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Factors for Reshoring Decision: A Supply Chain Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study aims to explore the supply chain factors that impacts reshoring decisions.

Methods: The study followed a qualitative research method based on exploratory research. In order to attain the context of situation-based interpretation, semi-structured interviews were conducted based on two Swedish firms engaged in reshoring initiatives. The collected data were individually analysed followed by a cross-case analyses.

Findings: The research findings identified several experiences within the supply chain factors that have an influence over the reshoring decision. Firstly, firms are required to secure the replacement of offshored suppliers in their home country and ensure the access to the abundance of raw materials while reshoring. Secondly, realignments are needed for components to suit with organizational values, integrate to obtain independence from external entities and utilize pre-existing assets to mitigate challenges. Thirdly, increase in customer participation for firm's product decision and locally produced goods can further enhance brand perception. Lastly, proximity allowed firms to streamline logistical communication, deter investment cost and promote R&D capabilities.

Contribution: The study contributes in the knowledge of reshoring through the lens of supply chain management and also provides managerial context for reshoring decisions. The sole focus on supply chain factors enhances the theoretical expansion of reshoring and allowing further study materials into the emerging research field of reshoring. In addition, the research findings from four different supply chain factors allows a multifaceted contribution for organizational managers. Managers can individually or conjointly utilize the ideas on resource, reconfiguration, customer and proximity for reshoring decisions.

Conclusions: The results from the study and the fulfilment of the aim shows that reshoring is a case of strategic decision making by firms who aim to secure a better competitive standpoint by repatriating production back to the home country.

Keywords: reshoring, supply chain, resource, reconfiguration, proximity

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ABBREVIATIONS

B2C – Business-to-Business

B2G – Business-to-Government

R&D – Research and Development

RBV– Resource-Based-View

1. INTRODUCTION

To provide a concise understanding to the readers, the chapter provides a detailed breakdown of the research gap that exists for reshoring and supply chain networks and leading towards the development of the research aim followed by the research questions. The outline of this chapter is divided into five avenues and will be demonstrated in the following sequence: background, problem discussion, research aim and questions, delimitations, and disposition.

1.1 Background

Globalization embraced as an opportunity of comparative advantage to foster international competitiveness (Wild and Wild, 2016). The manifestation of globalization initiates from the need to survive in the national and international business arena, whereby firms from developed countries resort to offshoring the production operation in emerging nations (Jalvagi, Dixit and Scherer, 2009).

The last two decades have observed the increasing practice of outsourcing and offshoring by developed countries with a revolutionary shift that mushroomed the construction of infrastructure through reversing the geographically centralized production process (Pisani and Ricart, 2016; Tarn, 2015). Although the reasoning behind the strategic practice of offshoring varies across different firms and countries, the primary motivation of offshoring addresses the physical relocation of a firm's production operation and value chain (Wagner, 2011; Kreutzer and Mitze, 2017; Mihalache and Mihalache, 2016). The popular reasons behind the physical relocation are cost efficiency and flexibility, thus resulting in companies spreading out their operational facilities in strategic zones ensuring the fulfilment of key locational objectives (Feenstra, 2011). The inherent benefit from offshoring provided the motivation for Western European countries to play an active role in the relocation process (Stare and Rubalcaba, 2009). Swedish companies have also utilized the benefits through globalization as a tool to subdue global competition by relocation of operations and components of the value chain process (Hafstrom, Magnusson and Max, 2010; Waehrens, Slepnirov and Johansen, 2015).

Marked by the issues related to location, supply chain and global managerial decision; many firms have faced the inevitable reconsideration of bringing back the offshored productions (Barbieri et al., 2018). Resulting from unforeseen hindrances and underestimation of global variables: offshored projects have failed to utilize the newly located strategic operations, and firms were left with no choice but to recall and engage in reshoring (Bruccoleri et al., 2019).

The last couple of decades have seen an increasing level of reshoring for cases where multinational corporations and enterprises have brought back the production facilities that were once operated globally (Barbieri et al., 2018). The act of reshoring can be described as the voluntary corporate strategy whereby a company retracts offshored manufacturing processes to re-establish them back in the home country (Ellram, Tate and Petersen, 2013; Fratocchi et al., 2014; Gray et al., 2017). High levels of reshoring practices were observed among countries across North America and Western Europe and depicting the greatest number of reshoring of operations from Asian countries (Ancarani et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the exponential economic growth in Sweden through offshoring have caused internal employment challenges for the country; therefore, the reshuffling to turn the tide towards Sweden has led to the propensity of reshoring or backshoring activities (Johansson and Olhager, 2018). The studies conducted by Ellram, Tate and Petersen (2013) and Fratocchi et al. (2016) discuss reshoring drivers due to offshored challenges in areas such as operational control, quality management, intellectual property laws, supply chain flexibility, geographic proximity, logistics, inventory management and exchange rate volatility.

Effective management of supply chains has played an integral role for firms to sustain a steady injection of products in the marketplace (Christopher and Holweg, 2011). At present, there is a dynamic shift in customers' behaviour regarding supply chain variables. Factors such as ease of product accessibility, environmentally supportive transportation, product customization and quick trackable delivery system have caused the reshoring of productions (Hilletoft et al., 2019). In the case of a Swedish firm known as FM Mattson; the two main supply chain factors for reshoring initiative were motivated due to environmental sustainability and faster product accessibility for their customers in Europe (Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson, 2019).

The increasing role in the global arena and recent academic interest provides a strong reasoning to conduct a study on reshoring. Furthermore, with the growing importance of the topic and having greater relevance to modern context, the inclusion of supply chain into reshoring poses a strong balance.

1.2 Problem Discussion

Despite the relative inception in the academic nature of reshoring, almost little to no research has been done underlying the impacts on supply chain a firm encounter once it reshores from

an offshore location except for a study published by Wiesman et al., (2017). Although the study highlights the impediments and consequences of supply chain due to reshoring from a global perspective, no research exists from a Swedish perspective that highlights the supply chain factors that an offshore Swedish firm needs to take into consideration for reshoring.

1.2.1 Reshoring Attributes

Previous studies have perceived reshoring as the initiative of recalling a firm's previously offshore production back to its home country (Fratocchi et al., 2014; Gray et al., 2013; Ellram, 2013). Subsequently, researchers have also distinguished the similar concept of backshoring being a redecorated variant of reshoring, the reversal of offshoring and a withdrawal of the production process. To clarify further, backshoring not only refers to the relocation of the production to the home country but can also refer to relocation to other countries where the firm has production facilities (Arlbjørn and Mikkelsen, 2014).

Current studies on reshoring associates the term through both as a deliberate means of creating value and bigger returns while some author perceive it as a solution to a failed offshore project (Barbieri et al., 2018; Albertoni et al., 2017; Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl, 2016). Wiesmann et al. (2017) claim that reshoring is a backup strategy for firms who have offshored previously and have encountered a loss in value from intellectual property theft, environmental and cultural problems. Other researchers have also proposed location advantages to be one of the motivators to reshoring in the essence that proximity to customers can provide trade and distribution advantage to a firm (Rugman, 2010; Dunning, 1998).

Studies on reshoring have been conducted on various motives. Both Weismann et al. (2016) and Foerstl, Kirchoff and Bals (2015) seek the motivators and future research trend of reshoring. Similarly, Fratocchi et al. (2014) and Fratocchi et al. (2016) have tried to determine the reasons behind repatriation of the manufacturing process to the country of origin. Growing concern about manufacturing location has been highlighted in the papers presented by Kinkel (2012), Ellram (2013) and Tate et al. (2014).

1.2.2 Supply Chain Attributes

Supply chain network (SCN) initiates the structural process required to bring in a much greater influence on the effectiveness of an overall operation (Cavone et al., 2020). According to Choi (2016), SCN influences customer preference through strategic realignment and mutual

coordination of independent players in the value chain such as the suppliers, manufacturers, logistics and retail units.

From a globalization perspective SCN grasps an integral part in organizational functionality by enabling dynamic transactional networks beyond the national border (Weiqi, Yuanlong and Liangren, 2020). The correlation between operational advantage and interconnection of global supply chain sparks businesses the necessary motive to zone out of the geographical comfort and seek for locational diversification (Christopher, 2000).

1.2.3 Reshoring and Supply Chain Relationship

The following section contains a breakdown of studies highlighting the importance and leading to the discussion between reshoring and supply chain factors.

A literature review established by Wiesmann et al. (2017) based on 22 peer reviewed journals have identified specific parameters to the supply chain in relation to reshoring on a global perspective. The supply chain drivers identified in relation to reshoring are; difficulties for innovation, lack of research and development accessibility, costly monitoring process, increased possibility of interruption, lack of delivery reliability, asymmetry between supply and demand, lack of transportation availability, unable to address services related to the product, lack of response for product customization, lack of coherence between managerial and production process. Wiesmann et al. (2017) have also identified key barriers between the reshored operation and supply chain. Factors such as inaccessibility to the international market, high coordination costs due to longer distances, disruption in access to foreign production materials and inability to benefit foreign suppliers' competencies.

Engström et al. (2018) contains cumulated research literature on Swedish firms, enlisting drivers of reshoring which creates an impact on supply chain based on multiple factors; distance, research and development, transportation and logistics, and consumer markets. But despite the reasoning behind why a company may decide to reshore, no barriers to reshoring were identified in the paper from supply chain perspective.

Barbieri et al. (2018) raised the importance of future identification for the relational reconfiguration and strategic cooperation between reshored operations and the availability of suppliers in the home country. The authors referred to the findings by Stentoft et al. (2016)

where product development, customization, flexibility and streamlined delivery were considered as key supply chain factors for reshored projects.

Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Jonsen (2015) brought out the need to establish research on how companies can remodel the production process to adapt to different environments when a firm undergoes insourcing. This adulterated supply chain network is expected to have a complete shift from the pre-offshoring period.

Fjellström, Fang and Chimen (2019) have addressed the importance of lead times being a core motivator of reshoring through the Swedish company FM Mattsson. Due to considerably long cycle time in the production process, components often had to be transported by air instead of cheaper and longer shipping routes. But despite reshoring, trust and good relationship with the offshore supplier remain as a residue due to the strong initial commitment.

1.3 Research Gap

Based on previous studies focused above we can see that there no research in existence with the sole purpose to investigate how supply chain factors influence the reshoring decision. Therefore, a research gap exists which we are planning to focus on through the aim of our study.

1.4 Research Aim and Research Question

The study aims to explore the supply chain factors that affect reshoring decisions. The four supply chain factors that the study will look into are supply chain resource, supply chain reconfiguration, customer-supplier relationship and supply chain proximity.

In order to fulfill the aim of the research, the following research question was developed:

How does supply chain factors influence the reshoring decision making?

1.5 Delimitations

- 1) In order to narrow down the industry scope, the study only focused on companies that repatriated the manufacturing departments.
- 2) Initially, the plan contained the establishment of the supply chain factors based on the supply chain model developed by Lambert, Cooper and Pagh (1998). Later on, it was intended to provide representation of integration and interaction between the different supply chain factors.

However, the initial plan had to be discarded due to the lack of reshoring related articles to connect with the supply chain factors demonstrated in Lambert, Cooper and Pagh (1998). Consequently, the supply chain factors demonstrated in the theoretical framework are independent of each other.

3) The outcome of the study may not be applicable worldwide since both the respondent organizations have had reshoring transitions in relative proximity.

4) The focus of the study is limited to Swedish companies due to the nature of the study focusing on reshoring of companies in Sweden.

5) For the study, the customer segment is not only limited to end consumers but rather refers to any individuals or businesses that engages in purchasing the products and services of the respondent organizations.

1.6 Dispositions

The followings demonstrate the breakdown of individual chapters of the study:

Chapter 1 Introduction contains the background, problem discussion, rationale of the research, research aim and research questions and delimitations.

Chapter 2 Literature Review contains a brief overview of the supply chain and reshoring related past literatures.

Chapter 3 Methodology contains the overall procedures and measures followed in conducting the entire study

Chapter 4 Empirical Findings contains the primary data collected from the interview respondents.

Chapter 5 The analysis formulates a conjunction of the empirical findings through relevant alignment with the existing literature. Broken down into two components, the individual case analysis leads the readers to understand the importance each respondent poses to the supply chain parameters whereas, the cross-case analysis leads to an overall comparison of both the organizations to their conformity with the parameters.

Chapter 6 Concludes the overall outcome of the study, the fulfilment of the research gap, the problems addressed and the areas further researchers can look into as their research theme.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes four parts to cover the literatures in the following order: supply chain resource, supply chain reconfiguration, customer-supplier relationship and supply chain proximity, then lastly a theoretical framework for this study is presented followed by a summary of the key terms from the literature.

