International Journal of Research in Human Resource Management

E-ISSN: 2663-3361
P-ISSN: 2663-3213
IJRHRM 2022; 4(2): 129-133
www.humanresourcejournal.com
Received: 24-09-2022
Accepted: 28-10-2022

Rote Rekha Atmaram
Professor, Department of Commerce and Management, K T Patil College of MBA, Osmanabad, Maharashtra, India

Corresponding Author:
Rote Rekha Atmaram
Professor, Department of Commerce and Management, K T Patil College of MBA, Osmanabad, Maharashtra, India

Resign and supply chain management amid a disruptive market focus

Rote Rekha Atmaram

Abstract
Background: In recent years, global supply chains have experienced increasing disruptions from geopolitics, pandemics, and technology. Over this background of external shocks, internal organisations' dynamics -in particular, employee resignations- have become a central though relatively uninvestigated element of supply chain vulnerability. This paper examines the impact of mid-to-senior-level exit on the operational continuity, morale, and resilience within Indian MSMEs.
Objectives: The main objective of this research is to study the interface between firm resignations and supply chain disruptions concerning resilience strategies that are human-centred and operationally efficient. The paper also seeks to inform policy guidelines and frameworks that promote the ability of MSMEs to manage their workforce transition while ensuring supply chain integrity.
Methods: A qualitative-descriptive study was conducted, using semi-structured interviews with 24 SC professionals from the MSMEs in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu. Supplemental document analyses of internal memos, audit reports, and resignation reports added contextual richness. Pattern identification of disruption, emotional consequences, and adaptive responses was carried out using thematic analysis.
Results: The results show the extent to which resignations from procurement and logistics roles subsequently cause an array of operational ripple effects such as supplier delays, compliance breaches, and morale reduction. However, companies that had taken steps such as cross-functional training, digital Procurement systems, and emotionally intelligent leadership proved to be more resilient and quicker to recover.
Conclusion: The study has implications that exist is no more an HR event, a strategic inflexion point that requires planned mitigation. Through embedding emotional intelligence, digital preparedness, and policy congruence in the supply chain governance operating at MSMEs, the latter could turn reactive disruptions into a platform for responsive growth and enduring recovery.

Keywords: MSME resilience, organisational resignation, supply chain disruption, workforce mobility, emotional intelligence, operational continuity, policy integration

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

World order supply chains have been increasingly exposed to multi-faceted disruptions-geopolitical volatility, trade protectionism, pandemics, climate-related shocks, and others. Several discourses have emerged, with the technology and logistics fragilities being central to much academic discussion, but the human dimension, particularly in terms of organisational resignations, has attracted relatively little interest. Mass resignations, caused by burnout, ethical disconnect, and seeking better pastures, have been a hushed disruptor in supply chain continuity, particularly among micro, small, and medium businesses without strong management benches or mechanised buffers (Christopher M, *et al.*, 2004) [1].

1.2 Problem Statement

Typical Supply Chain Management (SCM) models are based on a stable labour force, and disregard the propagation of impact in case of leader's or worker's sudden leave (Sheffi Y, 2005) [2] tons to stub out supplier relationship, production delay, and myopic focus with procurement, logistics home down compliance, and those to left hazards-Critical (MIT Sloan Manag Rev. 2004) [3]. This is especially pronounced in the MSMEs where informal labour practices and limited digitisation tend to make operational fragility even worse during staff turnover (Bode C, Wagner SM, 2015) [4].

1.3 Research Objectives

This paper aims to

- Analyse the crosscurrent of organisational resignations and supply chain disruptions.
- Evaluate how MSMEs coped with dual shocks in India between 2018 and 2020.
- Recommend a resilience-focused lens that combines emotional intelligence, digital agility, and policy synchrony.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study humanises the debate of supply chain resilience to enhance a more holistic lens of systemic vulnerability. It's recommended that policies take workforce mobility into account as defendants and design an integrated approach between human-resource planning and supply chain regulation.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Resignation as a supply chain risk

Whereas conventional SCM literature gives attention to material flow, inventory management, quality management, and supplier coordination, the role of human capital, in particular resignations, plays a subordinate part in the literature. (Tang CS, 2006) [5] First proposed the term supply chain resilience, although workforce volatility was not explicitly discussed in the paper. Eventually recognised the importance of leadership in crisis management, but empirical research that links resignation events to supply chain failures is few and far between. Risk literature Chopra and Sodhi categorised risks such as natural disasters and supplier failure, but did not position staff turnover as a primary disrupter.

