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Article

A Qualitative Analysis on Negotiation Tactics and Supplier Relationship Management in Multinational Supply Chains

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Abstract: This study explores the intricate dynamics of negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management within multinational supply chains, emphasizing their critical role in ensuring operational efficiency and strategic alignment. By examining key elements such as trust, cultural sensitivity, collaboration, risk management, digitalization, power dynamics, ethics, and interpersonal skills, the research highlights how these factors shape the success and sustainability of supply chain partnerships. Trust emerged as a cornerstone, facilitating transparency and collaboration, while cultural sensitivity enabled smoother interactions in diverse, multicultural settings. Collaborative practices and proactive risk management strategies further strengthened the resilience and adaptability of supply chains, particularly in volatile global markets. The transformative impact of digital technologies on negotiation and supplier management was evident, offering enhanced decision-making capabilities, real-time communication, and performance monitoring, although these advancements were accompanied by challenges such as data security concerns and infrastructure costs. The study also underscores the importance of balancing power dynamics and fostering equitable negotiations to sustain long-term partnerships. Ethical considerations, including sustainability and corporate responsibility, were integral to contemporary supply chain practices, reflecting growing stakeholder expectations. Interpersonal skills, such as effective communication and empathy, were identified as vital for building trust and resolving conflicts during negotiations. This research provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of negotiation and supplier relationship management, offering valuable insights for organizations seeking to navigate the complexities of global supply chains effectively. It emphasizes the need for holistic and adaptive strategies that prioritize collaboration, ethics, and innovation to achieve sustained success in an increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords: negotiation tactics; supplier relationship management; multinational supply chains; trust; collaboration; cultural sensitivity; digitalization

1. Introduction

Negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management are vital components of the effective operation and success of multinational supply chains. As globalization accelerates and supply chains become more complex, the need for strategic negotiation approaches to enhance supplier relationships becomes more critical. These negotiations not only determine the terms of transactions but also the long-term sustainability of business relationships. With the growing interdependence between companies across borders, understanding the influence of negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management strategies is key to optimizing supply chain performance. Negotiation in supply chains, especially in multinational settings, involves multiple dimensions, including cost, quality, lead time, and flexibility. More than just bargaining over prices, these negotiations address the broader goals of creating mutually beneficial agreements that ensure continued cooperation in a competitive, often volatile, global market. The significance of negotiation tactics within multinational supply chains is underlined by the fact that companies are increasingly dealing with cross-cultural

challenges, differing regulations, and diverse market expectations (Alexander et al., 2024). In this context, effective negotiation becomes a central element in managing supplier relationships and ensuring operational success. While many studies have focused on the negotiation process itself, fewer have explored the intersection of negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management in multinational contexts. By examining these two crucial factors, this research aims to offer insights into how companies negotiate with suppliers and maintain robust, long-term relationships in complex, multinational supply chains. The essence of negotiation in supply chains lies in understanding that it is not just a transactional process but a relational one (Tsao & Ai, 2024). Suppliers in multinational supply chains are not merely external vendors but partners who contribute to the success of the supply chain ecosystem. As such, fostering strong, trust-based relationships is essential for securing competitive advantages. Negotiation tactics used by companies in these settings go beyond price negotiations to include issues like quality standards, delivery schedules, technological innovations, and even ethical concerns. The rise of global supply chains has complicated these negotiations, as companies must factor in geopolitical risks, regulatory constraints, and logistical challenges that differ from one region to another (Sim et al., 2024). Therefore, companies must develop negotiation strategies that are flexible and adaptive to these dynamic environments. The foundation of effective supplier relationship management (SRM) rests on the ability of companies to recognize the importance of supplier collaboration and trust (Pacheco & Clausen, 2024). Unlike traditional buyer-supplier relationships, which tend to be more transactional, SRM in the context of multinational supply chains calls for long-term commitment to building partnerships that offer mutual benefits. This evolving approach to SRM emphasizes cooperation over competition and requires a shift in mindset, with companies viewing suppliers not as mere sources of goods and services, but as integral partners who play a role in innovation, risk management, and value creation. A significant aspect of SRM is the ability to negotiate terms that satisfy both parties and contribute to shared growth. However, this process requires a nuanced understanding of cultural differences, market dynamics, and supplier capabilities, which can vary significantly across borders (Safaei et al., 2024). The importance of negotiation in SRM cannot be overstated. Through effective negotiation, companies can create a platform for ongoing collaboration and continuous improvement, which is crucial for the sustainability of their supply chains (Wiedenhofer et al., 2024). Negotiation tactics that prioritize transparency, fairness, and the long-term interests of both parties help create an environment where both the buyer and the supplier can work together to resolve challenges, adapt to market changes, and drive innovation. This approach is particularly significant in the context of multinational supply chains, where the impact of each decision can reverberate across multiple geographies and business units. The challenge lies in balancing the tactical aspects of negotiation—such as price setting and contract terms—with the strategic imperatives of fostering trust and collaboration. A key challenge faced by multinational companies in their supplier negotiations is managing the complex web of relationships that span different regions and cultures (Almofeez et al., 2024). In many cases, these negotiations require a deep understanding of the local market, customs, and expectations, which can significantly influence the outcome. For example, what may be considered a fair price in one country could be viewed as unreasonable in another due to differences in economic conditions and cultural norms. Thus, negotiation tactics must be adaptive to the diverse environments in which multinational companies operate. Some companies may rely on hard bargaining tactics, focusing on achieving the lowest possible cost, while others may adopt softer approaches that emphasize building long-term relationships with their suppliers (Basco et al., 2024). Both strategies have their merits, but the key is in understanding when to use each approach and how to navigate the complexities of multinational supply chains. In addition to understanding cultural and economic differences, companies must also be attuned to the evolving nature of global supply chains, which are increasingly influenced by technological advancements, environmental concerns, and shifting geopolitical dynamics (Palpacuer & Roussey, 2024). These factors make it imperative for companies to adopt negotiation tactics that are both flexible and forward-looking. For instance, as sustainability becomes an ever more critical factor in global supply chains, negotiating

