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Cell : +91 98247 02127, 8866 00 3636

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Research Paper Commerce

Enhancing Supply Chain Performance through Effective Transportation

Dr. Vipul Chalotra Assistant Professor, Dept. of Commerce, University of Jammu

ABSTRACT

Effective transportation management is vital for successful operations of any firm as transportation now-a-days accounts for major cost of distribution. Product manufactured at one place is globally required, so role of transportation becomes indispensable. The present study highlights the transportation modes and strategies used in 44 small scale units operating in district Udhampur of J&K State. The research framework was examined by empirical analysis of primary data collected. Validity and reliability of the scales in the construct were assessed through BTS and Cronbach-alpha. The results of ranking tables revealed that transportation cost is the main factor that influences transportation mode and vehicle cost is the main cost that affects transportation decisions.

KEYWORDS: Transportation, Supply Chain, Small Scale Industries (SSIs)

INTRODUCTION

As technologies and economies became more sophisticated and globalised, transport geographers began to embrace on new ways of understanding the role of transport at local, national and global scales (Tolley & Turton, 1995). As a consequence, there has been a considerable increase in the number of means & number of transport modes to cater the needs of high performance product at lower maintenance costs. Then transport manufacturers have focused their attention on the minimisation of the life-cycle-cost and on its main determining factors, in particular reliability, maintainability and availability of products (Black, 2001). Transportation design and networks results in supply chain effectiveness by lowering inventory (Barrett, 1998), moving timely inbound goods from supply sites to manufacturing facilities (Carter & Ferrin, 1995), plant efficiencies and delivering quality products to customers in an cost efficient manner.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on transportation issues succeeded after the mid-1980s and took a somewhat sclerotic approach from basic spatial interaction models to more sophisticated network approaches to cost effective movement of goods across space and time (Knowles, 1993 and Black, 2003). The role that transportation plays in supply chain management system is more complex than carrying goods for the proprietors. Therefore, transportation is the base of efficiency & economy in business logistics and expands other functions of logistics system. In addition, a good transport system performing in logistics activities brings benefits not only to service quality but also to company competitiveness. Transportation design and network planning includes all functions and sub-functions into a system of goods movement in order to minimize cost, maximize service to the customers which contributes to the concept of business logistics

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design and methodology comprises area of research, nature of data/information (Primary or secondary), questionnaire/schedule, research tools applied etc. The research methodology adopted proceeds as follows:

Sampling and data collection

The primary data for the study were collected from 44 functional manufacturing SSIs registered under District Industries Centre (DIC), Udhampur of J&K State sub-divided into ten lines of operation comprising cement (8), pesticide (3), steel (3), battery/lead/alloy (5), menthol (2), guns (2), conduit pipes (2), gates/grills/varnish (5), maize/atta/dal mills (3) and miscellaneous (11).

The Survey Instrument

Information was collected by administering self developed questionnaire prepared after consulting experts and review of literature which comprised of general information and 30 statements originally kept in the domain of transportation management. Statements in the questionnaire were in descriptive form, ranking, dichotomous, open ended and five -point Likert scale, where 1 stands for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. Collection of data

The primary data were collected by making three to four visits for getting response from respondents. Census method was applied for collecting data from the respective respondents. The secondary information was collected from various sources namely books, empirical papers from online & hard copies of journals. Various multivariate tools such as Mean, standard deviation were used for drawing meaningful inferences.

Reliability and validity of the instrument

Reliability: Five factors were obtained after scale purification falling within the domain of transportation management in supply chain management. As evident from the Table 1.1, the Cronbach's reliability coefficients for all 22 scale items underlying five factors ranges from 0.652 to 0.852. The alpha reliability coefficients for F1 (0.852), F2 (0.809), is higher than the criteria of 0.77 obtained by Gordon and Narayanan (1984) indicating high internal consistency. F3 (0.769), F4 (0.652) and F5 (0.704) are also at a minimum acceptable level of 0.50 as recommended by Brown et al. (2001) and Kakati and Dhar (2002) thereby obtaining satisfactory internal consistency. However, the overall alpha reliability score for all factors is very much satisfactory at 0.757. Adequacy and reliability of sample size to yield distinct and reliable factors is further demonstrated through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy that is 0.599 and all factor loadings between items and their respective constructs being greater than equal to 0.55.

Validity: The five factors obtained alpha reliability higher & equal to 0.50 and KMO value at 0.599, indicating significant construct validity of the construct (Hair et al., 1995).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRATATION

The suitability of raw data for factor analysis obtained from SSI managers was examined through Anti-image, KMO value, Bartlett's Test of Sphercity (p-value = 0.000), Principal Component Analysis and Varimax Rotation (Stewart, 1981) indicating sufficient common variance and correlation matrix (Field, 2000). On seventh round, the KMO value (0.599) and Bartlett Test of Sphercity (624.049) indicated acceptable and significant values. The process of R-Mode Principal Component Analysis (PSA) with Varimax Rotation brought the construct to the level of 22 statements out of 30 statements originally kept in the domain of transportation management. Therefore, factor loadings resulted into five-factor solution using Kaiser Criteria (i.e. eigen value ≥1) with 71.21% of the total variance explained, i.e. 22 items got grouped in five factors. The communality for 22 items ranged from 0.59 to 0.88, indicating moderate to high degree of linear association among the variables. The factor loading ranges from 0.585 to 0.905 and the cumulative variance extracted ranges from 18.98 to 71.21 percent.

Table 1.1 depicts impact of vehicle costs, overhead costs, road tax and processing costs on transportation decisions. Vehicle costs is accorded rank one by all the manufacturing firms. Road tax is given rank II by almost all the firms except for cements, pesticides/insecticides, guns and steel. Overhead costs are ranked third and processing costs is ranked IV by almost all the operating firms. In the nutshell, vehicle costs affect the most while making transportation decisions.

CONCLUSION

The study provides unmarked insights to the modes of transportation

and costs incurred by small scale industries in District Udhampur of J&K state. The present study reveals that five group of firm uses small load carriers as their transportation mode and five groups of firm's uses trucks as their main transportation. Secondly, transportation cost was the main factor that influences transportation mode and finally vehicle cost is the main cost that affects transportation decisions. The managers must be sensitized through periodic training & education programmes in order to better implement the existing and latest transportation techniques. The findings of the study is limited to small scale industries of district Udhampur of J&K State.

Table 1.1: Costs Affecting Transportation Decisions in Small Manufacturing Firms

Units/Costs	Vehicle costs	Overhead costs	Road tax	Processing costs
Cement	1.25 (I)	2.62 (II)	2.62 (III)	3.42 (IV)
Battery/Lead/Alloy	1 (I)	3 (III)	2.2 (II)	3.8 (IV)
Pesticides/Insecticides	1 (I)	2.6 (II)	3 (III)	3 (IV)
Conduit pipes	1 (I)	4 (IV)	2 (II)	3 (III)
Menthol	1 (I)	3 (III)	2 (II)	4 (IV)
Guns	1 (I)	2.5 (II)	2.5 (III)	4 (IV)
Steel	1.3 (I)	3.3 (III)	3.3 (IV)	2 (II)
Gates/Grills/Varnish/Paint	1.4 (I)	4 (IV)	1.8 (II)	2.8 (III)
Atta/Maize/Dal mills	1.3 (I)	3 (III)	2 (II)	3.5 (IV)
Others (Miscellaneous)	1 (I)	3 (III)	2.27 (II)	3.72 (IV)
Mean & Rank	1.12 (I)	3.17 (III)	2.36 (II)	3.32 (IV)

Note: Where 1 denotes "highest rank" and 4 denotes "lowest rank"

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