

What Drives Successful Sustainable Supply Chain Implementation? Evidence from Cross-Industry Cases

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable supply chains are widely discussed, yet firms often find it difficult to translate sustainability goals into actual practices, especially across complex and diverse supply chain structures. This study examines how sustainability is implemented in different industry contexts through a cross-case comparison of four firms: UNIQLO, H&M, Tesla, and Starbucks. The cases show that while approaches vary depending on supply chain conditions, certain patterns recur, including the integration of sustainability into core decisions, closer and more sustained engagement with suppliers, efforts to improve visibility, and, in some situations, the use of innovation or tighter control over upstream activities. Rather than pointing to a single model, the findings suggest that implementation depends on how these elements are combined in response to specific constraints. This helps explain why similar sustainability objectives lead to different practices, while still reflecting a shared underlying logic across industries.

JEL Codes:

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