

A
Project Report
On
Supply Chain Risk Management During Global Crisis

At
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By
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ANNEXURE D
DECLARATION OF
STUDENT
(CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY/DECLARATION)

This is to declare that I have carried out this project work myself in partial fulfilment of the BBA Program of Chandigarh University,

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CHAPTER 1

Abstract

The 2020 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in many companies' SCRM strategies, leading to closures, but Walmart Inc. demonstrated resilience, increasing revenue and customer reputation, highlighting the importance of effective SCRM strategies.

This study examines Walmart's SCRM strategy during COVID-19, emphasising its critical importance through an analysis of Walmart's financial reports and press releases, and exploring how investments in e-commerce, technology, and other SCRM practices led to sales growth and reinforced community trust and resilience. The methodology involves a review of secondary data, including financials, capital expenditures, operating cash flow, and investments. Results show that the epidemic has caused previously uncommon disturbances to supply chains, including variations in demand, delays in transit, and shortages of raw materials. Nonetheless, companies with strong SCRM procedures in place showed more adaptability and resilience in handling these difficulties. But yet Walmart minimized the risks associated with disruptions in the global supply chain by diversifying its supplier base and sourcing practices, hence decreasing reliance on individual suppliers. In order to adapt to changing customer preferences and safety standards, Walmart showed operational flexibility by modifying store layouts, introducing contactless delivery options, and streamlining distribution networks. Walmart expedited its digital transformation efforts by utilizing its technology prowess to boost transparency and visibility throughout its supply chain network, thereby increasing decision-making and responsiveness. In order to adapt to changing customer preferences and safety standards, Walmart showed operational flexibility by modifying store layouts, introducing contactless delivery options, and streamlining distribution networks.

Introduction

The global supply chains are facing previously unheard-of difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Events such as worker shortages, lockdowns, and transportation network disruptions have brought to light the weaknesses present in even the most meticulously managed supply chains. One of the biggest retailers in the world, Walmart, had to quickly adjust its supply chain management procedures in response to the pandemic to meet the spikes in demand for necessities while also ensuring the security of its workers and clients.

The supply chain is a vital network that is at the centre of the complex ecosystem that is the global retail scene. A well-functioning supply chain is essential to the operation of a massive company like Walmart, which is known for its low prices and expansive reach. The emergence of erratic global crises, however, has changed the dynamic of multiple industries all over the globe. Supply chain stability is seriously threatened by these events, which range from the prolonged geopolitical tensions to the extraordinary disruption caused by COVID-19. Effective supply chain risk management allows firms to detect, assess, prioritise, and mitigate risks that could disrupt their supply chains. Businesses that manage risks proactively can strengthen their resilience, make better decisions, and maintain their competitiveness in the face of adversity.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Analyse the divergent trends in sales growth between Walmart US and Walmart International post-pandemic, focusing on the impact of strategic supply chain risk management practices, workforce initiatives, and local market adaptations.
2. Assess how Walmart's investments in improving its e-commerce capabilities helped counterbalance the risks posed by a decline in physical store traffic during the pandemic.
3. Examine the increase in operating cash flow and revenue growth reported in the annual report, and how these financial metrics supported Walmart's SCRM strategies under the stress of the pandemic.
4. Examine Walmart's strategic response to the pandemic by analysing the increase in capital expenditures allocated to technology enhancements, supply chain improvements, and omni-channel capabilities. Investigate how these investments have supported Walmart's supply chain resilience and adaptability during the global disruption.
5. Evaluate Walmart's comprehensive SCRM strategies during the pandemic, focusing on how strategic partnerships with local suppliers and new technologies like AI and data analytics were leveraged to manage global supply chain disruptions and volatile demand. Examine the measures taken to optimise workforce and inventory management for operational efficiency and assess the impact of community support initiatives on enhancing the company's resilience and risk mitigation efforts.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The idea of the project is to investigate the supply chain risk management techniques and strategies used exclusively with Walmart during COVID-19. Any other form of Global crisis is not involved in this study as COVID-19 has given enough details about the risks associated with strategies to develop for future crises.

The primary goal of this study is to investigate supply chain risk management practices during global crises and their impact on business resilience. The key study topics are:

- How can organisations detect, assess, and reduce supply chain risks during global crises?
- What are the best techniques for increasing supply chain resilience in the face of uncertainty?

Here are some of the key components going to be looked after in this project:

- **Supplier Relationship Management:** How Walmart is maintaining adequate relationships with suppliers during crises and what risk aversions, or support have they created to overcome the pandemic.
- **Inventory Management:** Has Walmart understood the importance of having additional inventory? If so, what kind of metrics have been used to determine which stocks are less risky to buy during a pandemic.
- **Technology Adoption:** The Risk comparison of online retailing compared to brick-and-mortar stores of Walmart.
- **Business Continuity Planning and Crisis Response:** The overall performance and the emergency procedures used by Walmart to navigate the risks taken during the pandemic with stakeholders and other factors on safety.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The 2019 pandemic was a test for every company's risk management strategy and also a test of the adaptability of companies worldwide. With this study we can gain several valuable insights into risk management practices during a global pandemic. If another global event which disrupts the supply chain were to follow, companies can use these insights to employ the best practices from day one and limit the wastage of resources and keep profits as high as possible.

Additionally, learning from previous practices by Walmart in terms of local partnerships, workforce and inventory management, E-commerce investments and other initiatives will provide ways to improve risk management practices in the future by helping organisations develop robust strategies and better failsafe in case of another event.

This case study will also serve to enhance corporate adaptability and resilience helping companies position themselves to thrive during uncertain periods and by adopting and enhancing proven strategies, companies can employ proactive risk management instead of reactive risk management, setting a new standard in strategic preparedness and forecasting.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Data will be limited to sales figures, labour force, and online traffic but the data will not show company dynamics and employee morale during the pandemic.
2. Risk management strategies that worked for Walmart may not work for any other company as Walmart is a giant in its industry with a vast financial and cultural cushion.
3. Risk management strategies that worked during Covid-19 pandemic, may not work for Walmart during a future event or a pandemic as the situation is constantly evolving.
4. Detailed reports of Walmart's strategies may not be publicly accessible, limiting the data available for this study.
5. Impact of community support incentives are hard to see on paper as the only data available for it is customer surveys.

CHAPTER 2: COMPANY PROFILE/ ORGANISATION PROFILE

Introduction to Organization

Walmart Inc founded in 1962 in Arkansas, United States of America is a multinational retail company who own and operate over 10,000 stores in 24 countries. Walmart operates various types of stores, ranging such as hypermarkets, supermarkets, department stores and E-commerce stores and they sell everything such as groceries, electronics, health products, apparel, furniture etc.

→ Vision and mission statement

Their vision has evolved throughout the years but their current vision is to “Build a better world by helping people live better and renew the planet while building thriving, resilient communities”.

Walmart aims to continue being a giant retail store chain that gives back to the community by creating equal and fair opportunities and advancing diversity, equity and inclusion. Walmart also aims to build a sustainable future and are focussed on climate, nature, waste and people in supply chains. To put it simply, Walmart is a company who follows the triple bottom line in their philosophy which also seeks to achieve a higher market share compared to its competitors such as Amazon and Best Buy in the United States.

→ Key Achievements

After starting in 1962, Walmart first began to be publicly traded in 1970 at \$16.50 per share and by 1980 it already had 276 stores and 21,000 employees. By 1990, Walmart was America's number one retailer and in 1992 they had close to 2000 stores and 370,000 employees. In 1997 Walmart had \$100 billion sales in a year and by 2009 this number exceeded \$400 billion yearly. Walmart first entered India in 2010 under the name Bharti Walmart and in 2018 it acquired Flipkart in India. In 2019 Walmart started in home delivery service after noticing an upward trend in E-commerce and by 2022 there in home delivery service reached 30 million US homes.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- **Strong Supplier Relationship:** Walmart has one of the world's largest and most complex supply chains, which includes a massive network of warehouses, distribution centres, and transportation operations, allowing for efficient inventory management and product distribution. Walmart's vast purchasing power allows them to leverage strong supplier connections to obtain advantageous pricing and ensure consistent product sourcing.
- **Economies of Scale:** Walmart can take advantage of large economies of scale, because of its size which lowers costs and gives it more negotiating power with suppliers a vital tool for risk management and mitigation.
- **Good Financial Position:** Walmart routinely earns significant income and profits, thanks to its large sales volume, allowing for investments in growth and innovation strategies. Walmart expands beyond traditional retail with its e-commerce platform, food stores, and financial services, providing a broader range of earning opportunities.
- **Effective Supply Chain management:** Walmart has a well-functioning supply chain that makes cost control, product movement and on time delivery to customers. Delays and inventory shortages are therefore less likely as a result which also boast.
- **Strong Customer base:** Walmart is perceived by US citizens as an all-inclusive store that offers almost every type of technology product as well as many other necessities for daily living at a discounted price.