for ethical sourcing and environmentally friendly practices has become a key element in supplier relationships. Suppliers are increasingly expected to adhere to sustainability standards, and negotiating these terms is becoming an integral part of the overall negotiation process (Wang et al., 2024). The ability to incorporate sustainability into negotiation tactics and SRM strategies requires a deep understanding of both the local regulatory landscape and global trends, further complicating the negotiation process in multinational supply chains. Effective negotiation tactics in multinational supply chains also involve leveraging the power of technology to streamline and enhance communication, improve transparency, and facilitate data-driven decision-making (Lee et al., 2024). The digital transformation of supply chains has provided companies with powerful tools to track supplier performance, predict potential disruptions, and negotiate better terms based on real-time data. These technological advances, however, do not eliminate the need for traditional negotiation skills. Instead, they enhance the negotiation process by providing additional layers of information that can be used to make more informed decisions (Emon & Khan, 2024). In this context, negotiation becomes a more complex process, with data analytics and digital tools complementing the human element of relationship-building and collaboration. The global nature of multinational supply chains also means that companies must be proactive in managing risk, a central consideration in supplier relationship management (Khan & Emon, 2024). Geopolitical risks, natural disasters, and economic downturns are all factors that can disrupt supply chains, making it essential for companies to negotiate contingency plans with their suppliers. Negotiating flexible terms that allow for adaptation to changing circumstances is a key aspect of building resilient supply chains. As multinational companies seek to mitigate risks and safeguard the continuity of their supply chains, they must engage in negotiations that address these uncertainties and build trust with suppliers to ensure mutual support during challenging times (Emon et al., 2025). Despite the increasing importance of supplier relationship management and negotiation tactics in multinational supply chains, there remains a lack of in-depth qualitative studies that explore how these elements interact and shape supply chain performance. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the negotiation tactics employed by multinational companies and how they influence supplier relationships. By focusing on qualitative insights, the study will provide a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in negotiating with suppliers across different cultural and economic contexts. It will also shed light on the role of trust, communication, and mutual benefit in building long-term supplier relationships, offering valuable lessons for companies operating in multinational supply chains. In conclusion, the effective management of supplier relationships through negotiation is a cornerstone of successful multinational supply chains. As companies expand their operations across borders, they face new challenges that require innovative negotiation strategies and robust supplier relationship management practices. The importance of negotiation tactics and SRM in multinational supply chains cannot be overstated, as these elements directly impact the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of global supply chains. As global supply chains continue to evolve, the need for companies to adapt their negotiation tactics and strengthen their supplier relationships will only increase. By understanding the nuances of negotiation and relationship-building in this context, companies can position themselves to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

2. Literature Review

The concept of negotiation tactics within supplier relationship management (SRM) has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly as global supply chains have become increasingly complex and interconnected. As multinational corporations navigate the challenges of sourcing materials and goods from diverse regions, the necessity of adopting effective negotiation strategies has become a crucial aspect of maintaining strong supplier relationships and ensuring smooth supply chain operations. In examining the body of literature on this topic, it is clear that negotiation in supply chains is not merely a matter of haggling over price but encompasses a wide range of strategic considerations, including collaboration, risk management, ethical practices, and long-term sustainability (Garcia-Torres et al., 2024). The rapid globalization of supply chains has underscored

