

## **Systematic Literature Analysis for Supply Chain Conflicts: Paving the Way for Future Studies**

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### **Abstract**

This research provides a systematic overview regarding the Supply Chain Conflicts in Business-to-Business (B2B) relationships and defines and categorizes the main conflict areas and resolution mechanisms by conducting a content analysis. Based on the screening of 343 studies published mainly in the literature on marketing, business, management literature and other disciplines during 2010-2021, a systematic review and a content analysis were applied to find out the current situation and future research directions on this topic. In this research, within the context of descriptive analysis, sectoral-based analysis enables us to identify areas where conflicts are prevalent and where there is a need for further action. Regarding content analysis, highly fragmented synthesis presents how areas of conflicts and conflict resolution mechanisms are formed in the current B2B context. By providing a summary of the existing research direction on the subject, published in peer-reviewed international journals that publish research in English, this study contributes to the future academic work by identifying conflict sources and resolution methods to achieve better conflict management practices within the supply chains. With the findings of the research, companies can review their business practices and the underlying factors of conflict situations to improve their supply chains and gain ideas for their resolution. This research also contributes to the industrial marketing literature by providing an assembled and synthesized knowledge for scholars on supply chain conflicts with resolution mechanisms in both the social sciences and interdisciplinary management; deriving a comprehensive analysis of methods and insights addressed by researchers in the field.

**Key words:** Supply Chain Conflict, SLR, B2B Relationships, Conflict Resolution, Content Analysis

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## **1. Introduction**

Whenever people or companies work together, conflict is inevitable (Daft, 1997), and it has been the subject of many disciplines including psychology, sociology, business, management, and marketing for years. In supply chains, channel conflict arises within the channel when a channel member perceives that another is engaging in behavior that prevents or hinders their goals (Coughlan et al., 2001). Researchers working across disciplines have recognized conflict as a major issue affecting both organizational and supply chain performance (Bradford et al., 2004; Lam et al., 2007; Blackhurst et al., 2008; Molnár et al., 2010).

Due to the competitive business environment, which has been fueled by rising customer requirements and globalization, companies have been pushed to compete not just with their own capabilities but also with their entire supply chain and suppliers (Christopher, 1992; Barutcu et al., 2010). Under these circumstances, coordination and management of entities in supply chains have proven to be a challenging task due to the conflicts inherent in such systems. If not managed effectively, the conflicts can impact supply chain network performance and lead to dissolution of network partnerships. The supply chain network is a system full of contradictions and conflicts, thus understanding the reasons for conflicts and the motivations of business parties is crucial for elaborating the nature and complexity of conflicts. The insight gathered from the profound examination of conflicts and conflict resolution strategies adopted in diverse industries would enable the comprehension of the reasons why some conflicts occur and end up in destructive consequences while some others constructively give rise to stronger bonds among the supply chain partners.

By the necessity of understanding supply chain conflicts in a deeper sense, we aim to shed light on the aspects of previous supply chain conflict literature. This study contributes to the existing literature by pointing to the areas of conflicts and effective conflict resolution methods employed in various types of supply chains. In this way, we also aim to provide insights for the development of proactive conflict handling strategies for practitioners. Additionally, this study categorizes and redefines conflict areas and different conflict resolution mechanisms employed in different B2B relationships in prior academic studies. In this regard, our paper aims to systematically review and assess the status of research for providing a framework for future research avenues. With this aim, we address the following research questions:

RQ1. What are the current conflict areas for B2B supply chains?

RQ2. Which conflict resolution mechanisms can be applied for conflicts in B2B supply chains?

RQ3. What are the possible future research avenues for B2B supply chain conflicts?

The remainder of this research is as follows; first, we explain a brief overview of supply chain conflicts by basing on different industries and different supply chain perspectives along with the applied conflict resolutions methods.

Then, we explain the methodology used in this study including details of its scope, data collection process and data analysis procedures. Findings, future research directions and implications of this review study are presented in the following sections.

## **2. Literature Review**

Referring to the review studies so far, we see that some of the conflicts are examined on an industry basis (Barutcu et al., 2010; Jaffar et al., 2011; Pereseina et al., 2014; Aithal & Maurya, 2017), some of them are handled with different supply chain perspectives (Kanda & Deshmukh, 2008; John & Prasad, 2012; Zhou, 2012; Johnsen & Lacoste, 2016) and some of them are written with a general perspective like ours (Coughlan et al., 2001; Constantinescu, 2017).

In diverse industries, conflicts have some similar and distinguishing patterns and sources. For instance, Barutcu et al. (2010) ascertained that conflicts and resolution methods in the textile industry differ between downstream and upstream partners. Herein main sources of conflict are found as price changes for downstream partners and demands for faster delivery from upstream partners. The basic conflict resolution methods used are compromising for downstream partners and sharing for upstream partners. Similarly, Jaffar et al. (2011) provided an overview about conflict reasons in the construction industry and highlighted three types of conflict factors as behavioral problems, contractual problems, and technical problems. In similar lines, Pereseina et al. (2014) explored the challenges and conflicts in automobile and logistics industries in which conflicts are addressed from environmental and economic perspectives. Lastly, Aithal & Maurya (2017) presented main reasons for channel conflicts in the context of the retail industry and highlighted probable outcomes of perceived channel conflicts.

In the literature, conflicts are also addressed from different supply chain perspectives in reviewed papers conducted so far. Within the scope of supply chain coordination, Kanda & Deshmukh (2008) pointed to typical conflicts in supply chain processes and proposed a conflict resolution framework based on the use of coordination mechanisms. In parallel to this research, John & Prasad (2012) examined conflicts specifically in purchasing situations, design, marketing and distribution channels, and workflows with the consideration of effective supply chain coordination to understand and appreciate different conflict detection methods. In line with the organizational behavior perspective, Zhou (2012) simply listed five fundamental areas of supply chain conflict and they put forward a three-dimensional conflict resolution model accordingly to distinguish the behavioral intentions of companies in the supply chain. From the perspective of channel relationships, Johnsen & Lacoste (2016) sketched out an integrated heuristic map of the literature on situations spurring customer-supplier conflicts with two sub-topics: the main reasons for conflict related to asymmetric relationships and opportunism and other reasons along with the different types of conflict (e.g., lack of role clarity, cultural differences etc.).

By adopting a more general perspective, Coughlan et al. (2001) suggested a taxonomy with three pillars: goal incompatibility, different perceptions of reality, and domain conflicts as the sources of conflict. Additionally, Constantinescu (2017) plotted a diagram of supply chain conflict areas in eight classifications: logistics, quality, commercial, management, financial, relationship along the chain, business environment and interpersonal communication.