Weakness:

- **Overdependence on the US Market:** Walmart receives a large amount of its revenue from the United States. Because of this, it is vulnerable to downturns in the market's economy.
- **Labour practices:** The company's reputation and employee morale may suffer as a result of Walmart's complaints of employee pay and working conditions. High employee turnover rates in certain areas have resulted from this while gaining employee dissatisfaction.
- **Overdependence on low-cost suppliers:** Walmart's emphasis on low-cost sourcing leaves it subject to quality issues, labour breaches, and ethical sourcing concerns. These can harm reputation and cause supply chain interruptions.
- **Public Perception and Brand Image:** Walmart has received criticism and negative publicity for its labour practices, impact on local businesses, and environmental policies, which can harm its brand image.

Opportunities:

- **Global Opportunities:** Walmart should plan to expand in emerging nations, which have growth potential as retail infrastructure improves and consumer spending rises to stay with the current competition in the market.
- **Blockchain Technology:** Implementing blockchain technology can increase supply chain transparency, traceability, and risk management.
- **E-commerce Growth:** Accelerating the growth of its online platforms will allow Walmart to compete more effectively with giants of e-commerce like Amazon. Expansion of online groceries and pick-up services is especially promising.
- **Demand for Environmentally friendly products:** Walmart should develop environmentally friendly delivery techniques and promote products that are beneficial to the environment in order to increase revenue and consumer pleasure.
- **Private Label Products:** Expanding its private label product line, which has higher margins than name brands, can improve profitability.

Threats:

- **Economic downturn:** Walmart's sales are impacted by economic downturns, though less than those of some competitors, but shifts in consumer behaviour can still pose risks. Economic downturns can reduce consumer spending while disrupting supplier production, affecting Walmart's sales and supply chain efficiency.
- **Regulatory Challenges:** Walmart faces regulatory challenges in a number of countries, including labour laws, trade restrictions, and antitrust laws, all of which can have an impact on operations and profitability.
- **Competitiveness of Competitors:** Intense competition from both physical and online retailers, particularly Amazon, is a constant threat to market share and profitability.
- **Technological Disruptions:** Given the rapid pace of technological change, Walmart must invest in technology on a continuous basis in order to meet customer expectations and compete.

Organisational Chart



Corporate Structure

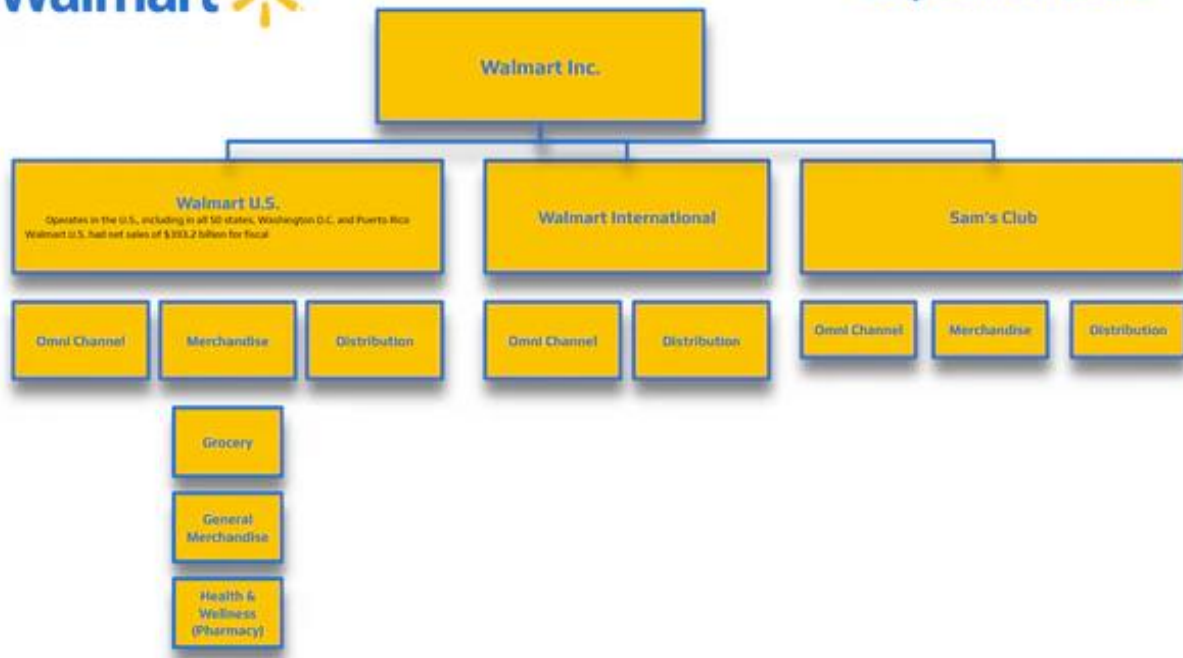


Figure 1: Walmart Corporate Structure

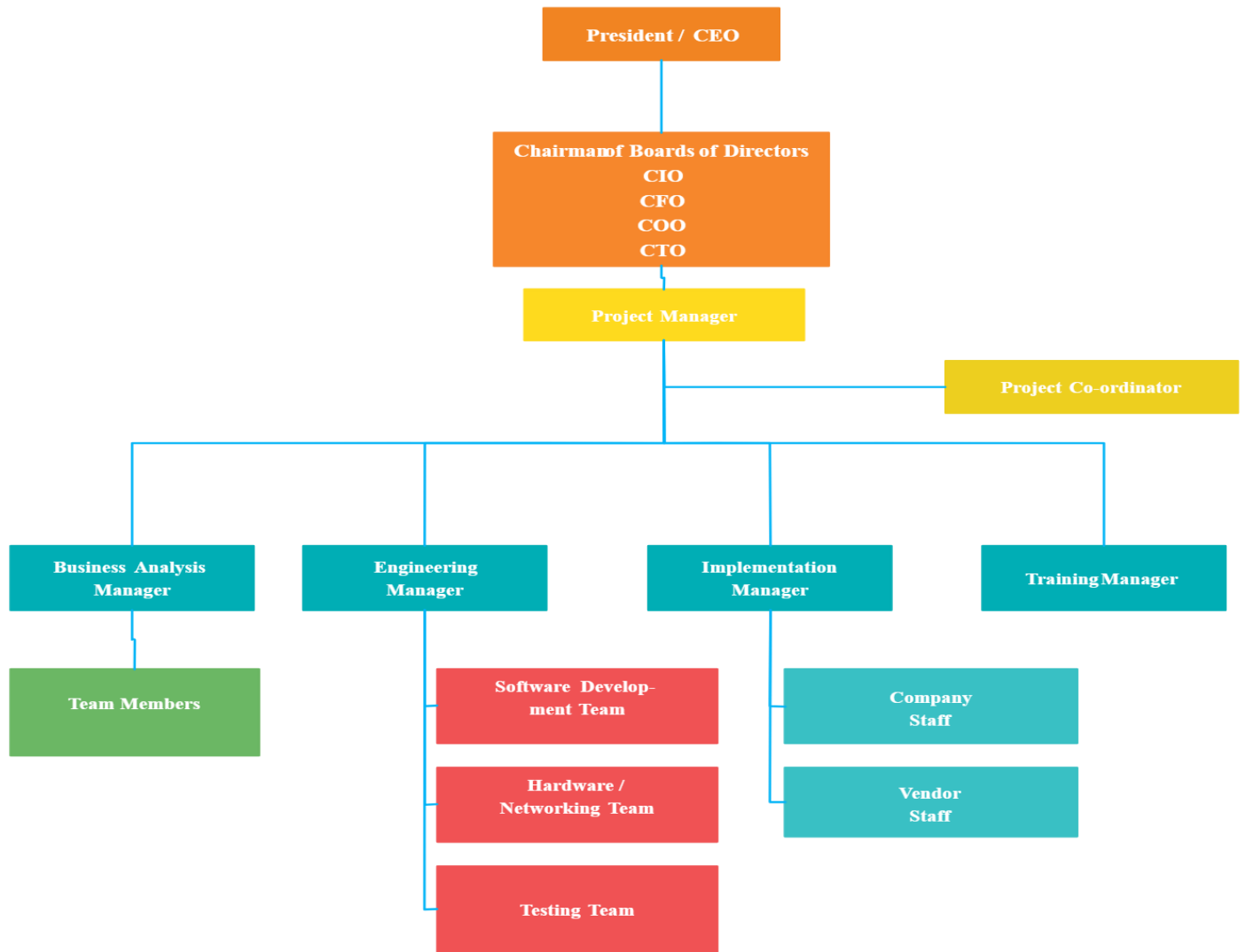


Figure 2: Walmart Organizational Structure

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Problem / statement of Problem

The research aims to explore how Walmart's risk management strategies during the pandemic helped the company mitigate risks associated with global supply chain disruptions, volatile demand, workforce management, and shifts in consumer behaviour towards online shopping.

