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REVIEW OF THE PECULIARITIES OF BUSINESS LOGISTICS PROJECTS MANAGEMENT LEADING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. Peculiarities of business logistics are related to sustainable transferring processes, which has always been a mundane task of trade processes. The lack of obstruction of the constant flow of this operation causes disruption to the whole economy and can lead not only to the loss of the foremost profits but also negatively influence the sustainable business logistics development. In pursuance of a strong logistical basis, any business entity should have a variety of practices for managing projects of this kind. Unfortunately, recent scientific explorations overlooked the importance of sustainable project management factors, especially during the Covid-19 situation, and rarely focused on how the implementation of these projects changed in the business logistics over the past few years. Based on a scientific literature review, a set of factors influencing sustainable business logistics projects management both externally and internally was identified. Study results showed that external factors influencing sustainability were related to environmental expenditure, local procurement, and the presence of the market as well as the internal connecting reduced resource exploitation, strategy and project life cycle towards rendering effective business logistics projects for the companies operating mainly on third-party logistics (3PL) and ground transport basis.

Keywords: business logistics, business project, business project management, factors, sustainability, sustainable development.

JEL Classification: M1, O22, Q01, Q56.

Introduction

In the complexity of a trade process, logistics takes its fundamental part to fulfill essential party demands. Having a system of actions that could realize the challenges of any transportation process gives distinctive benefits to any company. The intricacy of business logistics can become a proprietary asset hard to replicate and therefore can create an additional value to any form of business (Vidrova et al., 2019). United States stock market research indicated the transportation sector to have overall the biggest gross margin of 77.46% by the third quarter of the year 2021, while the average net margin by the third quarter of 2021 was 7.72% (Figure 1) – making companies even more successful than capital goods producers (CSIMarket, Inc., 2021). Furthermore, the European Union identified a constant development of annual road freight transport since 2013 (Eurostat, 2021), defining that freight forwarding should not be considered a stagnating part of the largest economies of the world (United Nations Statistics Division, 2020). It is indeed a constantly fluctuating part of the global exchange that can be conditioned by various factors. For instance, the Covid-19 pandemic statistically affected sea freight negatively (Xu et al., 2021) in the Chinese market, creating a prodigious sea container shortage in the countries ports. This caused more than 300% profit growth for Chinese sea freight companies and predicted the fastest development of these companies in the entire world trade community (Knowler, 2021). Evidently, this made an inconvenience for any business entity as lead times elongated in the commercial sector, causing the loss of potential profits, proving that "competences of the logistics and supply chain management professionals are more important than physical infrastructure [of the company] …" (Cvetić et al., 2019). United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), which had its' recent summit in October 2021 in Glasgow, United Kingdom, had some notable conclusions, one of which to call the participating parties to accelerate the substitution use for

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fossil fuels (Sharma, 2021), which were the main fuels used by the transport industry. The upcoming governmental rules in compliance with the following document will mean that logistics will experience inevitable drastic changes in the forthcoming period worldwide, and the experience of good business logistics project management will be much in need.

Scientists rarely discussed the potential applications of business project management disciplinaries in projects involving freight forwarding (Belantová et al., 2019). As a result, it created a research limitation in the overall subject of project management as transportation of some kind invariably impedes most of the business projects. There was not enough investigation in the field of sustainable business logistics project management to find an equilibrium in these types of projects to keep them both cost and time effective and what could determine those alterations (Björklund & Forslund, 2018). A lack of sustainable measurements was provided either of how methodologically logistics project management could face the sector's utmost challenges, such as the Covid-19 or upcoming climate change policies (Magruk, 2018).

This study aimed to identify crucial external and internal business logistics factors in project management influencing sustainable business logistics development. This study explored both external and internal factors influencing business logistics project management sustainability through the scientific literature review. After analyzing the given factors, conclusions were presented concerning the increment of the overall effectiveness of the business logistics project management. This scientific exploration also provided a direction for further research in this field.

1. Project management

A project can be determined as a value-seeking group of processes involving different opportunities with the potential to achieve preset goals (Eskerod et al., 2018). It could be considered as a series of actions to increase a subject's sustainability through different phases of challenging goals (Kivilä et al., 2017).