Apart from the “literature reviews”, there are also studies that examine the conflict in general with meta-analytical review and bibliometric analysis (Sharma & Parida, 2018; Caputo et al., 2019). In this regard, while Sharma & Parida (2018) suggested that determinants/antecedents of conflicts can be categorized into three main areas: organizational, interpersonal (communication, collaboration, relational activities, and opportunistic behavior), and environmental (environmental volatility, product or market volatility and competitive intensity), Caputo et al. (2019) identified key issues that help guide the direction of conflict management research: negotiation, mediation, trust, conflict management styles, and performance.

As the existing literature contains little review research presenting a detailed descriptive analysis with the integration of content analysis of the supply chain conflicts and resolution, this review is considered to be filling an important gap. In this research, we reveal the sources/areas of conflicts reflected in the related previous studies with a wider perspective by also looking at resolution mechanisms employed. Additionally, conflict resolution (CR) mechanisms provide a foundation to solve the problems faced, but there is limited research focusing on how business partners select the most appropriate CR strategy in their current situational context. Therefore, apart from the theoretical contribution, we aimed to offer a managerial contribution by proposing a classification of how to apply the knowledge of conflicts including how to evaluate and select resolution methods/approaches depending on the sources/areas of conflict for business managers. Furthermore, with the provided future research directions, our study can guide the forthcoming studies by highlighting the research gaps and opportunities in the related field.

### **3. Methodology**

Given the changes that have impacted supply chain management research over the past decade, such as the emergence of global sourcing, potential disruptions, increased importance of responsiveness and high level of agility, a clear and up-to-date documentation of key themes, concepts, and relationships in the conflict field is needed. Similarly, it is observed that many systematic literature studies in supply chain management have examined a 10-year time period (e.g., Soosay and Hyland, 2015; Singh and Trivedi, 2016; Caputo et al., 2018; Al Naimi et al., 2022; Jaiswal and Samuel, 2023). Therefore, this study proposes a literature analysis covering the years from 2010 to 2021 with an aim to create a systematic review that is comparable and consistent with previous assessments in the field of conflict management (Caputo et al., 2018).

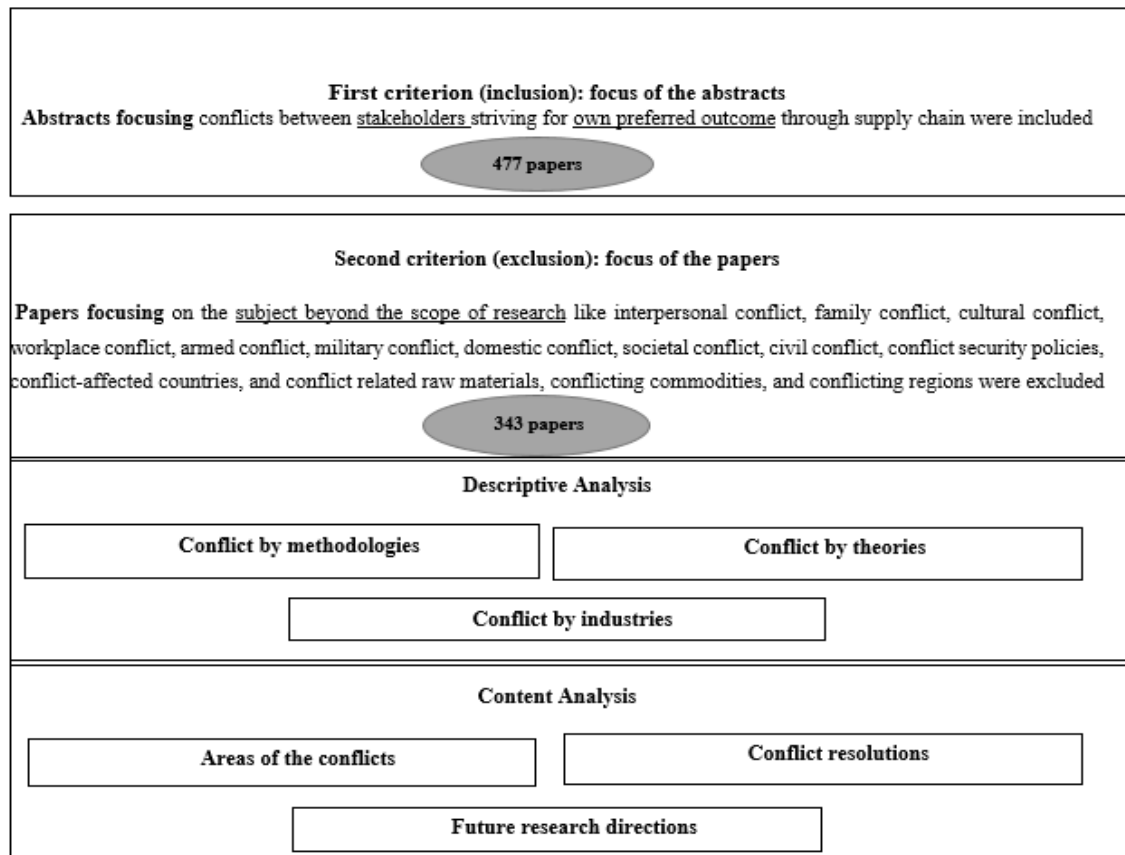
The research was conducted using “Web of Science” Clarivate Analytics Web of Science Core Collection database which is recognized as the most reliable database for bibliometric studies (Marzi et al., 2018) due to offering high-impact collection of data. Instead of limiting our subject areas as Environmental Science, Social Sciences, and Business, Management, and Accounting, we included all categories for rendering an interdisciplinary conflict framework. As we investigated the behaviors of different parties within a B2B context in response to potential or actual obstacles preventing one or more of the parties from achieving their goals (Coughlan et al., 2001), our initial search string included the following keywords: “conflict”, which describes the above situation best, and “supply chain” to provide a general and contemplated perspective regarding supply chain conflicts. We only included “articles” that went through a double-blind peer-reviewed process (Marzi et al., 2018). This allowed us to identify 477 articles in total.

### **Phase of Paper Selection**

To select the articles regarding the specific aim of the paper, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined. Regarding the subject of the “conflict”, first inclusion criteria are grounded on the widely accepted definition of the conflict, which is a situation in which a channel member perceives that another channel member is engaging in behavior that prevents them from achieving their goals (Sterns & El-Ansary, 1977). In accordance with Pittaway et al. (2004), this criterion made it possible to identify articles with abstracts that focus on the conflicts among supply chain members. To this end, the abstracts of the 477 articles were read by two scholars through Rayyan, a systematic review web app for exploring and filtering searches.

