STRATEGIC INCLUSION OF NON-TRADITIONAL MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES WITH SUPPLY CHAIN ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Diverse and well-built supply chains can stimulate business success by increasing innovation that generates new business opportunities and revenue. The National Minority Diverse Supplier Council (NMDSC) projects a 70 % increase in Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) by 2045. This poses opportunities to pursue new emerging, diverse business segments through MBE relationships as well as stimulate economic growth in underserved communities. This paper documents some of the strategic opportunities for effectively managing relationships with MBEs to maintain growth. Specifically, integrating corporate and purchasing social responsibility with diversity supplier strategic initiatives. For example, growth in LGBTQI MBEs could bring new means of reaching growing consumer segments. However, there are deficiencies with recognizing uniqueness of MBEs as qualification criteria places emphasis mostly on ethnicity and gender. Also, the process of public social identification could potentially complicate matters for LGBTQI MBEs, mainly stigma placed on disclosure of sexual orientation and gender identification. Drawing on a constructivist view of our nation's social-cultural impediments, this paper advances the need to address cognitive effects that could negatively affect business decision-making which lead to negative, out-group stereotype-like categorizations by enacting inclusive, non-traditional initiatives to progress the practice of corporate and purchasing responsibility.

Keywords: Supply Chain Management, Corporate Social Responsibility, Automaticity, Diversity Supplier

INTRODUCTION

A firms' supply chain can generate a plethora of competitive strategic advantages. As purchasing managers liaise with both internal functions and external stakeholders, including suppliers and third parties (Cavinato, 1992; Webster Jr, 1992), they are in an outstanding position to impact a number of strategic business practices (e.g., cross-functional value chain optimization, corporate social responsibility and sustainability). Supplier selection is a fundamental task for purchasing managers as supplier selection research mostly focuses on pinpointing ways to maximize economic outcomes for the firm (Akinc, 1993; Choi & Hartley, 1996; Ellram, 1990; Håkansson & Wootz, 1975; Spekman, 1988; Weber, Current, & Benton, 1991). However, emergence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) calls for a reexamination of supplier selection criteria to include minority business enterprises (MBEs). In particular, as society has progressed, decision-making related to supplier selection has not kept pace (Murphy & Poist, 2002). Also, only a few researchers have addressed development of supply chain management (SCM) and CSR practice and theory. Even less have researched supplier selection from a social and cognitive perspective. And given that purchasing managers are fairly autonomous with making most strategic purchasing decisions (Kraljic, 1983), being socially responsible potentially impacts brand value and the

financial position of their firms (e.g. Carter and Jennings, 2004 introduced purchasing social responsibility (PSR). Specifically, they provide a multidimensional operationalization of PSR that reflects a general focus on CSR principles. However, this view omits detailed accounts for how decision-making autonomy may hinder well-intended CSR efforts. Carter and Rogers (2008) address this gap with their introduction of socially responsible supplier selection (SRSS). They define SRSS as the firm's commitment in selection of suppliers that embrace CSR principles when conducting normal operations. Moreover, they emphasize the increasing importance of addressing decision-making autonomy as SCM efforts continue to advance.

These theoretical approaches suggest that all SCM operations are created equal and don't take into account the constraints social and political pressures place on organizations and operational units. Moreover, they fail to account for a number of socially embedded and cognitive variables that moderate decision-making at the group and individual level that may hinder diversity efforts. This lack of consideration led me to ask the following research questions: (1) What are the primary factors connecting PSR and SRSS frameworks to supplier diversity? (2) Do these factors positively or negatively impact CSR and sustainability and the value of SCM? Specifically, do firms who embrace a system of strategic social awareness within their supply chain management (SSCM) practices attain higher economic performance than firms who concentrate predominately on economic performance?

To answer this paper's research questions, I use conceptual theory building (Meredith, 1993) to develop a framework along with related research propositions. To accomplish this, I summarize each theory and find common and contrasting elements that are worthy of further expansion. According to Wacker (1998), specific predictions are proposed based on the integration of variables related to existing theories using logical deduction which support a conceptual framework. I first examine the general guidelines and principles associated with sustainability and CSR. Next, I review Carter and Jennings (2004) multidimensional operationalization of PSR and Carter and Roger's (2008) research and theoretical model for SSCM. Afterwards, I introduce some contextual rationale surrounding the framework for the business case for diversity and supplier diversity strategies. I then examine some of the social and cognitive factors that moderate decision-making and potentially hinder strategic efforts at the group and individual level. The framework and resulting propositions begin to address the void created by the lack of connecting the theoretical, conceptual and empirical research on PSR and SRSS with the business case for diversity and the social, cognitive factors that affect decision-making at the group and individual level. The research and managerial implications are discussed in the paper's final section where I examine how this approach may affect the practice of reporting LGBTQI suppliers as MBEs as well as others and offer some new approaches to managing relationships with MBEs.

