiricism and theory building, prompting the scientific community to address issues related to rigor and the definition of science (Feyerabend, 2010; Agarwal & Dhar, 2014) [16].

Privacy, Bias, And Ethics

The transformative power of data science is undeniable, as it harnesses ubiquitous transactional, sensing, and tracking data, including mobile phone data, to collect unprecedented amounts of information on customers. However, with such power comes a responsibility within the research community. The questions surrounding data collection, information safeguarding, and responses to data breaches necessitate careful consideration. Unfortunately, data collection often lacks a specific purpose and proves challenging to anonymize. Recent data breaches in Equifax, Yahoo, Ashley Madison, and Target exemplify the vulnerability of customers, firms, and their supply chains to cyber-attacks (O'Neil, 2016; O'Neil, 2017) [21, 22].

Bias and Ethical Considerations in Machine Learning

Cathy O'Neill, author of "Weapons of Math Destruction," provides a critical assessment of academia's role in educating policymakers about biases embedded in machine-learning algorithms (O'Neil, 2017) [22]. She contends that academics have neglected their responsibility, leaving the education on biases to well-paid lobbyists and industry employees. While the criticism may be contested, O'Neill's call for action underscores the need for vigilance (O'Neil, 2017) [22]. O'Neill's book highlights cases of bias and inequity in machine algorithms, particularly affecting vulnerable populations such as the disabled, poor, or minority communities. Additionally, these algorithms often fail to detect misinformation or "fake news" on social media platforms, impacting user perception and interpretation of factual information (O'Neil, 2016; O'Neil, 2017) [21, 22].

The Role of Academia in Addressing Ethical Concerns

O'Neill argues that academic research can play a pivotal role in studying examples of algorithmic bias, challenging statistical, ethical, or constitutional failures, and proposing solutions. She emphasizes that academics, with greater freedom of inquiry than industry professionals, should dedicate serious intellectual energy to these issues (O'Neil, 2017) [22].

The Conflict of Interest Challenge

Those closely aligned with industry face a conflict of interest, as firms provide access to data, fund research programs, and hire students. Moreover, in many academic programs, the focus on developing algorithms often overshadows considerations of the ethical value of these algorithms. Efforts such as the Fairness Accountability and Transparency in Machine Learning (FAT/ML) community are emerging to address algorithmic accountability. FAT/ML, comprising researchers from various disciplines, outlines principles to guide the design and implementation of algorithmic systems in publicly accountable ways (FAT/ML, n.d.) [20].

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Interdisciplinary research is imperative in addressing contemporary challenges within supply chain management, particularly those associated with large-scale organizational and societal issues, such as sustainability. The complexity of these problems, particularly in the context of sustainability, extends to intricate supply chain networks and interconnected socioeconomic systems involved in sustainable energy operations, global value creation and delivery, and responding to disruptions on a global scale. The study of climate change interventions, for instance, necessitates collaboration among meteorologists, geologists, chemists, economists, and sociologists, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of these challenges [23].

The vast scope and scale of supply chain issues related to feeding a growing population intertwine agriculture, ecology, transportation, and various other disciplines. Particularly challenging are the so-called "wicked problems," characterized by their complexity and difficulty to solve in isolation. Wicked problems, such as climate change mitigation, healthcare delivery, response to human disasters, and global water crises, require an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving. Interdisciplinary communities are proposed to jointly develop problem definitions, share a vocabulary, and identify important research questions.

In the past, the paradigm of solving problems within narrow disciplines has proven inadequate, advocate for an interdisciplinary approach to address large-scale societal problems. This approach involves collaboration using large data sets, multiple methodologies, and research team competitions to iteratively evolve the problem. While most supply chain problems may not fit the definitional criterion of "wicked problems," they still encompass substantial complexities requiring interdisciplinary research to provide diverse viewpoints for meaningful solutions [27].

Access to big data and associated technologies has facilitated interdisciplinary research, enabling experts from different disciplines to work with large datasets encompassing customer usage patterns, production data, supplier information, and public policy constraints. Challenges in implementation remain, emphasizing the importance of a common definition of the research problem, shared vocabulary, and agreed-upon research questions. Disciplines with a "reasonable distance" between their centroid philosophies in theory and method are suggested to be most promising for integrated work, ensuring sufficient topical and methodological overlap without duplicating knowledge.

