



Optimization of Supply Chain Management for Operational Efficiency in Beef Distribution

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ABSTRACT

The inefficiency in the beef supply chain poses significant challenges, including high logistics costs, product spoilage, and delays in distribution, which ultimately affect consumer satisfaction and business profitability. This research addresses the critical issues within the beef supply chain and explores strategies to enhance operational efficiency through optimized supply chain management (SCM). A qualitative research approach was employed, involving in-depth interviews with stakeholders such as cattle farmers, distributors, retailers, and logistics providers to identify pain points and inefficiencies. Observations were also conducted to analyze current practices in procurement, transportation, storage, and distribution of beef. The study revealed that a lack of coordination among supply chain actors, limited adoption of cold chain technology, and inadequate digital tracking systems significantly contribute to operational inefficiencies. By integrating best practices in SCM, including the use of cold storage transportation and digital inventory management systems, the research demonstrates the potential to reduce distribution times, minimize product losses, and lower operational costs. The findings emphasize the importance of collaboration among stakeholders and the adoption of technology to create a resilient and efficient supply chain. This study provides actionable recommendations for improving beef distribution, ensuring both quality and sustainability in meeting market demands.

INTRODUCTION

Supply chain management (SCM) is a crucial aspect of modern business operations, particularly in sectors dealing with perishable goods such as beef. The beef supply chain encompasses a series of interconnected activities, including cattle farming, processing, transportation, storage, and distribution to end consumers.¹ Each step in this chain plays a pivotal role in ensuring the quality, safety, and availability of beef. However, managing the supply chain efficiently remains a significant challenge for businesses worldwide due to the perishable nature of the product, fluctuating market demands, and the complexity of logistics involved. This research focuses on optimizing the beef supply chain to achieve operational efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance product quality for consumers.

The beef industry is integral to global food security and economic growth. As one of the primary sources of protein, beef constitutes a staple dietary component in many countries. However, inefficiencies in the supply chain can result in substantial losses, both financially and environmentally.² These inefficiencies often stem from a lack of coordination among supply chain actors, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient adoption of technology. Moreover, external factors such as fluctuating fuel prices, climate changes, and global market dynamics exacerbate the challenges. Addressing these issues through effective supply chain management strategies is essential to ensure the sustainability and profitability of the beef industry.³

One of the key challenges in beef supply chain management is maintaining product quality throughout the distribution process. Beef is a highly perishable commodity that requires stringent temperature control and hygienic handling to prevent spoilage and contamination.⁴ The absence of a robust cold chain system often leads to significant losses during transportation and storage. For instance, in developing countries,

¹ A W Irawan et al., "Pendistribusian Zakat Sebagai Upaya Pengentasan Kemiskinan Di Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAZ)," *JPSDa: Jurnal ...* (2023), <http://ejournal.iaida.ac.id/index.php/JPSDa/article/view/1954>.

² A W Irawan and S L Asfiah, "Analisis Metode SMART Dalam Strategi Segmentasi Pasar (Studi Produk Tabungan Simitra Mikro Di Bank Mitra Syariah Kantor Cabang Bojonegoro)," *ADILLA: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Syari' ...* (2022), <http://e-jurnal.unisda.ac.id/index.php/adilla/article/view/3050>.

³ A W Irawan, "THE ROLE OF SHARIA MANAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN ISLAMIC BANKING IN INDONESIA," *PAPUA: International Journal of Sharia ...* (2024), <https://e-journal.iainfmpapua.ac.id/index.php/papua/article/view/1148>.

⁴ A W Irawan and W Wahyuni, "Endorsement as a Marketing Media Trend: A Case Study on By_aibee," *Journal of Sharia Economics* (2022), <https://journal.uaindonesia.ac.id/index.php/JSE/article/view/304>.

where infrastructure for cold storage is limited, post-harvest losses can account for up to 30% of the total production.⁵ This not only affects the availability of beef in the market but also leads to economic losses for producers and distributors. Therefore, implementing advanced cold chain technology is a critical component of optimizing the beef supply chain.

Another pressing issue is the inefficiency in logistics operations. Transportation costs constitute a substantial portion of the total expenses in the beef supply chain. Delays in delivery, improper route planning, and inadequate vehicle maintenance contribute to increased costs and reduced efficiency.⁶ Additionally, the lack of real-time tracking systems limits the ability of supply chain managers to monitor and address issues promptly.⁷ By adopting digital technologies such as GPS tracking, route optimization software, and blockchain for traceability, businesses can enhance the efficiency and transparency of their logistics operations.