2.1 Supply Chain Resource

Research to understand reshoring from manufacturing location decisions in a greater angle of supply chain issues have led Ellram, Tate and Petersen (2013) to resort toward the revised version of Dunning's eclectic paradigm model. According to Dunning (1998), the model suggests certain microeconomic objectives a firm may want to pursue through a change in the manufacturing location. The model consisted of four factors encompassing resource seeking, market seeking, efficiency seeking and strategic asset seeking.

The concept coincides with the theoretical stand taken in the research to understand the importance of home country for reshoring where Wan et al. (2019b) examined and concluded on how firms interpret variations of different countries from a resource-based-view (RBV) to determine their reshoring destination. The resource-based view entails the internal and external capabilities, competencies and opportunities that a firm can utilize and exploit to achieve competitive advantages. Sansone, Hilletoft and Eriksson (2017) further confirmed this concept stating that companies can garner competitive advantage through the RBV ensuring proper utilization of firm's competencies and distinctive capabilities.

Furthermore, an elaboration has been stated by Shibin et al. (2020) with the authors calling out RBV to be the ideal standard of operation an organization may pursue through optimum utilization of internal organizational competencies, opportunities and available resources in order to streamline business functions and create competitive advantage. Baofeng, Zhaojun and Prajogo (2016) demonstrates the case of raw materials to signify resources that help amplify supply chain capabilities from a resource-based view. Within the capabilities, Wan et al. (2019a) suggested on the importance of accessing the necessary supplier that holds the ability to support the home-based resources to reshored firm. Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015) have put a strong emphasis upon resource allocation during the insourcing process based on the magnitude of the firm size. Based upon the observations of both Dunning's model and RBV, it can be understood that firms put a strong emphasis upon raw materials as an indicator

to determine if they can fully utilize their supply chain capabilities. Additional observations by Dachs, Kinkel and Jäger (2019) suggest that the availability of raw material poses as a core decision maker for reshoring.

Observations by Wiesmann et al. (2017) and Ellram, Tate and Petersen (2013) suggests that one key reason for failure for reshoring firms is due to loss of vital resources for production which were only available in the offshored location but do not have any existence in the home country. Therefore, strengthening the author's reasoning that the availability of key raw materials in the home country is imperative for reshoring. Despite the commonality, Wiesmann et al. (2017) focus upon the importance of the company to have a local presence in the home country which not only fulfills the benefits of having strong proximity to the headquarters but also demonstrates stronger supply chain integration. Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl (2016) furthermore support the strategic intent of reshoring companies to develop an integrated supply chain which promotes capable home base suppliers and maintains a consistent resource seeking approach.

Taking into consideration the repatriation of offshored production back to the home country, Moradlou and Backhouse (2016) insisted on the importance of readjusting the material procurement from a newly established supply chain base as per the viewpoint of a strategic production implementation. Uluskan, Joines and Godfrey (2016) further amplify the importance of selecting the capable and competent suppliers. These suppliers become a critical success factor to the supply chain by providing the best possible materials in terms of price and quality. In addition, choosing the right supplier is a major prerequisite for reshoring firms that are seeking for production materials in the reshored location.

Ashby (2016) looked into the resource allocation from an environmental perspective. Firms having a strong emphasis on sustainable production such as recycling, environmentally friendly packaging or renewable resources need to ensure the availability of the required material sources and suppliers in the home country in case they plan to reshore. Companies not only secure procurement to particular materials for the manufacturing production but can also guarantee such provisions for the research and development initiatives.

According to Schworer (2012), due to the initial case of offshoring, many domestic suppliers had to shut down their firms due to being replaced with rival suppliers for the offshoring firm

in the host country. Moretto, Patrucco and Harland (2020) suggest that the re-establishment of these suppliers in the home country is a key element the offshore firm has to cross-check in case of deciding to reshore. According to Ashby (2016), often offshored firms face the pressure to embrace sustainable sourcing for production. Consequently, when embarking in a reshoring initiative, firms are faced with the challenges to identify the qualified supplier to meet the sustainable sourcing requirements. Eventually, the availability of those particular suppliers becomes the deciding factor for a firm's reshoring decision.

2.2 Supply Chain Reconfiguration

Teece (2007) looked into supply chain management from the theoretical stand of dynamic capability view, whereby organizations make new adjustments through development of reconfiguration strategies involving external supply chain entities for a smoother organizational transition. Furthermore, dynamic capabilities enable the restructuring of organizational competencies to benefit from market arbitrage, where functionality of a dynamic capabilities helps to accomplish a newly configured organizational supply chain as a strategic initiative (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). Representation of manufacturing reshoring from a dynamic capability led Arlbjørn and Mikkelsen (2014) to establish that it is imperative for a reshoring phase to have existing manufacturing capability in the home country and also the dynamic capabilities of the reshoring firm.

According to Kristianto et al. (2012), integration and coordination are two vital elements that must be taken into consideration within the supply chain reconfiguration to create a streamlined supply chain network. Wei and Wang (2010) provided additional theoretical supplements, by highlighting the placement of integration and coordination as crucial constructs enabling the strategic value for reconfigurability of supply chain which contributes for dynamic capability view. The dynamic supply chain capability was extended by Aslam et al. (2018), where integration and coordination coupled around the manoeuvring of manufacturing productions and bounded by critical aspects of reconfiguration for a firm.

In contrast to the status quo, firms who are reshoring may face unprecedented challenges (Sayem, Feldmann and Ortega-Mier, 2018). With the initial phase of offshoring, supply chain partners in the home country may run out of business and be replaced with suppliers in the host country (Moretto, Patrucco and Harland, 2020). As a result, when the focal

firm who previously offshored decides to reshore, they may have to rely on suppliers in the offshored location or re-establish a supply network in the home country.

Studies conducted by Arshinder, Kanda and Deshmukh (2008) highlights the importance of a coordinated supply chain where collaboration and connection must exist within the involved supply chain members. This strong establishment in the supply chain can be transcribed with the observation of Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015) further stating that the ability to manage multiple segments of the value chain can form a strong base which eliminates the tension by reshoring firms needing to secure strong relationships with competent suppliers.

Chernova (2020) calls upon the importance of establishing supply chain networks through the integration of different supply chain components. Therefore, a reshoring firm can bring forth a synergy to the entire operation such as the integration between production and the research development departments. From an integration perspective, Dyer (1996) insists on the idea of a supply chain with a unilateral contribution and collaboration between all parties involved in the supply chain process to achieve an optimized goal.

It has often been the case that many firms tend to reshore as a strategy to fortify their competitive standpoint (Fratocchi et al., 2014). It is not an uncommon evidence for companies who have previously offshored and face adversities to economic turmoil may often find it a much easier solution to repatriate and produce back home given the availability of unutilized business assets (Tate et al., 2014). In the advent of converging fields such as manufacturing departments with the design team, not only does the firm have greater control over the supply chain, but have stronger quality control and greater trust earned from the customer market (Robinson and Hsieh, 2016).

Studies conducted by Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015) suggests that one major requirement for an integrated supply chain is proper levels of competence in involved personnel and also their ability in managing the reshoring process. In addition, stronger aggregate competencies and greater supply chain integration can be forged when a network vassals domestic and international value chain recipient in the same network (Grandinetti and Tabacco, 2015). Ashby (2016) identified that achieving goals for sustainability becomes much easier when firms in the supply chain network have harmonious relationships among each other.

2.3 Customer-Supplier Relationship

Engström et al. (2018) has observed that reshoring from offshored projects occurs due to increased difficulties in meeting customer demands for specific product categories, packaging and augmented facilities linked with the product itself. Wiesmann et al. (2017) highlighted that offshoring can often offset the supply chain integrity due to increased distance and reduced flexibility in the supply chain, thus, discrepancies may occur through differences in quantities of supply and demand in the customer market. In contrast to the problems addressed due to offshoring, Mlody and Stepień (2020) highlights reshoring firms can stimulate and influence customer markets. In addition, the authors relied on the prospect of maintaining coherence to the customer market as a major driving factor for reshoring establishment. The perspective held the notion of needing to fulfill customer needs through a strategic manufacturing optimization seeking to provide products that have quality, efficient production time alongside cost and ease of innovation with enough flexibility to adjust in accordance to customer preference (Lacoste, 2014).

According to Milošević et al. (2018), customer-supplier relationship extends and maximizes the incorporation for organizational success. Hallberg et al. (2018) assisted towards the understanding of customer and supplier relationship and comprehended the situation from an integration of various basic elements of supply chain. Ta, Esper, and Hofer (2015) demonstrated a broader viewpoint of customers holding a much greater scope for business and customer relationships. The study labelled customers as an active role in the supply chain process through direct or indirect participation. Zhaohui, Choi and Rungtusanatham (2010) highlights the importance of a customer-supplier flexibility posing a strong influence on the manufacturing capabilities. The degree of responsiveness of a supplier to changing and evolving customer needs plays a domino effect on manufacturing related components such as design, process, human resources and policy (Ziggers and Henseler, 2016).

According to Ta, Esper, and Hofer (2015), the role of customer expands to that of organizational employees; impacting value co-creation beyond their self-interest by reaching within and across the organizational operational border toward other customers. Within the paper, a modified version of supply chain management model by Lambert, Knemeyer and Gardner (2004) showed the transformation process of customers turning into the decision makers for a firm. A process starting with customers being the passive recipients of the firm's offerings. Later on, transforming into value co-creators with influences over the firm's decision

and eventually ending up as the collaborators to make amendments on behalf of other customers.

Customer preferences are increasingly adopting toward innovation, distinctive nature and brand images, leading to greater interest toward firms' activities such as the country of origin and environmental condition of the product manufacturing process (Viciunaite and Alfnes, 2020). Research to understand the perception of consumers toward reshoring firms has led Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2020) to demonstrate that the various initiatives a firm undertakes towards the customers eventually results in an enhanced brand perception. Furthermore, enhancement of the brand perception through reshoring is more prevalent for firms who have a greater proportion of domestic customers as a part of the total market (Cassia, 2020).

Customers today have an increased demand to consume homegrown products where the entirety of the product is produced and sold inside the national borders thus attributing the products with tradition and heritage (Robinson and Hsieh, 2016). Ancarni et al. (2015) highlights the notion that country of origin and manufacturing conditions pose a strong positive correlation on the subsequent brand image and value creation for customers. Despite the benefits that can be enjoyed through offshoring, firms often take initiatives to maintain the country-of-origin standards in order to stay committed and ensure brand presence among customers (Soosay et al., 2016). Brand image plays an integral role towards buying decision making processes for customers, thus providing many firms the necessary justification to reshoring back to maintain the brand authenticity (Weifeng, Shiling and Guangxing, 2016).

Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2015) represents the importance of companies to initiate in reshoring practices as a means of revamping the company brand image and scaling up the overall value addition to the customers. Nonetheless, the organization has to do so in a way that does not deviate the organizational competitiveness. The notion of competitiveness can be further affirmed by Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019) that reshoring firms have better market controls and better responsiveness to customer demands. The means of deriving this increased responsiveness to customer demands have been further supported by Hilletoft et al. (2019) where the authors suggested that firms need to relocate closer to the market in order to have greater coherence with customers. In addition, Moretto, Patrucco and Harland (2020) suggests that reshoring firms operating in the home country possess improved perception of

their brand image and fosters the customer and supplier relationship. Based on a research on relocation strategies for reshoring firms, Lica, Maria and Marchi (2020) provided justification that the reputation of a country has a correlation with the perception of a brand by the customers and especially applicable for firms whose products sales are largely driven by positive public perception.

In contrast to the benefit observed through manufacturing in accordance to customer-supplier relationship; Johnsen, Lacoste and Meehan (2020) brought forward the possibility of power imbalance bestowed upon the relation. The article further states that a major causal factor to this can often be the size of the parties involved thus leading to uneven power distribution. Customers with high levels of bargaining power can often be predominantly in control and have higher leverage over their relatively delicate suppliers. Augmenting to the point, the article further states that the effort provided by suppliers towards the customers has a strong correlation on how committed and trustworthy the customer is to the relationship.