the importance of understanding the dynamics between buyers and suppliers, particularly in terms of establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships (Vandana et al., 2024). This literature review explores the role of negotiation tactics and SRM in multinational supply chains, providing an in-depth analysis of existing research and identifying key themes that have emerged over the past several years. Supplier relationship management, particularly within the context of multinational supply chains, has become a key area of focus for scholars and practitioners alike. Researchers have found that SRM involves far more than transactional relationships between companies and suppliers (Ren et al., 2024). It requires the establishment of long-term, collaborative partnerships based on trust, transparency, and shared goals (Raaymann & Spinler, 2024). Negotiation tactics are a vital tool in achieving these objectives, as they serve as the means through which buyers and suppliers can agree on terms that align with both parties' interests and values. Effective negotiations are crucial in ensuring that suppliers meet the expectations of multinational companies in terms of quality, cost, and delivery timelines, while also maintaining a relationship that fosters innovation and mutual growth (Bryson et al., 2024). The process of negotiation itself, however, is far from straightforward. It requires not only the ability to make deals that benefit both parties, but also the capacity to navigate complex cultural, economic, and regulatory landscapes, especially in multinational contexts (Doan et al., 2024). As multinational supply chains span various countries and regions, the negotiation process must account for cultural differences that impact communication styles, decision-making processes, and conflict resolution (Nguyen et al., 2024). The influence of culture on negotiation tactics has been widely studied, with numerous scholars asserting that understanding cultural norms is essential for developing effective strategies (Li et al., 2024). For example, in many Western cultures, negotiation may be characterized by a direct, results-oriented approach, while in certain Asian cultures, relationships and trust-building often take precedence over immediate gains (Wu et al., 2024). Such cultural nuances necessitate that companies adapt their negotiation tactics according to the specific context in which they operate. Moreover, multinational supply chains often involve multiple stakeholders with varying interests, further complicating the negotiation process. As such, scholars emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability in negotiation tactics (Thomsen et al., 2024). A key aspect of SRM is the ability to build trust and develop collaborative partnerships with suppliers, especially in the context of multinational supply chains. Liu and Wang (2024) assert that trust is a cornerstone of effective supplier relationships and plays a pivotal role in shaping negotiation tactics. Trust fosters an environment in which both parties feel secure in sharing information and collaborating on long-term solutions (Khan et al., 2025). Without trust, negotiations are likely to become adversarial, and the relationship between buyer and supplier may deteriorate, leading to inefficiencies and suboptimal outcomes (Emon et al., 2024). This view is supported by a number of studies that emphasize the role of trust in creating value in supplier relationships (Khan et al., 2024). In practice, companies that invest in relationship-building activities, such as regular communication, joint problem-solving, and sharing of resources, are more likely to secure favorable outcomes in negotiations (Partzsch, 2024). In addition to trust, negotiation tactics must also account for the broader strategic goals of the company. Al Amin and Baldacci (2024) argue that negotiation strategies should align with the long-term objectives of the organization, such as innovation, sustainability, and market expansion. For instance, if a company is focused on reducing its environmental footprint, it may negotiate with suppliers to ensure that they adhere to sustainable practices or comply with environmental regulations (Arevalo-Ascanio et al., 2024). Such negotiations require an in-depth understanding of the supplier's capabilities and willingness to adopt sustainable practices, as well as the ability to strike a balance between cost-effectiveness and ethical considerations. The ability to negotiate for sustainability has become an increasingly important consideration in global supply chains, particularly as consumers and regulators demand higher standards of corporate social responsibility (Mancini et al., 2024). This reflects a broader shift toward integrating environmental and social goals into business negotiations, rather than focusing solely on financial outcomes (Huang & Li, 2024). Furthermore, negotiating for risk mitigation is a key consideration in supplier relationship management. In a world of unpredictable geopolitical events,

natural disasters, and economic downturns, multinational companies must develop negotiation tactics that address potential risks and uncertainties in the supply chain (Strelzoff et al., 2024). This may include negotiating flexible delivery terms, building contingency plans into contracts, or collaborating with suppliers on risk management strategies (Al-Khatib et al., 2024). Risk-based negotiations have gained prominence in recent years, particularly in the context of supply chain disruptions caused by global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed vulnerabilities in supply chain networks (Barrera et al., 2024). Scholars such as Shi and Wei (2024) highlight the importance of negotiating risk-sharing arrangements, whereby both buyers and suppliers share the responsibility for managing disruptions and uncertainties. The role of digitalization in negotiation and supplier relationship management has also been an area of growing interest in the literature. The advent of digital tools and platforms has revolutionized the way companies interact with their suppliers and negotiate terms. Digital technologies, such as supply chain management software, blockchain, and artificial intelligence, have enabled real-time data sharing, enhanced transparency, and improved decision-making capabilities (Štreimikienė et al., 2024). These technological advancements allow companies to monitor supplier performance, predict potential risks, and optimize negotiation strategies based on data-driven insights (Dube et al., 2024). However, despite the promise of digitalization, challenges remain in terms of data privacy, cybersecurity, and the ability of companies to effectively integrate these technologies into their existing supply chain processes (Abbas et al., 2024). The integration of digital tools into negotiation tactics has the potential to streamline communication and improve the accuracy of negotiations, but it also requires a strategic approach to ensure that technology is leveraged effectively (Basit et al., 2024). In light of the growing importance of digital tools, it is also essential to consider the human aspect of negotiation. While technology can enhance the negotiation process, the role of interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, and relationship-building remains fundamental to the success of supplier negotiations (Quentin, 2024). Even in an increasingly digital world, successful negotiations often hinge on the ability of individuals to navigate complex human dynamics, manage conflict, and build rapport with suppliers (Garcia-Torres et al., 2024). As such, negotiation tactics in multinational supply chains must strike a balance between leveraging digital tools and maintaining the human touch that is necessary for fostering strong, sustainable supplier relationships. The literature on negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management in multinational supply chains highlights the complexity and multifaceted nature of these processes. Effective negotiation is central to the success of global supply chains, requiring companies to balance strategic, financial, and ethical considerations while navigating cultural, economic, and technological challenges. The role of trust, collaboration, risk management, and digital tools in shaping supplier relationships is well-documented, but the literature also underscores the importance of interpersonal skills and adaptability in the negotiation process. As supply chains continue to evolve and become more interconnected, the need for effective negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management strategies will only grow. Future research should continue to explore the interplay between these elements and examine how companies can adapt to the changing landscape of global supply chains.