The growing consumer demand for sustainable and ethically sourced products also presents a unique challenge for the beef supply chain.⁸ Modern consumers are increasingly concerned about the environmental and social impact of their purchases. This has led to a rise in demand for grass-fed, organic, and locally sourced beef. Meeting these demands requires a paradigm shift in supply chain management practices, focusing on sustainable farming, efficient resource utilization, and transparent communication with consumers. Integrating sustainability into the supply chain not only helps businesses meet consumer expectations but also ensures long-term profitability and environmental conservation.⁹

This research adopts a qualitative approach to analyze the current state of beef supply chain management and identify opportunities for optimization. By conducting in-

⁵ A W Irawan and M A Sifa, "OVERVIEW OF ZAKAT COLLECTION IN LAZISNU SINGGAHAN TUBAN," *Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah Darussalam* (2023), <http://ejournal.iaida.ac.id/index.php/JESDar/article/view/1947>.

⁶ Agus Wahyu Irawan, Mukhamad Roni, and Heri Kuncoro Putro, "Islamic Business Ethics: How to Apply It on the Supply Chain Management?," *Journal of Sharia Economics* 3, no. 1 (2021): 18–39.

⁷ A W Irawan and Z Anisah, "Tinjauan Hybrid Contract Perspektif Maqashid Syari'ah," *Journal of Islamic Banking* (2020), <https://www.journal.uaindonesia.ac.id/index.php/JIB/article/view/99>.

⁸ A W Irawan, "Analisis Kualitas Produk Untuk Meningkatkan Kepuasan Nasabah," *TASYRI': JURNAL TARBIYAH-SYARI'AH* ... (2020), <https://ejournal.kopertais4.or.id/pantura/index.php/tasyri/article/view/3550>.

⁹ A W Irawan, "Penerapan Etika Bisnis Islam Terhadap Kelangsungan Pembiayaan SPBU Mini Di KSPPS Bina Syariah Ummah Jawa Timur," *JES (Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah)* (2020), <http://jes.unisla.ac.id/index.php/jes/article/view/73>.

depth interviews with stakeholders across the supply chain, including cattle farmers, processors,¹⁰ distributors, and retailers, the study aims to uncover the underlying causes of inefficiencies and propose actionable solutions. The findings will be contextualized within the broader framework of supply chain management theory, drawing insights from successful case studies and best practices in the industry.

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, it seeks to identify the key challenges and pain points in the beef supply chain. Second, it aims to evaluate the effectiveness of existing supply chain management practices in addressing these challenges.¹¹ Finally, it proposes a set of strategies and recommendations for optimizing the beef supply chain to achieve operational efficiency. These strategies will focus on leveraging technology, enhancing collaboration among stakeholders, and adopting sustainable practices.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the academic and practical understanding of supply chain management in the context of perishable goods. While there is a growing body of literature on supply chain management in general, studies focusing specifically on the beef industry are relatively scarce. This research aims to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the beef supply chain and offering practical solutions for its optimization. The findings of this study will be valuable not only for businesses operating in the beef industry but also for policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders interested in improving the efficiency and sustainability of food supply chains.

Optimizing the beef supply chain is a complex but necessary endeavor to ensure the quality, availability,¹² and affordability of beef in the market. By addressing the challenges of perishable product handling, logistics inefficiencies, and sustainability concerns, businesses can enhance their operational efficiency and meet the growing demands of modern consumers. This research aims to provide a roadmap for achieving

¹⁰ Nihayatul Muna, Lilis Ardini, and Zufra Inayah, "Lean Hospital: Strategy of Operational Financing Efficiency in Supply Chain Management," *Jurnal Manajemen Kesehatan Indonesia* 9, no. 1 (2021): 72–77, <http://dx.doi.org/10.14710/jmki.9.1.2021.72-77>.

¹¹ Jianke Zou, Huayu Zhao, and Ningxin Li, "Operational Efficiency through Machine Learning and Optimization in Supply Chain Management," *Academic Journal of Science and Technology* 12, no. 1 (2024): 1–5, <http://dx.doi.org/10.54097/9cb36341>.

