

## Mapping the social aspect of GSCM and SSCM: a proposed agenda for future research

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### RESUMO

**Objetivo** – Identificar como é tratada a investigação da dimensão social nas pesquisas GSCM e SSCM e propor uma agenda de pesquisa para a integração da dimensão social da GSCM e SSCM.

**Referencial teórico** – A pesquisa trata do aspecto social do triple bottom line, teoria idealizada por John Elkington, para identificar como o tema é tratado nas pesquisas GSCM E SSCM.

**Desenho/metodologia/abordagem** – Este estudo adotou uma revisão sistemática da abordagem da literatura para examinar a literatura que integra o GSCM e o SSCM com foco no aspecto social, com base em critérios e análise de estudos publicados adaptados de Tranfield *et al.* (2003).

**Descobertas** - A pesquisa contém um resumo dos trabalhos encontrados e uma categorização que define o estado da arte sobre o assunto. A análise corrobora que China, Índia e países europeus são os países que mais investigaram e produziram artigos de GSCM e SSCM, observando o aspecto social em suas edições. Os estudos quantitativos estão explorando a sustentabilidade em seu tripé econômico, ambiental e social em conjunto. A pesquisa em desempenho social ainda não é especializada e mensurar esse tipo de desempenho em uma organização é muito complexo. Estudos que abordam questões sociais são escassos, e ainda há muitas lacunas a serem preenchidas na investigação da dimensão social em GSCM e SSCM.

**Pesquisa, implicações práticas e sociais** – Como implicações teóricas, a pesquisa apresenta uma delimitação do estado da arte sobre questões sociais quando os temas GSCM E SSCM são trabalhados em conjunto. Por implicações práticas e gerenciais, serve como um guia para a consulta das melhores práticas sociais a serem adotadas pelas empresas.

**Originalidade/valor** – As pesquisas trabalham o aspecto social entre os temas GSCM e SSCM de forma conjunta, sendo escassos estudos que abordem questões sociais, contribuindo para a área de gestão empresarial.

**Palavras-chave** - GSCM, SSCM, Sustentabilidade, Desempenho social, Questões sociais, Aspectos sociais.

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose** – Identify how the social dimension is investigated in GSCM and SSCM research and propose a research agenda to integrate the social dimension in GSCM and SSCM.

**Theoretical framework** – The study deals with the social aspect of the triple bottom line, a theory devised by John Elkington, to identify how the topic is treated in GSCM AND SSCM research.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This study adopted a systematic review of the literature approach to examine the literature that integrates GSCM and the SSCM with a focus on the social aspect, based on criteria and an analysis of published studies adapted from Tranfield *et al.* (2003).

**Findings** - The study contains a summary of the papers found and a categorization that defines the state-of-the-art approach to the subject. The analysis supports the fact that China, India, and European countries carry out most of the investigation and produce GSCM and SSCM articles, observing the social aspect in their releases. Quantitative studies explore sustainability in the economic, environmental, and social tripod together. Research in social performance is not yet specialized and measuring this type of performance in an organization is very complex. Studies that address social issues are scarce, and there are still many gaps to be filled in the investigation of the social dimension in GSCM and SSCM.

**Research, Practical & Social implications** – As theoretical implications, the study presents a delimitation of the state-of-the-art approach on social issues when GSCM AND SSCM themes are worked together. For practical and managerial implications, it serves as a guide for consulting the best social practices to be adopted by companies.

**Originality/value** – The study works on the social aspect between GSCM and SSCM themes together, and studies that deal with social issues are scarce, contributing to the business management area.

**Keywords** - GSCM, SSCM, Sustainability, Social performance, Social issues, Social aspects.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aspects of Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) and Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM) involve the integration of social, environmental and economic issues in a traditional supply chain (CARTER; ROGERS, 2008). A growing number of studies have concluded that considering the global and dynamic market, the adoption of GSCM and SSCM practices brings benefits and advantages in relation to competitiveness within this sector (FALLAHPOUR *et al.*, 2017; ZHU, HU, 2017; ROY, SCHOENHERR, CHARAN, 2018; SILVA, SCHALTEGGER, 2019; SARWAR *et al.*, 2021).