THEORECTICAL APPROACHES TO SCM

Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Most companies have adopted some form of responsibility related to sustainability issues that deal with environmental, social and economic concerns. However, researchers are not aligned concerning the definition of sustainability and therefore, there is inconsistent application in the extant research. According to Carter and Rogers' (2008) meta-literature review, the most adopted and quoted definition of sustainability comes from the Brundtland Commission (WCED) which posits that its sustainability

efforts should meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations to meeting theirs. This macro-societal definition is difficult to synthesize and apply for organizational purposes. As such, there are some pertinent definitions provided by the related fields of management, operations and engineering which are mentioned in Carter and Rogers' (2008) literature review. Within their management and operations review, organizational sustainability focuses on ecological (e.g. the natural environment) sustainability, implicitly recognizing social and economic responsibilities. This approach addresses the societal pressure to reduce long-term concerns over natural resource depletion, energy consumption, product integrity and pollution and waste management (Shrivastava, 1995). The definitions found mostly in the engineering literature appear to more explicit addressing areas of accountability that go beyond natural resources and product integrity. They define sustainability as balance among economic development, environmental stewardship and social equity (Sikdar, 2003). Furthermore, they include economic stability and social equilibrium to their definition (Gończ, Skirke, Kleizen, & Barber, 2007). Although there are several definitions of sustainability, most incorporate the integration of environmental and economic concerns with that of social and environmental issues.

Early definitions of CSR include Davis (1960), who defined CSR as engaging in decisions and actions that go beyond the firm's direct economic or ethnical intent. Friedman (2007), added that it was the social responsibility of a business was to generate wealth for its shareholders. Then Carroll (1979), defined CSR as a social responsibility which encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectancies society has of establishments at a given point. Now known as the triple bottom line which posits that organizations strive for economic, environmental and social balance from a micro-economic standpoint (Elkington, 1998). Therefore, its activities should not only positively affect its natural environment and society, but also provide long-term economic benefits for the organization while forming a competitive advantage for the firm. Regarding operational definitions of CSR, I find that Lambert et al. (2006, p. 368) is one that best suits this research. They suggest that CSR is "the integration of key business processes from end-user through original suppliers, that provides products, services and information add value for customers and other stakeholders."

At the organizational level, the primary goals of CSR should be transparent, strategic elements that support long-term achievement of the organization's social, environmental and economic goals (Porter, 1995). At the functional SCM unit or group level, execution of these goals should include cross-functional coordination of business processes for improving performance through its supply chains within the broader context of the firm's overall strategic and financial objectives. At the individual level, employees should have a clear understanding of the organization's overall objectives related to CSR and have a personal connection and commitment to carry out those goals (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). There are challenges to implementing sustainability and CSR strategies. For example, companies may be quick to pursue low-hanging fruit while others may find it harder and harder to maintain long-term commitments to this strategy (Gray, Owen, & Maunders, 1988). Also, gaining internal and external buy-in requires organization's to be transparent and Hart (1995) suggests communities and external stakeholders are expecting that corporate practices be more visible and transparent. Therefore, companies may face greater public scrutiny for their failures especially given the speed of social media. In this regard, the world is truly flat (Friedman, 2005). Transparency includes not only reporting to external stakeholders, but actively engaging internal stakeholders for their buy-in as well. For example, Nike regularly audits their supply chain

organizations which include its contracted factories. Given their past CSR challenges, they now seek to promote greater transparency through collaboration and reinforcement of commitment to the triple bottom line. It may be simpler for a company to make the commitment to operate transparently, however, as I discuss later, not easily achieved.

An organization's sustainability initiatives and its corporate strategy must be strategically interlinked, (Shrivastava, 1995a). True sustainability and CSR occurs at the juncture where all three areas (e.g., environmental, social, and economic) adjoin and includes explicit and comprehensive social, environmental and economic goals for developing a long-term strategic vision for CSR objectives (Carter & Rogers, 2008). As previously mentioned, the social aspects of CSR include a broad set of supply chain activities and when strategically adjoined with an organization's long-term economic objectives, the inclusion of SCM activities can generate long-lasting benefits, including several competitive advantages (Porter, 1995). In their study, Collins and Porras (1994) found that profit maximization is not the driving force of visionary organizations, instead, successful firms had strong core values and cultures that were focused on goals beyond the economic bottom line. Carter and Jennings (2004) provide additional support for the role of corporate culture in sustainability. They found a significant correlation between environmentally SCM activities when paired with an organizational culture. Similarly, Bask and Kuula (2011) reported that Nokia reduced their costs for package materials by 60% or a reduction of 100,000 tons of paper. Others found similar results (Asgary & Li, 2016; Einstein, 2016) when effectively coupling SCM and CSR activities which leads to the following proposition: P_1: Organizations that strategically incorporate and leverage all three components of the triple bottom line will achieve higher financial performance over time than firms that pursue only one or two.