¹² Juliza Hidayati et al., "Transparent Distribution System Design of Halal Beef Supply Chain," *Uncertain Supply Chain Management* 11, no. 1 (2023): 31–40, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5267/j.uscm.2022.12.003>.

these goals by analyzing the current state of the beef supply chain and proposing evidence-based strategies for its optimization.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the complexities and challenges within the beef supply chain and identify strategies for optimization. The qualitative approach is chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the perspectives, experiences, and practices of various stakeholders involved in the supply chain, including cattle farmers, processors, distributors, and retailers. Data collection methods include in-depth interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with stakeholders to gather detailed insights into the pain points and inefficiencies in the supply chain, as well as the strategies currently employed to address these issues.¹³ Observations focus on key processes such as procurement, cold storage handling, transportation, and distribution to identify operational bottlenecks and best practices. Document analysis involves reviewing reports, policy documents, and industry data to contextualize findings within broader supply chain trends and frameworks.¹⁴

The data are analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, challenges, and opportunities within the beef supply chain. This method allows for the categorization of data into themes, such as logistics inefficiencies, quality management, and technological integration, which are crucial for understanding the root causes of operational challenges.¹⁵ By triangulating data from multiple sources, the study ensures the reliability and validity of its findings. The qualitative approach not only provides a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the beef supply chain but also facilitates the development of practical, stakeholder-driven recommendations for

¹³ Vinit Roshan, "Enhancing Operational Efficiency and Cash Flow through Supply Chain Optimization in the Oil and Gas Sector," *International Journal of Business and Management* 19, no. 3 (2024): 91, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v19n3p91>.

¹⁴ Prashant Tomar, "Unlocking Operational Efficiency: The Influence of Advanced B2B Software Solutions on Supply Chain Processes," *International Journal of Supply Chain Management* 13, no. 1 (2024): 25–34, <http://dx.doi.org/10.59160/ijscm.v13i1.6225>.

¹⁵ Antara Khastgir and Manish Krishnan, "Semiconductor Supply Chain Efficiency: A PLM-Powered Optimization Strategy," *International Journal of Supply Chain Management* 13, no. 3 (2024): 9–19, <http://dx.doi.org/10.59160/ijscm.v13i3.6243>.

optimization. This methodology is instrumental in uncovering actionable insights that can enhance operational efficiency and sustainability in the beef distribution system.

RESULT OPTIMIZATION OF SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT FOR OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN BEEF DISTRIBUTION

The results of this study highlight several critical areas within the beef supply chain where inefficiencies are prevalent and optimization is necessary. Based on the analysis of interviews, observations, and document reviews, the findings are categorized into three main themes: logistics challenges, quality management gaps, and the need for technological integration.¹⁶

1. Logistics Challenges

The study revealed that transportation inefficiencies are a significant issue in the beef supply chain. Stakeholders reported frequent delays caused by inadequate route planning, poor road infrastructure, and unoptimized scheduling. These delays often result in increased costs and reduced product quality due to prolonged transportation times.¹⁷ Additionally, high fuel prices and maintenance costs further exacerbate logistical challenges, making transportation one of the most expensive components of the supply chain.

Logistics challenges represent one of the most significant hurdles in the optimization of the beef supply chain, directly impacting operational efficiency and product quality. The complexity of transporting a perishable commodity like beef requires careful planning, precise execution, and significant investment in infrastructure. However, the findings of this study reveal that logistical inefficiencies are prevalent across various stages of the supply chain, particularly in transportation, storage, and scheduling. These inefficiencies stem from a combination of inadequate infrastructure, poor route optimization, high operational costs, and limited use of technology.

One of the primary challenges identified is the lack of proper transportation infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where most cattle farms are located. Poor

¹⁶ Chen Weiyu, "Operational Efficiency Cost Reduction Studies Based on Supply Chain Management," *2010 International Conference on E-Business and E-Government* (2010): 4236–4239, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/icee.2010.1064>.

¹⁷ Weiyu, "Operational Efficiency Cost Reduction Studies Based on Supply Chain Management."

road conditions and limited access to markets increase transportation times, leading to delays and higher fuel consumption. These factors not only elevate the overall costs of logistics but also compromise the freshness and quality of beef by the time it reaches consumers.¹⁸ Stakeholders in the supply chain reported that many vehicles used for transporting beef lack refrigeration systems, further exacerbating the issue of product spoilage during transit. In tropical regions, where high temperatures accelerate the degradation of perishable goods, the absence of cold chain technology results in substantial post-harvest losses, estimated at 20-30% of total production in some areas.