Hypothesis

H1: Walmart's effective supply chain risk management (SCRM) strategies, workforce initiatives, and local market adaptations will lead to an increase in revenue as Walmart will be able to boost sales during the pandemic.

H2: Walmart will see a rise in e-commerce sales due to significant investments in e-commerce capabilities and risk management strategies, effectively offsetting the risks associated with decreased physical store traffic.

H3: Walmart's financials will show a rise in capital expenditures for technology and supply chain improvements, and an increase in omni-channel capabilities will enhance supply chain resilience and maintain operational efficiency.

Methods of data collection

The research that will be done will only rely on secondary data; primary data will not be used in any way during the data collection process.

Secondary data

Accessing publicly available information from multiple sources is necessary in order to get secondary data from Walmart for a BBA project on supply chain risk management amid global crises. Press releases, case studies, academic articles, news articles, annual reports, sustainability reports, and press releases from Walmart can all provide you with important insights even though the corporation may not publicly share any precise internal data. Let's dive in more detail.

1. **Annual Reports and Financial Filings:** Comprehensive details regarding Walmart's

operations, strategic initiatives, and financial performance are available in its annual reports. The document frequently discusses risk mitigation techniques and the company's supply chain management philosophy. It is best to Analyse Walmart's annual reports for the fiscal years covering the COVID-19 pandemic 2019-2023.

2. **Walmart Press Releases and News Articles:** Reviewing the press releases that Walmart published in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak. check news on efforts to resolve disruptions, operational changes, and supply chain resilience.
3. **Academic Articles and Case Studies:** Scholarly publications and case studies that analyse Walmart's supply chain handling during the COVID-19 outbreak using google scholar.
4. **Industry Reports:** Exploring resources from supply chain management associations that discuss strategies for mitigating risks and enhancing resilience in global supply chains.
5. **Case Studies and White Papers:** Industry associations dedicated to retail or supply chain management may issue case studies or white papers detailing how corporations such as Walmart have handled distinct global crises.
6. **Company Websites:** Examine Walmart's website for news articles, visions, or data about the supply chain, and identify the risks associated with it based on the strategies they have implemented.
7. **Online Forums and Discussion Boards:** Online forums and discussion boards dedicated to supply chain management, retail industry trends, and business sustainability. Clear-cut research would have been completed and uploaded for assessment, which may be used to better understand the organisation.
8. **Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility Reports:** Examining Walmart's sustainability reports, which frequently contain sections on crisis management, resilience, and supply chain sustainability.

Measurement and scaling technique

Upon the acquisition of secondary data, it is crucial to meticulously measure and scale this data to ensure accuracy and minimise any potential errors or outliers that could skew the results. The initial scaling method implemented will be trend scaling, a rigorous approach focusing on examining temporal changes in Walmart's key operational data during the pandemic period. This data will include but not be limited to sales figures, inventory levels, and financial statements. Each dataset will be carefully correlated with specific risk management actions that Walmart reported in their press releases or were highlighted in news articles. This correlation will help to directly link observed changes in operational metrics to strategic decisions made by Walmart in response to the pandemic.

The second type of scaling involves a detailed content analysis of various documents including corporate documents, media reports, and academic articles. This document analysis will be conducted to assess the frequency and contextual usage of discussions surrounding risk management strategies. Each document will be critically evaluated to understand how often risk management strategies are mentioned and in what context, providing insights into the emphasis placed on different strategies and the perceived effectiveness and priority of these strategies within Walmart's corporate narrative and external media commentary.

Sample Design

The sampling framework will span the years 2019 to 2023, a period strategically chosen to encompass the full scope of the pandemic's impact: pre-pandemic conditions, peak pandemic disruptions, and the subsequent post-pandemic phase. This timeline will allow for a comprehensive analysis of Walmart's evolving risk management strategies as they adapted to rapidly changing circumstances. Moreover, the study will incorporate a diverse array of secondary sources including media articles, industry reports, and academic papers that discuss and analyse Walmart's strategies throughout the pandemic. The selection of these documents will be guided by their relevance to the research objectives, their contribution to a nuanced understanding of risk management dynamics, and their potential to provide a balanced view of Walmart's strategic responses.

Statistical technique

The statistical analysis will commence with time series analysis, which is pivotal for examining longitudinal data trends. This technique will be employed to scrutinise Walmart's operational data collected at regular intervals from 2019 through 2023. Time series analysis is particularly effective for identifying overarching trends, cyclical patterns, and potential anomalies within the data, facilitating a deeper understanding of how various risk management strategies were reflected in operational performance over time.

Additionally, Excel will be utilised to explore the relationship between Walmart's financial performance and the various risk management strategies employed. This analysis will help quantify the impact of specific strategic actions on financial outcomes, offering insights into the effectiveness of different risk management approaches.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

Review of Related Literature

The COVID-19 pandemic has produced unprecedented disruptions in global supply chains, affecting a variety of industries and posing considerable issues in procurement, production, and distribution networks. This literature review summarises major findings from existing research on the impact of COVID-19 on supply chains, emphasising the significance of supply chain risk management in minimising such disruptions.

Global Impacts on Supply Chain Disruptions

(Taylor and Schwartz, 2020) Natural disasters, storms, pandemics, conflict, fire, and flooding are all potential dangers to supply networks. While pandemics are expected, the low probability of their occurrence has made it difficult to effectively evaluate and prepare for such dangers.

(Taylor and Schwartz, 2020) Manufacturers who rely significantly on Chinese suppliers for over 70% of their products face insolvency as a result of factory closures and shipping difficulties in China. The loss of factories and the collapse of transportation lines have made it difficult to promote items globally, increasing expenses for manufacturers.

Impact of Covid - 19 on Supply Chain Risk Management

(Ulucan Erkesim, 2021) According to the research on the impact following Covid-19, the world had a lack of raw materials and finished products. The lack of air and marine transit options has aggravated the situation. As the virus spreads to new nations, interest and demand for Chinese items has fallen, revealing a fear of recession. Due to the substantial expenses associated with risk reduction, many governments have begun to employ such techniques. Firms suffer a supply-demand imbalance.

(Atif Saleem Butt, 2021) The findings show that buying firms are transitioning to agile production, focusing on tier-1 supplier risk, improving inbound material visibility, and temporarily halting

production sites in response to COVID-19 problems. Furthermore, distribution centres are changing their inventory procedures and examining alternative outward routes and sources of supplies to deal with the disruptions to their business operations caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

(Taylor and Schwartz, 2020) The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the vital role of supply chain risk management in preventing disruptions and maintaining business continuity. Many businesses struggled to manage their supply chains against the pandemic, emphasising the need for proactive risk management techniques.

Impact of E-commerce and Internet on Supply chain management

(Richard Lancioni, 2000) The idea of internet boom has caused a huge significant improvement in supply chain management which makes inventory management a high-cost component of supply chains. According to studies, the Internet is most commonly used for communicating stock-outs between customers and vendors, as well as notifying customers about stock-outs by companies. The Internet has accelerated the implementation of EDI programs with clients.

(May,Charlie,Christeen,Belanda,Cheng and Ping, 2020)To increase agility in the Supply chain, organisations can explore using risk management strategies that examine sourcing dependencies and offer 'buffers' to mitigate the effects of interruptions. Firms should also strive to assist major suppliers who are facing insolvency and ensure that social distancing limits are followed in order to protect long-term interests. Stocking tactics based on actual demand rather than expected demand may provide more flexibility for some businesses, and investments in online customer experience are required to account for demand disruptions and maximise sales.