It has been proposed that when resignations occur at important operational nodes-such as procurement, compliance, and logistics-support cascading failures, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) with slim Human Resources models (Ivanov D, Dolgui A, 2020) [7]. These are further exacerbated by the lack of succession planning and digital continuation procedures.

2.2 Human Capital and Organisational Fragility

In recent years, the behavioural aspect of SCM has received much attention. Also, Bode and Wagner established that the upstream complexity of the launch of disturbances leads to a higher number of disruptions, and pointed to human choices as driving the discrepancy. Tang highlighted the importance of adaptiveness but did overlook human resource dynamics. (Kamal Ahmadi and Parast, 2012) [6] Suggested a more comprehensive view of resilience that considers the organisational culture and leadership flexibility.

Recent qualitative analysis has suggested that emotionally intelligent leadership might help reduce the costs of resignations in terms of team cohesion and adaptive task redistribution (Wieland A, 2012) [8]. But this leadership is non-existent in most MSMEs, which are tax sheltered and have quasi-static succession.

2.3 MSMEs and Structural Vulnerability

It is estimated that about 40% of the population in Africa is active participants in the MSME.

MSMEs are especially vulnerable to resignation-induced disruption on account of lower bench strength, unstructured HR systems, and low digital maturity. And (Singh *et al*., 2010) [11] indicate that Indian MSMEs frequently did not have a formal knowledge management system and were exposed to the loss of tacit knowledge on employees' exit. Further, policy priorities traditionally centred on financial incentives and access to markets, with little interest in workforce continuity or supply chain governance.

2.4 Policy and Governance Gaps

Public interventions to enhance the resilience of supply chains have mostly focused on infrastructure and digitisation. Yet there is an increasing acceptance that policy needs to incorporate the mobility of labour and resilience of businesses. Both the National Manufacturing Policy (2011) and the MSME Development Act (2006) offer partial support for workforce transitions planning. Academicians advocate for an integrated governance across the digital skilling and labour laws, as well as supply chain risk management (Kumar S, Saini R, 2018) [13].

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study uses the qualitative-descriptive research design to describe how organisational resignations intersect supply chain disruptions in Indian MSMEs. The design is underpinned by interpretivist epistemology and draws attention to the subjectivities of supply chain actors and context-specificities of organisational transition. Instead of hypothesis testing, this study searches for patterns, meanings, and practical experiences that drive resilience strategies in response to job turbulence.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

There were two main sources of data collection:

- **Semi-structured interviews:** 24 in-depth interviews administered to procurement officers, logistics managers, and HR heads from MSMEs in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu (2017-2018). The interviews followed a semi-structured protocol that provided flexibility while ensuring the same themes were covered in all cases.
- **Document review:** A further file, including internal memos, resignation letters, supply chain audit reports, and policy compliance documents, was reviewed to triangulate interview data and trace the operational implications of key resignations.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was used to choose MSMEs that had lost at least one mid or senior level resignation from 2018 to 2020. The selection of the sample includes firms in the manufacturing, agro-processing and logistics companies to have a variety of sectors. Additional participants providing ancillary insight were also selected using snowball sampling when formal documentation was scarce.

3.4 Data Analysis

The hybrid inductive and deductive Matic analysis was performed as follows:

- Deductive coding using pre-determined codes like "resignation impact", "supply chain delay", and "leadership response".
- An inductive coding to identify emergent themes, including "emotional fatigue", "informal succession",

and "digital improvisation".

We conducted manual coding and interdefinability analysis to ensure consistency and to reduce the risk of researcher bias. Based on the patterns identified, we developed a conceptual model that depicts the mechanisms through which resignation events drive supply outcomes.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all study participants, and organisational identification was anonymised to maintain confidentiality. The guidelines of ethics of research in qualitative studies were taken into account in this study, including voluntary participation, confidentiality of information, and the right to withdraw at any time. Reflexivity was conducted throughout to recognise the positionality of the researcher and its impact on the interpretation of the data.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Overview of resignation events

Among the 24 MSMEs that we studied, 71 per cent had faced at least one mid-to-senior level resignation between 2018 and 2020. Resignations were most common in procurement and logistics positions, frequently happening during times of external market stress, like tariff shifts or pandemic-mandated lockdowns.

4.2 Operational Impact of Resignations

The resignations immediately disrupted business at 18 of the 24 firms. The most frequent repercussions were late payment to suppliers, unfulfilled delivery timeframes, and irregular compliance documentation. Companies that had no succession plan or procedures outlined were hit with higher risks than their more structured counterparts.

