How Waste Reduction Strategies Shape Sustainable Supply Chain Resilience: A Narrative Review

Nurazmi Afifah and Musran Munizu

Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia
afifahn23a@student.unhas.ac.id

Abstract. This study explores the key strategies for waste reduction in supply chains and their impact on enhancing supply chain resilience. Through a narrative review of 25 articles, various waste reduction strategies, such as supply chain optimization, the adoption of 3R principles (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), circular economy practices, and the use of smart technologies, were identified as highly effective in reducing waste and improving efficiency. These strategies, alongside food waste management and green investments, help optimize resource utilization, lower operational costs, and reduce environmental impacts. The study also highlights that resource optimization and cost reduction through waste minimization contribute significantly to improving supply chain resilience, particularly by reducing carbon emissions and aligning with sustainability goals. However, several barriers, including high initial costs, insufficient infrastructure, logistical challenges, and policy limitations, impede the broader adoption of these strategies. Addressing these obstacles requires collaboration between businesses, policymakers, and stakeholders, supported by technological advancements and favorable regulatory frameworks. Such efforts are crucial to ensure the successful implementation of waste reduction practices, thereby fostering more resilient and sustainable global supply chains.

Keywords: Waste Reduction, Supply Chain Resilience, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Global supply chains have become increasingly complex, facing a range of challenges from environmental concerns to economic fluctuations. As a result, sustainability and resilience have become critical components of modern supply chain management. Supply chain resilience refers to the ability of a supply chain to recover from disruptions, while sustainability focuses on reducing environmental impact through eco-friendly practices. Combining these two principles is essential for companies striving to maintain competitiveness while meeting global sustainability goals [1].

Waste reduction strategies play a pivotal role in achieving both sustainability and resilience. By minimizing waste, companies can enhance resource efficiency and reduce their environmental footprint, which in turn strengthens the resilience of their supply chains. Despite the growing importance of waste reduction, its role in enhancing supply chain resilience has received limited attention in the existing

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literature [2], [3]. This study seeks to explore how waste reduction strategies shape and strengthen supply chain resilience.

While there has been significant growth in research on sustainability within supply chains, the connection between waste reduction strategies and supply chain resilience remains underexplored. Much of the existing research focuses primarily on the environmental benefits of waste reduction, without fully addressing its strategic role in strengthening supply chain resilience in the face of disruptions [4]. Understanding this relationship is crucial for businesses aiming to build more robust and sustainable supply chains [1]

Although the importance of waste reduction in the context of sustainability and supply chain efficiency has been extensively discussed in previous research, the specific relationship between waste reduction strategies and supply chain resilience remains underexplored. Many studies focus on the environmental benefits of waste reduction, such as lowering carbon emissions and enhancing resource efficiency [4] However, there has been limited attention given to understanding how these strategies can bolster supply chain resilience against disruptions, including market fluctuations, natural disasters, or logistical interruptions. Existing research tends not to comprehensively examine the mechanisms or best practices for implementing waste reduction strategies that support resilience. Therefore, a gap exists in the literature regarding the specific role of waste reduction as a strategic approach to building resilience, which is the primary focus of this study.

This study seeks to answer the following key questions: How do waste reduction strategies influence the resilience of sustainable supply chains? What are the most effective waste reduction strategies for enhancing supply chain resilience? What challenges and enablers exist in implementing waste reduction strategies within resilient supply chains?

The primary objective of this research is to examine the relationship between waste reduction strategies and supply chain resilience. Using a narrative review approach, this study will explore the ways in which waste reduction initiatives contribute to creating more resilient and sustainable supply chains. The research will synthesize existing literature to identify best practices and recommend strategies for enhancing resilience through waste reduction.

This research contributes to the fields of supply chain management and sustainability by offering new insights into how waste reduction not only improves environmental outcomes but also enhances the resilience of supply chains. The findings provide valuable guidance for businesses seeking to implement sustainable practices while bolstering their resilience [2], [4]. The study's results are relevant for supply chain professionals, policymakers, and scholars aiming to promote both sustainability and resilience.

2. Methodology

2.1 Narrative Review Approach

This study employs a narrative review approach, a qualitative method that allows for the synthesis of existing literature to identify trends, gaps, and conceptual relationships within the topic being studied. Narrative reviews are often chosen for topics that encompass a wide range of evidence or theoretical perspectives and provide flexibility in refining the scope as new insights emerge throughout the review process [5], [6].

This approach enables a deep understanding of the relationship between waste reduction strategies and supply chain resilience by critically examining relevant literature. It involves iterative cycles of literature searching and refining the research question, allowing for a comprehensive and in-depth review. The narrative review also provides the freedom to select relevant sources while maintaining clear boundaries and key definitions to ensure the review's focus.

2.2 Data Collection Process

Relevant literature was gathered from the Scopus database. Keywords used in the search included "waste reduction strategies," and "sustainable supply chains." The articles selected for analysis were published between 2019 and 2024, ensuring that the data used is both up-to-date and relevant.