Theoretical Background of the study

Definitions

Supply Chain Risk Management: Commonly known as SCRM, is a business discipline which involves processes to identify, assess and mitigate risks and disruptions within the supply chain to ensure high efficiency and no stoppages in the supply chain regardless of any events.

Risk identification: Risk identification is the initial step of SCRM, and it involves identifying potential risks and vulnerabilities in the supply chain network during global crises. A company lists all potential risks to its supply chain, for example war, pandemic, security, IT, regulatory etc risks,

Risk assessment: Risk assessment is the second step of SCRM, and it involves evaluating the likelihood and impact of identified risks on supply chain operations and business performance. After assessing risks, some companies classify their risks according to severity for example Walmart has four types of risks which are colour coded, red, orange, yellow and green. Red being a severe risk that temporarily or permanently terminates a facilities ability to produce a product, whereas green is on the other end of the spectrum and it means that those facilities have negligible amount of risk associated with them. This step will also involve drawing diagrams and probability tables showing the probability of the risk and the estimated financial loss during or after the disruption.

Risk mitigation strategies: Once a risk has been identified, companies create and use risk mitigation strategies to implement proactive measures to mitigate risks, ensure continuity and minimise losses. Walmart develops new risk mitigation strategies by assigning trained associates to project teams and brainstorming ideas and techniques to mitigate a particular risk.

Resilience building: Developing adaptive strategies and capabilities to enhance supply chain resilience and responsiveness to crises. Walmart has their own Enterprise Resilience Planning team which works with company leaders to train and prepare for disasters.

Walmart

Walmart is aware that disasters and business disruptions can happen at any time hence they have developed a Global Emergency Management team that oversees SCRM and emergency operations at Walmart. The Global Emergency Management team has several sub teams taking care of each and every aspect of SCRM and emergency operations.

Theories used by Walmart

Disaster Preparation for Associates

Walmart's strategic approach to disaster preparedness for associates exemplifies the application of SCRM theory through workforce readiness and operational resilience. By offering comprehensive online training and resources, Walmart ensures that its associates are not only aware of potential risks but are also proficient in emergency response procedures. Annual and quarterly refresher training sessions are critical components of this strategy, aligning with SCRM theory that emphasises the importance of continuous education and training to maintain a high level of readiness. This theory suggests that well-prepared human resources significantly enhance the ability of a supply chain to respond quickly and effectively to disruptions, thereby minimising operational impacts and recovery time.

Disaster Preparation for Customers

In line with SCRM theory, which highlights the importance of stakeholder communication and engagement during crises, Walmart's efforts to keep customers informed and prepared during emergencies are crucial. By preparing physical facilities and pre-shipping essential supplies like water and other critical items to stores ahead of predicted disruptions, Walmart demonstrates an advanced level of proactive risk mitigation. This approach not only ensures the availability of necessary products but also helps maintain customer trust and loyalty during critical times, reducing panic buying and smoothing demand spikes, which are common challenges during disasters.

Disaster Preparation for Communities

Community resilience is a central theme in SCRM, where the focus extends beyond the individual organisation to include the entire ecosystem within which it operates. Walmart supports organisations that build disaster preparedness and community resilience, thus broadening the impact of its risk management strategies. By preparing communities for disasters, Walmart helps to stabilise the regions where its customers and employees live, which in turn supports smoother supply chain operations during crises. This is reflective of SCRM theory that advocates for a holistic approach to risk

management—recognizing that strong community relations are essential for long-term sustainability and resilience.

Enterprise Resilience

At the corporate level, Walmart engages with various business units to implement and regularly update business continuity and crisis plans, a practice strongly rooted in SCRM theory. Collaborations with institutions like the Disaster Recovery Institute and the Business Continuity Institute allow Walmart to stay at the forefront of risk management strategies, integrating academic research and mock experiments into practical applications. These partnerships are vital for ensuring that Walmart's strategies are not only theoretically sound but also tested and adaptable to real-world scenarios. SCRM theory supports this integrated approach, advocating for continuous improvement and adaptation of risk management frameworks based on evolving threats and new information.

Conclusion

Walmart's disaster preparedness and response strategies provide a clear illustration of SCRM theory in action. By focusing on preparedness across all levels of its operation—from associates and customers to communities and the enterprise as a whole—Walmart builds a resilient supply chain capable of withstanding and recovering from disruptions. These strategies are not just reactive but are designed to build an enduring framework that supports rapid adaptation and recovery, key tenets of effective supply chain risk management. This holistic and proactive approach to SCRM helps Walmart maintain operational continuity, safeguard stakeholder interests, and enhance overall resilience in the face of global crises.

● Diagrams

Advantages of SCRM for Walmart:

- **Continuity and Resilience:** Ensuring uninterrupted business operations and supply chain resilience during disruptions highlights SCRM's core benefits.
- **Pre-emptive Risk Mitigation:** Proactive measures for risk management enable better preparedness against future crises, safeguarding against potential disruptions.
- **Community and Customer Support:** Effective SCRM practices help provide timely relief to communities and customers, enhancing brand loyalty and public trust.
- **Employee Satisfaction:** By securing the supply chain, employees experience a stable working environment, which can lead to higher job satisfaction.

- **Increased Efficiency and Productivity:** Streamlined operations through SCRM practices lead to improved efficiency and productivity within the supply chain.
- **Stronger Partnerships:** Collaboration with the private sector and government agencies fosters robust relationships, crucial for comprehensive disaster response and recovery efforts.

Disadvantages of SCRM for Walmart:

- **High Costs:** Adapting supply chain processes to manage extensive risks involves significant financial outlay, particularly in terms of enhancing infrastructure and employee training.
- **Risk of Over-Preparedness:** Extensive pre-planning may lead to resource wastage if anticipated disasters do not occur as expected, tying up capital that could be used more effectively elsewhere.
- **Complex Collaborations:** While partnerships are beneficial, they can also introduce complexities in coordination, potentially slowing down decision-making processes.
- **Post-Disaster Costs:** Managing the aftermath of frequent disasters can be costly, impacting profitability especially if such events occur more frequently than anticipated.

Features

I already talked about some of the major frameworks in SCRM such as risk assessment, risk mitigation and resilience. These frameworks are a key part of the overall feature set of SCRM. Some of the major features of SCRM are listed below.

Major Frameworks and Features of SCRM:

- **Risk Management:** This encompasses risk identification, where threats are detected; risk assessment, which evaluates their potential impact and likelihood; risk mitigation, involving strategies to manage risks; and resilience building, aimed at enhancing the ability to recover from disruptions.
- **Technology Integration:**
 - **Big Data Analytics:** Utilised to parse large volumes of data to identify trends that predict supply chain vulnerabilities.
 - **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Employs predictive analytics to anticipate disruptions and automate response strategies.
 - **Blockchain Technology:** Enhances transparency and traceability across the supply chain, which is crucial for verifying the authenticity of goods and the integrity of the supply chain.

- **Sustainability Focus:** SCRM integrates sustainability by promoting ethical sourcing, reducing the carbon footprint, and ensuring fair labour practices, which help in meeting the triple bottom line of social, environmental, and financial performance.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Emphasises the necessity of ongoing adaptation to dynamically address new risks and maintain pace with global changes. This involves regularly updating risk management strategies to reflect new data and emerging threats.

Walmart examples

Community Support:

During Hurricane Ian in 2022, Walmart actively supported local customers and communities by transforming its facilities into community hubs that offered essential supplies and services, including meals and emergency relief. This strategic use of Walmart's physical assets illustrates a key principle of Supply Chain Risk Management (SCRM)—leveraging organisational resources to enhance community resilience and stability during crises. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Walmart repurposed its extensive network of parking lots and store locations to serve as convenient vaccination centres, facilitating accessible and efficient distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to the public. This initiative not only demonstrated Walmart's capacity to adapt its operational capabilities to meet critical community needs but also underscored the importance of flexible supply chain strategies in enhancing public health responses.

In both instances, Walmart's approach aligned with advanced SCRM practices, where the resilience of the supply chain is intrinsically linked to the resilience of the community it serves. By acting as a pivotal resource during emergencies, Walmart not only fulfilled immediate community needs but also contributed to a faster recovery process, which is essential for the stabilisation of local markets and the quicker resumption of regular supply chain operations. This strategic perspective is rooted in the understanding that strengthening community resilience through proactive support and resource allocation during disasters leads to a more robust and responsive supply chain system. The company's ability to quickly mobilise and repurpose its assets for emergency use reflects a sophisticated application of SCRM theory—highlighting the critical role of adaptive capabilities and strategic partnerships in maintaining supply chain continuity in the face of widespread disruptions.