Nonetheless, there are pressures from the government, consumers, and producer groups for social issues to be more considered in Supply Chain Management (SCM) (KOTTALA, 2021), and the existing literature on GSCM and SSCM research has given the greater focus on economic and environmental aspects than to social aspect (HONG *et al.*, 2021).

Therefore, there is a paradox between the studies that seem to agree with the need for companies to address economic, environmental, and social issues to promote their organizational sustainability and what is done in practice by companies, and the literature reflects this reality (FREISE; SEURING, 2015; RAJEEV *et al.*, 2017, KHOKHAR *et al.*, 2020).

Given this research gap, the present study brings a systematic review of the literature to answer the following research question: *How is the investigation of the social dimension in GSCM and SSCM research?* To this end, the following objectives are proposed:

- Identify the state of the art of GSCM and SSCM research in relation to the social aspect;
- Propose a research agenda for integrating the social dimension of GSCM and SSCM.

The article is structured as follows: section 2 - theoretical foundation in GSCM, SSCM, and Social Aspect; section 3 - research methodology; section 4 presents the results of the literature review; section 5 – discussions; section 6 - research agenda and section 7 concluding remarks.

## **2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

### **2.1 GSCM - SSCM**

Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM) is conceptualized by Seuring and Muller (2008) as the management of materials, information and capital flows, and cooperation between companies throughout the chain, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental, and social. Within the broad concept of SSCM also emerged the process of Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) as the process of interaction of environmental thinking in the supply chain, including green design, green purchasing, green manufacturing, green distribution, logistics, marketing, and reverse logistics (SARKIS; GONZALEZ-TORRE; ADENSO-DIAS, 2010).

According to Acquah Agyabeng-Mensah and Afum, (2021) GSCMP is a subsystem of the sustainable supply chain, which involves green procurement, green cooperation with customers, cross-functional cooperation for environmental improvements, total quality environmental management, environmental compliance and audit programs, ISO 14001 certification, environmental management systems, and green supply chain information systems.

The big difference between the two concepts is their scope; while SSCM considers the three dimensions - economic, environmental, and social of sustainability, GSCM is more concerned with environmental and economic issues.

### **2.2 Social sustainability**

Some authors define the concept of social sustainability and give us a way to integrate it into the supply chain. Mohamed and Paleologos (2021) define Social Sustainability as a measure of human well-being concerning intergenerational equity, that is, protecting the rights of future generations. Littig and Griessler (2005) conceptualize it as a quality of societies in the work environment that satisfies a wide range of human needs, preserves natural resources, and fulfills norms of social justice and human dignity.

Central themes in relation to well-being and social equity are related to the provision of basic needs, fair distribution of income, good working conditions, and decent wages, equal rights, intergenerational and intergenerational justice, access to social and health services and education, social cohesion and inclusion, empowerment and participation in policy-making

(MCGUINN *et al*, 2020). Such themes have appeared infrequently in the literature (WEINGAERTNER; MOBERG 2014), with ample space for social investigations (KANDACHAR, 2014).