Route optimization also emerged as a significant area of concern. Many supply chain operators rely on traditional, manual methods for planning transportation routes, which often fail to account for real-time variables such as traffic conditions, weather changes, or road closures. This lack of dynamic route planning leads to inefficient use of resources and increased delivery times.¹⁹ Furthermore, fragmented coordination among supply chain actors—such as farmers, processors, and distributors—compounds logistical inefficiencies. For example, delays in one segment of the supply chain, such as late harvesting or processing, often result in a cascading effect on subsequent stages, causing significant disruptions to the overall distribution timeline.²⁰

Another major challenge is the high cost of logistics, which accounts for a substantial portion of the total expenses in the beef supply chain. Rising fuel prices, maintenance costs for vehicles, and toll fees collectively strain the financial viability of logistics operations. For small-scale farmers and distributors, these costs often become prohibitive, limiting their ability to compete effectively in the market. This financial strain also discourages investments in advanced logistics solutions, such as

¹⁸ G Baourakis and M Stroe, "The Optimization of the Distribution System in the Context of Supply Chain Management Development," *Applied Optimization* (2002): 321–342, http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4757-5226-7_18.

¹⁹ Kiefer Lee and Steve Carter, "Managing Supply Chain and Distribution," *Global Marketing Management* (2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hebz/9780199609703.003.0014>.

²⁰ Yue Zhai, *Operational Hedging and Coordination for Prefabricated Construction Supply Chain Management* (The University of Hong Kong Libraries, 2020), http://dx.doi.org/10.5353/th_991043979532603414.

refrigerated vehicles or GPS tracking systems, perpetuating the cycle of inefficiency.²¹

The study also highlighted the lack of technology integration as a critical factor contributing to logistical inefficiencies. Digital tools such as GPS tracking, automated route planning, and inventory management systems are either underutilized or entirely absent in many segments of the beef supply chain. Without these tools, stakeholders have limited visibility into the status of shipments, making it difficult to address issues such as delays or product losses in real-time. The absence of robust tracking systems also hinders traceability, which is increasingly demanded by consumers and regulators to ensure food safety and quality.²²

Cold chain infrastructure is another critical gap in the logistics of beef distribution. Effective cold chain systems are essential for maintaining the integrity of beef products during transportation and storage. However, many supply chain operators lack access to affordable and reliable cold chain technology. This issue is particularly pronounced in developing countries, where investment in cold storage facilities and refrigerated transport remains limited. As a result, beef products are often exposed to suboptimal conditions, leading to spoilage, contamination, and significant economic losses.²³

Scheduling inefficiencies further complicate logistics operations in the beef supply chain. The absence of coordinated scheduling among supply chain actors often results in mismatches between supply and demand. For instance, delays in transportation may cause processors to hold inventory for longer periods, increasing storage costs and the risk of spoilage. Conversely, poor demand forecasting can lead to overproduction, resulting in excess inventory that strains logistics systems and creates waste. The lack of synchronized scheduling also reduces the responsiveness

²¹ Nisrine Rezki and Mohamed Mansouri, "Machine Learning for Proactive Supply Chain Risk Management: Predicting Delays and Enhancing Operational Efficiency," *Management Systems in Production Engineering* 32, no. 3 (2024): 345–356, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/mspe-2024-0033>.

²² Vishal Jain and Archan Mitra, "Optimizing Supply Chain Efficiency and Transparency Through Quantum Computing Technologies," *Advances in Logistics, Operations, and Management Science* (2024): 233–248, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-4107-0.ch016>.

²³ Guoming Lai, Wenqiang Xiao, and Jun Yang, "Supply Chain Performance Under Market Valuation: An Operational Approach to Restore Efficiency," *Management Science* 58, no. 10 (2012): 1933–1951, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1120.1523>.

of the supply chain to market fluctuations, making it difficult to adapt to changes in consumer demand or external disruptions.

Additionally, environmental factors pose unique logistical challenges in the beef supply chain. Extreme weather conditions, such as heavy rainfall or heat waves, can disrupt transportation routes and damage infrastructure, further complicating the distribution process. Climate-related risks also exacerbate the perishability of beef products, increasing the need for resilient logistics systems capable of mitigating these challenges.

