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Reinventing productivity

The strategic role of Supply Chain Management

Productivity is a critical driver of economic growth and improved living standards. In Ghana, persistent challenges with low labour productivity continue to undermine national competitiveness, wage growth, and sustainable development. This article argues that Supply Chain Management (SCM) offers a strategic pathway to address these challenges. Drawing on global best practices, theoretical insights, and practical applications, the paper examines how SCM principles can be adapted to Ghana's context to boost efficiency, resilience, and long-term productivity.

Productivity is universally recognized as the cornerstone of economic prosperity. Economies with higher productivity generate greater value per worker, enabling stronger growth, higher wages, and improved standards of living. Conversely, low productivity limits economic potential, weakens

competitiveness, and constrains wage growth.

In Ghana, low labour productivity has significant implications. It limits household incomes, dampens consumer spending, fuels inflationary pressures, and restricts the pace of GDP expansion. A critical structural challenge lies in the disconnection between wage growth and productivity gains, creating economic inefficiencies

and perpetuating income stagnation.

Addressing this challenge requires innovative solutions that go beyond traditional policy interventions. Supply Chain Management (SCM), though underutilized in Ghana, offers a transformative framework for enhancing productivity at both organizational and national levels.

Methodology

This paper adopts a conceptual and analytical approach. Instead of primary data collection, it synthesizes existing literature, case studies, and global market reports to develop a framework for applying SCM principles to Ghana's productivity challenges. This approach allows for contextual adaptation of international best practices to local realities, ensuring policy relevance.

Supply Chain Management as a productivity driver

Research underscores the strong relationship between productivity improvement and

effective supply chain management (Vrijhoef & Koskela, 2000). SCM enhances collaboration (Cheung, 2010), improves information flow (Eriksson, 2010), and drives efficiency across processes (Egan, 1998; Jones & Saad, 2003). Global case studies, including the British Airport Authority's Heathrow T5 project (Brady et al., 2006; Potts, 2009), highlight how SCM can eliminate inefficiencies and optimize labour output.

For Ghana, integrating SCM principles into both public and private sector operations can address root causes of low productivity, such as delays, waste, poor coordination, and lack of technological adoption.

Strategic SCM approaches to enhance labour productivity

Technology Integration

- ◆ Adoption of Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), AI analytics, and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies can improve visibility, reduce waste, and maximize labour efficiency.
- ◆ Real-time supply chain visibility platforms can minimize idle time by enabling accurate scheduling and resource allocation.

Lean and Kaizen Principles

- ◆ Lean supply chain strategies such as Just-in-Time (JIT) inventory reduce waiting times and excess stock, ensuring workers focus on value-adding activities.
- ◆ A Kaizen culture fosters continuous improvement, empowering employees to identify and eliminate

inefficiencies.

Performance Monitoring and Analytics

- ◆ Data-driven performance measurement using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)—such as “orders picked per hour”—enables organizations to identify bottlenecks and implement targeted solutions.

Resilience and Risk Management

- ◆ The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains. For Ghana, adopting contingency planning, supplier diversification, and risk management strategies will help safeguard productivity against disruptions.

Sustainability in Supply Chains

- ◆ According to McKinsey & Company, firms prioritizing sustainability experience higher annual revenue growth. Sustainable supply chain practices enhance efficiency, reduce risks, and improve stakeholder confidence while strengthening long-term competitiveness.

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Global market outlook and implications for Ghana

The global SCM market is projected to reach \$89.57 billion by 2034, reflecting rapid adoption of cloud-based solutions, AI, and IoT.

Key drivers include digital transformation, the rise of e-commerce, and the growing complexity of global commerce. Ghana's integration into these trends is vital for improving competitiveness and ensuring that businesses can thrive in increasingly interconnected markets.

Conclusion

Effective Supply Chain Management (SCM) represents a strategic lever for Ghana to overcome its persistent labour productivity challenges.

By embedding SCM principles—technology adoption, lean practices, performance monitoring, risk management, and sustainability—organizations can optimize efficiency, reduce waste, and strengthen resilience.

For Ghana, the pursuit of productivity must be grounded in systemic reform. Building robust, agile, and sustainable supply chains will be essential for accelerating economic growth, improving global competitiveness, and enhancing the livelihoods of citizens.

When gold means growth

...mining reforms, enterprise linkages, and the price of inaction

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citizens see action timelines and outcomes.

Policy coherence matters. Global experience (World Bank, IFC) shows reform sticks when permits, royalties, environmental oversight, and community benefits are aligned and enforced. Ghana's economy has stabilized with growth recovering in 2024–2025, creating fiscal room to invest in genuine enforcement and water infrastructure if leakage is curtailed.



(Preview of Part II)
As Ghana embraces drones and artificial intelligence to confront galamsey, the real test will be

whether technology strengthens trust rather than erodes it. Three principles are essential. Civilians must always come first: monitoring should

remain non-lethal, with community alert systems and zero tolerance for excessive force, lessons drawn from the tragic outcomes of corporate deployments elsewhere in West Africa.

Privacy and legitimacy are equally vital; intrusive surveillance must follow clear authority chains, be subject to judicial oversight, and observe strict data-retention limits. Finally, local enterprise participation must anchor the effort.

Training and certifying Ghanaian drone pilots, data annotators, and geospatial analysts, and requiring foreign contractors to partner locally,

will ensure that technological sovereignty grows alongside environmental protection.

These themes will be expanded in Part II: “AI Over Rivers – How Drones, Satellites and Machine Intelligence Can End Galamsey.”

Across the developing world, Ghana's approach offers broader lessons. Formalization beats prohibition, progressive licensing, traceability, and market access outperform blunt crackdowns.

Revenue sharing at the source aligns local incentives for maintenance, stewardship, and SME growth. And when turbidity reaches seven times treatment thresholds, safeguarding water is no longer environmentalism; it is macroeconomic policy, a truth that links Ghana's rivers to the Amazon, the Mekong, and every resource frontier in between.

Conclusion: Reform

Is the Start... Value Creation the Finish

Ghana stands at the threshold of transformation. It possesses a world-class gold industry, a bold reform agenda that links growth to governance, and a rising tech ecosystem capable of exporting AI- and drone-based innovation.

If Accra sustains its course, tightening licence discipline, ensuring transparent community revenue sharing, formalizing small-scale mining, and embedding AI in enforcement, the returns will extend far beyond ounces. They will be measured in jobs created, rivers restored, and districts made investable.

When gold truly means growth, it must also mean water fit to drink, forests reborn, and small enterprises scaling from Tarkwa to Tamale and beyond. That is how reform becomes legacy, and a mining boom becomes a story of enduring national renewal.

Guardrails for “AI Over Rivers”