2.4 Supply Chain Proximity

Sirilertsuwan, Hjelmgren and Ekwall (2019) demonstrated the importance of understanding as to whether firms tend to relocate to close the proximity between customers or headquarters or for both cases. The study by Wan et al. (2019a) highlighted supply chain proximity from the perspective of being closer to the customer market. The authors also reflected upon the location of the headquarters to signify the offshored firm's home country by constituting the identity of the reshored firm's origin based on the proximity to headquarters. In contrast Moradlou and Backhouse (2016) made a more direct observation by suggesting that locating the manufacturing plant next to the target market through reshoring can help shorten lead times and ensure greater adaptability to changing customer demands due to easier market access and greater transparency in information flow. Sirilertsuwan, Hjelmgren and Ekwall (2019) furthermore, looked into reshoring concerning supply chain through the lens of a multi-faceted viewpoint such as logistics, R&D and relocation investment within the same conceptual umbrella.

According to historical evidence (Williamson, 1991; Dyer, 1996), supply chain proximity poses an inverse connection to logistics cost whereby, binding the customers and the suppliers in relative vicinity can help reduce overall logistic challenges. Benefits derived from having close proximity can make a firm more capable and responsive to customers who have strong

concerns for quick delivery (Grandinetti and Tabacco, 2015). In contrast Sirilertsuwan, Ekwall and Hjelmgren (2018) made observations for events where given cycle times and the overall lead times are considerably high, a supply chain adjustment leading to reduced proximity can lead to an increase in logistic costs.

Both papers of Engström et al. (2018) and Wiesmann et al. (2017) pointed out that with the case of reshoring and the lack of proximity due to increase in mental and physical distance between firms in the supply chain may lead to greater coordination complexity. Adding to these, if the offshoring firm has an increased need for product customization, the firm would have no choice but to repatriate production to the home country (Wiesmann et al. 2017).

Reduction in proximity through the reshoring process not only can contribute to an integrated supply chain but can also have positive spill over effects in terms of better inventory controls and reduced lead times (Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson 2019). Similar observations have been highlighted by other studies suggesting that a reduction in supply chain proximity can ensure reliability, affordability and stability in the transportation facilities, lead to better flow of knowledge within the value chain and reduce storage costs (Ellram, Tate and Petersen, 2013; Tate et al. 2014). Wiesmann et al. (2017) called out that firms may engage in reshoring as a strategy for better control over the supply chain to foster better delivery output. This is further reconfirmed by Engström et al. (2018) stating that reshoring and bringing a stronger synergy between logistics and transportation can greatly reduce costs and streamline the transportation process and ensuring speed and dependability.

The innovative and research capabilities of the organization can be often suppressed when components across the value chain are spread out due to offshoring (Dachs et al., 2015). Wiesmann et al. (2017) suggests that R&D can be short-sighted due to limited information flow addressed by increased physical distance with the manufacturing location. A remedy to this situation would be to engage in insourcing or reshoring since convergence between the R&D and the manufacturing departments can make it easier for engineers to respond to changing market conditions and act accordingly (Engström et al., 2018; Wan et al., 2019b). Furthermore, Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl (2016) have identified cases where companies may often need to reshore when they are launching new products as different departments in the supply chain may require to mutually coordinate and perform auxiliary services to establish the product into the market.

Srai and Ane (2016) have furthermore highlighted reshoring as an important element of gaining competitive advantage in terms of greater productivity and higher innovation capability due to greater information flow in the regional supply chain cluster which can be addressed through the advantages of ‘related and supporting industries’ as theorized by the Porter’s Diamond Model. In contrast to the already established phenomenon, the reverse is also highly noticeable where many companies tend to diverge their upstream supply chain components through relocating R&D departments to offshored locations (Orzes and Sarkis, 2019) in hopes of minimizing costs and accessing skilled R&D engineers who may not be available in the home country.

Studies conducted by Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl (2016) suggest the importance of investments and the availability of investment capital as a core necessity for reshoring. The investment initiative is not only limited to the reshoring firm and can be done by any departments in the value chain. The required investments can be done in several areas to improve the supply chain through improvements in several tangible or intangible factors. This can be further confirmed from the observations of Barbieri et al. (2018) where the authors state that many firms who have engaged in offshoring face an irreversibility due to the huge investments required for the change in the manufacturing location. Thus, strongly supporting the idea that a sizable amount of investment capital is a big requirement for a reshoring process and a change in the manufacturing location.

Moradlou, Backhouse and Ranganathan (2017) have highlighted the intensity of the complete reshoring project whereby government agencies of the home country intervene to provide relocation investment aids to ease the reshoring process. Gray et al. (2013) brought forward the evidence of large corporations which make investments to ensure that the reshoring project attains a smooth transition. Vanchan, Mulhall and Bryson (2018) maps the reshoring initiative from an investment prerequisite where the board members of an organization have to go through an intense decision-making process before finalizing the relocation of the supply chain. In contrast, Bossche et al. (2014) implies that business functions which are unutilized but in proper usable conditions set for imminent restart of production therefore allowing the minimization of investment required for reshoring. Consequently, existing business assets can help a firm with the technical know-how and domestic expertise thus removing the requirement to set up everything from scratch.

2.5 Summary of key terms from Existing Literature

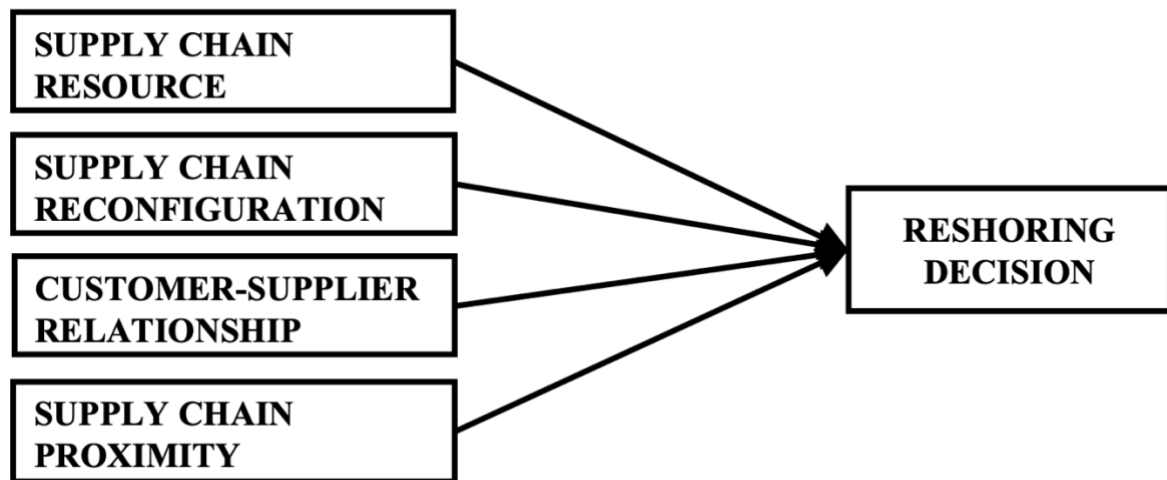
Table 1 Summary of key terms from existing literature

| Supply Chain Factors | Key terms from existing literatures | Authors |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Supply Chain Resource | Dunnings Eclectic Paradigm Model (1998), Resource-Based View (RBV), reshoring destination, internal and external capabilities, competencies and opportunities, resource based competitive advantage, streamline business functions, raw materials access, home based resource, firm size, decision making process, drive for local presence, integrated supplier base, material procurement adjustment, material cost and quality, environmental sustainability; domestic supplier redundancy | Dunning (1998); Schworer (2012); Ellram, Tate and Petersen (2013); Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015); Moradlou and Backhouse (2016); Uluskan, Joines and Godfrey (2016); Ashby (2016); Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl (2016); Huo, Han and Prajogo (2016); Sansone, Hilletoft and Eriksson (2017); Wiesmann et al. (2017); Wan et al. (2019b); Wan et al. (2019a); Dachs, Kinkel and Jäger (2019); Shibin et al. (2020); Moretto, Patrucco and Harland (2020) |
| Supply Chain Reconfiguration | streamlined organizational transition, unprecedented challenges, achieve supply chain goals, unilateral contribution, coordinated supply chain, contribution to dynamic capability, supply chain integration and coordination, domestic manufacturing base, garner competitiveness, eliminating supplier dependency, personnel competency, incorporating domestic and international SCN recipients, reconfiguration leading to quality and trust empowerment, inter-firm relationships achieve sustainable objectives, domestic supplier redundancy | Dyer (1996); Eisenhardt and Martin (2000); Teece et al. (2007); Arshinder, Kanda and Deshmukh (2008); Wei and Wang (2010); Kristianto et al. (2012); Arlbjörn and Mikkelsen (2014); Fratocchi et al. (2014); Tate et al. (2014); Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015); Grandinetti and Tabacco (2015), Robinson and Hsieh (2016); Ashby (2016); Sayem, Feldmann and Ortega-Mier (2018); Moretto, Patrucco and Harland (2019); Chernova (2020) |
| Customer-Supplier Relationship | product demands, imbalanced demand and supply, influence consumer markets, fulfill customer needs, maximizing organizational success, understanding of customer-supplier relationship, viewpoint of customers, customer participation, facilitating manufacturing capabilities, customer responsiveness | Lambert, Knemeyer and Gardner (2004); Zhaohui, Choi and Rungtusanatham (2010); Lacoste (2014); Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2015); Ta, Esper, and Hofer (2015); Ancarni et al. (2015); Robinson and Hsieh (2016); Soosay et al. (2016); Weifeng, Shiling and Guangxing |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | influencing manufacturing, customers as co-creators, customers as decision makers, demand creation, brand perception, brand perception enhancement, homegrown products, country of origin, decision making, revamping brand image; market controls, coherence with customers, country reputation, power imbalance | (2016); Ziggers and Henseler (2016); Engström et al. (2018); Wiesmann et al. (2017); Milošević et al. (2018); Hallberg et al. (2018); Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019); Hilletoft et al. (2019), Moretto, Patrucco and Harland (2020); Lica, Maria and Marchi, (2020), Johnsen, Lacoste and Meehan (2020); Cassia (2020); Mlody and Stepien (2020); Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2020); Viciunaite and Alfnes (2020) |
| Supply Chain Proximity | Relocation priority, relocation to shorten lead times, relocation for customer responsiveness, relocation for information flow | Moradlou and Backhouse (2016); Sirilertsuwan, Hjelmgren and Ekwall (2019); Wan et al. (2019a) |
| | proximity-cost relationship, customer responsiveness, logistic costs; product customization, firms repatriation, proximity influencing logistics, reshoring improving transportation capabilities, reshoring improving delivery output, logistics and transportation synergy fostering speed and dependability | Williamson (1991); Dyer (1996); Ellram, Tate and Petersen (2013); Tate et al. (2014); Grandinetti and Tabacco (2015); Engström et al. (2018); Wiesmann et al. (2017); Sirilertsuwan, Ekwall and Hjelmgren (2018); Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019) |
| | intra supply chain divergence, innovation capabilities, supply chain convergence, innovation limitations, new product launch | Dachs et al. (2015); Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl (2016); Srai and Ane (2016); Wiesman et al (2017); Engström et al (2018); Wan et al (2019b); (Orzes and Sarkis, 2019) |
| | investment capital as a core necessity for reshoring, huge offshore investment limits future reshore opportunities, government facilitating reshoring transition, reshoring transition influenced by investment quantity, intense pre-planning for reshoring initiative, unutilized business assets facilitating easier reshoring transition | Gray et al. (2013); Bossche et al. (2014); Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl (2016); Barbieri et al. (2018); Moradlou, Backhouse and Ranganathan (2017); Vanchan, Mulhall and Bryson (2018) |

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 Framework of supply chain factors influencing reshoring decision



Source: Own created

The framework (Figure 1) illustrates four supply chain factors as independent construct which pose an imminent influence upon the reshoring initiatives of an offshore firm.

Supply chain resources indicate the availability of raw materials and the utilization of firm competency to achieve a reshoring decision (Ellram, Tate and Petersen, 2013; Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen 2015; Ashby 2016). Supply chain reconfiguration refers to intra supply chain adjustments that are necessary to foster the reshoring process (Moretto, Patrucco and Harland, 2020; Arlbjørn and Mikkelsen, 2014; Grandinetti and Tabacco, 2015). Customer-supplier relationship refers to all sorts of brand building and steps initiated by a reshoring firm to address customer needs (Mlody and Stepien, 2020). Supply chain proximity entails all sorts of reshoring impediments and benefits that are looked through the lens of three sub-parameters (Sirilertsuwan, Hjelmgren and Ekwall, 2019). These four supply chain parameters provide the factors to be considered for reshoring.