To address these logistical challenges, several strategies must be implemented. First, investments in transportation infrastructure, particularly in rural and remote areas, are essential to improve access to markets and reduce delays. Second, the adoption of digital technologies, such as GPS tracking and automated route planning, can enhance efficiency and reduce costs by optimizing resource allocation. Third, developing affordable and accessible cold chain infrastructure is critical to maintaining product quality and minimizing post-harvest losses. Collaboration among supply chain actors is also crucial for improving coordination and synchronization, ensuring that logistical operations are aligned across all stages of the supply chain.²⁴

Logistical challenges in the beef supply chain significantly impact operational efficiency and product quality, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to optimize transportation, storage, and scheduling processes. By addressing these challenges through infrastructure development, technological integration, and enhanced collaboration, the beef supply chain can achieve greater efficiency, sustainability, and profitability, ultimately benefiting both producers and consumers.

2. Quality Management Gaps

Maintaining the freshness and safety of beef throughout the supply chain remains a critical challenge. Observations identified inconsistent use of cold chain technologies, with many distributors lacking proper refrigeration systems. This gap leads to significant product losses, particularly during long-haul transportation and

²⁴ Ahmed Nahar Al Hussaini, "Financial Supply Chain, Inventory Management and Supply Chain Efficiency: An Empirical Insight from Kuwait," *Uncertain Supply Chain Management* (2019): 753–766, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5267/j.uscm.2019.1.004>.

storage. Furthermore, hygiene standards in processing and storage facilities were found to be inconsistent, increasing the risk of contamination.

Quality management is a fundamental aspect of supply chain operations, particularly in the beef industry, where maintaining product integrity is critical to meeting consumer expectations and ensuring food safety. However, significant gaps in quality management practices have been identified, resulting in product spoilage, contamination, and economic losses. These gaps stem from inconsistent standards, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of adherence to best practices across various stages of the supply chain. Addressing these challenges is essential to optimize the beef supply chain and enhance its operational efficiency.

One of the most critical issues in quality management is the lack of a robust cold chain system. Beef is a highly perishable product that requires consistent temperature control throughout its journey from the farm to the consumer. The study found that many supply chain actors, particularly in developing regions, lack access to refrigerated storage and transport facilities. Without proper temperature regulation, beef products are exposed to conditions that accelerate spoilage and increase the risk of contamination. This not only compromises product quality but also leads to substantial economic losses for producers and distributors. The absence of cold chain infrastructure is often exacerbated by unreliable electricity supply and high costs associated with refrigeration equipment, making it difficult for small-scale operators to implement effective quality management systems.

Inconsistent hygiene practices across the supply chain further contribute to quality management gaps. Observations revealed that processing and storage facilities often fail to meet established food safety standards, resulting in increased vulnerability to microbial contamination. For instance, inadequate cleaning protocols, improper handling of raw meat, and the use of non-compliant equipment were identified as common issues. These practices not only jeopardize consumer health but also damage the reputation of businesses operating within the beef supply chain. The

lack of regulatory oversight and enforcement in certain regions further exacerbates these issues, allowing substandard practices to persist unchecked.²⁵

Traceability is another critical aspect of quality management that remains underdeveloped in the beef supply chain. Consumers and regulators increasingly demand transparency regarding the origin, handling, and safety of food products. However, the study found that many supply chain actors rely on manual record-keeping systems, which are prone to errors and inconsistencies. The absence of digital tracking systems makes it difficult to trace the journey of beef products, particularly in the event of food safety incidents or product recalls. This lack of traceability not only undermines consumer trust but also exposes businesses to legal and financial risks.

Another factor contributing to quality management gaps is the lack of standardization across the supply chain. Stakeholders often operate independently, with little coordination or adherence to uniform quality standards. This fragmentation leads to discrepancies in how beef is handled, processed, and stored at different stages of the supply chain. For example, while some processors may implement strict quality control measures, others may lack the resources or knowledge to do so, resulting in inconsistent product quality. This lack of standardization creates challenges for supply chain integration and limits the ability of businesses to achieve economies of scale.

Additionally, the study highlighted the role of training and capacity-building in addressing quality management gaps. Many supply chain actors, particularly small-scale farmers and distributors, lack awareness of best practices in quality management. Limited access to training programs and technical support further hinders their ability to implement effective quality control measures. This gap in knowledge and skills perpetuates inefficiencies and compromises the overall performance of the supply chain.