Purchasing Social Responsibility (PSR). Carter and Jennings (2004) introduced Purchasing Social Responsibility (PSR) as a way of explaining the overlap between SCM and CSR. Supply chain managers are responsible for the selection and management of suppliers to ensure that purchases are socially responsible, have a diverse supply base and that suppliers are managing their suppliers in a socially responsible manner. They posit that PSR is a multidimensional construct involving environmental activities relating to diversity, human rights, safety and philanthropy. They also confirmed the impact that leadership has PSR, for example, supply chain managers influence PSR by hiring employees with compatible individual value systems to oversee SCM initiatives while also facing external pressures from stakeholders regarding CSR activities. They also suggest that there is a need for additional empirical research to more closely examine barriers to PSR. Specifically, how purchasing managers overcome the inevitable barriers with implementing and maintaining PSR activities at the unit or group level. They also mention diversity issues within the SCM literature and found that it mostly centered upon selection and purchasing from MBEs (Carter, Auskalnis, & Ketchum, 1999; Dollinger, Enz, & Daily, 1991) that required top management support and policies were needed to ensure that inclusion of MBEs was a priority for SCMs. Additionally, they cite that Krause, Ragau, and Hughley (1999) provide a secondary strategy for firms to consider that concerned leveraging MBEs for growing customers. As minorities represent a growth market for many consumer organizations, organizations can market their commitment to selecting and working with MBEs as positive CSR. Unfortunately, PSR has not evolved much since the publishing this article in 2004.

Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM). SCM defined by Matsuno et al. (2002) is the

systemic, strategic synchronization of traditional business functions and the procedures across business functions within a particular company and across businesses within the supply chain to improve the long-term performance of individual companies as well as the supply chain as a whole. As previously stated, SCM activities overlap CSR in many ways, specifically involving the achievement of an organization's social, environmental, and economic goals. To increase the potential for improving the long-term economic performance of an organization through its supply chains, Carter and Rogers (2008) introduced the concept of sustainable supply chain management (SSCM), and they strategically link to four supporting facets of sustainability: – risk management; transparency; strategy and culture. They suggest that this approach must be linked with the organization's economic goals and operationalized by the SCM team. Like Carter and Jenning's PSR (2002), organizational culture plays a critical role in its implementation and execution. As I discuss later, social interactions and relationships influence how supply chain employees behave within the organization.

Though these approaches directly link SCM activities to sustainability and CSR at the organizational and functional levels, neither of them take into account the variation of behavior which may occur because of the autonomy SCM's possess. Carter and Jennings (2004) discuss how compatible values with socially responsible actions will be mediated where relationship exists and an individual's values can have a significant and positive influence on PSR. They further suggest that no direct relationships exist between employee values and PSR and that programs can be established regardless of employee values. However, they affirm that employee values play a pivotal role when employees initiate actions on their own or chose to develop or manage a PSR effort. Brammer et al (2012) found that the most interesting developments in CSR are concerning collective forms of self-regulation and may require greater understanding of what occurs within firms and how group norms and how regulatory standards become either secured within the organization or changed, avoided or subverted. Crane & Ruebottom (2011) suggest that symbolic predispositions are strong motivators more likely to bring group cohesion and according to Wolfe and Putler (2002, p. 68) are acquired relatively early in life. SCMs are likely to self-regulate when there is strong cohesion with from different groups which promotes positive intergroup attitudes (Hewstone, 2015). This leads to my second proposition: P_2: Sustainability and CSR initiatives will not succeed in organizations that have cultures with weak group cohesion.