3. METHODOLOGY

The following chapter contains the overall procedures and measures followed in conducting the entire study.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Formation of a quality research and elevated contribution towards the field of reshoring, requires the understanding of the conceptual presence within the realm of a philosophical paradigm as suggested in the methodological debate established by Robson and McCartan (2015). To understand the dynamism and the objectivity of the reshoring phenomenon, it is imperative for researchers to be involved in human interactions (Bryman, 1989) to understand an array of viewpoints in the relative subjectivism of reshoring.

Observations by Wiesmann et al. (2017), discusses reshoring from the perspectives of repatriating manufacturing and service units from offshored projects back to the origin location. It can be concluded that reshoring clearly requires the intertwining of the tangible objects and human participation. Given the nature of the differences in persona in the context of human interactions, different viewpoints are addressed in the context of reshoring. Such are also prevalent in the case of researchers as well whereby; multiple researchers have looked into the topic from separate contexts.

Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019) have established a study with the aim to denominate multi-faceted viewpoints of reshoring. Weismann et al. (2017) has been fairly interested in how the topic of reshoring will evolve and what are the future trends behind the phenomenon. Other studies have tried to determine the relative motivators for repatriation of the manufacturing process to the home country (Fratocchi et al., 2016; Benstead, Stevenson and Hendry., 2017; Engström et al., 2018).

Accounting for the subjective construct of the reshoring phenomenon and the diversified conclusions led by numerous researchers, the nature of the reality of reshoring under the ontological stance goes in line with relativism which suggests that moderation of ideas is subjective and based on human orientation (Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). Furthermore, the concept of reshoring can be observed through the knowledge of epistemology and holding social constructionism as the underlying stance. As mentioned in Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015 p, 52) “The idea of social constructionism, as developed by authors such as Berger and

Luckman (1966), Watzlawick (1984) and Shotter (1993), focuses on the ways that people make sense of the world – especially through sharing their experiences with others via the medium of language”.

As research surrounding reshoring has incorporated an active participation of the researchers such in the case of the Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019), where the authors visited the factory in China to get a holistic viewpoint of the reshoring process through in-depth interviews. The feedback from the respondents are considered a vital tool for the key observations of this study because such observations require active elements of human thoughts, feelings, beliefs which may provide situational results based upon particular respondents (Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015).

3.2 Research Approach

In line with the relatively unexplored context of reshoring Arlbjørn and Mikkelsen (2014), the usability of a qualitative method best suits the purpose of exploring what is yet unidentified. Furthermore, due to the lack of scientific data available, exploratory research would be the best tool to gather data due to its capability of giving answers to under-researched themes (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Development of relevant theories follows an inductive approach through the combination of systematic literature review and empirical findings. Therefore, the following thesis study moves in adjacent to conducting a qualitative study through exploratory research in line with a social constructionism perspective and an inductive approach.

3.3 Research Design

This chapter demonstrates the processes and steps undertaken to satisfy the research questions. Establishment of the research design will follow three subcomponents: Methodological choice, Research Strategy and Time Horizon based on the framework suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019).

3.3.1 Methodological Choice

In consideration of the interpretive aspect of the study, the research design therefore aligned with a qualitative focus to incorporate open ended viewpoints based on the situation of the respondents instead of moving ahead with a fixed viewpoint for all suitable examples. The focus was on the “how” and “what” instead of using numeric such as “how much” to have a

clear and understandable evaluation of the participants Roland, Frenay and Boudrenghien, (2016).

3.3.2 Research Strategy of the Study

Due to the lack of established academic studies and scientific data on the given research topic, the study aimed to conclude evidence through real-life experiences to satisfy the research gap. In essence to the situation, interviews with two companies were conducted to investigate the reshoring phenomenon and get a stronger depth on the topic through empirical findings, (Yin, 2014). The triangulation of case studies along with related literature on the topic with viewpoints from researchers can attribute the study to the overall credibility.

3.3.3 Time Horizons

Given the allocated time for the entire study period, a lot of time constraint was involved. The best course of action was therefore to engage in a cross-sectional study with participants. As a result, the interview results were collected from the companies on a one-time basis and not on repeated intervals or follow-up interviews.

3.4 Primary Data

In order to gather empirical data to correlate and validate established literature, primary data was collected through interviews with two Swedish based companies.

3.4.1 Research Strategy of the Primary Data

Once a gap was identified and a research aim was developed, primary data was collected through interviews conducted upon real life organizations to understand the actual scenario and to contribute further to the research topic in attempting to close the research gap. This chapter provides the steps followed in undertaking both secondary and primary data collection.

3.4.2 Research Quality

To establish a more reliable and relevant qualitative research, the magnitude of the research can be supported through relevant trustworthiness criteria. Observing the research of Lincoln and Guba (1982) where to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the data being collected the authors have transposed validity and reliability with credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The criterion of credibility can be further analysed through 6 subunits. For our study, we aim to utilize this concept and conclude to a better academic standpoint.

Table 2 Reliability and validity of the study based on Lincoln and Guba (1982)

| Criteria | Information | Conclusion and Remarks |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Credibility | | |
| <i>Prolonged engagement</i> | The study commenced in the first week of September 2020 and ran till the mid of January 2021. | The factors to consider for Reshoring from a supply chain perspective has been studied for 4.5 months |
| <i>Persistent observation</i> | Both the companies that have been used as a sample for the research have had successful reshoring projects. Data collecting for the multiple case studies were conducted based on a cross-sectional study but provided the option to conduct further interviews | Studying both the companies a single time was sufficient and despite the possibility to engage in further interviews, it was not really a necessity |
| <i>Triangulation</i> | The data processed has been incorporated through case studies, documents, semi-structured interviews with academic scholars. | The empirical findings have been corroborated with relevant theory and existing literature |
| <i>Peer debriefing</i> | Multiple seminars, both preliminary, final and opposition seminars were held | Feedbacks and critics were realized and resolved |
| <i>Referential Adequacy</i> | Raw interview data gathered from companies have been transcribed to employ empirical findings and reflect upon theory | The raw interview data and feedback from academic researchers are stored in recorded forms and written texts to reflect upon anytime |
| <i>Member Checks</i> | The data gathered have been cross-checked by both the authors of this study and can also be visited upon in the appendix | The data have been provided in the appendix to provide a clear picture of the industry scenario and the reshoring phenomenon |
| 2. Transferability | No existing literature upon exact research topic although data on similar topics are available | Medium transferability to similar research or high transferability to further research on existing topic |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| 3. Dependability | The overall interview results have been sorted out to ensure the applicability to satisfy the research aim. The applicable data maintained consistency in all areas comprising empirical findings, analysis and conclusion. | The entire thesis paper maintains strong consistency in the presentation of the data and was thoroughly cross-checked to fit the relevance of the findings based on the different contextual situations of the two respondents |
| 4. Conformability | The entirety of the study was consolidated upon a single literature framework to ensure maximum consistency throughout different portions. The analysis has been conducted based upon individual cases, comparison between cross cases and with existing literature | Multiple viewpoints at searching for the right keywords to ensure proper optimized results to cater to the research aim and ensure a consistent literature review. Interview recordings have been codified to text to be able to properly refer to them instead of repeatedly listening to the recordings |

3.4.3 Research Ethics

Due to the alignment of the study with a relativist approach through considerable human interactions in the form of semi-structured interviews, a consideration of research ethics is imperative. Studies by Robson and McCartan (2016 p, 489) suggests the importance of maintaining anonymity and strong levels of secrecy with the information collected from interview data. Similarly, this study maintains the proposition whereby, initial contact with the company in the form of e-mails administered consent to ensure that all interview results will be kept discreet. Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) have theorized ethical reasoning at different stages of interaction and data collection with respondents. The authors have broken down the entire interaction process into four steps: *administering research direction, access to organizations, data collection and interpretation, data publishing*.

Given the case of this study, the consideration of ethics became a matter at hand from the second step. Consent letters (see Appendix 1) had to be sent to the organizations through email to ensure privacy and confidentiality of the organization, personnel, and all organizational data while at the same time, clearly stating the motives of the research and avoiding all cases of deception. During the interview session, the interviewees were handled with proper means of respect thus ensuring there were no conflicts or heated discussions between the respondents

and the interviewers. The last step is to administer concerns of ethics in data representation. The data was processed, analysed and represented in the notion of maintaining company confidentiality and strictly ensuring that the company is not harmed in any manner.

3.4.3.1 Interviewer Consent

All respected interview respondents were subjected to voluntary participation and were only provided to answer open-ended questions at their maximum comfort and consent. These participants were initially contacted through a detailed email explaining the purpose of the interview direction for the study. Moreover, an informed consent from the university body was used to establish trust and provide a valid code of conduct. The email also included proof of maintaining anonymity ensuring the abiding of any possible rules and conditions set by the interviewees. This was aligned with keeping in mind the nature of qualitative research through semi-structured interviews to analyse open-ended viewpoints rather than a direct positive or a negative response. The respondents were clearly informed regarding the motive of the study and what would be the final outcome of the thesis paper.

3.4.4 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the represented sample unit source from which the data is gathered, processed, and later presented (Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). The sampling unit can be categorized by an individual, a group, or a number of groups bonded together, race and culture (Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015; Bryman, 1989) but not a sample size reflecting the entire consensus of the organization. Although the sample unit for Company B was the sales manager, the focus was not on the sales department but on the organization as a whole for the sampling unit. To maintain consistency of the data collection process, the 'organization' is predominantly set as the sampling unit for both Company A and Company B. Given the aspect of the reshoring process and the responsible organizational personnel involved in the procedure, it was decided to focus on chief executives and top-level managers for the interview process since these individuals were in more capable hands and were more involved in the reshoring process compared to subordinates and bottom level employees (Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl, 2016).

3.4.5 Operationalization

The development of the interview questions were based on the culmination of the theoretical references in accordance to the four supply chain factors. The following Table-3 provides a detailed breakdown. To understand the fields of both supply chain management and the context of reshoring from a theoretical perspectives were collected exclusively from peer-reviewed academic journals found in online Ebscohost. Limiting the search for academic journals strongly elevates the eloquence of the data as Rowley (2017) suggests that peer-review not only justifies the quality of the paper but also assures that the paper is relevant to the research aim.

3.4.5.1 Supply Chain Management

To understand the aspect of supply chain management and the relevance of the topic based on the research topic, the theories of supply chain management were searched on online Ebscohost in conjunction with the role of reshoring and offshoring. This was done mainly because, specifically searching for Supply Chain Management only provides results of over ninety thousand peer reviewed academic journals. In order to enhance the feasibility of scrutinizing through various research, it was a necessity to integrate the concepts of offshoring, reshoring and supply chain management together.

3.4.5.2 Reshoring Factors

Similar to the methods applied to the literature regarding supply chain management, the theories of reshoring were also searched on online Ebscohost and only peer reviewed academic journals were studied. To establish the research aim, various articles on offshoring and its reversal reshoring have been studied, understood and the core factors that firms consider for reshoring have been highlighted and filtered for further study. The viewpoints have been analyzed from both the viewpoints of offshoring and reshoring. In case of offshoring, data could be gathered from the manifested projections of an offshored firm regarding the factors they consider for a possible reshoring solution. Also, in the case of reshoring, ideas are taken on what drove these firms to reshore and what amenities they had to ensure to proceed with the reshoring decision.

3.4.5.3 Additional Literatures

Apart from the literature that has been studied to understand the concepts of supply chain management and reshoring, additional sources and published books were also part of the studied literature. These include books like *Management and Business Research 5th edition* by Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015). The purpose behind studying these books were not directly related to the establishment or the understanding of theoretical concepts but rather helped on the methods that have to be followed and the approaches that must be ensured to conduct the study. Similar to the literature that have been studied, the source of these books also includes online Ebscohost, Google Scholar, Academia.edu and as well as recommendations by the thesis supervisors.