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

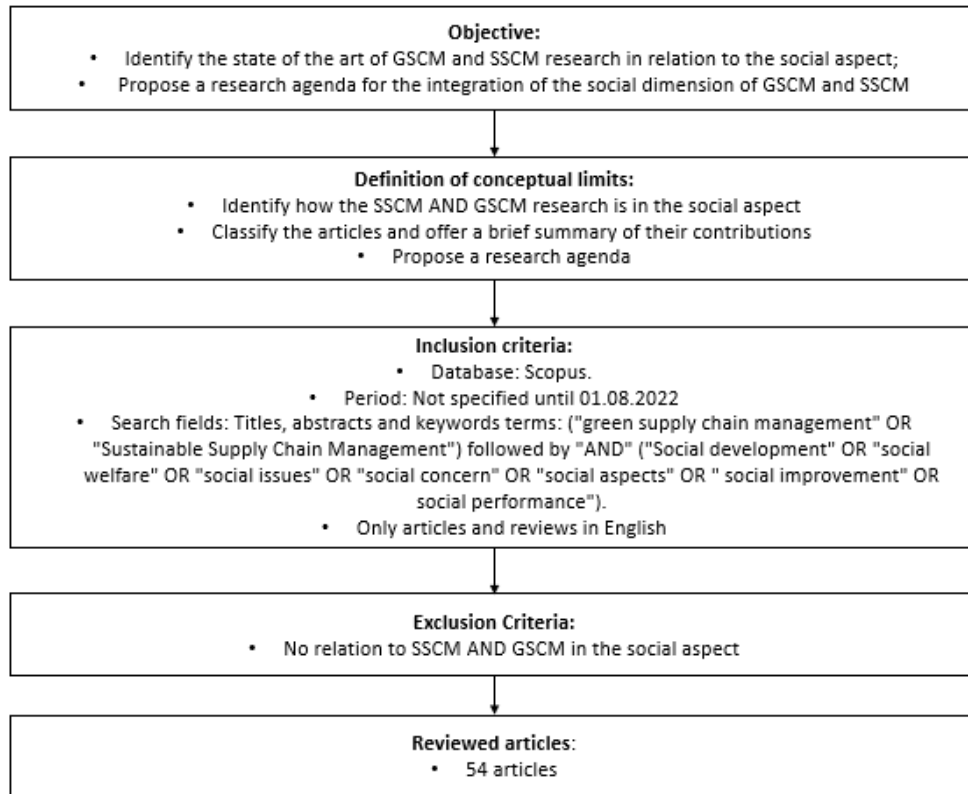
This study adopted a systematic review of the literature approach to examine the literature that integrates the GSCM and the SSCM with a focus on the social aspect, based on criteria and analysis of published studies adapted from Tranfield *et al.* (2003).

#### 3.1 Identification and selection of publications

The search and selection of articles relevant to the present study were carried out in the Scopus database (Elsevier), one of the most used databases in the world for literature reviews by researchers.

For the search and collection of articles, two sets of keywords were used - one related to GSCM and the other to SSCM. The chosen terms for search in the fields title of the article, abstract, and keywords were: (green supply chain management OR Sustainable Supply Chain Management ) followed by AND ( Social development OR social welfare OR social issues OR social concern OR social aspects OR social improvement OR social performance). The search for articles in the Scopus Database was carried out on August 1, 2022 and considered the entire available research period. Only articles and reviews published in journals and written in English were considered. The result showed 176 articles. Figure 1 presents the Structure of the Method.

**Figure 1 - Article selection protocol**



Source: Adapted Lu *et al.* (2018).

Of the 176 articles, 20 were excluded for being duplicates and six were excluded for restricted access. After excluding duplicate articles, the titles and abstracts of the articles were read and 96 articles were eliminated because they were outside the scope of the research (GSCM or SSCM with a focus on the social aspect), which resulted in 54 articles for analysis.

### 3.2 Classification and coding process and proposal

To analyze the articles, classification was performed using a coding based on letters and numbers, based on research by Klassen and Vereecke (2012), Zorzini *et al.* (2015), Carter and Jennings (2002) and Carter (2004) and a method similar to those used by Stefanelli (2019), Jabbour, Azevedo, Arantes and Jabbour (2013), Junior and Godinho Filho (2010) and Teixeira *et al.* (2020).