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

Thus far, I have explored two strategic approaches that link SCM to sustainability and CSR at the organizational levels. Most organizations have some initiative to strategically select and manage MBEs and is associated with their business case for diversity. Organizational commitment to diversity initiatives are positively correlated with meeting customer needs, understand the marketplace and improving the outcome of products and services (Cox, 1994; Cox & Beale, 1997; Hubbard, 2004; Richard, 2000). When organizations take advantage of diverse perspectives, it avails a greater array of human resources to problem resolution and fulfill workforce needs (Cox, 2001). These advantages are further explained in Watson, Kumar, and Michaelsen (1993) findings indicating that there are tangential benefits derived from the interactions and performance of culturally heterogeneous versus homogeneous groups. Because of these alleged advantages, researchers continue to explore linkages between strategic diversity efforts and firm performance (Dwyer, Richard, & Shepherd, 1998; O'Reilly, Williams, & Barsade, 1998; O'Reilly, Caldwell, &

Barnett, 1989; Pelled, 1996; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999; Thomas, 1993; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). Yet, very few empirical studies find evidence to uphold the validity of these advantages (Antun, Strick, & Thomas, 2007; Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2007; Christiansen & Just, 2012; Elsass, 1997; Hoffman & Stallworth, 2008; Madera, Kapoor, Kapoor, & Madera, 2011; Magnini, 2009; Meirovich, 2010a; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Richard & Shelor, 2002; Sacco & Schmitt, 2005; Selmer & Lauring, 2012; Siebers, 2009b; Syed & Kramar, 2009a). Some pundits argue that the process of pursuing diversity as a competitive strategy incurs significant costs (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Pelled, 1996; Pelled et al., 1999). Others suggest that it causes disruptions that are difficult to manage. For instance, Skerry (2002), points out that diversity is linked with conflict, especially emotional conflict among co-workers. Tsui et al. (1992) concur, suggesting that diversity initiatives can diminish group cohesiveness and result in increased employee absenteeism and turnover. For these reasons, skeptics still question the real impact of diversity to an organization's bottom line.

Supplier diversity has become an increasingly important component of SCM and is explicitly linked to sustainability and CSR (Carter and Jennings, 2004). Supplier diversity involves procuring goods and services from businesses owned and operated by certified minority groups (Adobor & McMullen, 2007). There are traditionally three categories of diverse suppliers: Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBEs). According to the National Minority Diverse Supplier Council's (NMDSC) 2015 annual report, MBEs are responsible for generating 400 billion in annual sales and employs over two million employees. SCMs have become more attune to the potential economic benefits of inclusion of MBEs as vendors (Teague & Hannon, 2005). MBEs are the fastest growing business segment in the US economy (Caminiti, 2006) and the NMDSC projects a 70% increase in MBEs by 2045. This poses opportunities to pursue new emerging, diverse business segments through MBE relationships as well as stimulating economic growth in underserved business communities. Diversifying one's supplier base, however, will merit no competitive advantages unless there is a comprehensive strategy in place to successfully impact firm performance in sustainable ways. Since the majority of minority suppliers tend to be small businesses (one to ten million in annual revenues), they are at a disadvantage compared to their large corporate partners. Supplier diversity relationships are also competitively structured with economic imperatives, therefore MBEs must deliver on expectations and increase capabilities to maintain their competitive advantage (Hamel & Prahalad, 1990). Alternatively, Porter (1980) suggests competitive advantages can occur as a result of the relationship if the outcome is something rivals cannot duplicate and that the ability to leverage supplier relationships can contribute to a firm's financial performance when firms integrate well-articulated supplier diversity goals into their overall organizational performance goals.

Through organizational commitment to sustainability and CSR, supplier diversity strategies as described are certainly possible, however, there are challenges persuading SCMs to select MBEs over their usual network of vendors. In some cases, top management are given incentives to work with MBEs through pay for performance systems that reward them when they achieve their diversity supplier goals. There are also consequences to this approach. If goals aren't met, the negative backlash can affect the legitimacy of the effort (Tversky & Kahneman, 1992). Also, Teague and Hannon (2005) suggest that supplier diversity and procurement goals may be in conflict with each other. Supplier diversity efforts broaden the supplier base while procurement

reduces it. Ultimately, these conflicting aims will have to be harmonized through clearly articulated shared goals and effective cross-functional integration strategies. This leads to the next proposition: P_3: Supplier diversity relationships will positively contribute to a firm's financial performance when firms integrate well-articulated supplier diversity goals into their organizational CSR goals.