Public-Private Collaboration: In 2022, Walmart held a Preparedness Summit to strengthen partnerships and improve coordination in disaster preparedness across various stakeholders such as government, NGOs and private sector corporations to improve partnerships and coordination during

times of need. The summit advocated for creating an unified approach to disaster response to make sure all parties act in a coordinated manner and transcend individual organisational boundaries. This aligns with SCRM principles that emphasise the need for an integrated approach to managing supply chain risks.

Public-Private collaborations such as these help to establish standardised protocols between corporations, governments and NGOs and help alleviate some of the confusion caused by overlaps in disaster response efforts. Such collaboration is fundamental to SCRM as it facilitates sharing of resources, knowledge, and strategies which are crucial for effective risk management and helps support continuity in business and supply chain.

Customer support: In anticipation of disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Walmart proactively implemented a strategic initiative within its Supply Chain Risk Management (SCRM) framework to ensure the availability of essential goods across its stores. This pre-emptive distribution strategy involved the pre shipment of vital supplies to various locations, ensuring that, even during the strictest lockdown periods, consumers would have access to necessary products. This approach not only secured the essentials for customers but also maintained the flow of goods, mitigating potential supply chain disruptions.

This strategy exemplifies the application of core SCRM principles, where risk assessment and mitigation play pivotal roles. By analysing potential risks associated with pandemic-induced lockdowns—such as sudden spikes in demand for household essentials and health products—Walmart was able to devise a plan that pre-emptively addressed these challenges. The decision to stockpile and distribute critical inventory ahead of expected disruptions ensured that Walmart could maintain service continuity and operational resilience, key objectives of effective supply chain risk management.

Moreover, this SCRM practice highlights the importance of adaptive supply chain capabilities in responding to rapid changes in the market and consumer behaviour. Walmart's ability to quickly adjust its supply chain operations in response to emergent risks protected its business operations from severe impacts, while also supporting community needs during a critical time. This strategic alignment of operational planning with risk management objectives not only fortified Walmart's supply chain but also reinforced its position as a reliable retailer capable of meeting customer needs under extreme conditions.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Walmart Financial Reports 2019-2022

Walmart Annual Reports

FY 2020 Feb 1st, 2019, to January 31 2020

Revenue \$524 Billion

Operating Cash Flow \$25 Billion

FY 2021 Feb 1st, 2020, to January 31, 2021

Revenue \$559.2 Billion

\$36.1 Billion Operating cash flow

FY 2022 Feb 1st, 2021, to January 31, 2022

Revenue \$572.8 Billion

\$24.2 Billion Operating cash flow

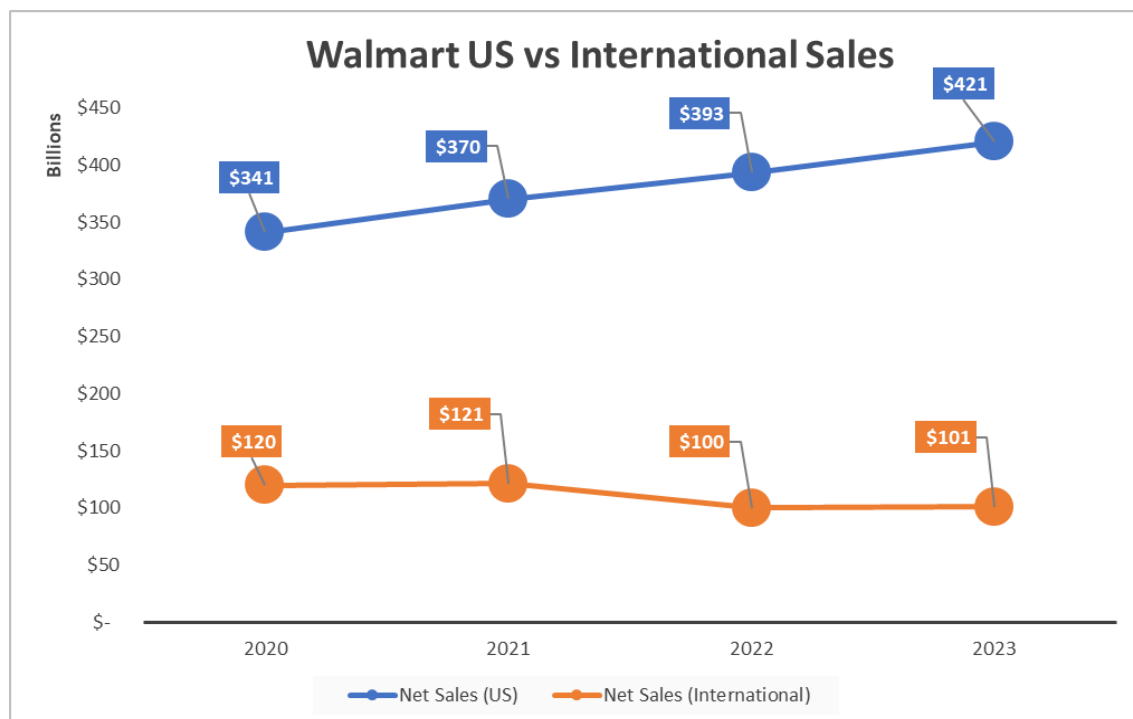


Figure 3: Line Chart showing Walmart Net Sales

Key analysis and interpretation of Walmart US vs international sales (Objective 1)

Walmart US: Enhanced SCRM and Strategic Agility

- **Technological Collaborations:** Walmart US established strategic partnerships with tech companies to bolster its e-commerce and logistic capabilities, ensuring consistent product availability during supply chain disruptions.
- **Workforce Productivity:** Implemented wage increases and enhanced health benefits, boosting employee morale and operational efficiency critical for smooth store functioning. Walmart US paid \$1.6 billion in additional cash bonuses on top of general wage increase to employees for their appreciation of efforts during the pandemic hence improving workforce morale and productivity.
- **Economic Stimulus Response:** Leveraged high governmental stimulus packages, aligning with the spending tendencies of US consumers who quickly returned to pre-pandemic spending habits, boosting sales.
- **Service Expansion:** Expanded services like home delivery and contactless pickup catered to consumer preferences for convenience and safety, enhancing shopping experience and sales.

Walmart International: Confronting SCRM Challenges

- **Economic and Lockdown Impact:** Faced with stricter lockdowns and slower economic recovery, international markets experienced reduced consumer spending power, affecting sales.
- **Delayed SCRM Implementation:** While efforts were made to improve online sales and diversify supply chains, the pace and scale of implementation lagged behind US operations, impacting sales.
- **Inconsistent Community and Workforce Initiatives:** Varied success in community support and employee initiatives across markets due to local constraints, affecting brand loyalty and operational efficiency.

