

SKILLS REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY-LEVEL LOGISTICIANS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS PERCEPTION IN EGYPT

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1. Introduction

Competition in the global market is fierce. In this market, products and materials are moved from every corner around the globe by the support of highly integrated activities and processes known as logistics and supply chain management. Powered by professional and highly talented logistics and supply chain (SC) managers, this global and complex chains of physical, monetary and information flows are today's essentials to competitive advantage. This consequently justifies the crucial role that qualified supply chain professionals have in global supply chains.

But, according to Cottrill (2010), and Ellinger and Ellinger (2014), there will be a significant shortage of qualified SC professionals in the coming years, especially in developed countries. Rappaport et al. (2003), and Wolff et al. (2009) stated that approximately 50 percent of senior-level managers will retire within the next ten years, which will cause a substantial shortage in skilled professionals. However, Schuler et al (2011), and Autry and Whipple (2013) stated an interesting fact about the growing populations in developed and developing economies. They stated that in 'developed economies the populations are aging and shrinking while in many developing economies populations are younger and growing'. For developing economies, this is an opportunity for its young calibers to compete in the global talent pool of SC professionals which in return renders the study of the required skills and competencies to compete, necessary.

Therefore, this research examines the skills needed for entry-level logisticians in Egypt by comparing between the academics' perceptions and the global practitioners' perceptions who operate in Egypt for the required skills set. This in return can assist in the provision of recommendations to develop the undergraduate logistics and SC programs and supply the global market with logistics and SC calibers who can be competent professionals.