

UNDERLYING SOCIETAL FACTORS AFFECTING URBAN FOOD SECURITY IN THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper reports on an empirical study of societal factors that influence urban food security in the food supply chain in poor neighbourhoods. Urban dwellers are food buyers and thus the role of the food supply chain and grocery retail is paramount in terms of providing food security. This study approaches this issue from the perspective of the food retailers and social workers working with urban dwellers in the poor neighbourhoods to provide a holistic perspective of urban food security and supply chain nexus.

Research Design/Methodology/Approach: This study empirical study was conducted in one of the poorer neighbourhoods, known as a township, in the Western Cape, South Africa. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with food retailers and retail experts in the South African grocery market and social workers working in the township. Secondary data regarding the South African grocery market was also used to underpin the primary research.

Findings/Research and Practical Implications: The food supply chain treats food as a commodity and operates with a goal of making profits for companies involved along the chain. However, the retail outputs from this supply chain is the main source of nutrition for urban populations and has significant societal impact through this function. Food retail wields notable power throughout the supply chain and can therefore influence the societal repercussions of the food supply chain, i.e. access to nutritious food for poorer populations.

The Living Standards Measurement (LSM), a unique market research tool in South Africa, divides the demographic into ten segments, one being the lowest and ten the wealthiest. Township citizens are generally placed in LSM 1-4. Formal food retail outlets are clearly segmented towards certain LSMs. Limited buying power limits the selection of stores near townships, but there is an element of contradiction as the real buying power in terms of volume in South Africa is in the lower LSMs. Even so, there are eight times less grocery stores near townships compared to wealthier areas.

The dynamics of grocery shopping are thought to be similar throughout the LSMs, but this does not translate into practice. On the one hand, township dwellers buy a lot of the staples in bulk, but on the other purchase perishables in small quantities on a daily basis. Food retailers should be aware of these dynamics and their repercussions in larger societal structures to positively influence their societal impact.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to the urban food security, an under-researched topic, and food retail supply chain literature, highlighting the perspectives from both a disadvantaged community and the food retailers serving it.

USING A TEXT-MINING APPROACH TO EXPLORE HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS RESEARCH THEMES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to identify unobserved research patterns through text mining from a large set of research articles in peer-reviewed journals on Humanitarian Logistics made available online until the end of 2018.

Design methodology approach: A generative statistical method, called Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), is applied on a dataset of articles published in the Humanitarian Logistics field. Titles, abstracts and keywords of articles were selected to represent the full contents of the article. The titles, abstracts and keywords are more focused than full texts and therefore more suitable for automated analysis.

Findings: As many as tens core research areas and twenty research trends have been revealed; and the identified research trends have been semantically mapped to be associated with core research areas.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable): The search was limited to peer-reviewed publications only. Book sections, conference proceedings, reports and practitioner journals were excluded from our selection.

Practical implications (if applicable): The patterns and trends identified through this research can help in finding the potential research areas.

Originality value: This study summarises the research trends in Humanitarian Logistics based upon a corpus of articles.

Keywords: Humanitarian Logistics, Text Mining, Latent Dirichlet allocation, Topic modeling

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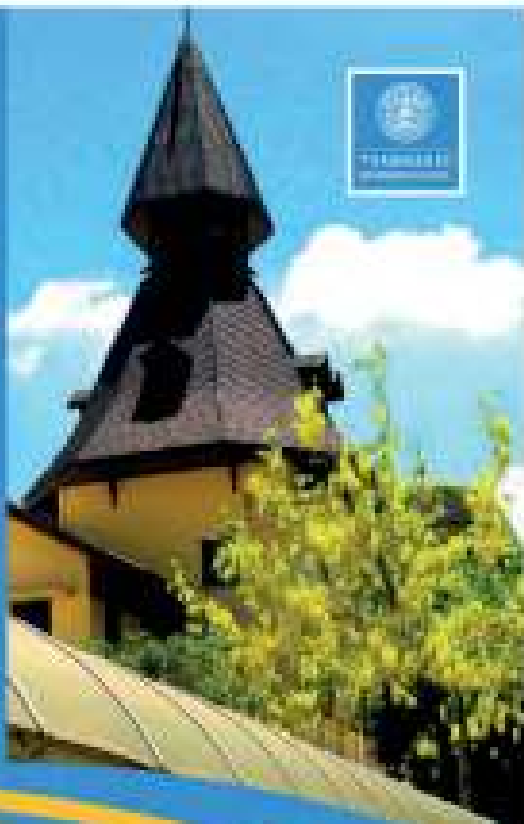
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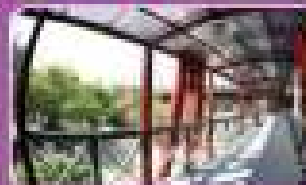
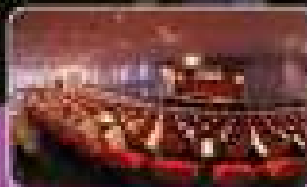
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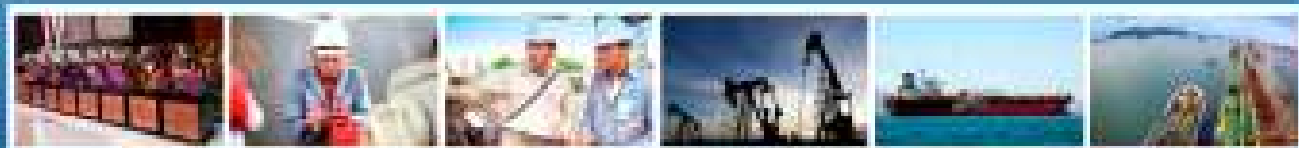
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