Table 3 Operationalization

| S.N | Questions | Theoretical Reference | Themes |
|-----|--|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 | How are suppliers identified for resources in the reshoring location? | Sansone, Hilletoft and Eriksson (2017); Wan et al. (2019a); Wiesmann et al. (2017) | Supply Chain Resource |
| 3 | What are some factors that drove toward the establishment of a supplier base in Sweden? | Dachs, Kinkel and Jäger (2019); Ashby (2016) | |
| 4 | What adjustments and abilities were required in the supply chain when reshoring from the offshored location? | Aslam et al. (2018); Kristianto et al. (2012); Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015) | Supply Chain Reconfiguration |
| 5 | How did the different players in the supply chain collaborated in the reshored location? | Moretto, Patrucco and Harland (2020); Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015) | |
| 6 | What is the impact on the consumer market due to the adjusted environment? | Robinson and Hsieh (2016) | |
| 7 | How does previously existing assets in Sweden impacted supply chain readjustment? | Tate et al. (2014) | |
| 8 | How reshoring impacted the customer and supplier relationship? | Mlody and Stepien (2020); Ancarni et al. (2015); Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019) | Customer Supplier Relationship |
| 9 | What supply chain initiative does your firm take to ensure brand image? | (Soosay et al., 2016); Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2015) | |

| | | | |
|----|---|---|------------------------|
| 10 | How customers impact product development and manufacturing process in your company? | Johnsen, Lacoste and Meehan (2020) | |
| 11 | What is the impact of reshoring on supply chain proximity? | Sirilertsuwan, Hjelmgren and Ekwall (2019); Wan et al. (2019a) | Supply Chain Proximity |
| 12 | How reshoring has impacted supply chain proximity from a logistical perspective in terms of manufacturing location, retail outlets and customer market? | Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019); Wiesmann et al. (2017); Engström et al. (2018) | |
| 13 | How reshoring has impacted supply chain proximity from a relocation investment perspective? | Orzes and Sarkis (2019); Srai and Ane (2016) | |
| 14 | How reshoring has impacted supply chain proximity from the perspective of research and development? | Barbieri et al. (2018); Gray et al. (2013); Bossche et al. (2014) | |

3.4.6 Rationale of Selection

This sub-chapter aims to identify motives behind the selection of multiple recipients and factors which have contributed to providing relevant data to fulfil the aim and accomplish the research. The sub-chapter will be limited to three parameters: *Rationale behind Selection of Company, Rationale behind Selection of Participants, Interview Schedule and Data Collection.*

3.4.6.1 Rationale for Selection of Company

Two companies were selected for this research study.

Company A is a Swedish food company providing lactose and gluten free milk as substitutes of milk products. The company primarily caters their offerings to young allergic children. The company is owned and managed by two licensed dieticians with a strong background in child nutrition. The organization does not have any direct production but has dedicated suppliers to whom the company has offshored the product manufacturing initiatives the company launched in 2002 having their headquarter located in Sweden and production offshored to Spain. In 2007, the manufacturing was further offshored to Germany and reshored back to Sweden in 2016. The company envisions creating a sustainable and healthy future generation through providing healthy food for children. Sustainability and regional heritage are strong concerns for the company as they aim to utilize ingredients sourced from Swedish fields and raw materials procured from Swedish suppliers. All product packaging is also subjected to concerns about sustainability using recycled material to create product packages.

The rationale behind selecting the company was due to their long exposure of overseas production and then transporting the products to Sweden thus proving to have strong exposure to reshoring overcoming all possible challenges and cross-checking all fundamentals to achieve the reshoring goals. The company is maintaining concerns about multiple avenues; sustainability, climate change, recyclability, childcare, preserving the national heritage, and being keen observant to consumer demands. Furthermore, the company maintains a lot of stakes in the overall supply chain due to having strong dependency over external independent suppliers. All these factors combined make them a suitable candidate for research on reshoring phenomenon.

Company B is a Swedish office furniture company offering exquisite and finesse furniture and workplace design solutions. The company primarily engages in Business-to-Business (B2B) sales but also has some stake in Business-to-Government (B2G) transactions with operations involving in more than 40 countries. The company launched in 1942 and has expanded its base of production into Germany in the 1970s by acquiring other German furniture manufacturing plants. Although there were two production zones involving Sweden and Germany, in 2014, production was finally closed in German and the company now solely produces in Sweden through 6 production plants. The organization has a strong focus on sustainability through their organizational principle of “re-use, refresh and recycle” thus strongly emphasizing on lean production, material recyclability, restoration of obsolete products to put them into commercial use.

The eligibility of the company as a valid respondent was judged based upon their proven track record of nearly seven decades of operation. Although the offshoring expansion took place into Germany, a high-cost country having very similar socio-economic standards and almost identical market structure, they have operated beyond their origin borders for over 30 years. In addition, the organization maintains strong conformity to sustainability; a key practice to excel in the Swedish economy. All these variables combined makes company B an excellent respondent to conduct the studies upon.

3.4.6.2 Rationale for Selection of Participants

The participants for the study had to be limited down to only three due to companies being reluctant to provide their members for interviews amid the ongoing covid-19 crisis. The

participants were two chief executives of Company A and one sales manager at Company B. The rationale of choosing the respondents were disregarded in terms of gender, incomes and departments but only in their years of industry experience and the degree of authority they pose on the organization.

Also, it was more appropriate to choose respondents from high organizational positions as per the observation of Bryman (1989) stating that the enactment of top-level strategies can strongly influence the financial outcomes of an organization. In regards, emails were sent to multiple company heads and top executives but only two companies had positive responses and despite the strong adversities faced by the impacts of Covid-19, they were very generous to provide time.

For Company A, the participants are chief executives who are licensed dieticians and top experts in the baby food industry. Given their area of expertise in the field, the attention to detail at product quality and production procedures coupling with their strong motivations to sustainability proved them to be second to none as a research respondent. The sales manager at Company B, although he has around 6 months of involvement as the manager of company B, has over 20 years of industry experience working with top furniture companies. The manager is well groomed with proper industry insights and has been extremely helpful at providing information regarding the domestic, offshoring and reshoring operations of Company B.

A table is constructed based on the interview respondents and their experience in the organization

Table 4 Interview Participant Information

| Employee position | Company | Duration in the company | Date of Interview | Duration of Interview |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| CEO/Owner | Company A | 7 years + | 25th November 2020 | 28 minutes |
| CEO/Owner | Company A | 7 years + | 25th November 2020 | 28 minutes |
| Sales Manager | Company B | 6 months | 17th December 2020 | 31 minutes |

Source: Own created

3.4.6.3 Interview Schedule and Data Collection Fundamentals

The interview protocols followed a semi-structured interview through open-ended questions but also adjacent to relevant theories and concepts to accomplish the research aim and fill in the research gap. This allowed the respondents to be as comfortable as possible and were given enough “room to talk” about their own perception over the matter to conform with interpretivism (Bryman, 1989). According to Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, (2015), not only does maintaining this approach benefit the respondents with being more comfortable to the interview session but also benefits the interviewer with gaining the trust of the respondents and getting a greater pool of relevant information.

To assure the ease of timing, the interviewees were given the freedom to choose the interview method, location and decide upon the timing of the interview as per their convenience. This was specified mainly for Company B due to their office being inside Gävle. The interview session with Company A had to be conducted through a zoom meeting due to them being located in the Southern part of Sweden.

The Case of Company A

The interview with Company A was conducted on 25th November 2020 through Zoom due to their presence being geographically distant. The timing for the interview was confirmed on 23rd November and a zoom link was shared for the upcoming session. After introducing the respondents regarding the research aim and the research topic, the respondents were asked for permission to record the interview for further reference on data analysis and processing. The interview session included questions consisting of pre-set questions which were asked in the context of the organization and additional questions which were improvised and asked on the spot to explore further about the organization. The idea of a zoom meeting was not only imperative due to the geographical distance but also according to Gray et al. (2020), in an online meeting, the interviewees feel more connected to the interviewers due to assurance of safety (Oltmann, 2016) and feel more open and expressive. Opdenakker (2006) highlights the advantages of a face-to-face meeting, which can also transcend in the case of a video call over the Zoom whereby social cues such as body language, tone of voice and facial expressions are also applicable.

The Case of Company B

Company B was contacted twice, the first time through an email which had no response. A week later their CEO in the Gävle branch was contacted for a meeting and the CEO assigned a newly appointed sales manager for the interview session. The manager requested a Face-to-Face interview on 17th December 2020 at 13:00. In accordance with the request by Company B, the interview session was held by being physically present in the Gävle office of Company B. The interview session included questions consisting of pre-set questions which were asked in the context of the organization and additional questions which were improvised and asked on the spot to explore further about the organization. From the respondent's point of view, the concept of a face-to-face meeting would mitigate any scopes of alienating the respondent through the lens of a long-distance meeting held by an online meeting. This gives the respondent more confidence to answer the questions and with being inside their own comfort zone, they are given the opportunity to be themselves and are more likely to present accurate information and not deliberately modify the information just for the sake of providing interview responses (Oltmann, 2016).

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This chapter contains a brief overview of the findings gained from interviews and case studies of two Swedish companies who have been engaged in reshoring activities. A culmination of motivators, drivers, challenges and factors to consider for reshoring are provided from the viewpoints of the respondents. Further details will be broken down in the analysis and discussion chapter.

Table 5 Company Overview

| | Company A | Company B |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Type of Industry | Lactose-free food for children | Workplace solutions |
| Main Market | Sweden | Sweden and Germany |
| Revenues (SEK) - 2019 | 10.22 millions | 3.955 billions |
| Offshoring location | Germany | Germany |
| Type of offshoring | Outsourced offshoring | Expansion of new production |
| Offshoring duration | 9 years + | 30+ years |
| Reasons for offshoring | Lack of domestic suppliers | Regional concentration of production, Greater control over value chain |

4.1 The Case of Company A

4.1.1 Background

Company A is an SME located in Bjuv municipality in Skåne county. The company started its journey in 2002 specializing in providing dairy-free products to children with allergies and lactose intolerance. The company had a change of ownership in 2013 and the current owners of the company are Elin and Sandra (not their real names). These owners also play the role of the CEO in the organization and were the decision makers of the reshoring process.

The initial days of Company A started with offshored production in Spain when the former proprietors had no supply as the technology of producing milk-free food did not exist in Sweden. This motivated the owners to seek producers overseas and found opportunities in

Spain thus engaging in a full-scale offshored manufacturing. The products would, therefore, be produced in Spain and shipped to retail outlets in Sweden. In 2007, the production offshored from Spain to Germany to increase logistical flexibility as producers in Germany have promised an equivalent level of product quality. With increased spatial proximity, the owners had now better control over the supply chain. Furthermore, in March 2016, three years after the change of ownership, the new entrepreneurs Elin and Sandra got news about milk-free production opportunities in Sweden and identified suppliers. This led the company to decide to reshore the production process from Germany to Sweden. In May 2016, legal procedures were completed with the local suppliers and the first domestic production in Sweden took place in October 2016 thus taking strong pride in achieving the dream of launching a ‘Made in Sweden’ brand.

The motive behind the reshoring phase was not due to any obstacles they had to endure but rather due to the concept of a fully domestically produced brand “*As Swedish as possible*” quoted by Sandra. This decision however, opened up the company to various opportunities.

4.1.2 Supply Chain Resource

A major reason for reshoring to Sweden derived from the need to stay aligned with the organizational principle of using Swedish based raw materials. The sudden embracement of Sweden in being able to process gluten free milk provided the justification to further allocate the supplier who can meet the quality standard. Due to the sustainability trend in Sweden, Company A engaged in both the identification of milk-ingredient suppliers and also producers using recycled materials to produce environmentally friendly packaging. As the CEO from Company A said “*We wanted to incorporate with Swedish environment of sustainability. Utilize Swedish ingredients such as oat and oil locally produced in Sweden.*”

4.1.3 Supply Chain Reconfiguration

In essence to the reshoring from Germany, Company A required a new producer to perform effectively in the Swedish market. This led to a change in the initial supply chain as the producers of key ingredients such as oat in Germany got replaced Swedish suppliers. In reference to greater understanding of consumer demand and the necessary actions they took to reciprocate, the company has installed new production lines to cater for product development and establish new variations of the existing products. In essence to the supply chain reconfiguration, Company A now has an integrated and streamlined communication media

with the suppliers. This enabled Company A to engage better with the suppliers since the organization can now initiate repeated field visits to the factories of the suppliers. As stated by the respondent *“Easier to visit factory, understand each other, stronger communication with more scope for discussions, better control over the value chain”*. Previously, during the case of offshored production in both Spain and Germany, they had to rely on occasional phone calls and very rarely visit the manufacturing plants of the outsourced suppliers.

4.1.4 Customer-Supplier Relationship

There are several factors that motivated Company A, such as; to market the products as a homegrown Swedish brand, keeping access to only Swedish suppliers and to establishing a market base focused on Swedish customers. In relation to the respondent *“It is easier to do advertising as we can boast that the products are homegrown, and Swedish made. Swedish consumers appreciate products which are produced in Sweden”*. This leads to creating strong brand appeal, approval and trust to the customer. The prospect of the customer’s positive perception towards Swedish made products carries better integration to thinking patterns and understanding of consumer trends in the market. As a result, the Swedish producers of Company A share a better understanding of the consumer markets due to having similar thinking patterns and can easily cope up with Company A’s change in production demands. Based on the respondent *“Better integration to thinking patterns and understanding of consumer trends in the market. The Swedish factory has better understanding of the Swedish market and can easily cope up with change in production demands”*. The ability to stay closer to the customer base helps to understand and align the advertising strategies in accordance to the customer preference. Company A can boast that the products are homegrown, and Swedish made. Swedish consumers appreciate products which are produced in Sweden.