Out of 477 articles, we focused on 400 articles with abstracts stressing supply chain conflicts and giving certain references to the B2B parties involved. After conducting a detailed analysis of each abstract, we additionally excluded 57 articles that were out-of-scope. The final database resulted in 343 relevant documents suitable for the analysis (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Systematic Literature Review Process

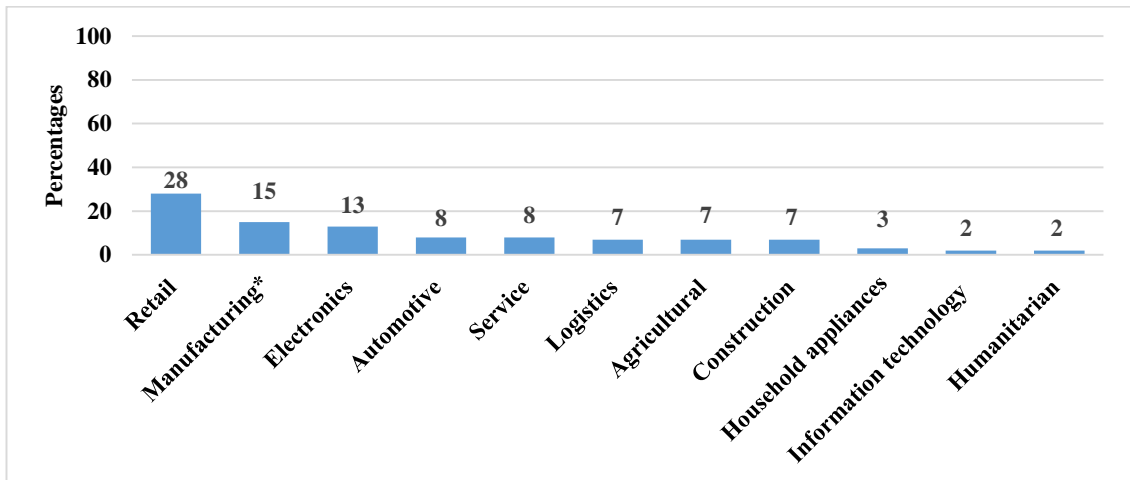


## 4. Findings

### Descriptive analysis

Concerning the industries, the vast majority of papers specifically addressed retail (28%), manufacturing (15%), and electronic industries (13%) (Figure 2). Herein, the manufacturing industry includes many different sectors at the same time. The humanitarian and information technologies sectors were detected as the areas where less conflict research was conducted compared to the others.

**Figure 2. Distribution of Articles by Industry**



Regarding the research methodology applied, the most of the papers employed quantitative techniques (76% includes mathematical modeling, case study, experiment, optimization and decentralized methods, regression, simulation, bibliometric studies) and further portion adopted qualitative methodologies (17% includes case studies, interviews, field studies, action research projects, ethnographic studies, focus groups, discourses, comparative and conceptual analysis) or mixed approaches (constitute 7% of the papers) (Figure 3-4-5).

**Figure 3. Research Methodologies**

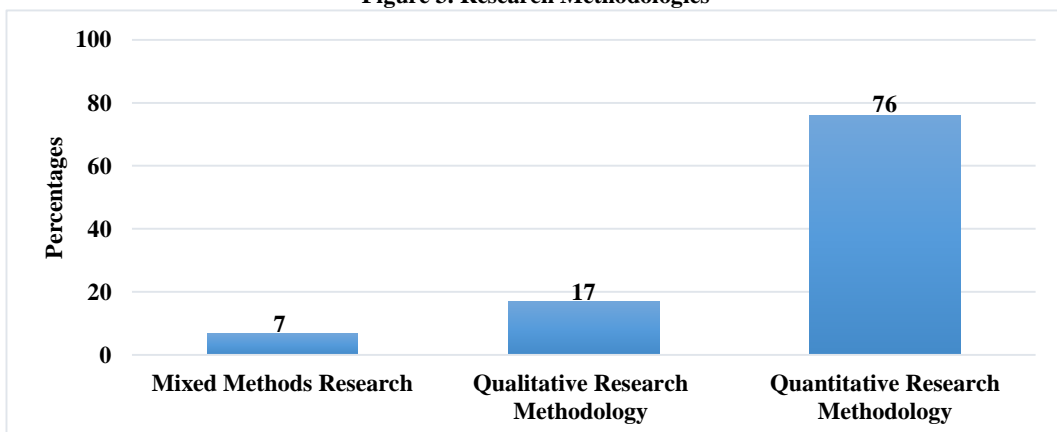


Figure 4. Quantitative Research Methods

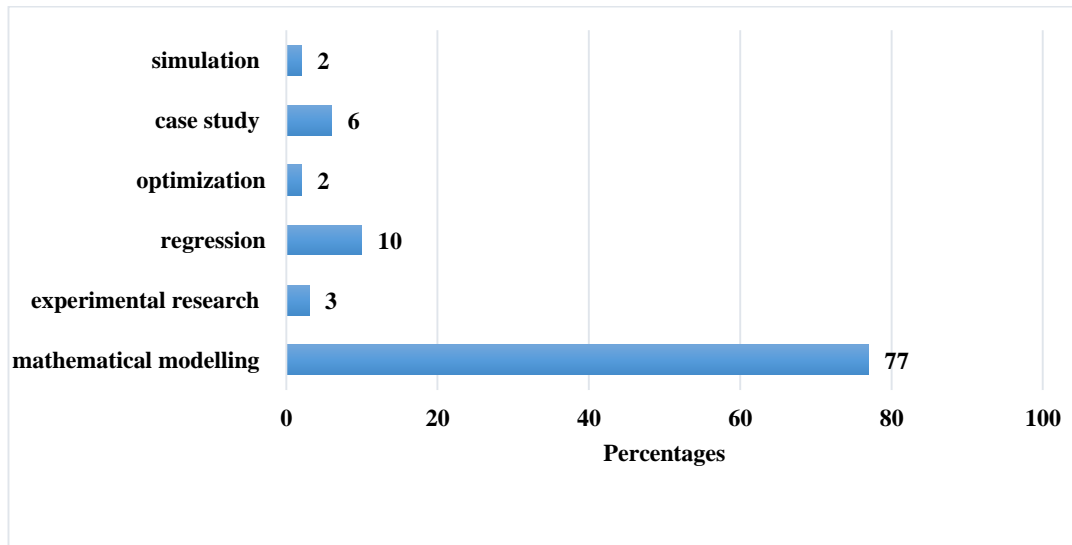
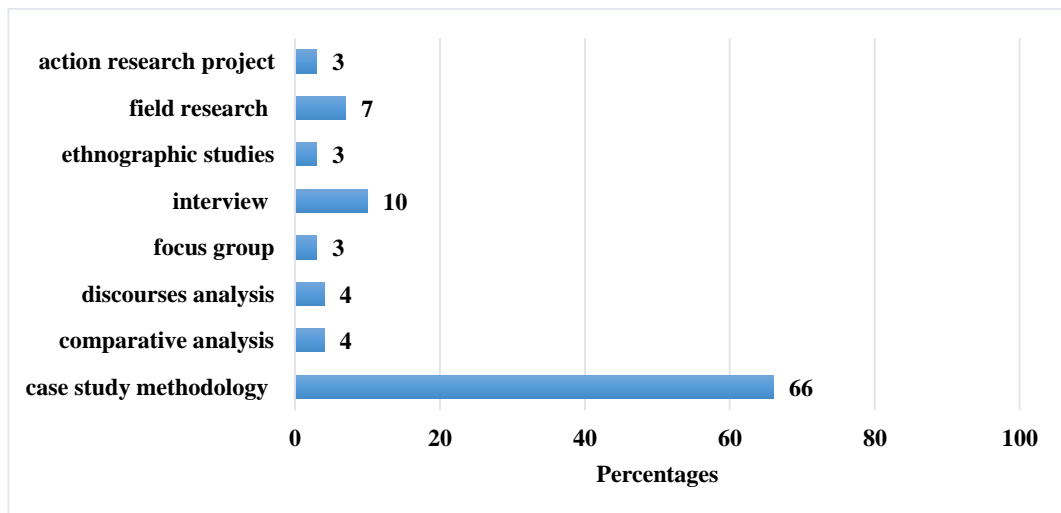


