

Abstract

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Supply Chain Risk Management: The Lessons Learned from the Egyptian Revolution 2011

Purpose: The Arab Spring (literally the Arab Revolutions) is a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests occurring in the Arab world. The 2011 Egyptian revolution took place following a popular uprising that began on the 25th of January 2011 and ran for 18 days. As a result of the revolution, the business sector was significantly affected in Egypt due to the mass demonstrations and strikes that took place in major cities, Internet access and mobile services that were shut down by the Government, in addition to the closure of banks and the curfew that was enforced. This research attempts to investigate the impact of the Egyptian revolution on the supply chain of a number of companies in different business sectors for the purpose of evaluating the degree of their preparedness to supply chain risk. The study focuses on the three main components to a supply chain risk program: (1) the ability to forecast/discover potential disruptions (2) the ability to recover from the disruption (3) supply chain design strategies for resilience. **Research approach:** The research is exploratory and descriptive in nature using semi-structured interviews for data collection. The sample of companies to be targeted in this study will be of a purposive nature as the study will focus on a number of companies belonging to the manufacturing, retailing, and the transport and logistics sectors due to the direct impact they have on customers especially during turbulent economic and political situations. **Findings and originality:** The majority of supply chain disruption studies investigated the impact of specific sources of disruption and proposed methods for mitigation namely for terrorists' attacks, natural disasters, outbreaks and regional power outages. However, there was an apparent lack of research that investigated the impact of political disruption on supply chain management and the recommended strategies for mitigation especially for the Middle East and North African (MENA) region that has been witnessing political unrest since December 2010. **Research impact:** It is hoped that this study will draw the attention of the research community towards initiating more research projects that would study supply chain practices and strategies in the MENA region. It is worth noting that the majority of studies conducted in the supply chain discipline mainly focuses on the developed countries whose economic and political conditions are significantly different from those in emerging developing nations. This in many cases renders the implementation of these studies focusing on supply chain practices and strategies rather challenging and in some cases unrealistic in emerging/developing countries. **Practical impact:** It is hoped that this research would highlight some critical aspects in supply chain risk management that would be of benefit to organisations confronted with similar type of disruption.