4.1.5 Supply Chain Proximity

The reshoring motive to closing the proximity between the retail markets and the manufacturing location was called in for several factors. The closer proximity allows efficient production control, increases inter-supplier communication and establishes a brand identity reflecting the Swedish heritage. Moreover, reshoring back to Sweden helped to mitigate the problem of communication gap between the top management and the offshored production facility.

Given the specialized nature of the product and the target customer group, the gluten-free products are addressed to have strict quality controls and a very distinct procedure on how they can be manufactured. Now with being in closer proximity, it is easier to manage over the value chain ensuring proper control. Furthermore, with closer market proximity improved logistical movement of raw materials to the manufacturing plants and also helped to convey the finished goods to the end customers resulting in a decrease in the overall lead time. In accordance to the respondent *“Being in Sweden helps to focus on minimizing transportation distance and closer proximity helps with raw material sourcing”*.

According to the interview respondents, some minor reshoring investments were incurred. In order to commence production in Sweden, Company A had to invest a substantial amount of time at grooming their suppliers. Some other minor costs were involved in the designing of the new packaging. Due to enlisting the Swedish logo on the new product packages, the old packages which were used during production in Spain and Germany were remodelled to a new version suitable for commercialization and branding in Sweden. As per the CEO *“We did incur some investment related to change in product design but no significant investment was needed due to shift in Sweden”*.

With the closure of the proximity between the manufacturing plants and the headquarters, the company now has greater innovation capabilities due to easier information flow between the inter organizational departments. Furthermore, due to the augmentation of symmetrical thinking patterns and with the greater understanding of the markets and the needs of the consumers, it has become much easier for the organization to design, innovate and develop new products. According to the respondent *“Being in Sweden helps to better access the market, easier to hold meetings, market information can be easily conveyed to the responsible factories and suppliers who can design new product lines”*.

4.2 The Case of Company B

4.2.1 Background

Company B is a leading Swedish furniture manufacturer, the company started its journey in 1942 under the ownership of two entrepreneurs and excels in producing office furniture, upholsters and providing workplace solutions. Production takes place across six of the company's own manufacturing plants scattered around 3 zones in Sweden. In the 1970s, the

company sought expansion into the German market and through acquisition of German manufacturing plants, they have set their footprint into the German market. The motive behind this expansion was to access the market in Germany, being the largest office furniture market in Europe. The company operates in over 40 countries but offshoring expansion was done only in Germany primarily due to their internal competency of quick order and delivery. As a result, offshoring to distant overseas locations was not a possibility.

The offshoring production in Germany had strong potential but with the advent of the global financial crisis in 2008, the organization started to realize its vulnerability. In 2010, the Company bought a second manufacturing plant from a Dutch company which was trying to liquidate its assets through an exit strategy. This plant survived for some time until 2014, when company B realized it would be a bold strategic move to close the German plants and upscale existing production in Sweden. As a result, the plant was shut down and Sweden has been the only manufacturing location since late 2014.

After Company B announced the news regarding their reshoring from Germany to Sweden, this resulted into demotivation of working and increased absenteeism rates amongst the German personnel as they realized they would eventually lose their jobs. But according to the respondent, these employees eventually looked at the bigger picture and slowly embraced the news and accepted the reshoring transition.

4.2.2 Supply Chain Resource

One of the key drivers for Company B to reshore to Sweden was the abundance of very high quality and affordable resources. According to the respondent, a key factor for the highly performing furniture industry is the well-established wood and timber industries. Furthermore, the quality of wood has significantly improved as Swedish wood and timber are of much higher quality compared to their German counterparts. As told by the sales manager of Company B *“Suppliers are based on a combination of both quality and affordable materials. The way we wanted to maintain quality and brand our product, it was necessary to move back to Sweden”*. The organization has a concern for sustainability and through their maxim of “re-use, refresh and recycle”, they have a strong commitment to lean production. Wastage such as fabrics during the production of office upholsters are re-processed into product packaging and any sort of wooden leftovers are used as fuel source and for heating up the factories. Furthermore, it is a common practice to reuse old and obsolete products and the company regularly sources old

furniture and equipment to salvage and reprocess them into new high-quality products. This not only saves cost for the organization but is also a major contributor to the sustainability ideology in Sweden. Referring to the statement by the respondent *“Sweden has exceptionally good quality woods and we have lots of it. Sweden has a law for many years where if you take down trees, you have to replant it. In a bigger perspective, it was a way of securing good quality raw materials and sustainability”*

4.2.3 Supply Chain Reconfiguration

Following the reshoring transition from Germany to Sweden, Company B underwent some drastic supply chain changes. Following the reshoring, the German plant in Winden closed down and the company decided to upscale their current factories in Sweden. This transition led to Suppliers in Germany getting replaced with suppliers in Sweden since they proved to be more competent and due to closer proximity. The new suppliers in Sweden initiated internal collaboration with each other as a means to share knowledge and mutually assist Company B by providing the best quality raw materials. As the sales manager said *“there is collaboration when it comes to spreading knowledge between each different supplier. The wood manufacturer and the steel manufacturer, they have internal knowledge sharing”*.

Transportation in Germany was dependent on external suppliers and the organization had to rely on delivery trucks which would stop at multiple destinations and would carry goods from multiple companies at the same time. This became a lot more flexible after reshoring due to having their own fleet of blue trucks. This enabled the opportunity to choose their own delivery routes and transport greater quantities of products. In respect to the challenges, the organization had to reshape their methods in order to be more customer responsive. Statement from the respondent provides further understanding *“We can control it better since we have our own blue trucks. We have them on specific routes, and we fill them as much as we can. When they move, they can access different customers and to take care of used products. They move as a cycle and we can control that from Sweden. Greater flexibility in transportation.”*. The production strategies have been remodelled from producing in bulk to taking orders and co-creating with customers while keeping very limited shelf stock.

4.2.4 Customer-Supplier Relationship

During the initial days of operation, a major customer for Company B was the Swedish government which helped them with a major “head-start”. This eventually turned around as the

contract was lost due to improper customer-centric strategic decisions. To correct their previous mistakes of not being customer responsive but rather producing in bulk, the organization had to remodel their methods and have decided to take orders through co-creation of products with the customers. According to the sales manager *“We forced to be innovative and more on the edge of what the market required and very keen to listening to market needs and finding new ways to make furniture. Emphasizing on good quality and price worthiness leading to a strong and consistent brand image”*. In addition, they had to be keen and observant with the market trends, understand the needs of the customers, innovate accordingly, modernize the brand and re-introduce new methods of production. This over time became a key strength of the organization and the company takes pride in being able to fulfil market demands and their ability to innovate according to customer needs. This strategic advantage got fortified even further in the advent of reshoring as closing the proximity led to being more customer responsive.

The change in the production and the usage of Swedish raw materials also enriches the brand identity as the customers are proud of the brand heritage. In order to maintain trust and commitment, the organization ensures consistent product quality and consistently comes up with more advanced technical solutions to create convenience. The strategy is to build up collaboration over time with the customers, maintain good relationships and to showcase new product offerings and how they operate. As suggested by the sales manager *“We looked at what the market has, how we can refresh, how we can come up with new ideas, really listen to the customers’ needs, found new ways of manufacturing and modernized the needs of the customers”*. According to the respondent, it is the role of the organization to ensure that the customers of the organization receive the best service quality.

4.2.5 Supply Chain Proximity

While operating in Germany, it was a desire of the company to repatriate production as a means of garnering better operational control and that the employees and workforce involved operate in the best quality work environment. This could have been ensured by relocating production closer to the headquarters to promote greater integration and control. Further benefits of reshoring led to greater quality controls and ease of innovation. However, when asked about the importance of closing the physical distance as an influencer for reshoring, the respondent mentioned it was a lesser important reason.

Since the reshoring, the organization had a dynamic shift in their transportation logistics. Compared to the previous case where the company had to rely on delivery trucks from external suppliers which would transport shipments from multiple companies simultaneously and would drop at many different routes, they now have their own trucks. This reduced overall transportation costs and gave them greater flexibility to their transportation efforts as they are now able to move greater quantities of raw materials to their factories and more goods to the customers. Furthermore, delivery time has significantly dropped due to greater control over their delivery routes, they can now decide where to drop and unlike their case in Germany, do not have to drop at delivery points of other companies. The sales manager of company B mentioned that *“Proximity reduces delivery times due to having access to our own truck and not being dependent on others and we can plan our own delivery routes. In the case of German trucks, they loaded and had multiple destinations”*.

As a remedy to the challenges the organization has faced during the initial years, they took innovation and research quite seriously. This further created the motive to reshore as Company B wanted to be closer to the headquarters. It has become a part of their core operations to meet customers, discuss needs, co-create designs, and innovate together. Being close to the market makes this process a lot easier. Sales manager of Company said *“Proximity with the Swedish market made it easier to engage in supply chain for product development and the closeness of the different factors helped new ways of working new solutions”*.

In commencing the reshoring transition, the German manufacturing plant was closed down and the existing factories in Sweden were upscaled. This resulted in intangible costs in the form of workplace demotivation of the German employees once they got the news that they would eventually be made redundant. Monetary costs were incurred in expanding the Swedish factories. Furthermore, with increased production and increased output, the organization had to buy new delivery trucks which would transport raw materials to the factories and also deliver finished goods to the customers.

4.3 Summary of Findings

The following Table- 5 consists of the overall empirical findings obtained from Company A and Company B. The findings are placed in accordance to the four supply chain factors; supply chain resource, supply chain reconfiguration, customer-supplier relationship and supply chain proximity.

Table 6 Summary of the Empirical Findings

| Supply Chain Factors | Empirical Findings |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Supply Chain Resource | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replaced sourcing of raw materials from offshored supplier to Swedish supplier. - Sustainability and environmental consciousness are crucial factor in the sourcing pattern. - Abundance of raw material is important to ensure lower variable cost and higher. |
| Supply Chain Reconfiguration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure supply chain competency in the home before reshoring to avoid failures to readjust. - Reshoring improves coordination and integration across supply chain. - Pre-existing assets in home country can ease the process of adjusting the supply chain after reshoring. |
| Customer-Supplier Relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reshoring helped associate the firm's product with Swedish heritage and thus catering to customer perception. - Allows customer centric strategic decisions by aligning with their preference and collaborate for future product creation. |
| Supply Chain Proximity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ease of overseeing logistical support. - Reduction in transportation cost and product delivery time. - Creates better access to market information for research and development. - Firms incur investment cost due to repatriation from the offshored location to the reshored establishment. |

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following chapter encompasses a breakdown and an understanding of the empirical evidence gathered from the multiple case studies in conjunction with the four independent variables established in the literature that are used to satisfy and test the research topic. The following chapter is divided in two main sections; 5.1 Individual Case Analysis and Discussion and 5.2 Cross-Case Analysis.

5.1 Individual Case Analysis and Discussion

Through this section, readers can get a conjoined viewpoint about the findings established through primary data in adjacent to the previously established systematic literature review. The viewpoints are addressed for both the organizations that have been interviewed upon for the primary data collection.

5.1.1 Supply Chain Resource

Theories (Dunning, 1998; Wan et al., 2019b; Sansone, Hilletofth and Eriksson, 2017) suggesting the importance of availability of resources in the home country in order to supplement reshoring firms does coincide directly with the case of both Company A and Company B.

Company A

Company A, which specializes in providing dairy-free and gluten-free milk-based food to babies, have primarily decided to reshore back from Germany to Sweden due to their derived principle of trying to establish products originated with the Swedish heritage. In order to do so, they had to replace all sorts of materials and ingredient sourcing from overseas suppliers and replace them with domestic ingredients sourced from Swedish fields and other Swedish suppliers. Thus, directly going hand-in-hand with the observations past literatures (Ellram, Tate and Petersen, 2013; Wiesmann et al., 2017; Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen, 2015) addressing that firms are in dire need of securing reliable resource suppliers in the reshored home county before repatriating from the offshored location.

Lastly, sustainability was a crucial factor that made Company A to require sourcing from Sweden; as suggested by the respondent that such environmental consciousness helps their organizational goal by being part of Sweden's sustainable ecosystem. Sustainable resource seeking by Company A provides a relevant reshoring-based supply chain factor that links with

the study by Ashby (2016). Whereby the author looked into reshoring firms in terms of supply chain access to environmentally friendly and renewable resources.