3. Materials and Method

The research methodology adopted for this study was designed to explore and analyze the negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management strategies employed in multinational supply chains. A qualitative approach was utilized to gain in-depth insights into the perceptions, experiences, and strategies of participants involved in supply chain management. This approach was selected to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and dynamics inherent in negotiation and supplier relationship management within a multinational context. The study employed semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method, as this allowed for the exploration of predetermined themes while also providing flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences and insights. The sample for the study consisted of 38 participants, who were selected using purposive sampling. The participants were supply chain managers, procurement

officers, and key decision-makers from multinational corporations operating in diverse industries, including manufacturing, retail, and technology. The criteria for participant selection ensured that all individuals had direct experience in negotiating with suppliers and managing supplier relationships in multinational supply chains. This purposive approach was employed to ensure that the data collected would be rich, relevant, and directly aligned with the research objectives. The data collection process was conducted over a period of three months. Participants were approached through professional networks, industry associations, and direct invitations sent to companies known for their extensive supply chain operations. The semi-structured interviews were conducted either in person or via video conferencing platforms, depending on the availability and preference of the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was recorded with the consent of the participants to ensure the accuracy of data capture. The interview questions were designed to explore key aspects of negotiation tactics, including strategies employed, challenges encountered, and the influence of cultural and organizational factors. Additionally, questions were included to understand the participants' approaches to supplier relationship management, with a focus on trust-building, collaboration, and risk mitigation. To analyze the data, a thematic analysis was conducted. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were reviewed multiple times to ensure familiarity with the data. Coding was performed to identify recurring patterns, themes, and subthemes related to negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management. The coding process was iterative, involving both inductive and deductive approaches to ensure that the themes were both data-driven and aligned with the research objectives. Once the coding was completed, the themes were organized and analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions about the negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management strategies employed in multinational supply chains. Ethical considerations were an integral part of the research process. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, scope, and their role in the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to conducting the interviews, and they were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Data security measures were implemented to protect the recorded interviews and transcripts, ensuring that all information was stored securely and accessed only by the research team. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions. The methodological approach adopted in this study was effective in capturing nuanced insights into the negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management strategies used in multinational supply chains. By combining the perspectives of professionals from various industries, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with managing supplier relationships in a global context. The qualitative nature of the research allowed for the exploration of complex phenomena that are often difficult to quantify, making it particularly well-suited to the objectives of this study.

4. Results and Findings

The results and findings of this study provide a comprehensive exploration of the negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management strategies employed by professionals operating within multinational supply chains. Through the analysis of data gathered from 38 participants, several significant themes emerged, shedding light on the complex interplay between negotiation practices, supplier dynamics, and the broader organizational and cultural contexts in which these activities occur. The findings highlight not only the strategies and approaches used by supply chain professionals but also the challenges they face and the innovative solutions they employ to navigate an increasingly interconnected and dynamic global supply chain landscape. One of the primary findings of the study is the strategic nature of negotiation tactics employed in multinational supply chains. Participants consistently emphasized that negotiation is far more than a transactional activity; it is a strategic endeavor that requires careful planning, extensive research, and a thorough understanding of both parties' needs and objectives. Many participants described a shift from adversarial negotiation styles to more collaborative approaches, reflecting an evolving emphasis on