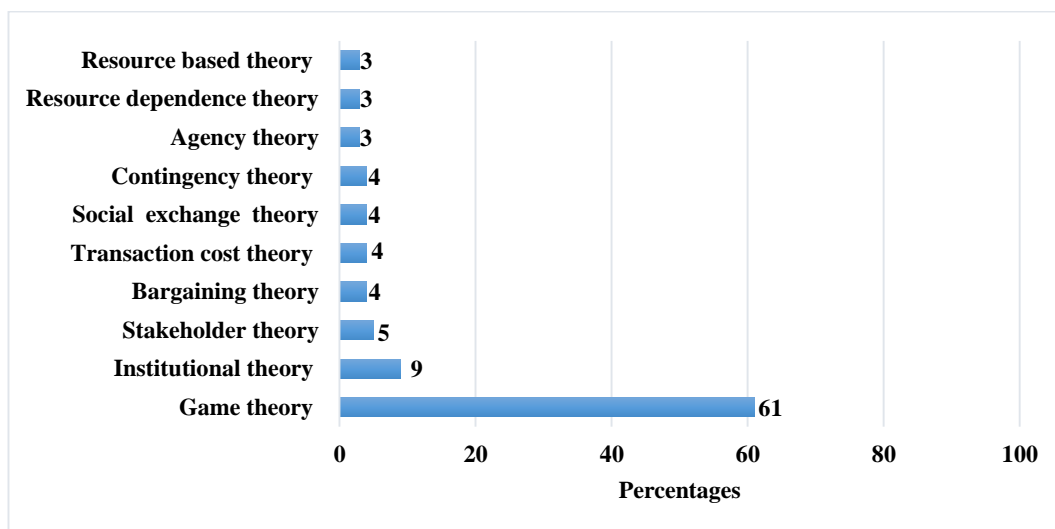
Figure 5. Qualitative Research Methods



While the most prominent theories are game, institutional and stakeholder theories, other theories include bargaining theory, transaction cost theory, social exchange theory, contingency theory, agency theory, resource dependence theory, and resource-based theory with very similar percentages (Figure 6).



**Figure 6. Papers by Theories**



## Content analysis

### Areas of conflicts

Channel members operate under different business philosophies that lead to different goals. Pursuing more than a single set of goals introduces various sources of conflict that are directly associated with the level of conflict perceived by channel members (Eliashberg & Michie, 1984). Logically, to understand and manage channel conflicts, we must first identify the determinants and sources of the conflict (Kumar & van Dissel, 1996). In consideration of the systematic literature review covering the last 11 years, Table 1 depicts the most common conflicts found as economic conflicts, operational conflicts, sustainability conflicts, and relationship conflicts.

*Economic conflict* is a channel member's negative feeling toward economic decline, such as decreasing profits (Yu et al., 2018). Although this concept is defined as commercial conflict (e.g., Lacity & Willcocks, 2017) in some studies and financial conflict (e.g., Beheshtifar and Zare, 2013) in others, we used the expression of "economic" as we found that everything with economic value causes conflict between partners in the supply chain. In the study, economic conflicts are disputes over finances such as price and profit margins and threaten economic performance of the companies. Our study reveals that economic conflicts in recent years are pertinent to problems with inventory/order levels, revenue sharing, specified financial targets, sales prices, distribution of resources, retail format preferences, channel encroachments and channel incentives.

*Operational conflict* arises when the operation of various elements of logistics systems and standards conflict such as the flow between the elements,

standards, norms, institutions, instruments, format and so on (Ge et al., 2010). In the meantime, it influences the relative preference between options in a choice set. In this review, some of the conflicts stemming from tradeoffs comprise efficiency and utilization considerations such as procurement planning, scheduling, optimal ordering and shipment size decisions, inventory control, network design, postponement/quick response, market coverage, decision timing practices, performance evaluations of partners, contract/policy design and quality evaluations. Besides, service conflicts related to service levels, after-sales service operations and demand-enhancing service operations are found to be the basis of most common operational-related conflicts experienced by business partners.

In *sustainability conflicts*, the stakeholder groups differ enormously in their values, time horizons, and resource allocations. Additionally, they may feature characteristics that present unique challenges to conflict resolution, such as large numbers of stakeholders, common resources, and specialized knowledge about the involved issues (Majer et al., 2018). In this review, sustainability conflicts are related with the considerations regarding sustainability and economic-operational outcomes (e.g., pricing, reverse logistics cost, and manufacturing cost) and refer to the strategic-level considerations in sustainability (e.g., supply chain transparency and monitoring, distribution of natural sources, crop regime shifts, land usage and compliance to government regulations).

As stated by Cai et al. (2020), *relationship conflict* is one of the types of organizational conflicts in B2B relationships. Herein, it refers to states of incompatibilities between organizational members due to inconsistent values (Cai et al., 2020) and it damages the cooperation performance of the business partners. In this sense, when looking at recent years, relational conflicts usually arise from the role conflicts of the partners, channel power practices and tactical strategies between parties, trust violations, separation of ownership and control, strong joint dependencies, partnering issues, having superior or incomplete information, misrepresentation, and manipulation of information in an opportunistic way along the supply chains.