PURCHASING DECISION MAKING BIAS

Social Identity Theory (SIT). SCM, like any other business area, is susceptible to human error. Sustainability and CSR at the organizational and unit and group levels provide direction for staff to follow and execute. However, situations are powerful influencers and account for the variation of behavior which can challenge SCMs given the amount of autonomy they possess. As previously mentioned, Carter and Jennings (2004) found that employee values play a pivotal role when they decide to initiate actions on their own, or when employees are chosen to develop or manage a PSR effort. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), people are inclined to group themselves and others into various social classifications influenced by the social environment relative to organizational memberships, gender, ethnic and age cohorts (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Categories are typified by prototypical characteristics abstracted from the members, which provide the individual with an organized means of defining others. As suggested by literature on stereotypes, though a person assigns prototypical characteristics, these assignments are not reliable (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1981). Social classification processes assist individuals with defining him or herself in their present social environment. According to SIT, the concept of *self* is comprised of a personal identity combining idiosyncratic characteristics (e.g., physical attributes, capabilities, social and psychological traits) and a social identity that which encompasses salient group categorizations. Social identification, therefore, concerns the perception of belongingness to some aggregate of human descriptors. For example, a man may define himself by the groups he classifies himself with such as *I am Guyanese* or *I am a gay man*. He then perceives himself as an actor or symbolic member of these groups and distinguishes the purpose of these groups as his own. Therefore, social identification provides important cues to answering the question of *Who am I?* (Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Turner, 1982). However, social identification is not to be construed as an all-or-none construct as there are many social categories and hierarchies to which an individual identifies with and each category can also be defined as a matter of degree. Further, such identities are viewed positively as one vests more of their identities into valued personas (Adler & Adler, 1987).

SIT and group identification are essentially one in the same (Tolman, 1943) as social and group identification can be used interchangeably. Group identification relevant to this paper covers four main points. First, identification is regarded as a perceptual and cognitive construct, not associated with any particular behaviors or emotional states. Individuals need only to perceive themselves as psychologically belonging to the group and behaviors are viewed as potential antecedents or consequences of membership or loyalty (Foote, 1951). Second, group identification includes how members personally experience successes and failures of the group, which involves loss or suffering and even expected failure (Gammons, 1986). Third, social identification refers to oneself in terms of social categorization (*I am*) whereas group identification refers to the interest in a group's values, attitudes and beliefs (*I believe*); however, individuals do not have to always embrace or accept those values and attitudes. For example, a person can work for a company and

yet disagree with many of its philosophies (Mintzberg, 1983). Finally, group identification is analogous with a person or role (e.g., father, reverend) as people define themselves in terms of social reference, referred to as classical identification (Kelman, 1961) where people have the desire to emulate or gain the abilities of another or others.

The roles people occupy within an organization may provide cues as to the question: *Who am I?* As previously mentioned, organizational or group identification is a form of SIT and thus, to the extent the organization embodies the perceived proto-typical assignments of its members, it may support the basis for fulfillment of motives for the individual to enhance their self-esteem (Tajfel, 1982). When individuals are able to strongly identify themselves with their group or organization, it initiates a process where the goals of the organization and the individual are increasingly integrated and these shared characteristics are construed as loyalty and solidarity. A problem synonymous with this alignment is the recurrent confusion between organizational identification and organizational commitment as some researchers compare identification with commitment, while others view them as separate variables. According to the authors of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), the most frequently used measure of commitment defines organizational commitment as the individual's identification and involvement in a particular organization characterized by: (1) belief and acceptance of the goals and values of the organization; (2) inclination to work tirelessly on behalf of the organization; and (3) a strong desire to maintain their membership. Although identification here is organization-specific, internalization and commitment may not be exclusive to an organization but to the shared goals and values of that organization. Thus, an individual can be committed, not because he or she perceives a shared purpose with the organization, but because the organization is satisfying a financial need at the moment she is taking advantage of a benefit the organization values (e.g., training and development). If another organization offers this and other added benefits, she could perceivably switch without sacrificing her goals.

Also, as previously mentioned, group coherence and cohesion is needed to successfully carry out strategy at all levels of the organization. Research on group processes are typically categorized in three dimensions: social integration; communication; and conflict, as these constructs are most widely referenced as variables that mediate group or organizational performance. For example, Cox, Lobel, and McLeod (1991, p. 828) found that "differences in cultural norms and values among ethnic groups in the United States will manifest themselves in different work-related behaviors….Asians, Hispanics and Blacks have roots in nations with collectivist tradition, whereas Anglos have roots in the Euro-Anglo tradition of individualism." Research in this area is a critical link to clarifying under what circumstances heterogeneous teams are the most effective or cohesive. There are some positive effects of social category diversity related to generating more creative alternatives than homogeneous groups (Watson et al., 1993) as ethnic backgrounds of the group members contribute to the hyper-dynamics of group behavior, leading to task conflict, which was found to be helpful in improving performance and cognitive tasks (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1997) as well as identifying social similarities. For example, Keck and Tushman (1993) found that heterogeneous top management teams, though slower to generate ideas, were able to respond to environmental shifts more effectively than homogenous ones over time. This effect is even more dynamic when paired with functional diversity, (e.g. specific emphasis on professional background) as this generates task conflict, which eventually leads to improved performance. Two other group cohesion effects that are worthy of mentioning are Social Dominance Orientation

(SDO) and Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA). SDO is a competitive-driven motivation situated around group-based dominance and supports the inclination to socially dominate inferior groups (Pratto et al., 1994). Those with a high SDO tend to view the world as a competitive place where only the toughest survive (Duckitt et al., 2002).