Business can be described as an organizational entity searching for a profitable activity (Ward, 2020) that operates in a designated market, area, or by a custom notion and requires vocational or monetary contribution from its' members (Hayes, 2021). By combining business and project perspectives, a business project can be defined as a systematic set of processes made by a business entity while varying "terms of benefits, investments, uncertainness and environmental and social impacts" (Dutra et al., 2016).

Business projects obligate for constant management as specific objectives with their own terms and budget are required to be efficiently and pliably optimized (Okechukwu & Egbo, 2017) in any business project. Business project management facilitates controlling the quantity of resources and the portfolio in coordinating numerous business projects, lowering the possibility of risks and handling issues, both extraordinary and commonly occurring (Hyväri, 2014). Every business process can be designed by this discipline of business project management (Calvert, 2021) and usually employs project-based professionals to arrange every part of business project management (Huemann et al., 2019). Therefore, business structures have project management offices – it can be described as the company's leading arranger of business projects (Silvius, 2021), where different members can pursue targets in the designated area of choice. This means that to manage business projects, a company should develop a set of processes that can be obtained with the integration of business project management professionals. As a result, project management is a discipline in which companies take control of their substantial activities, achieving a profitable enterprise with the help of internal structural units of an organization.

Project management is beneficial for any business entity as it can lower the risks of mishandling any business task while systemizing by a multiple set of actions with the contribution of project managers. The purpose of project management in business organizations can also be seen as delivering a better methodology for other structural compositions of a company, such as logistics, leading to sustainable development.

2. Business logistics project management

As a descriptive part of a company, logistics take responsibility for transferring the merchandise and offer management for freight forwarding, warehousing, distribution, and other transport-related economic activities (Arif & Jawab, 2018). A constant flow of logistics accounts even for the countries' GDP expansion, meaning that this part is crucial in any organizational development (Sénquiz-Díaz, 2021). Logistics can be divided into two main parts – logistics service providers and users. Business logistics focuses on the possibilities of transport development to increase a company's distinctiveness in any market (Richnák & Porubanová, 2017). It is one of the uttermost significant parts of the global economy as outlays for the whole logistics industry are enormous and constantly growing, even despite a drop in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 1). Logistics industry costs grew approximately 4.76% since 2016 in the United States with a drop of 2.15% in 2020 due to global market reaction to the ongoing consequences of the pandemic (Figure 1), but reconditioned and now forms 9.47% of

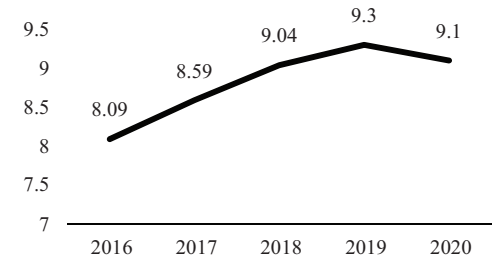

Figure 1. Logistics industry costs worldwide from 2016 to 2020 in trillion US dollars (source: Mazareanu, 2021)

total GDP of one of the world's biggest economies (United States Bureau of Economical Analysis, 2021).

Logistics trade had an average net margin growth of 8.34% (Figure 2). Overall, these statistics proved that business logistics cannot be neglected and should be considered a possible opportunity for lucrative growth for the company itself. Business logistics projects can focus either on the development of logistics, including construction, approaches to handle the goods, packaging, distribution, customs, etc. (Ključnikov & Jűnger, 2013) and in the freight forwarding part by sea, air or road transport and the substantial improvement of the relations between the logistics services providers (van Heeswijk et al., 2019). These critical segments of any business entity – logistics and project management – are commonly combined to create a crucial part in logistics management represented as business logistics project management.

Logistics projects are a pivotal part of managing any logistical set of processes and require constant supervision, which business logistics project management can ensure of. Only a well-managed logistics business project can become a distinctive asset as it increases customer satisfaction and maintains delivery requirements and others (Pisz, 2011).

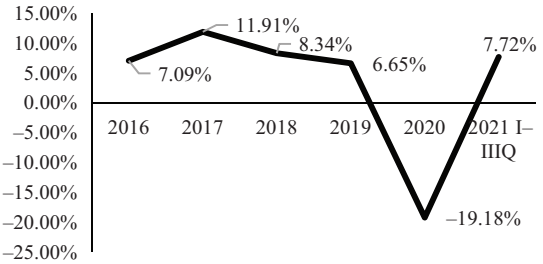

Figure 2. Net margin change in the US stock market in the transportation sector, percentage (source: CsiMarket, Inc., 2021)

A company with skillfully established business logistics project management can guarantee a constant flow of inbound and outbound logistics and have beneficial commitments with other contributing logistical companies (Jenkins, 2020). The primary purpose of business logistics project management is to ensure that transportation activities are handled well within the given period and budget.

