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Summary and Future Developments

In this research, it is reviewed the current market and business environment and highlighted the importance of companies become demand driven instead of production driven based on the contingency approach. In a demand driven supply chain, customers activate the replenishment flow and the organization is structured and prepared to sense and respond to real time demand across the supply chain, which should include customers and suppliers.

The financial and operational benefits that emerge from applying the demand driven concepts were also reviewed, like reduced inventory levels, increased production efficiencies, decreased freight cost, and improved fill rates and product availability in the market.

In this research, a framework was developed to allow companies to assess their current state in light of demand driven supply chain concepts, and also identify the desired future state in a one year horizon. The framework was applied to 3 supply chain operations of a beverage company in different countries as part of the methodology evaluation. Results indicated that one operation is currently close to an optimized push operation (level 2 out of 5), and the other two operations are close to a basic push operation (level 1 out of 5), revealing that there are clear opportunities to implement the demand driven supply chain concepts to move towards a more customer centric operation.

This study also developed a formal framework to support companies in designing a supply chain strategy that will allow them to move towards a demand driven supply chain. This framework is integrated with the assessment process of both current and future states proposed in this thesis, and should be used as part of the annual planning cycle.

Finally, this research contributed towards a better understanding of the demand driven supply chain concepts and how to effectively implement those concepts in a real supply chain environment. This research closed a gap that existed in the available academic literature and will help companies to provide better customer service cost effectively.

In terms of future development, additional research could be done to cover the following points:

- Review maturity model for companies that do not have a manufacturing process, like service and retail companies.
- As the proposed assessment methodology is applied in different industries and business segments, it will be a great value to benchmark and document successful practices, and share them for practitioners and researches.
- Measure actual benefits captured by companies after 1 – 3 years of implementation of the proposed methodology.
- Continue to further develop and refine the proposed framework to design a Demand Driven Supply Chain Strategy.
- Investigate potential benefits of applying Analytic Network Process (ANP) instead of Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP).
- Propose a set of metrics and performance indicators to evaluate current level in each category of the demand driven maturity model.