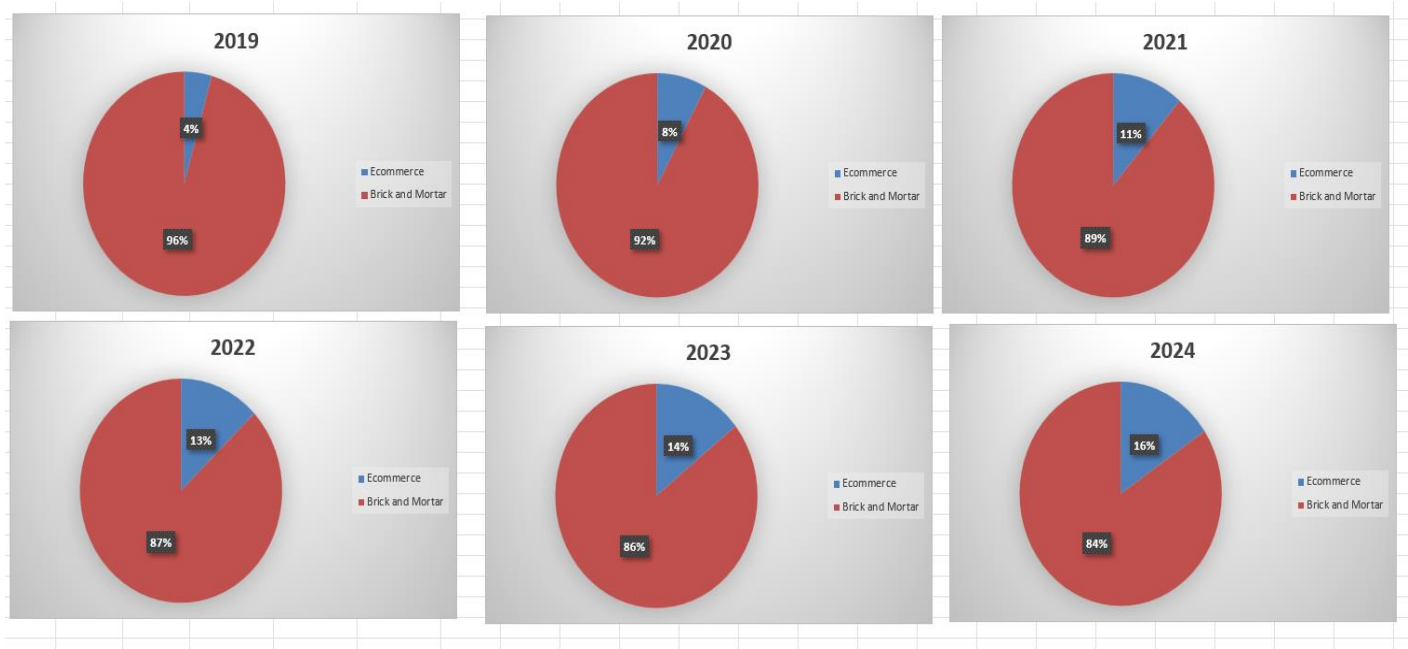


Figure 4: Pie chart showing increasing E-commerce reliance.

Key analysis and interpretations for E-commerce (Objective 2)

- In FY 2021 E-commerce grew by three-fold due to a shift towards online shopping and due to Walmart's good SCRM plan, they were well prepared to meet this shift in demand on its robust online platform.
- Seeing a shift in trend towards online shopping, Walmart introduced express delivery and curb side delivery to Walmart and Sam's Clubs locations. Hence customers did not have to physically enter the store and risk catching the virus.
- Walmart launched Walmart+, which is a subscription-based service to provide ease and safe purchases for customers and in turn the subscription service provided additional revenue for Walmart.
- E-commerce has been taking larger chunks and growing rapidly.

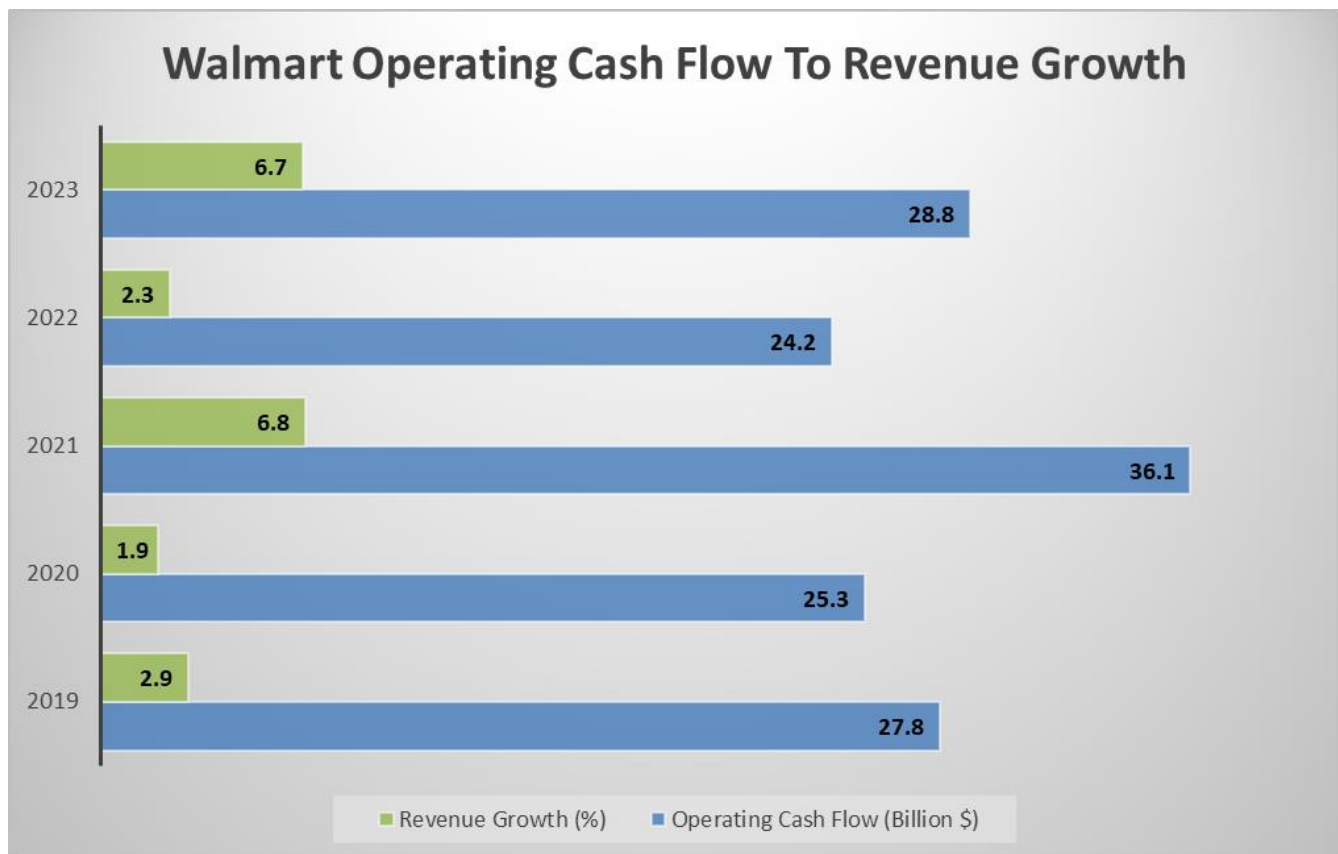


Figure 5: Walmart's Operating Cash Flow and Revenue Growth

Key analysis and interpretation of Walmart Operating Cash flow and revenue growth (Objective 3)

- Walmart's revenue growth of 6.8% during FY 2021 underscores its successful adaptation to pandemic-related disruptions, highlighting the effectiveness of its supply chain risk management (SCRM) strategies. By enhancing its online shopping capabilities and ensuring a consistent supply of essential goods, Walmart met the evolving needs of customers during a critical period, demonstrating resilience and flexibility in its operations.
- The substantial increase in operating cash flow from FY 2020 to FY 2021 reflects Walmart's robust response to the pandemic, underscoring its strategic cash management and operational efficiency.
- Through effective SCRM practices, Walmart maintained high liquidity, which was crucial for ongoing investments in technology and infrastructure. These investments were key to meeting new consumer demands, such as increased online purchases and contactless pickups, ensuring Walmart could continue to serve customers effectively without interruption.
- In the post-pandemic period, Walmart has shown no signs of regression, indicating that the

company has not only adapted well to the new normal but also strengthened its supply chain resilience. This ongoing stability in financial and operational health suggests that Walmart's SCRM strategies have been effective in mitigating risks during the pandemic and are well-suited to support future challenges.