RWA is a threat-driven motivation supported by collective group security and social cohesion where individuals tend to submit to authorities and observe established social conventions (Altemeyer, 1998). From a social constructivist viewpoint, those in socially dominate positions have been acculturated to play that role according to SIT. The same for those who are less dominate roles. What situations trigger these anti-social behaviors varies for groups and individuals. This is a concern for SCM because of the conflict this can cause a unit or organization. For example, there could collective efforts to maintain status quo because of a fear of change or loss of control. Adversely, aggressively driving too much change may place the organization at risk as well.

Automaticity. I have illustrated thus far that there are a number of social concerns that hinder the success of implementing SCM diversity strategy at the group and individual levels. I now contend that many of these hindrances are conceived and contrived at the individual level as volitions and are automatic. Social psychologists have studied priming effects on an individual's subsequent impressions of others and have shown how our use of stereotyping carries over time and exerts unintended, passive influence of the interpretation of our behavior (Bargh, 1994; Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996). Priming refers to an incidental activation of known social structures, such as stereotypes, that are influenced by the current situation and where the individual actor is unaware that they are judging others. Bargh's (1994) research has shown that attitudes are triggered automatically by the mere presence of relevant objects and events as unmediated psychological effects in the environment. Several theorists refer to this as a situational context which suggests that situations are extremely powerful influences on individual behavior. Lewin's (1943) psychological situation consists of the individual's immediate reactions to what they believe to be the objective, external situation. Mischel (1973) developed a social-cognitive model suggesting that an individual can exhibit a multitude of immediate reactions towards a person or event, that include: (1) subjective construal of what was happening; (2) expectancies for what happens next; (3) emotional reactions based on similar situations from the past; and (4) the behavioral response based on past experiences.

Stereotype priming effects have immediate impact and are consistent with the stereotype. For instance, when subjects are primed with elderly words or symbols (e.g., retirement, AARP) while completing a simple task would be observed physically walking slower when leaving the experiment than the control group without the prime. In other studies, when subjects were primed with African American faces they were more hostile toward experimenters. These stereotypes are automatically activated in the presence of stimuli (e.g., the presence of physical features associated a group) that affect self-perception and emotions (Bargh & Tota, 1988) and are then categorized consistent with the stereotype relevant to personality traits (Carlston & Skowronski, 1994) and then a reaction consistent with the dispositional attributes of the actor's salient personality (Gilbert, 1989). All of this has been shown to occur automatically and within milliseconds.

Researchers have examined the underlying neural mechanisms that are active when these stereotypical judgments are made. Researchers Selfridge (1959), and McClelland and Rumelhart

(1981), have successfully used words for testing partial consciousness at several levels (e.g., visual components, letters, and whole word) and have also tested the fusiform gyrus region or Visual Word Form Area (VWFA) which is responsible for our ability to recognize and interpret words. Magnetoencephalography (MEG) experiments aimed at measuring neural sensitivity in the VWFA revealed that that region of the brain acts as a sensory driven gatekeeper to conscious perception and that these neural events occur outside of conscious awareness unless allowed to pass through. Similar studies have been done with facial images and have yielded similar results. These automatic responses produce perceptions and elicit feelings though the individual is not aware of any of it (Herr, 1986); Neuberg, 1988) and while believing that the behavioral decisions they make are made consciously.

SIT and automaticity strongly connect to SCM in the form of group and individual behavior and decision-making. (See Table 1.) There are multiple, socially shared identities that are established by the individual and reinforced within a group or organization (Ashforth & Mael (1989). Group memberships do not require members to do anything other than identify themselves as being a member of a group. Social identification and automaticity are complex moderator variables and create dynamic opportunities and challenges for organizations as one's social and group identity will govern their behavior and decision-making. This can make managing supply chain managers and staff challenging, especially aligning their values and garnering their commitment. Lastly, research on organizational commitment has its challenges as it may be difficult to obtain if an individual is truly committed or just being compliant. This leads to the last of my propositions: P_4: Success with sustainability and CSR is contingent upon there begin a strong organizational commitment to these goals at the group and individual levels. P_5: Social identity and automaticity effect decision-making at the group and individual levels.