The classification dimensions encompassed: Country – indicating the country in which the research was carried out; Research types – coded on the A–D scale refer to the type of research that was developed; Research methods - coded on the A–E scale, it aims to analyze

the methodological procedures used; Sector – coded on the A – D scale indicate the economic sector of the companies object of the studies; economic activity – the United Nations International Standard Industrial Classification for All Economic Activities (ISIC / UN) was adopted and coded from A - W; focus - coded A - H classified the articles according to the main focus of the study; stakeholders – coded A - G , adapted from Klassen and Vereecke (2012) and indicate the stakeholders present in the analyzed studies; the items used for social categorization were coded from A – F and based on studies by Tajbakhsh and Hassini, 2015; Schöggel; Fritz; Baumgartner, 2016; Kühnen and Hahn, 2017; Carter and Jennings, 2002; Carter, 2004. Table 1 presents the classification and coding process:

**Table 1 - Classification and coding process**

Classification	Dimensions	Code
1	Country	Name of the country
2	Search Type	A - Quantitative B - Qualitative C - Quantitative and qualitative D – Other
3	Research Method	A - Case Study B - Survey (research) C - Review/Conceptual D - Case Study and Survey (research) E – Other
4	Sector	A – Private B - Audience C - Private and Public D - Not applicable (NA)
5	Economic activity	A - Agriculture, forestry and fisheries B - Mining and quarrying C - Manufacturing D - Supply of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning E - Water supply; sewage, waste management and remediation activities F - Construction G - Wholesale and retail trade; motor vehicle and motorcycle repair H - Transport and storage I - Accommodation and food activities J - Information and communication K - Financial and insurance activities L - Real estate activities M - Professional, scientific and technical activities N - Administrative and support services activities O – Public administration and defense; mandatory social security P - Education Q - Human health and social work activities R - Arts, entertainment and recreation S - Other service activities

		<p><b>T</b> - Activities of families as employers; undifferentiated goods and domestic activities producing services for own use</p> <p><b>U</b> - Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies</p> <p><b>V</b> - More than one economic activity</p> <p><b>W</b> - Not applicable</p>
<b>6</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<p><b>A</b> - Relevance of GSCM and SSCM with a social focus</p> <p><b>B</b> - Benefits of implementing GSCM and SSCM with a social focus</p> <p><b>C</b> - Motivations and pressures to implement GSCM and SSCM with a social focus</p> <p><b>D</b> - Financial impact of the social aspect on SSCM and GSCM</p> <p><b>E</b> - Barriers to implementing the social aspect of GSCM and SSCM</p> <p><b>F</b> - GSCM and SSCM practices with a focus on social</p> <p><b>G</b> - Environmental impact of GSCM and SSCM with a social focus</p> <p><b>H</b> - Literature review of GSCM and SSCM with a social focus</p> <p><b>I</b> - Not specifically GSCM and/or SSCM</p>
<b>7</b>	<b>Interested parts</b>	<p><b>A</b> - Internal level of the organization</p> <p><b>B</b> - Suppliers</p> <p><b>C</b> - Buying companies</p> <p><b>D</b> - Community</p> <p><b>E</b> - Regulators</p> <p><b>F</b> - NGOs</p> <p><b>G</b> - Not applicable (NA)</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>Social Concern</b>	<p><b>A</b> - Labor practices</p> <p><b>B</b> - Human Rights</p> <p><b>C</b> - Diversity</p> <p><b>D</b> - Ethics</p> <p><b>E</b> - Health</p> <p><b>F</b> - Environmental Impact</p> <p><b>G</b> - Not applicable (NA)</p>

Source: prepared by the authors.

## 4. RESULTS

This section presents a brief summary of the 54 articles in the literature review and an overview of the evolution of publications over the years.

### 4.1 Results and initial discussions

After analyzing the articles, with the name of the authors, year of publication, the title of the article, and a summary of each of them, with a focus on social sustainability.