3. Sustainability in business logistics

Sustainability can be interpreted through various perspectives. Different outlooks of sustainability can be found through recent scientific work, such as tourism as a part of sustainability (Force et al., 2018), sustainability as a leadership subject towards the economy, society, and the environment (Fry & Egel, 2021) or a fundamental part of any complex operation within the targets of steadiness (Jorat & Manousiouthakis, 2019). However, according to Kantabura (2020), it might signify accountability of a subject for sustainable development in an ongoing pathway (Kantabura, 2020). In an organization, sustainability can focus both on the achievement of milestones or satisfaction of stakeholders (Ceptureanu et al., 2017) or augment the company's withstand regarding social and environmental matters (Kantabura, 2020), meaning that sustainability has to be necessarily discussed (Martens & Carvalho, 2016) for a company in order to be considered a responsible one. The broader research area of sustainability was pressuring logistics as environmental, economic, or social factors that can enhance or disfigure the execution of logistics itself.

Sustainability in business logistics project management must first be assessed if any issues can be identified within a project. These concerns may contribute to a company's effectiveness, efficiency, profitability, or distinctiveness (Martens & Carvalho, 2016). Sustainability was usually discussed in logistics project management when uncertainty became a matter, and it must be addressed, even if some outcomes could not be predicted (Chawla et al., 2018). It must also be clearly addressed as logistics costs can be ranked as second before the goods in terms of companies' expenditure and have a substantial environmental impact on overall company's carbon footprint – this was why it had to become a key area for projects to be more efficient and proficient (Dey et al., 2011).

Recent research suggested that the environmental part of logistics sustainability could be developed by adopting eco-innovations (Orji et al., 2019) or optimizing current supply chain networks (Moshood & Sorooshian, 2021). This study focused mainly on sustainability as a part of companies' mindset to keep the business logistics projects effective, cost-efficient, and as less environmentally impactful as possible. The social part of the sustainability of business logistics project management will not be considered while obtaining better-targeted outcomes from this research.Based on the review results of the external and internal factors influencing business projects' sustainability management, many studies explored how sustainability was needed to be undoubtedly appraised to implement it to the project management practices (Table 1). For instance, there were compelling suggestions that business information systems incremented the efficiency towards sustainability (Muntean, 2018) and international business standard systems could become a success factor while applying sustainability to a project (Perales et al., 2018).

Other researchers delved into a broader understanding of the main factors determining business project sustainability management, including uncertainties in any project that needed to be clarified with sustainability measures (Brink, 2017). Some researchers suggested that collaboration might be a key to sustainable project management (Larsson & Larsson, 2020), while others confirmed that sustainability and project success had a similarity and hence could not be denied regarding the benefits for one another (Khalifeh et al., 2020).

Table 1. Examples of prior studies exploring business project management factors influencing sustainability (created by the authors based on previous scientific studies)