Company B

Company B, having around four decades of production in an offshored location, had been performing considerably well. Due to relatively unstable market dynamics and an increased concern to have stronger levels of control over the business operations, the company decided to reshore and concentrate global production inside Sweden and export overseas. As Company B is a significantly large firm, therefore it can be related to the observation by Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015) whereby the size of the reshoring firm should be taken into consideration as it determines the magnitude of supply chain resources being required. Therefore, despite the lucrative market stance in Germany, the reshoring process was completed in 2014 due to the existing capacity of the Swedish suppliers.

For Company B, access to raw material suppliers played an integral role for the decision to reshore back to Sweden. Wood being one of the key materials that is required and consumed for the production, the abundant access of it ensured that the company would be able to secure a stable production. The importance of abundance access to supply chain resources for Company B aligns with the observation by Wiesmann et al. (2017) and Ellram, Tate and Petersen (2013). The authors highlighted that the availability of raw material is imperative as the lack of resources can be a key reason behind the failure of a firm after reshoring. The presence of the flourished wood and timber industry cross-checks the hypothesis provided by research studies (Uluskan, Joines and Godfrey, 2016) where the author suggests the importance of selecting the right competent suppliers who are able to provide the right price and quality for the production materials. The abundance of the resource therefore ensures that the organization will have relatively lower variable costs and higher levels of quality compared to the offshored location.

5.1.2 Supply Chain Reconfiguration

Dynamic capability view proposed by Teece (2007) aligns with the supply chain reconfiguration documented from Company A and Company B. The theory suggests that organizations engaging in relocation must develop strategies to make new adjustments and reconfigure in order to coordinate with the new supply chain.

Company A

Initially the production facilities of Company A were completely reliant upon offshored suppliers. Due to the distinctive and sensitive nature of the production process, Company A had to ensure supply chain competencies before engaging in the reshoring from Germany to Sweden. Study by Kristianto et al. (2012) can further facilitate the understanding of Company A's initiative to configure the existing supply chain capabilities. The reshoring took place in 2016 with the first successful production batch completing in December. This transition of supply chain led to increased coordination to the entire value chain since the customer market has always been in Sweden. Study by Aslam et al. (2018) extends the transition taken by Company A to ensure supply chain coordination and readjustment of the manufacturing production in the new location.

In essence to the reduced proximity to the market, this allowed the entire network to be much more integrated and with increased coordination. This gave a solid boost to innovation, overall communication flow and logistics thus, leading to greater market responsiveness and greater appreciation from the customer market (Robinson and Hsieh 2016). Therefore, directly aligning with the observation of Wei and Wang (2010), where the authors stated that integration between value chain components makes a firm more strategically viable to have increased dynamic capability.

Company B

When Company B realized that they would be much better-off by producing solely in Sweden by concentrating all production facilities in proximity, a decision was made to close their plants in Germany and upscale existing manufacturing plants in Sweden. This gave them a major boost due to being much more integrated instead of having to encompass a part of it to Germany. This adds relevance to the observations of Chernova (2020) addressing the importance of integration between various supply chain components in order to create a streamlined and well-functioning supply chain network.

In the aspect of the reshoring, the company also allocated the delivery of materials and finished goods to their personal fleet of blue trucks. These trucks have specific routes they follow and tend to stock up with materials during their return to the manufacturing facility to ensure smooth transition and minimize events of the truck being empty. Compared to the situation while operating in Germany, the trucks were contractually hired from other suppliers holding

only a fraction of the goods and stopping at multiple destinations. The new adjustment and greater control over the additional segment of the value chain has greatly reshaped logistics for the company which can be addressed by the theory of Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Jonsen (2015). The theory suggests that companies having control over multiple segments are independent over the necessity to secure relationships with competent suppliers in the post reshoring period.

For Company B, the reshoring transition was also easy and inexpensive due to their already ready and available production facilities in Sweden. This led the organization to access previously unused business assets and upscale existing businesses to operate at greater utilization. This goes with the theoretical observation of Tate et al. (2014) suggesting that companies find it much easier to repatriate due to existing assets at the home country not operating at maximum capacity. Suggestion by Arlbjørn and Mikkelsen (2014) on the importance of having existing manufacturing facilities in the home country making it easier to reshore therefore has a strong reflection upon the case of Company B.

5.1.3 Customer-Supplier Relationship

Company A

Company A being involved in the baby food industry follows very distinct and specific product recipes which require close monitoring and control. Despite concerns about quality, the organization needed to administer strong levels of control to ensure the proper taste. Recent studies according to (Viciunaite and Alfnes, 2020; Mlody and Stepień, 2020) suggests that consumers have an added demand for specialized products involving distinctive tastes and also towards companies that have reshored from overseas locations. The author further suggested that these customers also have an increased demand for the conditions in which the product was manufactured. This strongly applies to the case of Company B for which the organization took the initiative to reshore as a means of ensuring that all personnel who are involved in the manufacturing process operate under the best working conditions.

Observations by (Robinson & Hsieh 2016) suggest the importance of added consumer demand when the products are associated with national heritage and contain locally sourced ingredients. This was one of the main reasons why Company A decided to reshore as they have strong concerns of making their brand “as Swedish as possible”. Theory proposed by Ancarani et al. (2015) suggests the notion of creative positive brand image derived from adhering to the

national heritage and relating the brand with the country of origin. Adding to the initiative of sourcing all ingredients and raw materials from Sweden, the organization went a step ahead as to incorporate a Swedish logo into their product packaging leading the organization to discard old packages and develop a new one. These steps align with the observations of Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2015) where the authors state that companies reshore through a carefully constructed plan as a means of upholding their brand image.

In accordance to the creation of the brand image and the subsequent similarity in thinking patterns, Company A has a greater grasp over the customer market leading to additional advantages in terms of product promotion and innovation. The authors from the study of Hilletofth et al. (2019) suggest the same concept that firms often tend to relocate to have greater understanding of customers. Furthermore, in accordance with the observations of (Cassia, 2020), Company A having its biggest market share in Sweden poses a strong advantage to the brand in terms of positive appeal from the domestic customers. As the market share for Company A comprises mainly of Swedish customers, the benefits behind it can be related to Cassia (2020) adding to the advantage of having positive perception of the brand by customers.

Company B

In the initial days of operation, the organization had greater concern over bulk production with limited concerns to customer preference. This eventually led the company to lose customers and created a disproportional demand and supply, a scenario which is reflected in a study by Wiesmann et al. (2017). For Company B, customers work in conjunction to discuss tastes, needs and ways of improvement thus leading to co-creation and co-develop new products for the organization. Therefore, denoting that the customer is a key stakeholder and a major contributor to product designing. Lambert, Knemeyer and Gardner (2004) and Ta, Esper, and Hofer (2015) have both agreed upon the concept of a customer playing the role of an employee and actively contributing to the product development and decision making in an organization.

In reference to the strategic alteration, the organization took initiatives to cater to customer needs and act accordingly having greater consideration over customer demand instead of producing in bulk, while also taking efforts to restructure and modernize operational methods. The new approach led the organization to take orders and design blueprints based on the product specifications of the customer requirements. This led the organization to engage in

greater flexibility in terms of production and innovation capability, thus going directly in line with the theory of “strategic manufacturing optimization” as proposed by Lacoste (2014).

Furthermore, the change in the manufacturing location and closing the proximity has led to increased customer responsiveness coinciding directly with the observations of Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019); Hilletoft et al (2019) where the authors have stated that firms need to relocate closer to the market to have greater coherence and better customer responsiveness.

Observations of Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2015, 2020) stating that companies initiate various initiatives including reshoring as a method of revamping the company and enhancing the overall brand perception of the customers. The relevancy of this theory can be affirmed by the empirical evidence of Company B. In order to maintain trust and commitment, the organization took the initiative to reshore, replaced the raw material suppliers, administered quality concerns to provide consistent, premium quality, and took initiatives to keep customers informed about new product offerings and how to operate them. Furthermore, the organization always updates their organization bulletin which incorporates any upcoming product and prototypes.

5.1.4 Supply Chain Proximity

Company A

Company A had a case of inflexible communication between the organizational supply chain recipients inside Sweden and the outsourced manufacturers in Germany. The top management had to rely on email conversations and phone calls due to the geographic proximity and could only very rarely engage in factory visits. This issue has been addressed in Wiesmann et al. (2017) where the authors stated that due to offshoring and the increased levels of distance, an increase in coordination costs is quite prevalent. It was a core concern of the organization to move the production closer to get rid of this inflexibility. This method of correcting the hindrances in offshore production through reshoring has been mentioned in a study conducted by Moradlou and Backhouse (2018).

Not only has the organization has greater communication coherence and integration with the entire supply chain but also the overall lead time has significantly dropped, and customers can

get access to the products at greater ease. Apart from stronger levels of coordination and mitigating the communication gap due to the reduced geographic proximity, the organization has also a much more effective stance in logistics. Delivery time and overall lead time has significantly dropped, and it has become much easier to maintain track of inventory levels going in proper alignment with the observations of Fjellstrom, Fang and Chimenson (2019).

The owners of Company A realized that with increased proximity between the headquarters and the manufacturing location was suppressing innovation of the company and was a major barrier when relating to research and development. With reshoring and readjusting the manufacturing closer to the research and development department observed quick flow of market information between all departments and the organization as a whole had greater innovation capability leading to new products and product variations being launched. This can be addressed by Weismann (2017) where the author demonstrated a negative correlation between R&D and physical distance stating that as physical distance increases between the manufacturing department and the R&D department, the innovation capabilities of the business shrinks down due to reduced information flow.

Observations by Bals, Kirchoff and Foerstl (2016) highlighting the importance of reshoring as a measure of streamlining the communication flow within the supply chain departments to foster innovation and product launch has been observed in the case of Company A. Through execution of the reshoring project, it has become much easier for the organization to understand customer demand and needs due to similar thought processes and better grasp over industry trends. Thus with better understanding of the customer market, it has become easier for the R&D department to innovate new products.

Taking into consideration the matter that Company A was involved in offshoring and even after the reshoring still engaged in outsourced production, they did not have any production facilities of their own. Therefore, even though the company decided to reshore its production in 2016, it did not have to set up any production plants and only had to secure a competent supplier who could ensure the proper product quality. Although there was no direct establishment of production facilities, the organization had to create new product packaging and had some minor costs involved in designing new packages. The company however, had to halt production for some time in order to groom the new suppliers and align them with the methods and

fundamentals followed by the organization. As a result, although no significant financial costs were involved, the organization lost valuable time.

Company B

For the case of Company B, the idea of reshoring was a tool to foster greater levels of supply chain coordination to ensure greater transition between different parts of the value chain and a smoother transition in inventory levels. Observations by Engström et al. (2014) Wiesmann et al. (2017) demonstrating the positive effects of reshoring as to create logistics and transportation-based synergy has been empirically evident in the case of company B. With their own fleet of blue trucks, the organization is able to effectively transport resources and has received greater levels of improvement in their overall logistics. The evidence from the case reflects on the benefits demonstrated by past reshoring related studies (Grandinetti and Tabacco, 2015; Ellram, Tate and Petersen, 2013; Tate et al. 2014). The authors have stated that in the advent of reshoring and closing the proximity, a firm has better grasp to customers due to quicker delivery derived from reliable, affordable and stable transportation methods. Although it was a concern of the company to have greater control over the offshored components, the idea behind minimizing the physical distance was solely not a key concern behind the reshoring but rather the effects from it.

Company B has changed its production strategy given the major hurdles it had to endure in its first days. The company decided to transition from producing in bulk to taking orders and producing customized products based on the requirements and specifications of customers. As a result, they are strongly involved in co-development where the customers play a key role in the decision making of developing new products. Studies conducted by Oinonen et al, (2018) suggests the importance of co-development in B2B markets entailing suppliers and customers both playing an active role in product and service development.

In the case of Company B which decided to close down factories in Germany and upscale existing factories in Sweden, they had fairly less investment costs due to already available knowledge and capacity of shifting production from one site to another. This scenario reflects upon the observation of Bossche et al. (2014), where the authors stated that relocation investment costs can be greatly minimized during reshoring for firms who have unutilized business assets in the home country. But despite the matter, a lot of intangible costs were incurred in terms of increased employee absenteeism and lack of employee motivation towards

the work once they were announced that they would be laid off. Therefore, the costs incurred affected both the company and the supply chain. The empirical finding therefore correlates with the observation of Foerstl, Kirchoff and Bals (2016) where the authors stated that not only is the organization solely responsible to handle the investment costs but it can also be a burden for other members in the value chain.