**Table 1. Areas of Conflicts**

Categories	Conflict definitions and scope	Related research
<b>Economic Conflicts</b>	...refers profit margins and pricing related conflicts associated with inventory/order levels, revenue sharing, specified financial targets, sales prices, distribution of resources, retail format preferences, channel encroachments, and channel incentive conflicts including misalignment of incentives, incentives on pricing, quality, and investment levels, in-store promotions, offering referrals, extended warranty terms,	Chiang & Feng (2010), Biyalogorsky & Koenigsberg (2010), Frow et al. (2010), Ding et al. (2011), Cai & Chen (2011), Huang et al. (2011), Yan (2011), He & Khouja (2011), Liu et al. (2012), Heese (2012), Chyu & Huang (2013), Tripathi & Dave (2013), Panda (2014), Huang et al. (2014), Xu et al. (2015), Panda et al. (2015), Lv & Qi (2016), Li & Li (2016), Ohmura & Matsuo (2016), Yoo & Kim (2016), Lacity & Willcocks (2017), DeLuca-Acconi (2017), Jiang et al. (2017), Liu et al. (2018), Wang

	reinforcement of sales efforts, amount of discounts and return taking policies.	& Liu (2018), Saha et al. (2018), Yang et al. (2018), Biswas & Avittathur (2019), Wang et al. (2019), Li et al. (2020), Cai & Qing (2020), Xia et al. (2021), Li and Li (2021), Li et al. (2021), Xiao et al. (2021), Zhao et al. (2021), Zhao & Li (2021), Hou et al. (2021), Yan & Ye (2021), Liu et al. (2021), Yang et al. (2021), Zheng & Yu (2021), Lin et al. (2021), Wang et al. (2021), Modak et al. (2021), Lin et al. (2021), Tang et al. (2021), Ma & Hong (2021), Huang et al. (2021), Jiao et al. (2021), Hu et al. (2021), Loconto et al. (2021)
<b>Operational Conflicts</b>	...refer to operational conflicts stemming from efficiency and utilization considerations such as procurement planning, scheduling, optimal ordering and shipment size decisions, inventory control, network design, postponement/quick response, market coverage, decision timing practices, performance evaluations of partners, contract/policy designs and quality evaluations, and service conflicts related to service levels, after sales service operations , trade-in and demand-enhancing service operations.	Wang et al. (2010), Steward et al. (2010), Liu et al. (2012), Ramezani et al. (2013), Kurata & Ham (2013), Karimi-Nasab et al. (2013), Zhou et al. (2014), Selviaridis & Norrman (2014), Park & Lee (2015), Ab Rahman et al. (2016), Matawale et al. (2016), Li et al. (2016), Yildiz et al. (2016), Vairaktarakis & Aydinliyim (2017), Rasmussen et al. (2017), Fan et al. (2017), Kuik et al. (2017), Seif et al. (2018), Nielsen & Saha (2018), Elkhechafi et al. (2018), Niu & Xie (2020), Tang & Yang (2020), Jiang et al. (2020), Lin & Wang (2020), Vishnu et al. (2020), Shen & Qian (2021), Yoo and Cheong (2021), Pourmohammad-Zia et al. Rezaei (2021), Karray & Martín-Herrán (2021), Idris et al. (2021), Svanberg et al. (2021), Suleiman et al. (2021), Hamamura & Zenny (2021)
<b>Sustainability Conflicts</b>	...refer to the considerations regarding sustainability and economic-operational-social outcomes (e.g., pricing, reverse logistics cost and manufacturing cost). These conflicts may also refer to the strategic-level considerations in sustainability (e.g., supply chain transparency and monitoring, distribution of natural sources, crop regime shifts, compliance to government regulations, land usage, implementation of sustainability practices).	Ni et al. (2010), Sherval & Hardiman (2014), Inghelbrecht et al. (2014), Grose & Richardson (2014), Modak et al. (2016), Huang et al. (2016), Svensson et al. (2016), Qin et al. (2017), Liu et al. (2018), Li et al. (2018), Mantino & Frosina (2018), Arrigo (2018), Rebehy et al. (2019), Hosseini-Motlagh et al. (2019), Wijen & Chiroleu-Assouline (2019), Zheng et al. (2019), Guo et al. (2020), Zarei et al. (2020), Alizadeh-Basban & Taleizadeh (2020), Goworek et al. (2020), Karaosman et al. (2020), Kumar et al. (2021), Cruz-Daraviña & Suescún (2021), Nath & Eweje (2021), Liu et al. (2021), Fan et al. (2021), Tamannaie et al. (2021), Vlachokostas et al. (2021)

<p><b>Relationship Conflicts</b></p>	<p>...refer to the partner role/responsibility conflicts, personal relationships, over-relying, channel power practices (e.g., coercive, reward) and tactical strategies between parties, trust violations, separation of ownership and controls, strong joint dependencies, partnering issues, self-serving and free riding behaviors, and having superior or incomplete information. These conflicts also refer to misrepresentation and manipulation of information in an opportunistic way along the supply chains.</p>	<p>Cheng (2011), Oosterhuis et al. (2012), Mysen et al. (2012), Lumineau &amp; Henderson (2012), Salonen &amp; Gabrielsson (2012), Cheng &amp; Sheu (2012), Cheng &amp; Fu (2013), Leber et al. (2014), Egels-Zandén Hulthén, &amp; Wulff (2015), Addae-Boateng et al. (2015), Peres &amp; Kesan (2015), Chang &amp; Fang (2015), Dong et al. (2016), Perner &amp; Skjølsvik (2016), Low &amp; Lee (2016), Murfield et al. (2016), Panchal et al. (2017), Madichie &amp; Yamoah (2017), Awan et al. (2018), Low (2018), Eckerd &amp; Sweeney (2018), Dwivedi et al. (2018), Chen &amp; Xu (2018), Qian et al. (2018), Yang et al. (2018), Akrouf et al. (2018), Yan et al. (2019), Butt (2019), Pulles &amp; Loohuis (2020), Høgevoid, et al. (2020), Talay et al. (2020), Shareef et al. (2021), Liu et al. (2021), Vos et al. (2021), Tolmay (2021), Badenhorst-Weiss &amp; Tolmay (2021), Guo et al. (2021), Ma et al. (2021), Richards &amp; Safari (2021), Matthes et al. (2021)</p>
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### Conflict Resolution

In this study, by enlarging the conflict resolution definition, we consider resolution mechanisms/methods employed in reviewed papers as different ways of achieving resolution with the best possible outcomes in the supply chain conflicts. In this sense, the paper reviews the current state of knowledge in conflict areas and resolution mechanisms by offering a projection to support contemporary theory and practice.

### Resolution of the conflicts in social sciences

Conflict resolution is defined as strategies aimed at increasing, reducing, and resolving tension (Dreu et al., 1999) and it is characterized as an interaction process in which two parties react and act on each other, with individuals changing their behavior to adapt to the situation and attain the best possible results (Munduate et al., 1999; Coleman & Kugler, 2014). Within the context of organizational conflict, widely applied conflict resolution methods revolve around institutional information intensive mechanisms, third party mechanisms, using incentives, relational governance mechanisms, contractual governance mechanisms (Lumineau & Malhotra, 2011; Palmatier et al., 2020; Ryciuk, 2020; Shahzad et al., 2020). Herein, institutionalized information intensive mechanisms can be in forms of joint memberships in trade associations, distributor councils, and exchange-of-personnel programs. In this context, members create “information intensive mechanisms” by sharing information and devoting resources to communicating for resolution of channel conflicts. Moreover, building relational governance based on

informal mechanisms such as trust, reciprocity or social embedding, or providing contractual governance by defining the roles and duties of the parties are some of the efficient ways to deal with conflict. Similarly, for all players involved in the conflict resolution process, relying on third parties, which are external parties, not involved in the channel like referrals to boards of arbitration or mediation and aligning some economic incentives offer a way out before the conflict gets much worse.

