



Paper: “Strategic Supply Chain Participation and SME Demand Expectations under Environmental Turbulence: Evidence from Italian SMEs”

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Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Mohammed Kerbouche
University of Mascara, Algeria

Reviewer 2: Steven Thomas Tumaini
College of Business and Education, Tanzania

Reviewer 3: Diana Maria Lopez Celis
Jorge Tadeo Lozano University of Bogotá, Colombia

Reviewer 4: Iaataren Idriss
Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco

ESJ Manuscript Evaluation Form 2026

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Reviewer Name: Mohammed Kerbouche	
University, Country: Mustapha Stambouli University of Mascara	
Date Manuscript Received: 14/02/2026	Date Review Report Submitted: 16/02/2016
Manuscript Title: Does Supply Chain Participation Influence SME Demand Expectations During Market Turbulence? An Exploratory Study	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 0269/26	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: Yes	
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Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	Rating Result [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.	4
The title, " Does Supply Chain Participation Influence SME Demand Expectations During Market Turbulence? An Exploratory Study, " is highly reflective of the paper's core components for several reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies the Subjects: It clearly specifies that the study focuses on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).• Defines the Variables: It highlights the relationship between Supply Chain Participation (the independent variable) and Demand Expectations (the dependent variable). Sets the Context: It explicitly mentions Market Turbulence, which serves as the critical macro-environmental backdrop for the research.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodological Transparency: By including the phrase "An Exploratory Study," it correctly sets the reader's expectation for a preliminary investigation into these complex associations rather than a definitive, longitudinal proof of causality. <p>The title effectively summarizes the paper's goal of investigating whether participation in a strategic supply chain enhances or constrains SME performance and outlook in uncertain economic environments.</p>	
2. The abstract presents objectives, methods, and results.	4
<p>The abstract indeed fulfills the fundamental requirements of a research summary by clearly outlining the study's scope and findings. Here is how the abstract breaks down these three essential components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary goal is to investigate whether participation in a Strategic Supply Chain (SSC) enhances or constrains SME performance and short-term expectations. It specifically aims to compare the outlook of firms affiliated with an SSC against those operating independently under conditions of market turbulence. The study seeks to contribute to the debate on inter-firm cooperation by identifying potential trade-offs associated with structured participation. Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research utilizes qualitative survey data collected from SMEs in the Lombardy region of Italy. The methodology involves an empirical assessment focusing on structural characteristics, strategic positioning, and short-term demand expectations. The study uses a comparative design, splitting respondents into two distinct groups based on their supply chain affiliation. Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings highlight significant differences in the perceived adaptability and outlook between SSC-affiliated and independent firms. The abstract notes that the benefits of integration are not "unequivocal" during periods of instability. Ultimately, it identifies that structured participation involves both advantages and potential trade-offs, particularly in contexts of economic instability. 	
3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	4
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	4
<p>The methodology is indeed laid out in a logical, step-by-step fashion that allows for a clear understanding of how the researcher moved from data collection to statistical inference.</p>	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	4
<p>The results are presented with high statistical transparency and are logically aligned with the research questions. The author utilizes a clear sequence of analysis that moves from structural descriptions to comparative testing and, finally, multivariate modeling.</p>	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	4
<p>The conclusions of the paper are indeed a faithful synthesis of the empirical data, moving beyond simple observation to provide a contingency-based explanation for the findings.</p>	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	4

The references in this article are indeed extensive and well-tailored to the multidisciplinary nature of the study, drawing from literature on **SME strategy, supply chain management, and organizational resilience.**

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	X
Accepted, minor revision needed	
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:

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Reviewer Name: IAATAREN IDRIS	
University, Country: Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco	
Date Manuscript Received: 17 February 2026	Date Review Report Submitted: 22 February 2026
Manuscript Title: <i>Does Supply Chain Participation Influence SME Demand Expectations During Market Turbulence? An Exploratory Study</i>	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 22	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: YES	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the “review history” of the paper: YES	
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Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	Rating Result [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.	5/5
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i> The title is precise, consistent with the content, and clearly reflects the central research question as well as the exploratory nature of the study. It allows immediate identification of the research focus and conceptual framework.	
2. The abstract presents objectives, methods, and results.	4/5
The abstract clearly presents the research problem, comparative methodology, and main findings. It could be slightly strengthened by explicitly mentioning the main statistical tools used and by including one concise quantitative result.	