The field of forecasting exemplifies interdisciplinary opportunities by bringing together operations management and organizational behavior. Despite the availability of fine-grained information, many forecasts still rely on human judgment, combining data-based statistical forecasts with subjective judgment. This practice persists despite evidence suggesting potential deterioration in forecast accuracy due to cognitive biases inherent in human judgment [28].

Interdisciplinary research is actively addressing these issues, moving beyond a narrow disciplinary lens to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the problem and develop innovative solutions not achievable from a single disciplinary perspective. By analyzing the impact of individual decision-makers' abilities and cognitive profiles on forecast performance, this research contributes to a more holistic and nuanced approach to problem-solving.

Supply chain management has become an increasingly intricate field, shaped by a myriad of factors such as globalization, digitization, environmental concerns, and geopolitical uncertainties. In order to effectively navigate these challenges, a paradigm shift toward interdisciplinary research is imperative. Traditional disciplinary boundaries are no longer sufficient to address the multifaceted nature of contemporary supply chain issues.

Contemporary supply chain challenges extend beyond conventional issues of cost and efficiency. Factors such as climate change, geopolitical disruptions, and the digital transformation demand a more holistic approach. The interconnectedness of these challenges necessitates collaboration among experts from diverse fields including engineering, economics, environmental science, data analytics, and social sciences.

Several successful interdisciplinary research projects have demonstrated the efficacy of collaboration in addressing SCM challenges. For instance, projects that integrate data science with logistics optimization algorithms have proven to enhance supply chain visibility and responsiveness. Similarly, collaborations between environmental scientists and supply chain experts have resulted in sustainable sourcing and reduced carbon footprints.

To facilitate effective interdisciplinary collaboration, a framework is proposed, comprising three key elements: a) Identification of Key Stakeholders, b) Integration of Diverse Expertise, and c) Creation of Shared Platforms. By involving stakeholders from academia, industry, and policy- making bodies, diverse perspectives can be integrated to address both theoretical and practical aspects of SCM challenges.

Addressing current challenges, particularly sustainability within supply chains, necessitates research methods extending beyond conventional areas of investigation. the importance of a comprehensive understanding of supply chain management, asserting that it demands multiple approaches. Furthermore, argue for methodological diversity, highlighting the need for various approaches to support interdisciplinary research in this domain. This aligns with the notion that a singular method may not suffice for tackling the complexities inherent in contemporary supply chain issues (Boyer & Swink, 2008; Ketter et al., 2016) [1, 2].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the article delves into the intricate intersection of sustainability, artificial intelligence, big data, and digitization in the context of global supply chains. It highlights the pivotal role of technology in reshaping supply chain management, emphasizing the need for sustainability considerations. The primary themes explored include the management of demand, production and operations, transportation, and sourcing. Each of these domains is profoundly impacted by big data and digitization, introducing both opportunities and challenges for sustainable supply chain practices.

ISSN: 2249-4766 (Online), ISSN: 2347-9930 (Print)

The article underscores the transformative potential of technologies like 3D printing, anthropomorphic robots, autonomous driving vehicles, and blockchain in revolutionizing various aspects of the supply chain. It emphasizes the importance of data-driven decision-making in demand forecasting, production efficiency, and sourcing practices. Furthermore, the potential for interdisciplinary research is highlighted as a crucial avenue for addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by contemporary supply chain dynamics.

In the discussion of new opportunities for research, the article suggests avenues such as data calibration, theory testing, and addressing privacy, bias, and ethical considerations. It acknowledges the transformative power of data science but also raises concerns about biases embedded in machine learning algorithms and the ethical responsibilities of academia in addressing these issues.

The call for interdisciplinary research is particularly emphasized, recognizing the interconnected nature of contemporary supply chain challenges. The article advocates for a paradigm shift towards collaboration among experts from diverse fields, including engineering, economics, environmental science, data analytics, and social sciences. It proposes a framework for effective interdisciplinary collaboration, comprising the identification of key stakeholders, integration of diverse expertise, and the creation of shared platforms.

In essence, the article provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of sustainable supply chains in the era of AI and digitization. It not only identifies the current challenges but also emphasizes the need for innovative research approaches and collaborative efforts to navigate the complexities of modern supply chain management successfully.

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