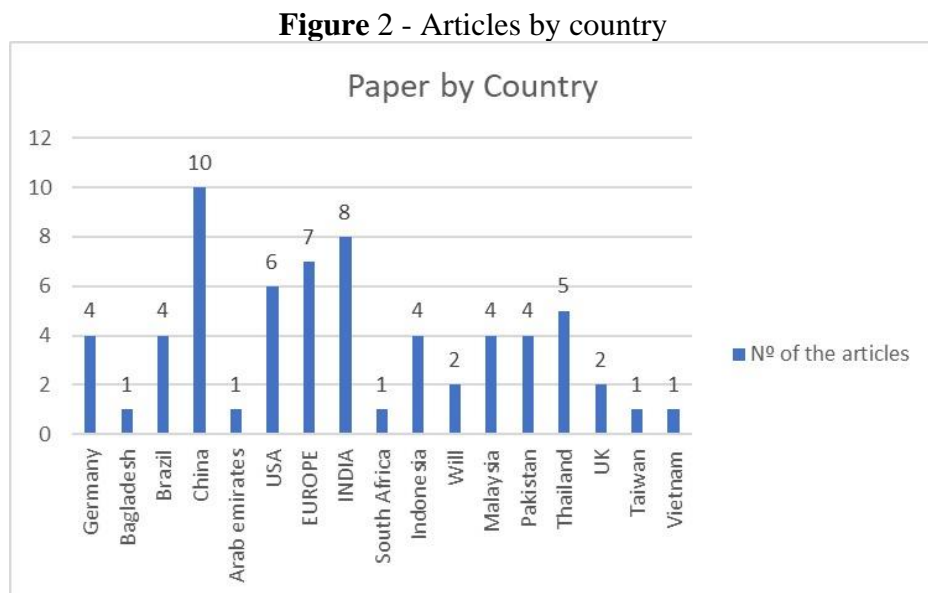
### 4.2 Results and discussions

This section presents the results and discussions based on the classification and coding methods proposed in Section 3.2 with the dimensions: Country, type of research, research

method, sector, economic activity, focus, stakeholders, and social concern. A presents the final classification and coding of the 54 articles.

#### 4.2.1 Country

This category sought to identify in which countries studies on GSCM and SSCM that focused on social aspects were developed. Figure 2 shows that China, India, and European countries are the countries that most investigated and produced articles on GSCM and SSCM, observing the social aspect of their issues.



Source: prepared by the authors.

China, as a major world power, has been concerned with justice linked to the sustainability of the supply chain demanded by buyers to ensure good sales performance and profitability (Khokhar *et al.*, 2020).

Following the ranking, in 2nd place, India appears with eight published articles, reflecting a scenario where the government, in 2013, began to invest efforts in manufacturing activities so that companies act with greater corporate social responsibility and with greater emphasis on ISO 140001 (DAS, 2018) and in 3rd place, Europe with seven articles, concerned with the social aspect of supply chain management, thinking about extinguishing any practices of slave labor, child labor and damage to the health of employees and the



community that may influence consumers of its brand negatively (ALGHABABSHEH; GALLEAR, 2020).

The USA appears in 4th place, with six articles on the theme of the social aspect in GSCM and SSCM, indicating the need for more empirical studies on the issue. Also, well focused on corporate social responsibility (CSR), USA research should expand its horizons in search of a greater breadth of the social concept (YUN *et al.*, 2019).

Other countries such as Germany, Malaysia, Pakistan, Brazil, Indonesia, Iran, Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, United Kingdom, and Taiwan published four or less than four articles in the period investigated by this research and their theoretical contributions on the topic are primarily observed in CSR (SOLTANMOHAMMADI *et al.*, 2021; ACQUAH; AGYABENG-MENSAH; AFUM, 2021; SARWAR *et al.*, 2021; YOUNIS; SUNDARAKANI, 2020; SUBRAMANIAM *et al.*, 2020; ALGHABABSHEH; GALLEAR, 2020; SITTISOM; MEKHUM, 2020; NUGRAHANI *et al.*, 2020; VIVAS *et al.*, 2020; CARBONE *et al.*, 2019; AZEVEDO, SCAVARDA; CAIADO, 2019; ROZAR; RAZIK; ZAKARIA, 2019; PAKDEECHOHO; SUKHOTU, 2018; BENDUL; ROSCA; PIVOVAROVA, 2017; FALLAHPOUR *et al.*, 2017; AMJAD; JAMIL; EHSAN, 2017; KÖKSAL, *et al.*, 2017; SHEU; CHEN, 2012; SEURING,; MÜLLER, 2008).