5.2 Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion

In reference to the cross-case analysis, readers can understand the attributes of both the organization to their conformity to the parameters which they consider are imperative factors to consider for reshoring. This comparison can help establish similar or contrasting results as to how these organizations value these variables which can be further used to conclude the significance of these parameters.

5.2.1 Supply Chain Resource

In reference to access of resources, both the companies have shown a strong consideration for the parameter as a core requirement for to facilitate a reshoring project. While Company A has emphasized on using locally sourced materials as a means to associate with and preserve the Swedish heritage, Company B has identified that wood resources in Sweden are of much better quality and have greater quantity of availability in Sweden. While the perspectives for the consideration of the parameters slightly differ between each other, it is however an important factor for both the organizations thus providing that Supply Chain resource is a strong factor to consider for reshoring.

5.2.2 Supply Chain Reconfiguration

Both Company A and Company B have encountered drastic changes to their supply chain since their reshoring projects from Germany to Sweden. Company A had to secure capable and competent suppliers who were able to maintain the product and quality consistency while on the other hand, Company B had to upscale their existing plants in Germany and buy a new fleet of trucks to administer their own delivery system within the value chain. In terms of communication and control, this was a major benefit for Company A due to easier and more coherent communication. This proves from the angle of both the organizations that supply chain reconfiguration is a major factor to consider for reshoring.

5.2.3 Customer-Supplier Relationship

Both the organizations had a strong drive and motive to align their values and offerings to cater for customer demand. Company A not only was extremely cautious to customer behavior due to their primary market being babies and children but also went to certain lengths to change the product packaging and enlist a Swedish logo as Swedish customers attribute a higher level of trust and loyalty to brands which respect and associate with the national heritage. Company B in its initial days had to endure big challenges and had to refine their methods. The organization used to produce in bulk and then attempt to market their existing stock to customers, this however did not work, and the organization changed the methods thus leading to the company to taking notes over customer demand and lead to product development through co-creating with customers. Thus proving, customer to supplier relationship is a very strong parameter to reshoring since change in customer behavior may highly impact value chain activities in different locations.

5.2.4 Supply Chain Proximity

One of the main reasons for Company A to reshore, apart from associating the brand with the Swedish heritage, was to attain greater communication flexibility within the supply chain. This was mostly because the company did not have its own production plants and had to rely on offshore production in Germany whereas, the retail market was mostly in Sweden. The high level of inflexibility was often becoming an issue for the organization and just as they have identified suppliers who were capable of meeting the production standards, they decided to reshore. Company B on the other hand had some level of supply chain shortcomings during their time in Germany. The organization had to rely on other companies who would transport the goods from one location to another with the conditions of carrying only a small amount at a time and stopping at multiple stops which were costing time and resources for Company B. Both these problems were resolved after reshoring due to the availability of their own fleet of delivery trucks which could carry greater quantities of resource at a time and the production routes could be modified as per the organization requirements. Also, in the case of reshoring, close proximity has helped both the organizations to respond better to customer demand thus leading to more information flow between the entire value chain and strengthening innovation efforts. Both the organizations therefore pose a significant importance to supply chain and logistics as a major consideration for reshoring.

For both Company A and Company B, innovation and R&D initiatives are a major concern to prosper and excel. Company B had no choice but to change their ways of production due to differences in customer mindset whereby Swedish customers preferred to put a greater degree of involvement in the product development, Company A had to reshore to ensure greater communication coherence between different departments to formulate plans on how to develop new product variants. Thus, proving that Research and Development are a major factor to consider for reshoring.

Unlike the previous parameters where both the organizations had very strong conformity to the variables as factors to consider for reshoring, the case of relocation investment is fairly different. Company A had very little costs involved when they decided to replace their manufacturing facilities from German suppliers with Swedish suppliers. Since the company headquarters was already situated in Sweden, they did not have to make that many adjustments. The only costs they incurred were related to modifying the product packaging and also for the few months of stopping production where they had to groom the new Swedish suppliers and align them with the values and methods that needed to be followed to collaborate with Company A. This can therefore prove that relocation investment is a parameter which can differ based on the organizations and is not something all organizations may consider to be an important factor.

5.3 Summary of the Analysis

Supply Chain Resource

- Reshoring firms should secure the replacement of offshored suppliers in their home country.
- Home country suppliers must ensure the access to abundance of raw materials while reshoring.

Supply Chain Reconfiguration

- Components in the supply chain need to realign themselves to suit with organizational values.
- Integrated supply chains can provide independence to a reshoring firm from the reliance on external entities.

- Pre-existing assets in the domestic location mitigates reconfigurations in supply chain during reshoring

Customer-Supplier Relationship

- Reshoring can increase the role of customers as decision maker for product development.
- Utilization of locally sourced ingredients and associating the brand with the national heritage can help establish better brand perception.

Supply Chain Proximity

- Supply chain proximity improved logistical flexibility and streamlines the communication process.
- Supply chain proximity fosters stronger headquarter controls to the operational units.
- Prevalence of existing assets in the reshoring location can deter relocation investment cost.
- Supply chain proximity promotes innovation and R&D capabilities due to coherent communication between manufacturing and design team.

6. CONCLUSION

The following chapter concludes the overall outcome of the study, the fulfilment of the research gap, the problems addressed, and the areas further researchers can look into as their research theme.

6.1 Answering the Research Question

Referring back to the research question, the findings shows that there are different ways in which the supply chain factors have influence on reshoring decisions. The four identified factors as highlighted in the literature review has their own subareas that firms need to take into consideration due to the inherent construction to generate certain influence on a firm's decision to reshore. The following breakdown summarizes the explored supply chain factors which answers the influence on reshoring decisions: (i) secure replacement of offshored suppliers and ensure the access to abundance of raw materials (ii) realignment plus integration of supply chain components and utilization of pre-existing assets (iii) maintain relationships with customers by engaging in product development and uphold national heritage (iv) logistical flexibility, operational control, relocation investment and R&D capabilities.

6.2 Managerial Contributions

The study looked into the reshoring phenomenon through the lens of supply chain factors. Even though many researchers have incorporated the elements of supply chain within the angle of drivers and barriers, it was Stentoft, Mikkelsen and Johnsen (2015) paper that brought forward the future research scope from supply chain perspective. The establishment of the study can derive a few takeaways for real life managers who may use the results as a guide for reshoring prospects.

Before engaging in reshoring, the managers need to secure contracts and develop good relationships with competent suppliers. The requirement is irrespective of firm size as a stable raw material source is a key success factor to any organization. The managers need to prepare themselves to be able to restructure their operational methods in order to adhere to the new environment in the home country. Replacing previous suppliers and using ingredients from locally sourced suppliers is a key tool to build up brand perception as utilization of local ingredients reflects upon the local heritage and can create a lot of appeal from the customers.

The phenomenon of reshoring and closing in the physical gap with the headquarters can lead to a lot of advantages with improved logistics and improved innovation capabilities. However, in order to enjoy the benefits, the manager must be ready and willing to engage in investments in order to ensure the reshoring transition goes smooth.

6.3 Theoretical Implications

The existing literature on reshoring does not provide a definite study in terms of supply chain and the findings from this study extend the knowledge of this under researched field of reshoring. Despite the lack of access to respondents for the interview, it is still evidential from the findings that supply chain resource, supply chain reconfiguration, customer-supplier relationship and supply chain proximity pose theoretical importance for both supply chain management and reshoring related study.

6.4 Limitations of the Research

The establishment of this thesis paper had a few shortcomings. Due to the unexplored context of reshoring from supply chain perspective and the limited availability of secondary data, it was immensely difficult to establish a proper theoretical model that would cater to the research aim of this paper. With the few articles at hand, existing literature had to be both thoroughly studied from multiple angles and also reverse-engineered to understand how organizations facilitate the reshoring process to establish the fundamentals required to cross-check beforehand. Both the companies that have been investigated are of completely different backgrounds and although one had its own production facilities which had been reshored, the other merely relied upon outsourced suppliers which got replaced with local suppliers in Sweden. With the relatively low sample size, it would be more sensible to compare and contrast between organizations that have an identical standpoint.

The time allocated to conduct this study came forward with certain obstacles. Due to the narrowed down scope for respondents in terms of company selection adding with the reluctance of organizational members to provide time for interviews due to the nature of the topic, it was immensely difficult to find reshoring related companies who were motivated to provide time for interviews. Conversation over a phone call with companies led to the understanding that reshoring topic mostly requires the participation of senior members and with the avail of Covid-19, it became very difficult to access these companies.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Study

The research was conducted based on a cross-sectional study of two organizations who have both reshored from Germany to Sweden with both the locations having similar social and economic standards. Although the choice of the companies was limited due to the highly narrowed down focus of the topic, studying upon different companies who had different offshored locations may provide more variations of factors that firms may need to consider before they decide to reshore. In contrast to interviewing only the top management of the reshored organization, taking interview data from a handful of customers of the organization can help establish a better picture of certain variables. The interview data can be taken from customers in terms of customer supplier relationship and variables related to logistics which can help determine whether the reshoring project of the company added extra value or convenience to the customers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consent Letter for Interviews

Company A



Date: 19/11/2020

Subject: Interview Request for Master's Thesis (Högskolan I Gävle)

Dear [REDACTED]

We are Mr. Md. Tawhidul Islam and Mr. Sharif Ahmed. At present, we are doing our Master Programme in Business Administration (MBA) from Högskolan I Gävle. Our thesis topic is "Prerequisites for reshoring initiative by Swedish firms: A supply chain network perspective". Our research paper seeks to explore the supply chain criteria required for a Swedish firm to bring the offshored operations back to Sweden.

Based on our online research, it is very exciting for us to know that [REDACTED] puts a lot of emphasis on sustainability with long term orientation on the welfare of future generations and doing the kindness by lending a helping hand to make life easier. Furthermore, as academic students it will be a real honour for us to access business knowledge from such a highly socially concerned company.

We understand that the times are tough and Covid-19 has significantly halted opportunities thus we will be extremely grateful if your organization would give us a chance for an interview session either through zoom or phone conference meeting for our Master's thesis primary data collection. We will abide by any interview conditions being suggested, and if required, our paper will maintain complete anonymity of the organization and any personnel being interviewed.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated since the contribution of your organization will lead to the successful completion of our final year thesis paper. We really hope you will kindly take into consideration of our request for an interview session.

We will eagerly wait for your kind response.

Sincerely Yours,

Mr. Md. Tawhidul Islam;

email: tawhidulislam.nsu@gmail.com; phone no: +46734779130

Mr. Sharif Ahmed;

email: sharifahmedmba@gmail.com; phone no: +46723655221

Master Programme in Business Administration (MBA)

Högskolan I Gävle

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Company B



Date: 19/11/2020

Subject: Interview Request for Master's Thesis (Högskolan I Gävle)

Dear [REDACTED]

We are Mr. Md. Tawhidul Islam and Mr. Sharif Ahmed. At present, we are doing our Master Programme in Business Administration (MBA) from Högskolan I Gävle. Our thesis topic is "Prerequisites for reshoring initiative by Swedish firms: A supply chain network perspective". Our research paper seeks to explore the supply chain criteria required for a Swedish firm to bring the offshored operations back to Sweden.

We are very excited to know that [REDACTED] holds such a strong embracement of sustainable production emphasizing both on environmental concerns and also on reusability. Furthermore, as academic students we are honoured to find from online searching that [REDACTED] with such high reputation has previously contributed towards academic research studies in Sweden.

We understand that the times are tough and Covid-19 has significantly halted opportunities thus we will be extremely grateful if your organization would give us a chance for an interview session either through zoom or phone conference meeting for our Master's thesis primary data collection. We will abide by any interview conditions being suggested, and if required, our paper will maintain complete anonymity of the organization and any personnel being interviewed.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated since the contribution of your organization will lead to the successful completion of our final year thesis paper. We really hope you will kindly take into consideration of our request for an interview session.

We will eagerly wait for your kind response.

Sincerely Yours,

Mr. Md. Tawhidul Islam;
email: tawhidulislam.nsu@gmail.com; phone no: +46734779130
Mr. Sharif Ahmed;
email: sharifahmedmba@gmail.com; phone no: +46723655221
Master Programme in Business Administration (MBA)
Högskolan I Gävle

The University of Gävle is human-centred and develops the understanding of a sustainable living environment.

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