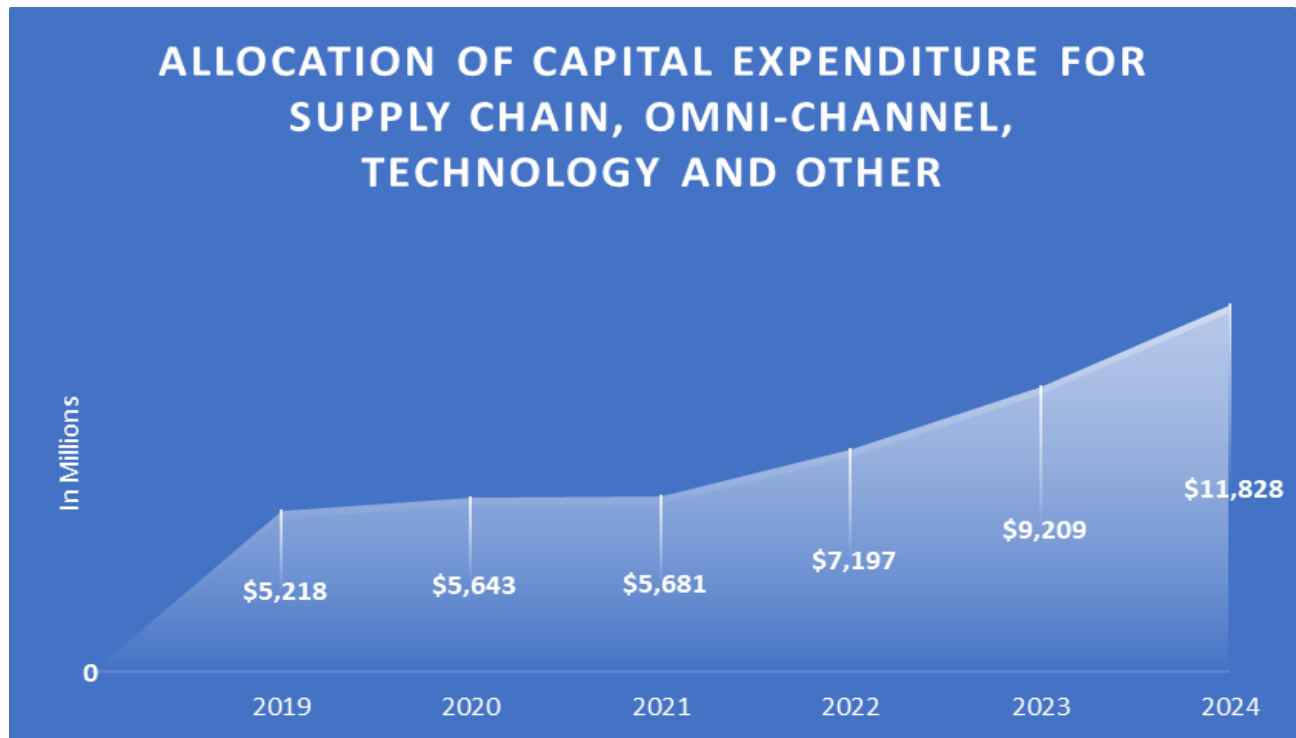


Figure 6: Walmarts steady increase in Capital Expenditure

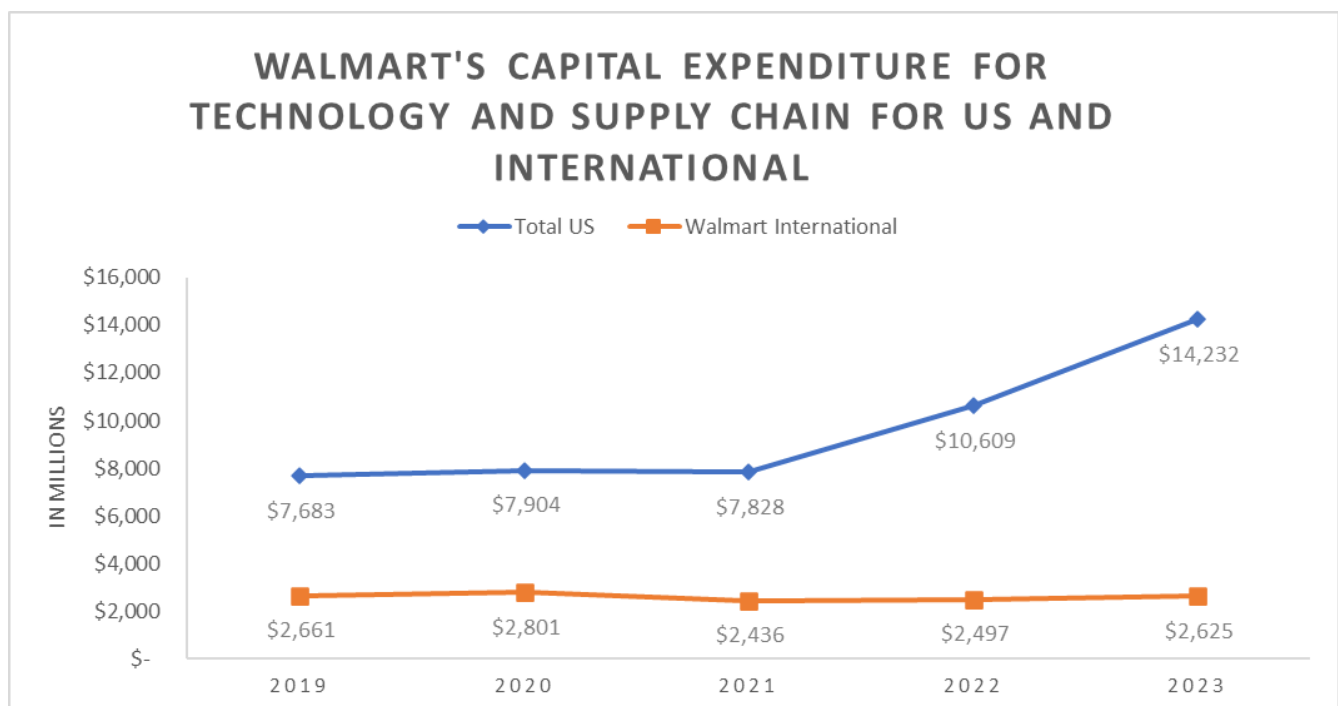


Figure 7: Difference between Capital Expenditure US and International

Key analysis and interpretation for Walmart Capital Expenditure (Objective 4)

- Proactive SCRM in the U.S.: Starting in FY 2021, which aligns with the onset and continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, Walmart significantly increased its capital expenditures in the U.S. This investment spike is indicative of a strategic application of the "resilience strategy" within SCRM, aimed at enhancing technological and supply chain capabilities to maintain business continuity and rapidly adapt to new consumer behaviours and market demands.
- Conservative Spending in International Markets: Unlike its domestic strategy, Walmart's international capital expenditures remained relatively flat during the same period, suggesting a more conservative SCRM approach. This could be attributed to the "avoidance strategy" in SCRM, where the company opts to minimise investments in regions with higher volatility or lower expected returns, as evidenced by stagnant or declining revenues in these markets during the pandemic.
- Strategic Prioritization Based on ROI and Market Familiarity: Walmart's increased investments in the U.S. market reflect a "portfolio strategy" within SCRM, focusing on regions with historically higher returns and strategic importance. The company's deep understanding and extensive network in the U.S. likely drove its decision to allocate more resources domestically, anticipating better control over risks and enhanced recovery capabilities compared to international markets.
- Long-term Investment for Enhanced Adaptability: Continuing to ramp up investments post-pandemic underscores Walmart's commitment to a "mitigation strategy" in SCRM, aimed at strengthening supply chain resilience against future disruptions. This ongoing investment is directed towards building a robust omni-channel retail framework that integrates advanced technological solutions, ensuring Walmart remains competitive and can swiftly adapt to future changes in the retail landscape.

Key analysis and interpretation of other SCRM strategies (Objective 5)

- Strategic Local Supplier Partnerships: Walmart's strategic partnerships with local suppliers helped maintain a steady supply of goods, ensuring a resilient and responsive global supply chain. This approach not only mitigated risks associated with global disruptions but also supported local economies during critical times.
- Advanced Technology Integration: By integrating AI and data analytics, Walmart effectively anticipated and responded to rapidly changing demand patterns. This technology-driven

approach enabled real-time inventory adjustments, minimising risks of overstocking and shortages, and ensured the availability of essential goods, crucial for maintaining consumer trust and business continuity.

- **Proactive Workforce Management:** Throughout the pandemic, Walmart implemented flexible scheduling and robust safety protocols, alongside providing additional health benefits. These measures enhanced operational efficiency and ensured the safety and well-being of employees, crucial for sustaining operations during periods of high uncertainty and stress.
- **Community Support and Public Health Initiatives:** Walmart's commitment to community support through opening mass testing and vaccination sites significantly contributed to public health efforts. These initiatives not only aided in crisis management but also bolstered community trust and reinforced Walmart's role as a community leader in times of need.

Key findings

1) There is a noticeable divergent trend in sales between Walmart US and Walmart International during the pandemic. This disparity stems primarily from Walmart US employing robust SCRM practices such as forging strong connections with domestic suppliers and significantly increasing investments in logistical and technological infrastructure. In contrast, Walmart International faced challenges due to less aggressive investment in SCRM capabilities, which led to stagnation in markets with stringent pandemic restrictions and varied consumer behaviour.

2) Walmart's substantial investment in its e-commerce platforms was met with strong customer approval, leading to a significant surge in online sales, which contributed to over 10 percent of annual revenue during the pandemic. This boom has continued to grow, proving the long-term viability of Walmart's strategic e-commerce investments. By enhancing its online presence, Walmart not only captured new digital markets but also fortified its omni-channel offerings, blending in-store and online shopping experiences seamlessly.