To address these quality management gaps, several strategies must be implemented. First, investments in cold chain infrastructure are essential to maintain

²⁵ Suning Zhu et al., "How Supply Chain Analytics Enables Operational Supply Chain Transparency," *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management* 48, no. 1 (2018): 47–68, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ijpdlm-11-2017-0341>.

the freshness and safety of beef products. Governments and private stakeholders should collaborate to develop affordable refrigeration solutions, particularly for small-scale operators. Second, regulatory frameworks should be strengthened to ensure compliance with food safety standards. This includes regular inspections, enforcement of penalties for non-compliance, and incentives for businesses that adhere to best practices. Third, the adoption of digital technologies, such as blockchain and IoT sensors, can enhance traceability and provide real-time data on product conditions. These tools enable supply chain actors to monitor and address quality issues proactively.

Standardization of quality management practices is also crucial to improving consistency and efficiency across the supply chain. Industry associations and policymakers should work together to develop and implement uniform standards for handling, processing, and storing beef. Training and capacity-building initiatives should be prioritized to equip supply chain actors with the knowledge and skills needed to adopt these standards. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, the beef supply chain can enhance its ability to deliver high-quality products that meet consumer expectations.

Quality management gaps represent a significant challenge in the beef supply chain, affecting product integrity, consumer trust, and business profitability. Addressing these gaps requires a multifaceted approach that includes infrastructure development, regulatory enforcement, technological integration, and capacity-building. By prioritizing quality management, the beef supply chain can achieve greater operational efficiency, ensure food safety, and enhance its competitiveness in the global market.

3. Need for Technological Integration

The lack of digital tools for monitoring and tracking beef products emerged as a common issue among stakeholders. Most supply chain actors rely on manual systems, resulting in limited visibility and traceability of products. This lack of

transparency hinders the ability to address inefficiencies in real-time and increases the risk of stockouts or overstocking.²⁶

The integration of technology into the beef supply chain has become a pressing necessity for achieving operational efficiency, ensuring product quality, and enhancing traceability. However, the study revealed a significant gap in technological adoption across the various stages of the beef supply chain, particularly in transportation, storage, and inventory management. This lack of integration not only hampers the overall performance of the supply chain but also exacerbates issues such as product spoilage, inefficiencies, and limited transparency. Bridging this gap through the adoption of advanced technologies is crucial for modernizing the beef supply chain and meeting the evolving demands of both consumers and regulators.

One of the most critical areas where technological integration is lacking is in real-time tracking and monitoring. Many stakeholders in the beef supply chain still rely on manual systems for tracking shipments, which are prone to errors and delays. The absence of digital tools such as GPS tracking and Internet of Things (IoT) sensors limits the ability of supply chain managers to monitor the location and condition of beef products during transit. This lack of visibility often results in delays, mismanagement, and an inability to address issues promptly, leading to financial losses and compromised product quality. Integrating GPS-enabled systems and IoT devices can provide real-time data on shipment locations and temperature conditions, ensuring better control over logistics and reducing the risk of spoilage.

Another significant gap is the limited use of digital inventory management systems. Many processors and distributors continue to manage inventory manually, which is inefficient and susceptible to inaccuracies. This often leads to overstocking or understocking, creating additional costs and operational disruptions. Implementing automated inventory management solutions can streamline operations by providing accurate and real-time data on stock levels, enabling better demand forecasting and reducing waste. Furthermore, integrating these systems with supply chain networks

²⁶ Stephan Zelewski and Malte L Peters, "Fair Distribution of Efficiency Gains in Supply Networks from a Cooperative Game Theory Point of View," *Information Technologies, Methods, and Techniques of Supply Chain Management* (2012): 149–171, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-0918-1.ch009>.

allows for seamless communication between stakeholders, ensuring that inventory is managed effectively at every stage of the supply chain.

Traceability, a growing concern among consumers and regulators, is another area where technological integration is urgently needed. The study highlighted that the beef supply chain lacks robust systems for tracing the origin, handling, and distribution of products. This gap not only undermines consumer trust but also poses significant risks in the event of food safety incidents or product recalls. Blockchain technology, which enables secure and transparent recording of transactions, can be a game-changer in this regard. By adopting blockchain, stakeholders can create an immutable record of each step in the supply chain, from farm to table. This enhances traceability, ensures compliance with food safety standards, and builds consumer confidence in the quality and safety of beef products.