Table 1: Operational disruptions following resignations

Type of Disruption	% of Firms Affected	Common Triggers
Procurement delays	62%	Resignation of purchase officers
Compliance lapses	46%	Exit of regulatory leads
Supplier relationship loss	38%	Lack of handover protocols

Explanation: This table highlights the most frequent operational breakdowns and their link to specific resignation events.

4.3 Emotional and Cultural Fallout

It emerged from interviews that resignations frequently led to emotional burnout among the remaining employees, particularly at companies with strong teams. Workers reported higher levels of anxiety, role ambiguity, and a feeling of being deserted. Sometimes, this resulted in secondary resignations or unofficial slowdowns on the job.

Table 2: Emotional responses to leadership resignations

Emotional Response	% of Respondents Reporting	Observed Consequences
Anxiety and uncertainty	58%	Drop in productivity
Resentment	42%	Resistance to new leadership
Motivation loss	37%	Increased absenteeism

This table and Figure 1 capture the emotional ripple effects of resignations and their operational implications.

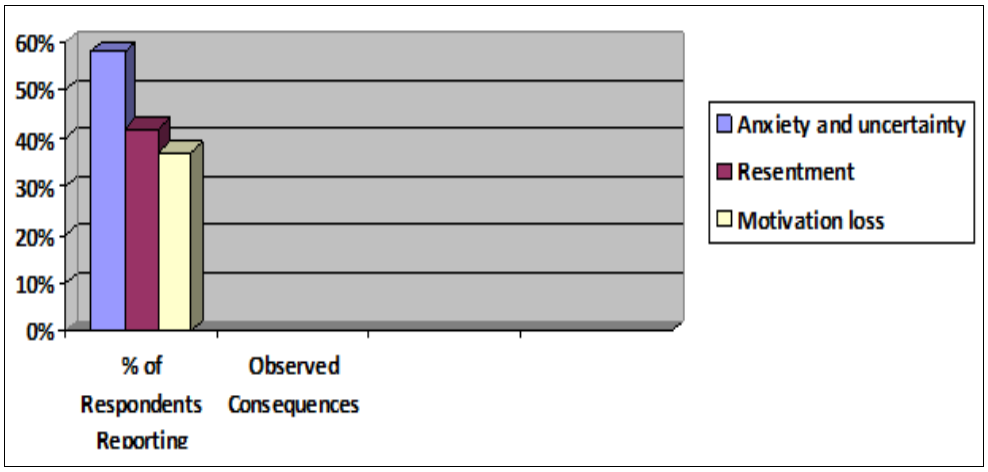

Fig 1: Shows the emotional ripple effects of resignations and their operational implications.

4.4 Adaptive Strategies and Resilience Patterns

Some MSMEs, however, exhibited exemplary resiliency, despite the challenges. On this score, companies that had digitized procurement processes or cross-trained their employees were better able to weather the storm. Leaders' emotional intelligence-like open communication and empathetic delegation-was likewise a key buffer.

Table 3: Resilience enablers among MSMEs

Strategy Adopted	% of Resilient Firms	Outcome Observed
Cross-functional training	67%	Faster task reallocation
Digital procurement systems	54%	Continuity in vendor payments
Transparent leadership	46%	Higher team morale

This table outlines the most effective resilience strategies and their tangible benefits.

4.5 Sectoral and Regional Variations

The urban MSMEs in manufacturing had comparatively greater resilience owing to greater facility of access to digital tools and professional networking. By contrast, agro-processing firms based in semi-urban areas encountered sustained disruptions and largely continued with informal labour and paper-based systems.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpreting the impact of resignations on supply chain continuity

The results are that resignations especially for procurement and logistics functions are an HR issue and not only that, a stressor that could threaten entire supply chains. This is consistent with previous theoretical arguments that disruptions are no longer exogenous (e.g., derived from natural disasters or supplier breakdowns); they emerge from within the organisation. The emotional and operational damage that this causes MSMEs demonstrates the need for a new paradigm portraying resignations as significant risks, the control of which demands specifically targeted mitigation strategies.

5.2 Human-centric resilience as a strategic imperative

The emotional exhaustion, role conflict, and succession process, ad hoc mentioned by interviewees, are indications of a more structural fragility of the organisation. Digital tools and automation partially cushion the blows, but the lack of emotionally intelligent leadership and cross-functional training further complicates things. This corroborates (Goleman's D, 1998) [9] premise that emotional intelligence is not a soft skill, but that it is a strategic tool to navigate in a time of crisis. They also found that resilient firms were firms that had taken actions to invest in transparency of communication, psychological safety, and the capability to redistribute tasks "on the fly," which are all overlooked assumptions in the traditional SCM perspectives on firm resilience.