### **Resolution of conflicts in interdisciplinary management**

Apart from social sciences, conflicts and their solutions are frequently studied in the field of interdisciplinary management.

As conflict is defined as the perception of incompatible activity in which one person's action is believed to make another less likely or effective (Cloven & Roloff, 1991), some papers focus on the reduction of incompatibility among the players. In this context, stakeholder groups may not understand conflict situations in the same way, which impact conflict resolution strategies. With a sensemaking perspective, the focus is on understanding the parties through the development of meanings and how those meanings motivate their involvement, actions, and practices in the conflict resolution process (Brummans, et al., 2008; Mikkelsen, 2012).

Additionally, conflict-resolution methods can be adopted as practical approaches to address the contradictions and trade-offs between the stakeholders involved (Alizadeh et al., 2017). Within this scope, game theoretical models and multi-objective optimization methods are used on a large scale in resolving problems related to conflicting interests of different decision makers (Lee, 2012; Tang & Liao, 2021). With game theoretical models, actions of the parties involved are considered simultaneously. In this respect, conflict resolution models are designed based on game-theoretic rough sets by constructing a game between all involved parties computing the payoff of different strategies, and classifying them according to equilibrium rules (Bashir et al., 2021). On the other hand, multi-objective optimization methods, which include different interests and goals of stakeholders, are conducted to find an optimal alternative considering the level of conflict and impact of conflict alternatives to select a combination of conflict resolution alternatives (Lee et al., 2017). The alternatives are evaluated based on the selected criteria (Sanayei et al., 2010).

In Table 2 and 3, we present the conflict areas where these resolution mechanisms are used, and the specific applications adopted by supply chain members.

**Table 2. Resolution Mechanisms for Supply Chain Conflicts in Social Sciences**

<p><b>1. Institutional information intensive mechanisms</b></p>	<p>...refer to using cooperative social interaction and open discussion processes, assisting timely communication, and using improved communication technologies to facilitate business practices, sharing of expertise (know-how) for solving channel conflicts.</p>	<p><b><u>Relationship conflicts</u></b>                      -channel power practices                      -having superior information                      -power practices and tactical strategies                      -opportunistic behavior                      -information asymmetries                      -free riding behavior</p> <p><b><u>Sustainability conflicts</u></b>                      -implementing sustainability practices</p> <p><b><u>Operational conflicts</u></b>                      -performance measurement</p>	<p>Khoja et al. (2010), Li et al. (2011), Akrouf (2014), Loosemore &amp; Lim (2015), Low (2018), Qian et al. (2018), Tolmay (2019), Yaroson et al. (2021), Guo et al. (2021), Nath &amp; Eweje (2021), Suleiman et al. (2021), Ma et al. (2021), Richards &amp; Safari (2021), Matthes et al. (2021).</p>
<p><b>2. Relational governance mechanisms</b></p>	<p>...refer to developing personal relationships to provide the basis for the strong initial trust, reaching shared understanding, proposing co-creative win-win solutions, sharing cost, resources, and capabilities, developing more coordinated and better performing business environments.</p>	<p><b><u>Relationship conflicts</u></b>                      -opportunistic behaviors                      -information asymmetry                      -power practices and tactical strategies                      -absence of personal relationships                      -self serving behaviors                      -over relying</p> <p><b><u>Sustainability conflicts</u></b>                      -crop regime shifts                      -decisions regarding sustainability and economic-operational outcomes                      -land use</p> <p><b><u>Economic conflicts</u></b></p>	<p>Frow et al. (2010), Khoja et al. (2010), Steward et al. (2010), Chen et al. (2010), Lumineau &amp; Malhotra (2011), Lumineau &amp; Henderson (2012), Mysen et al. (2012), Inghelbrecht et al. (2014), Selviaridis &amp; Norrman (2014), Xhoxhi et al. (2014), Loosemore &amp; Lim (2015), Park &amp; Lee (2015), Addae-Boateng et al. (2015), Han &amp; Chuang (2015), Yoo &amp; Kim (2016), Yan et al. (2016), Liu et al. (2018), Eckerd &amp; Sweeney (2018), Akrouf et al. (2018), Butt (2019), Enz et al. (2019), Tolmay (2019), Chen et al. (2019), Høgevold et al. (2020), Badenhorst-Weiss &amp; Tolmay (2021), Cruz-Daraviña &amp; Suescún (2021), Prakash et al. (2021)</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-retail format preferences</li> <li>-specified financial targets</li> <li>-sales prices</li> <li>-channel encroachments</li> <li>-payment terms</li> <li><b><u>Operational conflicts</u></b></li> <li>-efficiency considerations (SKU rationalization)</li> <li>- contract design</li> <li>-procurement planning</li> <li>-quality issues</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Contractual governance mechanisms</b>	<p>...refer using formal and detailed written contracts delineating the responsibilities of each party and specifying the appropriate actions in conflict resolution.</p>	<p><b><u>Relationship conflicts</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-opportunistic behaviors</li> <li>-information asymmetry</li> <li>-manipulation of information</li> <li>-separation of ownership and control</li> <li>- strong joint dependency</li> <li>-power practices</li> <li>-over-relying</li> <li><b><u>Operational conflicts</u></b></li> <li>-contract designs and inefficiencies</li> </ul>	<p>Khoja et al. (2010), Lumineau &amp; Malhotra (2011), Lumineau &amp; Henderson (2012), Selviaridis &amp; Norrman (2014), Addae-Boateng et al. (2015), Bai et al. (2016), Low &amp; Lee (2016), Eckerd &amp; Sweeney (2018), Dwivedi et al. (2018), Awan et al., (2018), Shen &amp; Qian (2021), Prakash et al. (2021).</p>
<b>4. Third party mechanisms</b>	<p>...refer to third parties for conflict resolutions in terms of negotiation, mediation, arbitration, or upper industrial regulatory institutions.</p>	<p><b><u>Relationship conflicts</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-trust violations</li> <li>-opportunistic behaviors</li> <li>-power practices</li> <li><b><u>Sustainability conflicts</u></b></li> <li>-decisions regarding sustainability and economic-operational outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>Wang &amp; Song (2011), Barchiesi et al. (2014), Peres &amp; Kesan (2015), Low &amp; Lee (2016), Yu et al. (2017), Rebehay et al. (2019)</p>