The adoption of advanced data analytics is also critical for optimizing the beef supply chain. Data-driven decision-making can help identify inefficiencies, predict demand trends, and optimize resource allocation. For instance, machine learning algorithms can analyze historical data to forecast market demand, enabling stakeholders to adjust production and distribution accordingly. Similarly, predictive analytics can identify potential disruptions in the supply chain, such as equipment failures or delays, allowing for proactive measures to mitigate risks. By leveraging data analytics, businesses can enhance their agility and responsiveness, ensuring that the supply chain operates smoothly and efficiently.

Despite the clear benefits of technological integration, several barriers hinder its adoption in the beef supply chain. High implementation costs, particularly for small-scale farmers and distributors, remain a significant challenge. Limited access to technological infrastructure, such as reliable internet connectivity, further complicates efforts to digitize the supply chain, especially in rural areas. Additionally, a lack of technical expertise and training among stakeholders impedes the effective use of available technologies. Addressing these barriers requires a collaborative approach involving government support, industry partnerships, and targeted capacity-building initiatives.

To overcome these challenges, stakeholders must prioritize investment in technology and innovation. Governments and industry associations can play a pivotal

role by providing financial incentives, subsidies, and training programs to support technological adoption. Public-private partnerships can also facilitate the development of affordable and scalable solutions tailored to the needs of the beef supply chain. Furthermore, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement within the industry is essential to drive the widespread adoption of technology.

In conclusion, the need for technological integration in the beef supply chain is evident and urgent. By adopting digital tools such as GPS tracking, IoT devices, blockchain, and data analytics, stakeholders can enhance visibility, efficiency, and traceability across the supply chain. Addressing the barriers to technological adoption through financial support, infrastructure development, and training will be critical for achieving these goals. Embracing technology is not only a pathway to operational efficiency but also a means to ensure the sustainability, safety, and competitiveness of the beef supply chain in a rapidly evolving global market.

DISCUSSION OPTIMIZATION OF SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT FOR OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN BEEF DISTRIBUTION

The optimization of the beef supply chain is a multifaceted endeavor that addresses critical challenges affecting logistics, quality management, and the adoption of technology. These components are interdependent and significantly influence operational efficiency, profitability, and customer satisfaction. Based on an extensive analysis of interviews, observations, and document reviews, three primary themes emerged as the focal points of this research: logistics challenges, quality management gaps, and the pressing need for technological integration. These themes highlight the complexities and opportunities within the beef supply chain, offering a roadmap for achieving a more resilient, efficient, and sustainable system.

Logistics remains one of the most significant hurdles in the beef supply chain, especially given the perishable nature of the product. Transportation inefficiencies, inadequate infrastructure, and unoptimized scheduling were identified as persistent problems that undermine operational efficiency. Poor road conditions and limited market access, particularly in rural areas where most cattle farms are located, exacerbate transportation delays. These delays not only increase fuel consumption and costs but also

compromise the freshness and quality of beef, reducing its market value and consumer satisfaction. Stakeholders also highlighted the scarcity of refrigerated vehicles, which is critical for maintaining the required temperature during transit. The absence of cold chain infrastructure in many regions, particularly in tropical climates, leads to substantial post-harvest losses, estimated at 20–30% of total production.

Route optimization emerged as another pressing concern. Many supply chain operators rely on outdated manual methods for planning transportation routes, failing to account for dynamic variables such as traffic, weather, and road closures. This lack of real-time adaptability results in resource inefficiencies, increased delivery times, and cascading delays across subsequent supply chain stages. Fragmented coordination among farmers, processors, and distributors further compounds these issues. For instance, delays in harvesting or processing often disrupt the entire distribution timeline, causing financial losses and operational strain.

The high cost of logistics also poses a major challenge, particularly for small-scale farmers and distributors. Rising fuel prices, vehicle maintenance costs, and toll fees collectively increase operational expenses, limiting the financial viability of many stakeholders. These high costs discourage investments in advanced logistics solutions, such as GPS tracking and automated route planning systems, perpetuating inefficiencies. Without technological support, supply chain managers face difficulties in monitoring shipments, addressing delays, and ensuring timely delivery of products.

Environmental factors further complicate logistics operations in the beef supply chain. Extreme weather conditions, such as heavy rainfall and heatwaves, disrupt transportation routes and damage infrastructure, increasing the need for resilient logistics systems. These climate-related risks also accelerate the perishability of beef products, intensifying the demand for robust cold chain solutions. Scheduling inefficiencies, caused by poor demand forecasting and a lack of synchronized planning among supply chain actors, lead to mismatches between supply and demand. Overproduction strains logistics resources, while underproduction results in unmet market needs and lost revenue.