#### 4.2.2 Type of search

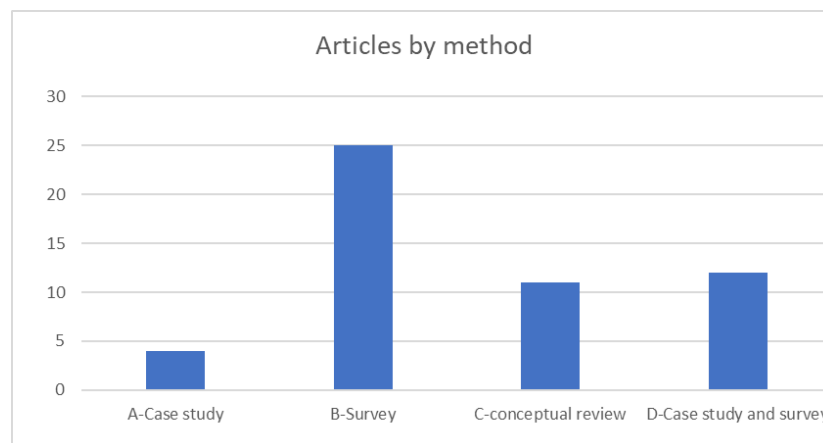
In the analysis of the articles regarding the type of research quantitative, qualitative, quantitative and qualitative (mixed) or others, it was found that about 41% of the studies used quantitative research, 31% used mixed research with a qualitative and quantitative approach together and 27% used qualitative research.

This classification may demonstrate the need for a more explicit definition for the aspects and social issues to be covered in the SSCM and GSCM, where only 27% of the studies presented addressed the topic in a more investigative and conceptual way. Most are quantitative studies in the environmental and environmental and social spheres together, and the remainder is mixed studies and address the aspect of CSR. In this way, there is still much space for publications, especially in the conceptual context, on the topic.

### 4.2.3 Research method

In this section, were analyzed the procedures used by the authors to verify which of the following research techniques were being considered in the social context of the SSCM and GSCM: case studies, surveys, literature reviews, case studies with surveys or other methods.

**Figure 3** - Number of articles by research method



Source: prepared by the authors.

Article analysis found that 48% of the articles, used surveys, 22% built case studies with surveys (mixed), 20% were literature review and 7% case studies. Only one article used the literature review with a case study together. Considering the lack of a conceptual definition and broad classification for the social aspect of the sustainability tripod of GSCM and SSCM (Yun *et al.*, 2019), these results demonstrate the need to develop research using mixed methodologies (case studies combined with research, for example).

### 4.2.4 Sector

The analyzed sectors in the 54 articles were divided into public, private, public and private (together), and not applicable (when the study was not carried out in a specific sector, such as a literature review).

The results obtained indicate that 46 articles explored the private sector (83%), and seven works focused on the public and private sectors together (12%). Here is a significant gap to be explored, as no GSCM and SSCM studies focusing on the social in the public sector

were found, so GSCM and SSCM scholars should start considering the public sector in their research.

#### **4.2.5 Economic activity**

As mentioned in section 3.2, the ISIC/UN was used to classify productive activities. The results show that of the 54 articles, 27 are surveys of manufacturing companies (50%). Having space for research in GSCM and SSCM for other economic activities such as construction, transport and storage, public administration, mining, service activities (e.g. hotels, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries).

#### **4.2.6 Study focus**

This classification aimed to identify each article's main focus and adopted the classification proposed in Section 3.2. It is worth mentioning that, depending on the focus of the articles, some were classified in more than one category; therefore, the number of classifications is higher than the total of 54 articles.

The most explored topic, with 16 articles (29%), were GSCM and SSCM practices with a social focus. The second was motivations and pressures to implement GSCM and SSCM with a social focus, with nine articles (16%). The third main focus, with six articles (11%), was the relevance of GSCM and SSCM with a focus on social. The other focus all have four or less than 4 articles published, deserving greater attention from future authors who work and study GSCM and SSCM.