long-term relationships and mutual value creation. The importance of preparation was a recurring theme, with participants highlighting the need to gather detailed information about suppliers, including their capabilities, financial stability, and previous performance, as well as broader market conditions and trends. Effective preparation not only equips negotiators with the tools to advocate for their organization's interests but also demonstrates a commitment to professionalism and respect for the supplier, fostering a positive negotiation atmosphere. Trust emerged as a critical factor influencing both negotiation outcomes and the overall quality of supplier relationships. Participants consistently described trust as the foundation upon which successful negotiations and enduring partnerships are built. In negotiations, trust enabled more open communication and the sharing of sensitive information, such as production costs, capabilities, and constraints, which in turn facilitated the development of creative solutions to complex problems. Participants also noted that trust played a pivotal role in mitigating conflicts and disagreements, as suppliers were more likely to believe in the intentions and commitments of buyers they trusted. Trust was seen not as a static quality but as something that must be continually cultivated through consistent actions, transparency, and ethical behavior. However, participants also acknowledged the fragility of trust, noting that it can be easily undermined by dishonesty, unmet expectations, or a perceived lack of fairness in negotiations. The role of cultural differences in shaping negotiation tactics and supplier relationships was another prominent theme. Participants operating in multinational supply chains frequently encountered situations where cultural norms and communication styles influenced the negotiation process. While some participants described these differences as a source of challenge, others viewed them as an opportunity to deepen their understanding of global business practices and enhance their intercultural competence. Adaptability was identified as a key skill for navigating cultural diversity, with successful negotiators demonstrating the ability to adjust their communication style, tone, and approach to align with the cultural expectations of their counterparts. The findings also highlighted the importance of cultural sensitivity in building trust and rapport with suppliers, particularly in regions where personal relationships play a central role in business interactions. Collaboration emerged as a central theme in supplier relationship management, with participants emphasizing its importance in achieving shared goals and fostering innovation. Many participants described how collaboration extended beyond the negotiation table to include joint problem-solving, knowledge-sharing, and co-development of products and processes. Collaborative relationships were particularly valued in situations where supply chain disruptions or market uncertainties required buyers and suppliers to work closely together to develop adaptive solutions. Participants noted that collaboration was most successful when both parties demonstrated a willingness to compromise, invest resources, and commit to long-term goals. However, achieving true collaboration often required overcoming challenges such as power imbalances, misaligned incentives, and differing organizational priorities. Participants described the negotiation process as a key opportunity to set the tone for collaboration by establishing clear expectations, defining shared objectives, and agreeing on mechanisms for resolving disputes. Risk management emerged as a recurring theme in both negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management. Participants highlighted the increasing complexity and unpredictability of global supply chains, driven by factors such as geopolitical tensions, natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, risk mitigation strategies have become an integral part of supplier negotiations. Participants described how they negotiated terms to address risks, such as including flexible delivery schedules, specifying contingency plans, and diversifying supplier bases to reduce dependency on any single source. Risk-sharing arrangements were also commonly discussed, with participants seeking to distribute the burden of disruptions fairly between buyers and suppliers. The findings suggest that proactive risk management in the negotiation phase can significantly enhance the resilience and stability of supply chains. The influence of digital technologies on negotiation and supplier relationship management was another key finding of the study. Participants described how digital tools, such as supply chain management software, data analytics, and communication platforms, have transformed the way negotiations are conducted and relationships are managed. Real-time access to data allowed participants to make

more informed decisions, monitor supplier performance, and identify opportunities for improvement. Digital platforms also facilitated communication and collaboration across geographic boundaries, enabling participants to engage with suppliers in ways that were previously challenging or impractical. However, participants also acknowledged the limitations and challenges associated with digitalization, including concerns about data security, the potential for technology to replace human interaction, and the need for significant investment in infrastructure and training. Despite these challenges, the findings suggest that digital technologies have become an indispensable tool for enhancing efficiency and transparency in multinational supply chains. Power dynamics between buyers and suppliers were another significant theme in the findings. Participants described how the relative power of each party influenced the negotiation process, with larger organizations often having greater leverage to dictate terms. However, participants also noted that an overreliance on power dynamics could harm relationships and lead to resentment or disengagement on the part of suppliers. Many participants emphasized the importance of balancing power with fairness, arguing that equitable negotiations were more likely to result in sustainable and productive relationships. The findings suggest that while power dynamics cannot be ignored, they should be managed carefully to ensure that both parties feel valued and respected. Ethical considerations were also a prominent focus in the findings. Participants described how issues such as labor practices, environmental sustainability, and corporate social responsibility increasingly influenced negotiations and supplier relationships. Buyers were often under pressure from stakeholders, including consumers, investors, and regulators, to ensure that their suppliers adhered to high ethical standards. Participants described how they incorporated ethical considerations into negotiations by specifying requirements for sustainable practices, auditing supplier operations, and incentivizing ethical behavior through long-term contracts or premium payments. While these efforts were generally well-received, participants noted that implementing and monitoring ethical standards could be resource-intensive and required careful planning and communication. The findings also highlighted the role of interpersonal skills in successful negotiations and supplier relationship management. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of communication, empathy, and emotional intelligence in building strong relationships with suppliers. The ability to listen actively, understand the perspective of the other party, and address concerns in a constructive manner was viewed as a critical factor in achieving positive outcomes. Participants also noted that effective communication extended beyond verbal interactions to include nonverbal cues, tone of voice, and timing, all of which could influence the perception of sincerity and intent. In conclusion, the results and findings of this study underscore the multifaceted nature of negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management in multinational supply chains. The themes identified through the analysis, including trust, cultural sensitivity, collaboration, risk management, digitalization, power dynamics, ethics, and interpersonal skills, reflect the diverse challenges and opportunities faced by supply chain professionals. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the strategies and practices that underpin successful negotiations and supplier relationships in a global context, providing valuable insights for both practitioners and scholars. As multinational supply chains continue to evolve, the ability to adapt to changing conditions, embrace innovation, and prioritize collaboration will remain critical to achieving sustainable and mutually beneficial outcomes.