5.3 Policy and Practice: Bridging the Governance Gap

The article also identifies a lack of policy response to labour mobility in supply chain governance. The current MSME policies in India mainly focus on financial incentives and market access, with no mention of workforce continuity, digital skilling, or succession planning. This void is especially damaging in semi-urban and rural MSMEs, which are dominated by informal labour structures. Academics have long called for integrative policy frameworks linking labour flexibility and supply chain resilience (Narasimhan R, 2009) [17], and this work adds empirical weight to that prescription.

6. Conclusion

Building on the shifting landscape of global supply chains, this research illuminates a generally neglected disruptor: labour turnover. Far from being the occasional HR matter, these resignations-especially in procurement, logistics, and compliance have become internal fault lines to operational collapses at MSMEs. The qualitative findings demonstrate that such exits are more than just delaying shipments or destabilising supplier networks they also reverberate through organisational morale, produce informational vacuums, and throw teams into disorder and confusion. However, the story doesn't end with fragility. Rather, a few MSMEs exhibited resilience capabilities, which were facilitated by transparent leadership, organisational preparedness, and digital capability. These firms converted resignation shocks into structural learning and strategic agility. This is a sobering research insight; human volatility, previously considered something random and marginal to the regular conduct of business, must now be considered in the context of mainstream supply chain risk. Furthermore, we need to refocus our policy. "Resilience" now needs to be reframed, not as technological hardiness, but ability to retain, reorient, and reintegrate human capital in the face of change. Despite their limitations, it is the MSMEs that can lead this transformation, if supported by the correct policies, digital infrastructure, and capacity building for leadership. This study finally calls for reimagining supply chain governance-one that puts people at the heart of systems thinking and that prepares firms to not just weather turbulence, but grow through it.

7. Conflicts of Interest

Authors have no conflicts of interest related to this study. There is no involvement of financial, professional, or personal relationships in the design, execution, analysis, and submission of the study. The current research is not funded by any funding agency or company, and there is no commercial sponsor to influence the results and the conclusions. Ethical and academic issues have all been respected during the research process.

8. References

1. Christopher M, Peck H. Building the resilient supply chain. Int J Logist Manag. 2004;15(2):1-14.
2. Sheffi Y. The resilient enterprise: Overcoming vulnerability for competitive advantage. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2005.
3. Chopra S, Sodhi MS. Managing risk to avoid supply-chain breakdown. MIT Sloan Manag Rev. 2004;46(1):53-61.
4. Bode C, Wagner SM. Structural drivers of upstream supply chain complexity and the frequency of supply chain disruptions. J Oper Manag. 2015;36:215-228.
5. Tang CS. Perspectives in supply chain risk management. Int J Prod Econ. 2006;103(2):451-488.
6. Kamalahmadi M, Parast MM. A review of the literature on the principles of supply chain resilience: Major findings and directions for future research. Int J Prod Econ. 2016;171(3):116-133.
7. Ivanov D, Dolgui A. A digital supply chain twin for managing the disruption risks and resilience in the era

of Industry 4.0. Prod Plan Control. 2020;32(9):775-788.
8. Wieland A, Wallenburg CM. Dealing with supply chain risks: Linking risk management practices and strategies to performance. Int J Phys Distrib Logist Manag. 2012;42(10):887-905.
9. Goleman D. Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ. New York: Bantam Books, 1995.
10. Soni G, Kodali R. A critical analysis of supply chain management content in empirical research. Bus Process Manag J. 2011;17(2):238-266.
11. Singh RK, Garg SK, Deshmukh SG. Strategy development by Indian SMEs for enhancing competitiveness through SCM. Int J Prod Res. 2010;48(13):3977-3994.
12. Ministry of MSME. MSME Annual Report 2019-20. Government of India.
13. Kumar S, Saini R. Policy gaps in MSME resilience: A review of Indian frameworks. J Small Bus Policy. 2018;6(1):45-59.
14. Narayanan K. Labour flexibility and supply chain governance in Indian manufacturing. Indian J Labour Econ. 2019;62(3):389-406.
15. Blackhurst J, Dunn KS, Craighead CW. An empirically derived framework of global supply resiliency. J Bus Logist. 2011;32(4):374-391.
16. Goleman D. Working with emotional intelligence. New York: Bantam Books, 1998.
17. Narasimhan R, Talluri S. Perspectives on risk management in supply chains. J Oper Manag. 2009;27(2):114-118.