<p><b>5. Using incentives</b></p>	<p>...refer to conducting compensation mechanisms, aligning, and specifying the responsibilities and incentives along the channels.</p>	<p><b><u>Economic conflicts</u></b>                  -retail format preferences                  -profit considerations  <b><u>Operational conflicts</u></b>                  -quality evaluations                  -ordering and inventory decisions  <b><u>Relationship conflicts</u></b>                  -partners roles and responsibilities                  -interest alignment                  -power exercises                  -opportunism</p>	<p>Taek et al. (2010), Crosno &amp; Dahlstrom (2011), Low &amp; Lee (2016), Kong et al. (2017), Tse et al. (2018), Low (2018), Yang et al. (2019), Liu et al. (2020), Nguyen (2020), Li et al. (2021), Ma &amp; Hong (2021)</p>
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**Table 3. Resolution Mechanisms for Supply Chain Conflicts in Interdisciplinary**

**Management**

<p><b>1. Sense-making activities</b></p>	<p>...refer to acts having an impact on the decision-making process of the conflicting parties like persuasion, cognitive mapping and aggregation, diagnostic prognostic and motivational framing and goal recognition among parties.</p>	<p><b><u>Relationship conflicts</u></b>                  -role conflicts                  -trust violations  <b><u>Sustainability conflicts</u></b>                  - decisions regarding sustainability and social-environmental outcomes  <b><u>Operational conflicts</u></b>                  -policy design</p>	<p>Oosterhuis et al. (2012), Guarnieri et al. (2016), Yu et al. (2017), Rasmussen et al. (2017), DeLuca-Acconi (2017)</p>
<p><b>2. Game theoretical models</b></p>	<p>...refer to constructing a game for solving supply chain conflicts by using backward induction, equilibrium strategies, robustness approaches, price-theoretic models, bargaining strategies and</p>	<p><b><u>Economic conflicts</u></b>                  -channel encroachments                  -revenue sharing                  -contract design                  -double marginalization                  -extended warranty terms  <b><u>Sustainability conflicts</u></b>                  - strategic-level considerations in sustainability (e.g.,</p>	<p>Cai (2010), Cai (2011), Heese (2012), Kurata &amp; Ham (2013), Panda (2014), Huang et al. (2014), Panda et al. (2015), Guan &amp; Chen (2015), Xu et al. (2015), Modak et al. (2016), Ohmura &amp; Matsuo (2016), Panda et al. (2016), Bashinskaya et al. (2016), Yang &amp; Gao (2017), Zhang &amp; Wang (2017), Yang &amp; Gao (2017), Saha et al. (2018), Liu et al.</p>

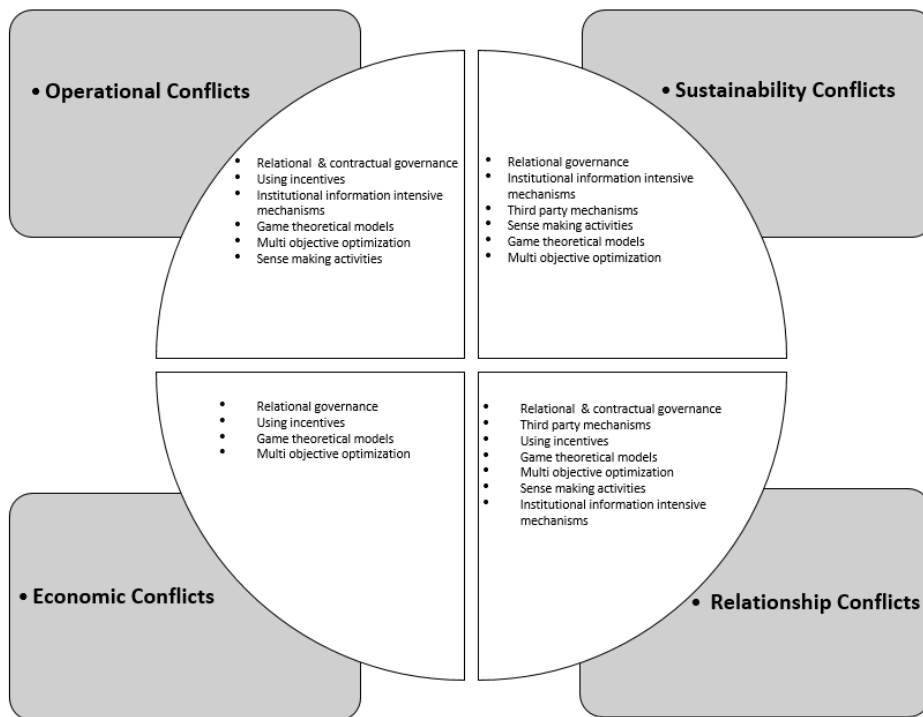


	<p>coordinating contracts.</p>	<p>crop regime, supply chain transparency and responsible sourcing) - decisions regarding sustainability and economic-environmental outcomes <b><u>Operational conflicts</u></b> - performance evaluations -optimal inventory levels -market coverage -decision timing practices -offering trade-in services -after sales service operations <b><u>Relationship conflicts</u></b> -role conflicts -information asymmetry</p>	<p>(2018), Fahimnia et al. (2018), Modak et al. (2018), Yan et al. (2019), Chen &amp; Su (2019), Huang &amp; Zhang (2020), Zu (2021), Chen (2021), Li and Li (2021), Xiao et al. (2021), Pourmohammad-Zia, Karimi &amp; Rezaei (2021), Kumar et al. (2021), Zhao &amp; Li (2021), Hou et al. (2021), Yan &amp; Ye (2021), Liu et al. (2021), Liu et al. (2021), Karray &amp; Martín-Herrán (2021), Yang et al. (2021), Zheng &amp; Yu (2021), Lin et al. (2021), Wang et al. (2021), Panda et al. (2021), Lin et al. (2021), Liu et al. (2021), Huang et al. (2021), Tamannaie, Zarei &amp; Rasti-Barzoki (2021), Li &amp; Du (2021), Hu et al. (2021)</p>
<p><b>3. Multi-Objective Optimization Models</b></p>	<p>...refer to finding an optimal solution for supply chain conflicts by considering a combination of alternatives using heuristic, metaheuristic, and combinations of them, fuzzy algorithms, network and simulation models, and constrained optimization.</p>	<p><b><u>Economic conflicts</u></b> -profit considerations -incentives on quality levels <b><u>Operational conflicts</u></b> -partner selection -optimal order quantity and inventory levels -network design -procurement planning -scheduling <b><u>Relationship conflicts</u></b> -incomplete information -power dominances <b><u>Sustainability conflicts</u></b></p>	<p>Güneri et al. (2011), Liu et al. (2012), Manoj et al. (2012), Ramezani et al. (2013), Aliakbari Nouri et al.(2015), Yildiz et al. (2016), Vairaktarakis &amp; Aydinliyim (2017), Qin et al. (2017), Liu et al. (2018), Elkhechafi et al. (2018), Seif et al. (2018), Vishnu et al. (2020), Yoo and Cheong (2021), Tang et al. (2021), Fan et al. (2021), Vlachokostas et al. (2021).</p>