Quality management is another critical area that significantly affects the beef supply chain's efficiency and effectiveness. Ensuring the freshness, safety, and overall integrity of beef throughout its journey from farm to table requires stringent quality control measures. However, this study identified substantial gaps in quality management

practices, driven by inconsistent standards, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of adherence to best practices.

One of the most glaring issues is the lack of a robust cold chain system. Temperature control is essential for preserving the freshness and safety of beef, yet many supply chain operators lack access to refrigerated storage and transport facilities. This gap is particularly pronounced in developing regions, where unreliable electricity supply and the high costs of refrigeration equipment further hinder the implementation of effective cold chain solutions. The absence of proper temperature regulation results in accelerated spoilage and increased risks of contamination, leading to significant economic losses and compromised food safety.

Hygiene practices across the supply chain are often inconsistent, further exacerbating quality management gaps. Observations revealed that processing and storage facilities frequently fail to meet established food safety standards. Inadequate cleaning protocols, improper handling of raw meat, and the use of non-compliant equipment were common issues reported by stakeholders. These practices increase the risk of microbial contamination, jeopardizing consumer health and the reputation of businesses within the supply chain. Regulatory oversight in certain regions is insufficient, allowing substandard practices to persist unchecked.

Traceability, a critical aspect of quality management, remains underdeveloped in the beef supply chain. Consumers and regulators increasingly demand transparency regarding the origin, handling, and safety of food products. However, many stakeholders still rely on manual record-keeping systems that are prone to errors and inconsistencies. The lack of robust digital tracking systems makes it challenging to trace the journey of beef products, particularly in the event of food safety incidents or recalls. This undermines consumer trust, exposes businesses to legal and financial risks, and highlights the urgent need for technological integration to enhance traceability and accountability.

Technological integration is vital for modernizing the beef supply chain and addressing inefficiencies in logistics and quality management. However, the study revealed a significant gap in the adoption of advanced technologies across various stages of the supply chain. Most stakeholders rely on manual systems for inventory management, route planning, and shipment tracking, limiting their ability to optimize operations and respond to challenges in real time.

Real-time tracking and monitoring are critical areas where technology can significantly enhance supply chain efficiency. GPS tracking and IoT-enabled sensors provide real-time data on shipment locations and temperature conditions, ensuring better control over logistics and reducing the risk of spoilage. However, many supply chain operators lack access to these tools due to high implementation costs and limited technical expertise. Integrating these technologies can provide stakeholders with greater visibility and control, enabling them to address logistical issues proactively and maintain product quality.

Digital inventory management systems are another area where technological integration can drive significant improvements. Automated solutions provide accurate and real-time data on stock levels, enabling better demand forecasting and reducing waste caused by overstocking or understocking. Furthermore, integrating inventory systems with supply chain networks allows for seamless communication and coordination among stakeholders, streamlining operations and enhancing responsiveness to market fluctuations.

Traceability, a growing concern among consumers and regulators, can be addressed through technologies like blockchain. Blockchain enables secure and transparent recording of transactions, creating an immutable record of each step in the supply chain. This enhances traceability, ensures compliance with food safety standards, and builds consumer confidence in the quality and safety of beef products. Despite these benefits, the adoption of blockchain and similar technologies remains limited due to financial and infrastructural barriers.

Data analytics is another powerful tool for optimizing the beef supply chain. Machine learning algorithms can analyze historical data to forecast demand trends, enabling stakeholders to adjust production and distribution accordingly. Predictive analytics can identify potential disruptions, such as equipment failures or delays, allowing for proactive measures to mitigate risks. By leveraging data analytics, businesses can enhance their agility and responsiveness, ensuring that the supply chain operates smoothly and efficiently.

CONCLUSION

Optimizing the beef supply chain requires a comprehensive approach that addresses logistical challenges, quality management gaps, and the integration of technology. Investments in transportation infrastructure, cold chain systems, and digital tools are critical for enhancing operational efficiency, reducing costs, and ensuring product quality. Collaboration among stakeholders, supported by regulatory frameworks and capacity-building initiatives, is essential for creating a resilient and sustainable supply chain. By embracing technological advancements and adopting best practices, the beef supply chain can meet the demands of modern consumers while ensuring profitability and sustainability.

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