Table 1. Summary of Research Variables

Independent Variable	Measurements	Illustrative References	Related Proposition
Firm Performance	Gross earnings; earnings per share; profit margin; and liquidity.	Cochran & Wood (1984)	P1
Organizational Commitment to CSR	Individual commitment to sustainability and CSR. Organizational commitment on three levels (e.g., work group, supervisor, and top management).	Mowday, Steers, & Porter (1979); Becker (1992)	P4
Organizational Commitment to Supplier Diversity	Sees supplier diversity as a dimension of PSR.	Carter (2004)	P3
Group Cohesion	Group cohesiveness, leader initiating structure, leader consideration, and several satisfaction scales.	Dobbins & Zaccaro (1986); Stogdill (1972)	P2

| SDO/RWA | Authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism. Attitudes to intergroup relations as well as one's tendency to endorse hierarchy enhancing myths. | Altemeyer (1981); Pratto et al., (1994) | P5 |
| Automaticity | Undetected activation of stereotypes on social behavior. | Bargh, Chen & Burrows (1996) | P5 |

DISCUSSION

Redefining Successful SCM. In order for an organization to successfully leverage diversity suppliers, it will have to be willing to endure the issues mentioned above and others as these represent only a few challenges contained in this work. I define success according to Hackman and Wageman (2005) who use three criteria: (1) the productive output of the group meets or exceeds the performance standards; (2) the social processes used in carrying out the work maintain or enhance the capability of the members who work together on subsequent team tasks; and (3) the group experience satisfies rather than frustrates the personal needs of those group members. These success factors are not all-inclusive but provide a benchmark for firms to consider.

Success starts with SCM's ensuring that diverse suppliers are qualified to meet the acceptable standards of performance set by the organization (e.g., operational specifications). In some cases, intermediary organizations extend their scope beyond minimum acceptable standards and go so far as to provide additional services. A growing number of firms have discovered how to leverage MBE supplier relationships into value-added assets that provide competitive advantages. Even small suppliers are powerful when there are no substitutes for their product. To achieve success, firms must consider diverse suppliers strategic partners. This requires infrastructure of open communication, a willingness to share competencies, expertise, resources and knowledge. One of the challenges facing firms is overcoming the myth that quality or competitiveness is lost when partnering with diverse suppliers. This could be one explanation why diversity supplier efforts have not progressed with other social movements as evidenced by the disproportionate number of contracts awarded to MBEs (Adobor & McMullen, 2007). Therefore, one of the opportunities for SCM leaders is renewing its interest in developing meaningful relationships with MBEs without disrepute.

As previously mentioned, although firms have the best intentions, lack of clear direction and alignment as well as decision-making at the group and individual level can cause firms to deviate from their commitment to this area and to achieving their overall CSR goals. There are some non-traditional approaches that may potentially assist with overcoming these impediments. First, since we know that race and gender are still causes for negative cognitive stereotypes and anti-social issues, categorical expansion of the outdated criteria used for qualifying MBEs beyond ethnicity and gender should be considered. I found that several companies only account for women, minority or disabled veteran business enterprises even though there are others. For example, both CVS and GE regard LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered, Questioning, and Intersex) business owners as MBEs and don't have a category to capture this segment of diverse suppliers. Why is this significant? Under the value-in-diversity strategy, developing stronger ties with LGBTQI MBEs could expand consumer reach and create new revenue streams. Though there have

been significant reforms pertaining to LGBTQI rights in many states, there continues to be broad gaps regarding how social/cultural influences stigmatize and treat members of the LGBTQI community. According to Meyer (2003), individuals who identify as LGBTQI are not likely to be motivated to publically identify themselves in fear of further disparate treatment. As Mays et al. (1998) report, 60% of the lesbians reported in their study were reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation because they feared negative reactions. Hatzenbuehler (2009) suggests that the effects of this stigma include further social isolation and emotional distress. This calls for a change in MBE categorization to one that does not heavily implicate someone's race, gender or sexual orientation. One that more equally levels the playing field without social disclosure. This could have a tremendous impact on supplier selection practices and deserves to be further examined.