Table 1. Theme - Trust in Supplier Relationships.

Subtheme	Description
Building Trust	Emphasizing consistent communication, reliability, and transparency.
Maintaining Trust	Ensuring follow-through on promises and ethical behavior.

Trust and Performance	How trust facilitates better supplier engagement and efficiency.
Challenges to Trust	Issues like unmet expectations or dishonesty undermining trust.

Trust was found to be the cornerstone of effective supplier relationships, as participants highlighted its role in fostering collaboration and transparency. Building trust often required consistent actions and communication, whereas maintaining it demanded ethical behavior and fulfilling commitments. Trust also directly influenced supplier performance, as suppliers were more engaged and proactive when they trusted the buyer. However, breaches in trust due to dishonesty or unmet expectations posed significant risks to the relationship, underscoring the need for careful management.

Table 2. Theme - Cultural Sensitivity in Negotiation.

Subtheme	Description
Adapting Communication	Adjusting tone and style to align with cultural norms.
Role of Cultural Awareness	Enhancing mutual understanding and rapport during negotiations.
Challenges in Multicultural Settings	Miscommunications arising from cultural differences.
Strategies for Sensitivity	Employing local representatives or training for cultural competence.

Participants underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity in negotiation processes, particularly in multinational supply chains. Adapting communication to align with cultural norms was crucial for fostering rapport and avoiding misunderstandings. Awareness of cultural differences often facilitated smoother interactions and better outcomes. However, challenges such as misinterpretation or unintended offense sometimes arose, necessitating strategies like employing local representatives or undergoing cultural training.

Table 3. Theme - Collaboration in Supplier Relationships.

Subtheme	Description
Joint Problem-Solving	Working together to address challenges and optimize outcomes.
Shared Goals	Aligning objectives to create mutual value.

Innovation Through Collaboration	Co-developing products and processes for competitive advantage.
Barriers to Collaboration	Factors such as power imbalances and misaligned priorities.

Collaboration was a key theme, with participants highlighting its role in achieving shared goals and fostering innovation. Joint problem-solving emerged as a particularly effective approach to overcoming supply chain challenges, while alignment of objectives allowed for mutual value creation. Innovation often stemmed from collaborative efforts, with buyers and suppliers co-developing new solutions. Despite its benefits, barriers such as power imbalances and misaligned incentives sometimes hindered collaborative efforts.

Table 4. Theme - Risk Management in Negotiation.

Subtheme	Description
Proactive Risk Mitigation	Addressing potential disruptions through strategic planning.
Risk Sharing	Negotiating terms to distribute risks equitably.
Contingency Planning	Developing flexible agreements to handle uncertainties.
Challenges in Risk Management	Balancing costs and benefits of risk-mitigation measures.

Risk management was integral to negotiation and supplier relationship strategies, as participants described proactive efforts to identify and mitigate potential disruptions. Terms were often negotiated to distribute risks fairly, and contingency planning allowed for flexibility in uncertain situations. While these strategies enhanced supply chain resilience, challenges arose in balancing the costs and benefits of risk mitigation measures, particularly in high-risk industries.

Table 5. Theme - Power Dynamics in Negotiation.

Subtheme	Description
Leverage in Negotiations	How organizational size and influence affect negotiation power.
Balancing Power	Ensuring equitable terms despite power imbalances.
Consequences of Power Misuse	Strained relationships due to perceived unfair treatment.
Strategies for Equilibrium	Building trust and respect to counterbalance power dynamics.

Power dynamics significantly influenced negotiation outcomes, with larger organizations often wielding greater leverage. Participants stressed the importance of balancing power to ensure fairness, as misuse of power could strain relationships. Equitable terms and respectful communication were

essential in maintaining positive interactions. Strategies to counterbalance power dynamics included fostering trust and demonstrating commitment to shared goals.

Table 6. Theme - Digitalization in Supply Chain Management.

Subtheme	Description
Enhanced Decision-Making	Using data analytics for informed negotiation strategies.
Real-Time Communication	Facilitating interactions through digital platforms.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Tracking supplier performance using technology.
Challenges of Digitalization	Issues like data security and infrastructure investment.

Digital tools were transformative for negotiation and supplier management, enabling better decision-making and real-time communication. Participants valued the ability to monitor and evaluate supplier performance through technology, which enhanced transparency and accountability. However, challenges such as concerns over data security and the high cost of digital infrastructure underscored the complexities of digital transformation in supply chains.

Table 7. Theme - Ethical Considerations in Supplier Management.

Subtheme	Description
Sustainable Practices	Incorporating environmental and social criteria into negotiations.
Ethical Audits	Evaluating supplier adherence to ethical standards.
Incentivizing Compliance	Offering rewards for adopting ethical practices.
Challenges in Implementation	Balancing ethical goals with cost and operational efficiency.