Briefly, the themes that deserve greater attention from the authors are: Benefits of implementing GSCM and SSCM with a social focus; Financial impact of the social aspect on SSCM and GSCM; Barriers to implementing the social aspect of GSCM and SSCM; Environmental impact of GSCM and SSCM with a social focus; Literature review of GSCM and SSCM with a social focus; Factors influencing the adoption of SSCM and GSCM with a social focus. All serve as indications for future research, in particular financial impact of the social aspect on SSCM and GSCM, the least explored among all mentioned.

#### 4.2.7 Interested parties

The analyzes of the articles, as presented in Section 3.2, covered the stakeholders and verified whether the articles addressed SSCM and GSCM at the internal level of the organization, with regard to suppliers, purchasing companies, community, regulators, NGOs or not applicable.

Most articles, about 17, mainly addressed the internal level of organizations, addressing the issue of corporate social responsibility. This number increases to 37 articles if we consider the internal level in the study with suppliers, buyers, the community, and regulators. There are also six articles focused on the community. As for the other classifications, it is clear that there is a vast field of research to be worked on since in the other classifications of interested parties, such as suppliers, purchasing companies, community, regulators, and NGOs, the articles are well distributed and are no more than three per category.

#### 4.2.8 Social concern

Regarding social concern, the articles were classified according to the works of Tajbakhsh and Hassini, 2015; Schögggl *et al.*, 2016; Kühnen and Hahn, 2017, Carter and Jennings (2002) and Carter (2004) and considered labor practices, human rights, diversity, ethics, health, environmental impact and not applicable. The approaches that stood out the most were labor practices, totaling 25 articles dealing with the theme, with six articles addressing centrally and 19 articles addressing the theme together with other social issues. The environmental impact was also a very recurrent social issue in the articles, appearing mainly in 20 of them and combined with other practices in 14, totaling 35 articles. Analyzing this panorama, it can be seen that there is still much space for publications in the field of GSCM and SSCM that mainly address the themes of human rights, diversity, ethics, and health in the environmental aspect.

### 5. DISCUSSION

The analyzes based on the literature review and classification and coding according to the works of Tajbakhsh and Hassini, 2015; Schögggl *et al.*, 2016; Kühnen and Hahn, 2017, Carter and Jennings (2002) and Carter (2004) corroborate that China, India, and European countries are the countries that most investigated and produced GSCM and SSCM articles

observing the social aspect in their issues, but with many different motivations. In order to guarantee sales performance and profitability, China seeks an ethical posture from its suppliers and distributors (KHOKHAR *et al.*, 2020), India is investing efforts in manufacturing activities with an emphasis on ISO 140001, so that companies act with greater corporate social responsibility (DAS, 2018) and Europe in the extinction of practices that cause damage to the health of employees and the community, slave labor and child labor (ALGHABABSHEH; GALLEAR, 2020). Quantitative studies are the largest number found in the sample, mostly exploring sustainability in its economic, environmental, and social tripod together, and it is observed in the results of the analyzes that, in relation to the social aspects and issues addressed, the dominant approaches refer to labor practices and environmental impact. Health considerations were observed in only four articles, human rights 7, and ethics was addressed in 12 studies in the sample. And questions about diversity were not observed in any survey of the sample.

With regard to stakeholders, companies have been working on the issue in relation to employees, avoiding slave and child labor and damage to the health of employees (ALGHABABSHEH; GALLEAR, 2020) and in the background, it extends to suppliers so that the supply chain supplies have a competitive and profitable capacity and to avoid legal sanctions. Companies need to work more on aspects that affect social issues in communities, NGOs, and regulatory bodies.

Despite the importance of including social standards throughout the production chain (ALGHABABSHEH; GALLEAR; RAHMAN, 2020), the social issue is still disconnected from the company's strategic issues, and this lack of consideration and commitment to social aspects can affect its image and long-term success (GHADIMI; WANG; LIM, 2019).