Author, Year	Research variables	Research findings	Research limitations	Sector/Area
Dobrovolskienė and Tamošiūnienė (2016)	Project sustainability index	Identification of 15 criteria for construction project sustainability.	Lack of implementation in practice	Construction industry
Brink (2017)	Management of uncertainty in complex projects	Exploration and exploitation need to be present to manage uncertainty for the sustainability of complex projects.	No generalization, research is limited to the selected sector	Offshore wind farm industry
Marnewick (2017)	Sustainability incorporation to information systems	Institutions of higher education can incorporate sustainability into their curricula and make aware of how sustainability can be incorporated into projects.	No confirmatory factor analysis	Project management professionals
Kudratova, Huang, and Zhou (2018)	Methodological implementations and cases study of sustainability	Optimal project selection is crucial to sustaining competitiveness, as well as consideration of sustainability costs is needed for sustainable project investment.	The implementation only in one sector	Investment banking
Muntean (2018)	Economic profitability and transparency, environmental sustainability	Business intelligence systems include the sustainability dimension, which is a part of business strategy and corporate data.	Lack of implementation in different business environments	Abstract corporate sustainability
Perales, Marcos, Ruiz, and Lázaro (2018)	Management system certifications that influence sustainability in projects	There was a clear relationship between the management systems standards and sustainability, positively impacting project success.	The implementation only on one sector, limited criteria consideration.	Spanish energy sector
Khalifeh, Farrell, and Al-edenat (2020)	Relationship between project sustainable management (PSM) and project success	The relationship between PSM and project success is inadequately addressed in scientific literature, but research marks that PSM does support project success.	Limited company reports, geographical bias	Project sustainable management
Larsson and Larsson (2020)	Collaborative business arrangements	A high degree of collaboration and its' dimensions affect sustainable project management.	No conclusion generalization on other sectors	Public infrastructure in a Swedish municipality
Toljaga-Nikolić, Todorović, Dobrota, Obradović, and Obradović (2020)	Sustainability concepts and strategies	Projects managed under a certain methodology can have sustainability introduced, but it does not have the same influence on all groups of subprocesses.	Generalization of agile methodologies	Project management professionals
Kostalova and McGrath (2021)	Project management maturity models in relation to sustainability	Sustainability is a building block of project management maturity.	No practical bias	Scientific research

A general limitation among the prior work exploring business projects' sustainability management – there was a considerable lack of practical implementation of propositions for sustainability management. This gap proved that sustainability in project management was not being held accountable enough and needed further enactment to achieve a high degree of sustainable management and effectively manage the company's economic and environmental impacts.

4. External and internal business project management factors that influence sustainability

Martens and Carvalho (2016) gave a jumpstart for other researchers to continue exploring business project management factors influencing sustainability. Since then, more eminent researchers have identified external and internal business project management factors that influence sustainability (Table 2).

It can be presumed that external factors were related to local outsourcing with the need for public policy and compliance to achieve sustainability (Marnewick, 2017). Governmental policy implementation could be a way of achieving that (Stoyanova et al., 2018). Still, it must be completed in an evaluated market presence (Kostalova & McGrath, 2021) while making the whole sustainability processing much easier for businesses of various kinds. Some external factors were related to environmental protection by creating a low carbon economy (Kudratova et al., 2018). Still, there should be more accountability for the lack of subsidies preventing businesses from accessing green solutions (Toljaga-Nikolić et al., 2020).

Table 2. External and internal business project management factors influencing sustainability (created by the authors based on previous scientific studies)

Author, Year	External business project management factors influencing sustainability	Internal business project management factors influencing sustainability
Dobrovolskienė and Tamošiūnienė (2016)	– Project declared of general interest – Local workers involved in construction, operation, and maintenance processes. – Construction time	– Water consumption – GHG emissions – Use of durable materials – Energy consumption – Reduction of direct and indirect costs – Maintenance costs
Brink (2017)	– Synergetic organization	– Flow of processes – Hardcore project unit integration – Lack of sub-optimizing
Marnewick (2017)	– Public policy and compliance – Local procurement	– Direct financial benefits – Business agility – Reduced resource exploitation
Kudratova, Huang, and Zhou (2018)	– Sustainability cost – Low carbon economy – Competitiveness – Critical thresholds – Green growth	– Investments in renewable energy projects – Maximum or/and positive investment return by employing sustainability – Positive net cash flow – Sustainability project expenditures and outlays cost – Available capital – Project life cycle
Muntean (2018)	– Costs of environmental management	– Personnel costs – Number of green technology development projects – Costs of environmental product innovations
Perales, Marcos, Ruiz, and Lázaro (2018)	– Management of environmental impacts – Business standard certification – Environmental policy management	– Energy efficiency, use, and consumption – Financial and economic performance – Natural resources savings – Environmental commitment and responsibility
Stoyanova, Bartos, and Petkova (2018)	– Climate factors – State institutions, associations, and organizations influence – Access to capital markets – Labor market	–
Khalifeh, Farrell, and Al-edenat (2020)	– Creation of new markets and technology – Future preparation	– Strategic goals – Project efficiency – Completion of agreed deliverables within budget and time
Larsson and Larsson (2020)	– Third-party procedures – Development work	– Project setting – Procurement procedure
Toljaga-Nikolić, Todorović, Dobrota, Obradović, and Obradović (2020)	– Lack of subsidies – Inaccessible "green" solutions	– Financial constraints – Lack of knowledge of sustainability principles – Outdated sustainability solutions
Kostalova and McGrath (2021)	– Market presence	– Supplier environmental assessment

These external factors should be considered with the future preparation while creating sustainable markets and technology, which could define the whole sustainability subject in business (Khalifeh et al., 2020). By generalizing these external parameters, it could be assumed that was a significant shortage of governmental involvement in systemizing sustainability measures, and accessibility to green solutions should be undertaken with resolutions to the global markets.