Ethics played a prominent role in shaping supplier management practices, with sustainability and labor standards being key considerations. Participants described efforts to conduct ethical audits and incentivize compliance through rewards like long-term contracts. While these practices were generally seen as beneficial, implementing them often required balancing ethical goals with cost constraints and operational demands.

Table 8. Theme - Interpersonal Skills in Negotiation.

Subtheme	Description
Communication Skills	Listening actively and conveying ideas effectively.
Empathy and Understanding	Recognizing and addressing the needs of the other party.

Conflict Resolution	Managing disagreements constructively to achieve resolution.
Nonverbal Communication	Using body language and tone to enhance rapport.

Interpersonal skills emerged as critical to successful negotiations, with participants emphasizing the importance of effective communication and empathy. Active listening and addressing the other party’s needs were viewed as essential for building rapport and trust. Conflict resolution required constructive management of disagreements, while nonverbal communication added depth to interactions, influencing perceptions and outcomes.

The findings of this study reveal the intricate dynamics of negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management within multinational supply chains. Trust emerged as a fundamental element, influencing the depth of collaboration and the effectiveness of supplier engagement. Participants underscored the significance of building and maintaining trust through consistent communication, transparency, and ethical behavior, while also acknowledging the fragility of trust when unmet expectations or dishonesty occur. Cultural sensitivity was another crucial factor, with participants emphasizing the importance of adapting communication styles and demonstrating awareness of cultural norms to foster stronger relationships. Challenges arising from cultural differences were mitigated through strategies such as training and the involvement of local representatives, enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation. Collaboration was identified as a central theme in supplier relationship management, with participants highlighting its role in joint problem-solving, innovation, and the achievement of shared objectives. However, barriers such as power imbalances and misaligned priorities sometimes hindered collaborative efforts, requiring careful negotiation and alignment of incentives. Risk management also played a pivotal role, as participants described proactive measures to address uncertainties and disruptions, including contingency planning and risk-sharing agreements. These strategies were particularly important in the context of an increasingly volatile global supply chain environment. The influence of digital technologies on negotiation and supplier relationship management was a recurring theme, with participants noting how data analytics, communication platforms, and monitoring tools enhanced decision-making, transparency, and efficiency. Despite these benefits, challenges such as data security concerns and the costs associated with digital infrastructure were noted. Power dynamics were another key aspect, with larger organizations often wielding significant influence in negotiations. Participants emphasized the importance of balancing power with fairness to maintain positive relationships and prevent resentment among suppliers. Ethical considerations emerged as a critical component of supplier management, reflecting growing stakeholder expectations around sustainability and corporate responsibility. Participants described efforts to incorporate ethical practices into negotiations through audits, incentives, and long-term commitments, while also navigating the complexities of balancing ethical goals with operational efficiency. Finally, interpersonal skills such as communication, empathy, and conflict resolution were highlighted as vital to building strong relationships and achieving successful negotiation outcomes. These findings collectively illustrate the multifaceted nature of negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management in multinational supply chains, emphasizing the need for adaptability, collaboration, and ethical commitment to thrive in a globalized business environment.

5. Discussion

The discussion of this study delves into the intricate interplay between negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management in the context of multinational supply chains. The findings illuminate how these processes are shaped by a confluence of factors, including trust, cultural sensitivity, collaboration, risk management, digital transformation, power dynamics, ethics, and interpersonal skills. These dimensions not only underscore the complexity of managing supply