		- decisions regarding sustainability and economic-environmental outcomes	
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Associating conflict areas with resolution methods in B2B supply chain context, it can be detected that economic conflicts are mostly resolved with relational governance, or by using incentives, game-theoretical and multi-objective optimization models. We also realized that in the literature on operational conflict, various mechanisms are being employed such as relational and contractual governance mechanisms, using incentives, institutional information intensive mechanisms, sense-making activities, game theoretical models and multi-objective optimization. In terms of sustainability conflicts, relational governance, third party mechanisms, institutional information intensive mechanisms, sense making, game-theoretical models and multi-objective optimization are mostly applied resolution tools. Finally, for relationship conflicts, the parties involved use all of the methods effectively (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Conflict Area Based Resolution Mechanisms



### Future Opportunities

Grounding on the systematic literature review that we have conducted and by capturing the recent articles in the field (e.g., Karaosman et al., 2020; Lin & Wang, 2020; Vishnu et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2020), we formulate some research

questions for guiding the possible future studies. In this regard, channel coordination issues, supply chain relationships, and environmental uncertainties are found to extend the extant anecdotal and conceptual body of literature by generating additional value for research and practice.

Concerning supply chain relations and coordination problems, the role of conflict resolution mechanisms in preventing different conflict outcomes is an area that researchers can focus on. As another avenue, the role of institutional pressures in conflict resolution in supply chains appeared to be one of the promising areas for further research. Along similar lines, the effects of omnichannel service collaboration and the effect of developments in internet-based technologies require more attention from the academic field. Moreover, prevention of conflicts under information asymmetry situations and varying response strategies under different circumstances (e.g., the severe threat of competition or cooperation between partners) are the other fruitful areas to proceed.

Pursuant to the environmental uncertainties, setting constructive conflict management strategies and reconfiguring internal and external capabilities in turbulent business environments emerge as important research areas with research gaps. Additionally, considering the emergency situations and disruptions, demonstrating common conflicts and resolution methods by pursuing responsiveness are identified as flourishing directions worth working on. In this direction, we group these recommendations by conceptions in Table 4.

**Table 4. Recommendations and Research Questions for Future Research**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Research question for future research</b>
<p><b>Supply Chain Relations and Coordination Problems</b></p> <p>Researchers should explore channel coordination problems where all members aim to maximize their own interest. Additionally, relational dynamics and effects of relationship characteristics can be explored.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the coordinative mechanism be used to mitigate destructive conflicts under the severe threat of competition?</li> <li>• How do the mimetic, coercive, and normative institutional pressures affect conflict resolution in supply chains?</li> <li>• How can service cooperation in multi-channels be provided to mitigate channel conflicts and improve the service levels?</li> <li>• In case of information asymmetries, how can coordination be facilitated in supply chains to avoid different forms of conflicts?</li> <li>• What is the role of behavioral factors such as anticipated regret and risk aversion on the part of decision makers in avoiding service-oriented supply chain conflicts?</li> <li>• How do conflict characteristics (e.g., directness and</li> </ul>

	<p>intensity of opposition) change in the course of a business relationship?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do supply chain partners' response strategies for conflicts differ in case of cooperation situations?</li> <li>• In what ways recent developments in internet-based technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence and blockchain) can be effective in conflicts arising from the imbibing of strategic capabilities into supply chains?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental Uncertainties:</b> Researchers should explore the changing characteristics of the environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can external conditions such as future uncertainty and market complexity influence the development of constructive conflict management strategies?</li> <li>• How can organizations integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external capabilities to defuse conflicts in rapidly changing environments?</li> <li>• What are the conflicts frequently experienced during slow onset disasters such as pandemics and climate change? Which conflict resolution strategies are being applied during slow-onset disaster related disruptions?</li> </ul>

## 5. Conclusions

Although conflict research has attracted notable academic attention, this review shows that existing review research, which focuses empirical evidence on very specific aspects, has deficits in categorizing and defining current conflicts and their sub-branches from a broader perspective. Due to the upsurging volume of international business operations, effectively coordinating the interests of supply chain members and building a suitable mode of conflict resolution deserves attention. By means of this research, apart from the divergence of resolution methods in studies, the tools used in these methods are also mentioned. By adhering to conflict resolution literature, we revealed the different resolution methods for supply chain conflicts by drawing a novel framework. From all these respects, this area can provide valuable and important insights both for practitioners and researchers.

In summary, the following six implications can be derived from the research questions. First, the industry analysis shows that manufacturing and retail sectors are actively studied areas where various types of conflict coexist. Sectors open to research in supply conflict management have also been identified. Second, in recent years, it is detected that there are many conflict studies using quantitative methodologies. In this sense, it is thought that different conflict areas mentioned in the “future opportunities” part will be valuable when using qualitative and mixed methodology. Third, the theory analysis demonstrated that game, institutional, and stakeholder theories are found to be matching well with the scope of conflicts. Fourth, the most common conflict areas are related to economic, operational, sustainability, and relationship conflicts. Fifth, it is found that

chosen resolution mechanisms in different fields of research vary depending on the area of the conflict. It is also observed that resolution strategies differ from previous studies as we adopt interdisciplinary conflict frameworks, which capture different aspects of the conflict. Within this scope, while institutional information-intensive mechanisms, relational governance mechanisms, contractual governance mechanisms, third party mechanisms, using incentives are widely used resolution methods in social sciences; sense-making activities, game-theoretical models, and multi-objective optimization methods are widely applied in interdisciplinary management for B2B supply chain conflicts. Finally, we suggest that supply chain relations and coordination problems as well as environmental uncertainties in business environments are promising topics for future research. In this context, considering the impact of the epidemic, supply chain relations and coordination issues can be explored in parallel to turbulent business environments.

This research provides a snapshot of knowledge for academics, providing a comprehensive analysis of research designs, methodologies, and findings by researchers in the field. In this way, it contributes to the industrial marketing and international marketing literature while revealing the phenomenon of conflict and future research directions. This study also enables managers and practitioners to be aware of the existence of different supply chain-based conflicts and to manage the conflicts more effectively. Besides, by providing the resolution mechanisms for conflict areas, this study sheds light on the possible resolution generation strategies for the encountered supply chain conflicts.

It should also be noted that the results of this study are to be seen within limitations. First, the reviewed studies were obtained from English-language journals only key word specific. Second, this study only considers peer-reviewed international journals, thus excluding publications in other forms such as books and conference proceedings. Third, although this study provides a holistic systematic literature regarding supply chain conflicts and resolution methods, it needs to be further deepened with more empirical research testing.

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