Internal factors influencing business projects' sustainability management were related to the use of materials and reduction of costs for resources and maintenance (Dobrovolskienė & Tamošiūnienė, 2016). This gave a prospect of positive returns and remarkable net cash flow (Kudratova et al., 2018). However, general project management practices should be considered to sustainability measures (Toljaga-Nikolić et al., 2020), and businesses should be agile reacting to constant market changes and adapt to its' patterned behavior (Marnewick, 2017). A suitable practice of supplier environmental assessment can be made to decrease the environmental impact of a business project (Kostalova & McGrath, 2021) while having clearly identified strategies towards sustainable management (Khalifeh et al., 2020). Procurement procedures,

such as selective supplier analysis, could be utilized for a sustainable project setting (Larsson & Larsson, 2020) and alterations in the human resources could be amended to intervene in internal research of sustainability optimization (Muntean, 2018). Consumption of goods and services was the greatest challenge for any company while pursuing sustainability internally. However, other internal enhancements such as implementing sustainable management of an organization could be examined as a proportionate tool to achieve sustainability.

Overall, environmental and financial factors influencing business projects' sustainability management were identified while skipping social settings due to the study's focus on the environmental and economic part of sustainability. External factors influencing sustainability are mostly linked to the public policy implementation, while internal factors' analysis showed that companies struggle with defiance of utility usage. This research provided a direction for future research to find a suitable business model, where economic and environmental aspects of sustainability would be priorities while upkeeping with abiding local or international market conditions.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This study focused on theoretical implications for logistics business practitioners, scientists, and society linking management and sustainability of business logistics projects. There are many approaches to scrutinize the whole topic of sustainability – from the disciplinary perspective to the generalization of a set of actions considered sustainable for its' subject. Still, when it comes to business sustainability, the first appeal should be to project management ventures in a company. A project in business could be named as a common set of practices obtaining advantageous results to develop a significant part of a business entity (Okechukwu & Egbo, 2017), while persistent control is obligatory to obtain sustainability measures in the company (Kudratova et al., 2018). Business logistics project management was rarely discussed in recent scientific studies, even if the growth of this sector provided global economic rules for future sustainability implementations. The larger the demand for business logistics, the more demanding usage of natural resources and the labor market was needed (Jenkins, 2020), meaning that sustainable business logistics project management is a highly ambitious direction for further research and can significantly lower the global industrial impact on climate change or systemize outstanding business models where professionals can utilize cost-efficient solutions for their business logistics projects. Furthermore, to keep business logistics projects effective, sustainability initiatives can render forehanded economic analysis to results where, for example, correlations with emissions of the carbon footprint of transport can no longer be considered as a defacing part of business logistics (Dey et al., 2011). Therefore, identifying external and internal business project management factors that influence sustainability becomes a primary sustainability goal in any business sector. Newly introduced government policies could set a new path for businesses to implement sustainability into their portfolios. The introduction of new sustainability policies worldwide could be a set-up for new forms of businesses that could create new markets in the future. Sustainability should be not only credited when financial optimization is obligatory but when consumability exceeds and marginalizes serious environmental impact. Continuous investigation of these factors should be compelled by future research as business environments are ceaselessly transposing due to the instability of global economic development and can cause indignations when discovered subsequently.

An insight into a detailed review of the scientific literature helped identify critical external and internal business project management factors that influence sustainability. However, the main limitation of this study is that it explored business projects sustainability management only on a theoretical basis without any consecutive empirical foundation. Still, it requires comprehensive empirical analysis to develop a research model of external and internal factors affecting business logistics project management to prove this study hypothetical propositions towards sustainability. The proposed further research direction should become a broader analysis of business research models in which sustainability is considered a mindset of a professional and a set of actions to convey the company's profitability, effectiveness, and efficiency in the sense of sustainable business management.

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