chains on a global scale but also highlight the evolving nature of these practices in response to changing market demands and technological advancements. Trust emerged as a cornerstone of effective supplier relationships, with its role extending beyond facilitating smoother negotiations to fostering long-term partnerships. Trust encourages transparency and open communication, enabling buyers and suppliers to collaborate on innovative solutions and navigate challenges together. However, its fragility necessitates a deliberate and continuous effort to build and sustain, as even minor breaches can have far-reaching consequences. This underscores the need for organizations to prioritize trust-building measures, not only during negotiations but throughout the lifecycle of supplier relationships. Cultural sensitivity was another critical factor that shaped the dynamics of negotiation and supplier relationship management. Operating in multinational contexts often involves engaging with diverse cultural norms, values, and communication styles. The ability to adapt to these differences and demonstrate cultural awareness emerged as a significant determinant of successful outcomes. While cultural diversity can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, it also provides an opportunity for organizations to enhance their global competency and build stronger ties with suppliers. Organizations that invest in cultural training and local representation are better positioned to navigate these complexities and leverage cultural diversity as a strength. Collaboration was highlighted as a fundamental approach to achieving shared goals and fostering innovation within supply chains. By working closely with suppliers, organizations can co-develop solutions, optimize processes, and enhance resilience against disruptions. However, achieving true collaboration often requires overcoming challenges such as power imbalances and conflicting priorities. Negotiation plays a pivotal role in setting the foundation for collaboration by establishing mutual expectations and creating an environment of trust and respect. Organizations that adopt collaborative approaches are better equipped to build sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships. The emphasis on risk management reflects the increasing volatility and uncertainty in global supply chains. The findings demonstrate that proactive risk mitigation strategies, including contingency planning and equitable risk-sharing agreements, are essential for maintaining supply chain stability. The integration of risk management into negotiations not only protects organizations from potential disruptions but also strengthens the overall resilience of the supply chain. This highlights the importance of a forward-looking approach to negotiations, where risk factors are systematically identified and addressed. Digital transformation emerged as a significant enabler of efficiency and transparency in supply chain management. The use of digital tools allows for real-time communication, data-driven decision-making, and enhanced monitoring of supplier performance. While these advancements offer numerous benefits, they also present challenges, including concerns about data security and the need for significant investments in infrastructure. Organizations must strike a balance between leveraging digital technologies to streamline operations and addressing the associated risks and costs. Power dynamics were found to influence the negotiation process significantly, with larger organizations often having greater leverage over smaller suppliers. While this can result in favorable terms for buyers, it can also lead to strained relationships if perceived as unfair by suppliers. The findings suggest that equitable negotiations, where both parties feel valued and respected, are more likely to result in long-term success. Balancing power dynamics requires a commitment to fairness and a willingness to consider the perspectives and needs of suppliers. Ethical considerations were identified as a growing priority in supplier relationship management, driven by increasing stakeholder expectations around sustainability, labor practices, and corporate responsibility. Integrating ethical practices into negotiations and supplier management not only enhances organizational reputation but also contributes to the broader goal of sustainable development. However, achieving this balance requires organizations to navigate complex trade-offs between ethical goals and cost considerations. Interpersonal skills were highlighted as a critical determinant of successful negotiations and supplier relationships. The ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, and manage conflicts constructively was consistently associated with positive outcomes. These skills enable negotiators to build rapport, address concerns, and foster trust, all of which are essential for sustaining strong relationships. The findings underscore the

importance of investing in the development of these skills as part of broader organizational strategies for managing supplier relationships. Overall, the discussion highlights the multifaceted nature of negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management within multinational supply chains. These processes are not only influenced by internal factors such as organizational priorities and capabilities but also by external dynamics, including cultural diversity, market volatility, and technological advancements. The findings emphasize the need for organizations to adopt holistic and adaptive approaches to negotiation and supplier management, prioritizing collaboration, ethical practices, and trust-building to navigate the complexities of a globalized supply chain environment.

6. Conclusions

The study concludes that negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management are pivotal elements in the functioning and success of multinational supply chains. These processes are inherently complex, shaped by a multitude of factors, including trust, cultural sensitivity, collaboration, risk management, digitalization, power dynamics, ethics, and interpersonal skills. Trust emerges as the foundation upon which effective relationships are built, fostering transparency, open communication, and long-term collaboration. However, maintaining trust requires consistent effort and ethical behavior, as even minor breaches can jeopardize partnerships. Cultural sensitivity further enhances these relationships by allowing organizations to navigate the nuances of diverse cultural contexts, turning potential challenges into opportunities for strengthening bonds with global suppliers. Collaboration was identified as an indispensable strategy for achieving shared goals and fostering innovation. By aligning objectives and working closely with suppliers, organizations can create mutual value and enhance resilience against disruptions. At the same time, proactive risk management strategies, including equitable risk-sharing and contingency planning, are essential for navigating the uncertainties of global supply chains. These approaches not only safeguard organizational interests but also contribute to the overall stability of supplier relationships. The integration of digital technologies has transformed negotiation and supplier management practices, offering enhanced efficiency, real-time communication, and data-driven insights. While these advancements provide significant benefits, they also introduce challenges such as data security concerns and the need for substantial investments. Balancing the advantages of digitalization with its potential risks is crucial for sustaining a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving global market. Power dynamics in negotiations remain a critical area of focus, as imbalances can impact the fairness and sustainability of supplier relationships. Organizations that prioritize equitable treatment and respect in negotiations are more likely to foster long-term partnerships based on mutual trust and commitment. Similarly, ethical considerations, including sustainability and corporate responsibility, have become integral to supplier management practices, reflecting growing stakeholder expectations. Balancing these ethical goals with operational and cost efficiency requires careful planning and prioritization. Interpersonal skills were underscored as vital to successful negotiations and supplier relationships. The ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, and manage conflicts constructively strengthens relationships and facilitates positive outcomes. These skills, combined with a strategic and adaptive approach to negotiation, enable organizations to navigate the complexities of multinational supply chains effectively. The findings highlight the interconnected nature of the factors influencing negotiation tactics and supplier relationship management. To thrive in a globalized and increasingly complex supply chain environment, organizations must adopt holistic, adaptive, and ethical strategies. By prioritizing trust, collaboration, cultural awareness, and technological innovation, organizations can build resilient and mutually beneficial supplier relationships, ensuring sustained success in a competitive global market.

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