3) The increase in operating cash flow and revenue during the pandemic underscores the efficacy of Walmart's comprehensive SCRM strategy, which was centred on maintaining continuous and stable business operations. The higher operating cash flow facilitated greater liquidity, enabling Walmart to invest more flexibly in critical areas such as technology upgrades, supply chain diversification, and safety enhancements in physical stores.

4) Walmart US's proactive increase in capital investments was strategically directed towards boosting supply chain resilience and adaptability, not only to weather the pandemic but also to prepare for any future disruptions. Continuous heavy investments in technology and supply chain enhancements are key components of Walmart's strategy to stay resilient and responsive to evolving market threats and opportunities, highlighting a forward-thinking approach to SCRM.

5) Walmart's array of SCRM strategies played a pivotal role in sustaining operational stability and efficiency during widespread global supply chain disruptions. Strategic partnerships with local suppliers allowed for quicker and more reliable sourcing of products. Simultaneously, workforce and inventory optimization—aided by advanced data analytics—enabled Walmart to respond dynamically to fluctuating demand patterns and maintain customer satisfaction and trust during uncertain times.

SUGGESTIONS

1)Strategic Recommendations for Global SCRM Enhancement

- Harmonise SCRM practices across all markets to ensure consistency and efficiency in operations. Develop adaptable supply chain strategies to quickly respond to changing market demands and conditions, emulating the US model.
- Invest in localised community support initiatives to build brand loyalty and trust in international markets.

2) Recommendations for E-commerce

- Implement AR and VR applications to simulate in-store experiences and support virtual product trials, thereby enhancing customer engagement and satisfaction from the comfort of their homes.
- Enhance integration between online platforms and physical stores to improve service delivery, reduce delivery times, and decrease operational costs, thereby elevating overall customer satisfaction and streamlining logistics.

3)Recommendations for Financial Resilience

- Develop more robust cash flow management systems to improve liquidity, ensuring Walmart can swiftly respond to investment opportunities and unexpected financial needs without external financing.
- Implement a variety of financial strategies to minimise risks associated with economic volatility, such as hedging and risk pooling, to maintain stability and financial health.

4)Recommendation for investment in Capital

- Cultivate beneficial partnerships with leading technology companies to co-develop custom solutions that enhance operational efficiencies and automation within Walmart's supply chain.
- Prioritise investments in cutting-edge technology, including blockchain and IoT, to enhance supply chain security and efficiency, keeping Walmart at the forefront of retail innovation.

5)Recommendation for workforce management and inventory

- Adopt flexible working conditions, such as remote work options and dynamic scheduling, to

maintain employee morale and productivity, particularly in unpredictable scenarios.

- Utilise AI-driven tools to analyse extensive data sets for predicting potential supply chain disruptions more accurately, enabling proactive management of inventory and resources.

Conclusion

The study of Walmart's supply chain risk management (SCRM) during the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the critical role of proactive strategies and resilience in mitigating disruptions and even increasing revenue during a global crisis. Walmart US, in particular, demonstrated a robust risk management strategy that included strategic partnerships with suppliers, significant investments in e-commerce and capital, and enhanced community outreach. These efforts helped Walmart increase its revenue in FY 2021 despite the pandemic's challenges.

Proactive strategies enabled Walmart to meet the evolving customer demands for goods and services, such as online shopping and delivery options to minimise contact and reduce the virus's spread. This adaptability and innovation during the pandemic resulted in a boost in e-commerce and an increase in operating cash flow. Walmart's holistic approach to risk management not only safeguarded its operations but also enhanced customer trust and solidified its reputation as a reliable retailer during the crisis.

However, there are a few suggestions for Walmart as they can further strengthen their position in the international market and make further use of technology and improve their resilience. Some of these suggestions included further integration between Walmart US and Walmart international to use common practices to strengthen both regions. Another suggestion regarding investments included tie-ups with high tech companies to develop custom solutions.

Overall Walmart has shown a robust SCRM strategy and a high level of financial resilience.

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ANNEXURE (BALANCE SHEET)

(Amounts in millions)

Walmart U.S. net sales by merchandise category	Fiscal Years Ended January 31,	
	2021	2020
Grocery	\$ 208,413	\$ 192,428
General merchandise	119,406	108,687
Health and wellness	38,522	36,558
Other categories	3,622	3,331
Total	\$ 369,963	\$ 341,004

Of Walmart U.S.'s total net sales, approximately \$43.0 billion and \$24.1 billion related to eCommerce for fiscal 2021 and fiscal 2020, respectively.

(Amounts in millions)

Walmart International net sales by market	Fiscal Years Ended January 31,	
	2021	2020
Mexico and Central America	\$ 32,642	\$ 33,350
United Kingdom	29,234	29,243
Canada	19,991	18,420
China	11,430	10,671
Other	28,063	28,446
Total	\$ 121,360	\$ 120,130

Of Walmart International's total net sales, approximately \$16.6 billion and \$11.8 billion related to eCommerce for fiscal 2021 and fiscal 2020, respectively.

(Amounts in millions)

Sam's Club net sales by merchandise category	Fiscal Years Ended January 31,	
	2021	2020
Grocery and consumables	\$ 42,148	\$ 35,043
Fuel, tobacco and other categories	7,838	10,571
Home and apparel	7,092	6,744
Health and wellness	3,792	3,372
Technology, office and entertainment	3,040	3,062
Total	\$ 63,910	\$ 58,792

Of Sam's Club's total net sales, approximately \$5.3 billion and \$3.8 billion related to eCommerce for fiscal 2021 and fiscal 2020, respectively.

(Amounts in millions)

Walmart U.S. net sales by merchandise category	Fiscal Years Ended January 31,		
	2024	2023	2022
Grocery	\$ 264,210	\$ 247,299	\$ 218,944
General merchandise	113,985	118,597	125,876
Health and wellness	54,898	46,591	42,839
Other categories	8,724	8,066	5,588
Total	\$ 441,817	\$ 420,553	\$ 393,247

Of Walmart U.S.'s total net sales, approximately \$65.4 billion, \$53.4 billion and \$47.8 billion related to eCommerce for fiscal 2024, 2023 and 2022, respectively.

(Amounts in millions)

Walmart International net sales by market	Fiscal Years Ended January 31,		
	2024	2023	2022
Mexico and Central America	\$ 49,726	\$ 40,496	\$ 35,964
Canada	22,639	22,300	21,773
China	17,011	14,711	13,852
United Kingdom	—	—	3,811
Other	25,265	23,476	25,559
Total	\$ 114,641	\$ 100,983	\$ 100,959

Of Walmart International's total net sales, approximately \$24.8 billion, \$20.3 billion and \$18.5 billion related to eCommerce for fiscal 2024, 2023 and 2022, respectively.

(Amounts in millions)

Sam's Club net sales by merchandise category	Fiscal Years Ended January 31,		
	2024	2023	2022
Grocery and consumables	\$ 56,449	\$ 53,027	\$ 46,822
Fuel, tobacco and other categories	12,854	14,636	10,751
Home and apparel	9,263	9,579	9,037
Health and wellness	5,005	4,248	3,956
Technology, office and entertainment	2,608	2,855	2,990
Total	\$ 86,179	\$ 84,345	\$ 73,556

Of Sam's Club's total net sales, approximately \$9.9 billion, \$8.4 billion and \$6.9 billion related to eCommerce for fiscal 2024, 2023 and 2022, respectively.

(Amounts in millions)

Walmart U.S. net sales by merchandise category	Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2019
Grocery	\$ 184,202
General merchandise	108,739
Health and wellness	35,788
Other categories	2,937
Total	\$ 331,666

Of Walmart U.S.'s total net sales, approximately \$15.7 billion related to eCommerce for fiscal 2019.

(Amounts in millions)

Walmart International net sales by market	Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2019
Mexico and Central America	\$ 31,790
United Kingdom	30,547
Canada	18,613
China	10,702
Other	29,172
Total	\$ 120,824

Of International's total net sales, approximately \$6.7 billion related to eCommerce for fiscal 2019.

(Amounts in millions)

Sam's Club net sales by merchandise category	Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2019
Grocery and consumables	\$ 33,708
Fuel, tobacco and other categories	12,110
Home and apparel	5,452
Technology, office and entertainment	3,388
Health and wellness	3,181
Total	\$ 57,839