3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	4/5
The manuscript is generally well written and well structured. Some minor corrections are recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminological harmonization (e.g., keywords) • Minor punctuation review • Standardization of reference formatting These adjustments are formal in nature and do not affect the scientific quality of the paper	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	4/5
The methodology is rigorously and coherently presented. The operationalization of variables and the justification for non-parametric tests are appropriate. A brief clarification regarding the sampling procedure and response rate would further enhance methodological transparency.	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	4/5
The results are logically structured and progressively presented. The comparative analysis is well organized, and the interpretation remains cautious and consistent with the data. A slight improvement in the formatting and standardization of tables is recommended.	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	5/5
The conclusions are solid, consistent with the empirical findings, and well connected to the theoretical framework. The study limitations are clearly acknowledged, which strengthens the scientific credibility of the work.	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	4/5
The reference list is rich, up to date, and relevant to the research topic. Minor adjustments are needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of potential duplicates • Strict harmonization according to APA style 	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	x
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

The manuscript addresses a relevant and timely topic, particularly in the context of economic instability and supply chain restructuring. The contingency-based approach provides a meaningful contribution to the literature on SME resilience.

The requested revisions are mainly formal and editorial:

1. Briefly clarify the sampling procedure and response rate.
2. Improve the readability and harmonization of tables.
3. Standardize references strictly according to APA style.
4. Conduct a final language proofreading to correct minor inconsistencies.

These adjustments will strengthen the formal quality of the manuscript without requiring substantial changes to the theoretical framework or empirical analysis.

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Reviewer Name: Dr Steven Tumaini	
University, Country: College of Business and Education & Institute of Accountancy Arusha (IAA) Tanzania	
Date Manuscript Received: 17 th February 2026	Date Review Report Submitted:
Manuscript Title: Does Supply Chain Participation Influence SME Demand Expectations During Market Turbulence? An Exploratory Study <i>(The action and objectives is missing here, participation in what?? In market promotion or where??)</i>	
ESJ Manuscript Number: Doi: 10.19044/esipreprint.2.2026.p385	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: Yes	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the "review history" of the paper: You approve, this review report is available in the "review history" of the paper: Yes	

Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	Rating Result [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article. <i>(Please insert your comments)</i> Suggested title "The Impact of Supply Chain Participation on SME Demand Expectations During Market Turbulence"	3
2. The abstract presents objectives, methods, and results.	3

<i>(Please insert your comments)</i> <i>The abstract is too descriptives miss statistics results, at this stage we expect a brief result on the study</i>	
3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	4
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i> <i>Further language check is recommended but the paper flow is good and the reference are well captured</i>	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	5
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i> Clear and detailed	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	5
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i> Clear and detailed	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	4
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i> <i>Although the region represents a major European manufacturing hub, caution is required when generalising results in other institutional or industrial contexts. Future research could employ longitudinal designs, incorporate performance outcomes, and extend the analysis to other regional or national settings</i> <i>I expected to cover such doubt on the background, please in three sentences share the industrial issues in other countries in Europe in the background section. Once it is done edit these sentences to meet the changes</i>	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	3
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i> <i>I have no problem with previous scholar but try to mix your reference focus in 1 to 10 years reference (Hult et al., 2007; Camarinha-Matos et al., 2010; Johanson & Vahlne, 2009 this is too old to apply in your work) You must have a concrete reason why you have opted to use them</i> <i>Reference issues see example the book reference on porter book</i> <i>Refence number 40. Porter, M. E. (2001). Competitive advantage: Creating and sustaining superior performance. Free Press.</i> <i>Recommended reference structurePorter, M. E. (2008). Competitive advantage: Creating and sustaining superior performance. simon and schuster.</i> <i>See on page 386</i> <i>However, recent scholarships have challenged the assumption that supply chain integration is inherently advantageous. Under turbulent conditions, tightly coordinated or hierarchical supply networks may generate rigidity rather than resilience. Complex governance structures, asymmetric power relations, and high coordination requirements can reduce strategic</i>	

discretion and slow adaptive responses (Durst et al., 2022; Bak et al., 2020; Karmaker et al., 2023).

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	x
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

Please read the current paper to backup your study

1. Do, H., Yan, S., & Gong, Y. (2026). Exploring the Nexus Between Internationalization and Sustainable Supply Chain Management Among UK SMEs. *Business Strategy and the Environment*.
2. Dulnuan Jr, C., Gonzales, M., & Kazeem, O. (2026). Enhancing Competition in NAVSEA Procurement: Strategies for Addressing Sole-Source Contracting Challenges (Doctoral dissertation, Acquisition Research Program).
3. Iltarabian, M. (2026). Enhancing Sustainable Entrepreneurship with Sustainable Supply Chain Strategies. In *Sustainable Entrepreneurship* (pp. 179-196). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
4. Al Naimat, A., & Davies, L. (2025). A systematic literature review of supply chain management strategies and SME performance: A retrospective analysis, current trends and future opportunities. *Engineering Economics*, 36(2), 192-211.
5. Annamalah, S., Aravindan, K. L., & Ahmed, S. (2025). Resilience in the face of uncertainty: Navigating supply chain challenges through proactive risk surveillance and mitigation strategies among SMEs in ASEAN countries. *F1000Research*, 13, 1037.

Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only: