

A Critical Review of Triadic Supply Chain

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Abstract

When researchers discuss the topic of supply chain management, they often emphasize the importance of viewing and managing the supply chain as a whole or as a system. However, past research has predominantly focused on individual dyads when developing theory for business-to-business relationships within the supply chain, with an assumption of *ceteris paribus* for all other relationships (Wathne and Heide 2004). More recently, some studies argue that a dyad is not the smallest unit of a supply chain network, and it is not realistic unless we begin to investigate a supply chain system as a network by examining the triad context. In short, although a dyadic focus is important in the process of theory development, the limitation of taking a purely dyadic focus is that critical factors within the system or network in which organizations operate are not considered.

A few studies (e.g., Choi & Linton, 2011; Wu & Choi, 2010; Choi and Kim, 2007; Wu & Choi, 2005; Choi et al., 2002; Kamath & Liker, 1994) began to consider the triadic interactions, buyer-supplier or supplier-supplier. They argued that supply chain research must incorporate the interactions between supply chain links. For instance, in Figure 1, the relationship between the two suppliers (B and C, or link BC) could affect the interactions between the buyer (A) and suppliers (B & C), links AB or AC. In reality, a buyer (A) could also influence the relationship between two suppliers (link BC). Essentially, this stream of studies examine the scenario of “triadic-two level” supply chain relationship.

Keyword : green supply chain management 、 environmental uncertainties 、 regulations 、 culture 、 legitimacy