Resource-Based View of PSR. Most large firms are obliged to maintain Affirmative Action Plans (AAP's) which include contracts with MBEs. This fosters fair play and transparency while also enhancing the firm's credibility among key stakeholder groups. As the world becomes more digitally connected, practicing organizational transparency and reporting may assist with maintaining legitimacy and building reputation. Integrating incentives and accountability that clearly align with a firm's sustainability and CSR goals is fundamental for success. Accountability is key. Top management should be held accountable (e.g., both internal and external stakeholders) when these efforts fail to meet the goals of the firm which should be transparent. For example, Apple's supplier website provides a plethora of information regarding their commitment to supplier diversity but they provide no information regarding who among their suppliers are MBEs. Accountability starts with top management and trickles into each functional area of the firm and to the individual resource level. Individuals play a major role in the development and execution of CSR, PSR and other sustainability initiatives. Perhaps SCMs could benefit from understanding their roles from a resource-based view (RBV) perspective (Penrose & Pitelis, 2002; Wernerfelt, 1995). The value from a large network of diverse resources who effectively work together is almost impossible to recreate. The financial benefits from this strategic advantage may be difficult to measure precisely using analytical models and the findings could have a detrimental effect on market prices (Sodhi, 2015).

Firms partner with third-party or intermediary organizations (these could even be MBEs) to identify qualified MBEs. Prospective suppliers must fulfill the minimum criteria to be considered certified which is often more rigorous than most RFP processes. Therefore, there should be less dissonance regarding the level of quality. Internally, diversity supplier programs benefit greatly if there is top leadership supporting the initiative. Some organizations actually assign a champion at the top executive level to support these efforts. This executive would vigorously promote adherence and commitment to these areas through formal and informal networks and even seek external support from important outside constituencies and stakeholders. Regarding supplier diversity programs, this resource would provide transformational leadership and have the ability to integrate all areas of sustainability (e.g. CSR, PSR, diversity supplier and RBV) into clear comprehensive and executable strategies. They must be comfortable as change agents and as Adobor & McMullen (2007) describe, cultural thinker able to get everyone to see and buy-in to big picture.

PSR Leadership. SCM executives with transformational leadership styles may assist organizations with combating the social impediments (e.g., social identity and automaticity) previously

mentioned. Transformational leaders inspire followers towards a higher collective purpose (Burns, 1978) and provide a compelling vision that inspires others to change and stretch their capabilities to reach a higher a level of performance. These attributes persist even when challenges arise and are complemented with a deep sense of compassion and self-awareness and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Fiske & Neuberg (1990) argued that a person could make tough choices and overcome stereotypic influences on behavior if sufficiently motivated to do so. According to Bargh (1989), to control automatic influences requires three things: (1) awareness of the influence; (2) motivation to practice control, and (3) enough capacity to engage controlling the process. Awareness is a critical component to controlling the automatic impulse triggered by speech accent, skin color, gender or age of another person. Schank & Abelson's (1977) script theory argues that the same mental structures used to understand and anticipate the sequence of behavior in social situations also used to generate appropriate responses to them. Thus, automatic social behavior may occur if the behavioral representation that is activated is already associated with that situation by the individual. Lewin's (1943) field theory holds that although you might be able to affect a person's behavior by making some motivations more salient than others, you cannot give the person a motivation that he or she does not already have and make him or her do something for which he or she has no motive base (Cartwright, 1959). Experiments have successfully developed a way to interfere with the automaticity process by creating cognitive load on their subjects after being primed by a stereotype. The more aware a person becomes of these biases, the better equipped they are at managing their effects.

Last, but perhaps most important, is organizational culture which I define as the sum of shared values, norms and beliefs of an organization (Hofstede, 1989). It dictates behaviors at all levels of the organizations and defines how people are treated within and outside of an organization – including suppliers. In order for the business case for diversity to work, there must be a cascaded form of commitment from top leadership. Regarding diversity, this translates into acceptance or inclusion being deeply embedded in how things get done and how people are treated, regardless of their social diversity. For example, the Chairman and CEO Kaiser Permanente Bernard Tyson, ranked among the best companies for diversity in DiversityInc's 2016 survey, explains "It is our collective differences that empower us every day, and enable us to consistently deliver high-quality and affordable health care to our members, customers and communities" (DiversityInc, 2016, p. 23).

CONCLUSION

In President Obama's farewell address (2017), he posited that "…we cannot withdraw from big global fights — to expand democracy, and human rights, and women's rights, and LGBT rights. No matter how imperfect our efforts..." Some researchers argue that strategic diversity efforts can benefit organizations when properly used and improve performance. While others find it to be harmful to group effectiveness (Brewer, 1979; O'Reilly, 1997). As related earlier, the field research on diversity reveals some less optimistic outcomes concerning its detrimental effects on group functioning as it can lead to increased stereotyping, in-group/out-group effects, dysfunctional group conflict and turnover. SCM operations should consider investment toward building greater awareness within their organization regarding the suggestions presented in this paper to successfully integrate their sustainability, corporate, purchasing social responsibility goals with their commitment to supplier diversity.

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