Research in the area of social performance is not yet specialized; measuring this type of performance in an organization is a very complex task since it involves several sectors and encompasses many aspects (ZHU; HU, 2017); the determination of the scope and measures of universal and global social sustainability is a challenge due to a lack of conceptual clarification (KHOKHAR *et al.*, 2020) and studies that address social issues are scarce (RAJEEV *et al.*, 2017; ANSARI; KANT, 2017; KÖKSAL *et al.*, 2017; FREISE; SEURING, 2015; TAJBAKSH; HASSINI, 2015).

### 5.1 Proposal of a research agenda

The results presented by the present study open up a wide range of opportunities for future studies within the GSCM and SSCM research that encompass social issues in their scope, as several research gaps were identified, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 - Search agenda by category**

Category	Main gap
Search type	Qualitative studies
Research method	Conceptual research and reviews
Sector	Studies in the public sector of social aspects of the GSCM and SSCM.
Economic activity	Studies in different areas of the manufacturing sector.
Focus	Studies on Benefits, motivations, pressures, barriers and facilitators regarding social aspects in GSCM and SSCM.
Interested parts	Studies on the SSCM and GSCM applied to suppliers, purchasing companies, the community, regulators, and NGOs.
Social concern	Studies with a discussion of the SSCM and GSCM that in vol.ve: human rights, diversity, ethics, and health.

Source: prepared by the authors.

As for the types and methods, the results suggest that more qualitative research should be developed, involving investigations of a conceptual nature and reviews, especially because the issue of lack of a clear concept and measures regarding aspects and social performance is posed as an obstacle in research. Studies involving case studies and research are also suggested.

A lack of studies was identified that considered the social aspects of GSCM and SSCM in the public sector, which emerges as a need and opportunity for research, as well as in the economic activities of construction, transport, and storage, public administration, mining, services, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.

Most studies were conducted out in private companies due to the need to adapt to market criteria for exporting products. Another point is the attention to the company's ESG image, improving its value, and there is the possibility of raising more external financing.

Among the topics to be considered for research, there is a great need to carry out studies that analyze the financial impact when considering the social aspects of the SSCM and GSCM. This topic was addressed by only one article from the analyzed sample and is of great relevance, considering that the economic issue is the most important for managers. Benefits,

motivations and pressures, barriers, and enablers to consider social aspects in GSCM and SSCM also emerge as opportunities.

Stakeholders also emerge as lacking investigation. When studies show that employees and internal collaborators are the ones that have received the most attention in the research, there are several participants to be approached, such as suppliers, purchasing companies, the community, regulators, and NGOs.

The results presented in the category of social aspects demonstrate that there are still many gaps to be filled in the field of research in GSCM and SSCM, with approaches to social issues in human rights, diversity, ethics, and health.

Thus, the research agenda listed in Table 2, is a valuable contribution to future academic research and draws the attention of managers and professionals in the supply chain, environmental management, and sustainability to invest in the social area, mainly to leverage business and achieve prominence in issues aligned with ESG (Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance). Companies with an ESG approach gain greater visibility and investments via shareholders.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study contributes to contextualizing social aspects in the GSCM and SSCM literature and reiterates that social issues need further research and practical application. We identified that labor issues stand out in the analyzed studies and the environmental impact. We believe that these two areas (labor and environmental) are the most applied because of the mandatory/legal procedures to which organizations are subject and by companies' concerns to improve their environmental indicators, which will impact the social context.

We believe that this lack of connection between social issues and the strategies of GSCM and SSCM derives from a lack of information and the development of theoretical and practical knowledge on this theme. The results of the analyzes presented in this study can be useful for academics in organizations in the sense of alerting them to the need for investigation and research, especially quantitative, that address social issues in GSCM and SSCM.

The presented limitations refer to the set of keywords used and the number of databases consulted, which may have missed some relevant material. And considering that in

conceptual research the researcher's knowledge, experience and mentality have a substantial impact on the results (SEURING; MÜLLER, 2008), the fact of determining the lack of a global conceptualization in relation to the scope of sustainability and social aspects (KHOKHAR *et al.*, 2020) is also pointed out as a limitation, especially with regard to the coding process.

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