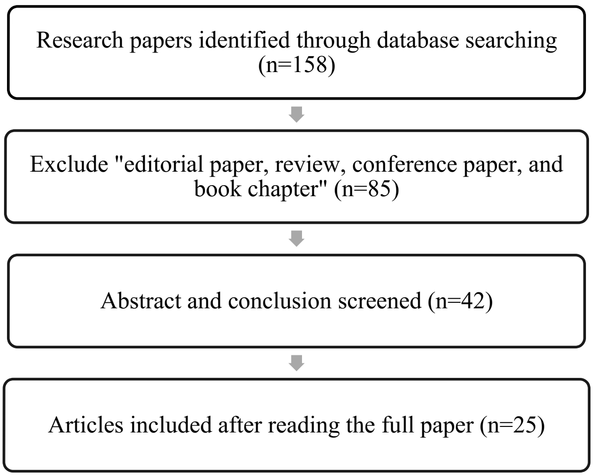

Fig. 1 Research methodology.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data gathered from the literature was analyzed using a thematic approach, where each article was grouped into key themes, such as: Waste reduction strategies (e.g., lean manufacturing, circular economy, recycling). Factors influencing the adoption of waste reduction strategies in supply chains. The impact of waste reduction on supply chain resilience. Challenges faced by companies in implementing waste reduction strategies.

Each theme was analyzed to identify trends, research gaps, and to provide further insight into how waste reduction can enhance supply chain resilience [4], [7].

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Periodicals wise % of research papers

Publisher Name	Journal Names	No. of articles	%
MDPI	Sustainability	4	16
Elsevier	Journal of Cleaner Production	3	12
MDPI	Foods	2	8
Elsevier	Sustainable Production and Consumption	2	8
Elsevier	Science of The Total Environment	2	8
AOSIS	Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management	1	4
EDP Sciences	RAIRO-Operations Research	1	4
Springer Nature	Environmental Science and Pollution Research	1	4
Springer Nature	Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change	1	4
MDPI	Logistics	1	4
MDPI	Administrative Sciences	1	4
MDPI	Agriculture	1	4
Elsevier	Ecological Indicators	1	4
Elsevier	Energy	1	4
Elsevier	International Journal of Production Economics	1	4
Elsevier	Resources, Conservation and Recycling	1	4
Elsevier	Cleaner Logistics and Supply Chain	1	4
	Total	25	100.0

a. Key Strategies for Waste Reduction in Supply Chains

Optimization of Supply Chains and Production Processes. Leveraging simulation models, warehouse management policies, and production process optimization to minimize waste generation and improve efficiency across industries. Optimization of supply chains, including the use of advanced simulations like Monte Carlo, helps companies manage inventory more effectively and reduce food wastage. In the baking and confectionery industries, optimizing production processes and providing employee training has been shown to reduce food losses. Additionally, recovering waste heat through closed-loop systems enhances efficiency in energy usage.

Adoption of 3R Principles (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). The application of the 3R concept to minimize waste and reduce costs through collaboration between suppliers and buyers. The 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) model is central to collaborative waste reduction initiatives between buyers and suppliers, especially in industries looking to cut operational costs while improving sustainability. Similarly, integrating GSCM (Green Supply Chain Management) with sustainable waste management can foster circular economy practices.

Circular Economy Implementation. Utilizing circular economy concepts to recycle and repurpose waste, thereby enhancing sustainability in supply chains. Circular economy strategies promote the reprocessing of waste materials, such as copper tailings into secondary products, like metals and building materials. Additionally, converting food waste into biofuels or biopolymers is another innovative way to utilize waste in a circular supply chain model.

Smart and Innovative Technology. The use of information systems, smart supply chains, and technology to reduce waste and enhance supply chain operations. Technological advancements, such as smart supply chain systems and information-sharing platforms, play a critical role in reducing food loss and waste. Optimizing information systems and supply chain strategies can streamline processes and improve network efficiency.

Carbon Emission Reduction and Construction Waste Management. Reducing carbon emissions and managing construction waste through recycling and green policies. Reducing carbon emissions through process optimization and cost reductions is critical in industries like manufacturing. Furthermore, implementing cap-and-trade mechanisms to recycle construction and demolition waste (C&DW) helps limit environmental damage while promoting sustainable construction practices.

Food Waste Management. Reducing food waste through improved storage technologies, optimized distribution systems, and enhanced employee training. Strategies to reduce food loss include optimizing harvesting times, improving storage technologies, and enhancing processing techniques. Furthermore, training employees and optimizing production processes have been proven effective in reducing food losses in specific industries like baking.

Green Investments and Reverse Logistics. Investing in green technology and implementing reverse logistics to minimize waste and improve supply chain efficiency. Green investments, coupled with reverse logistics, play a significant role in reducing waste across supply chains. This approach is bolstered by the use of Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) and consignment stock policies. Reverse logistics also contribute to lean supply chain methods and sustainable packaging practices.

Sustainable Materials and Energy Utilization. Using more sustainable materials and renewable energy sources to reduce environmental impact and improve supply chain sustainability. The shift toward using sustainable materials, such as alternative feed ingredients and sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), highlights the potential to significantly reduce environmental impact. In parallel, using animal fats for biodiesel production through efficient supply chain planning is another innovative strategy.

Holistic Approaches to Reducing Food Loss. Adopting a holistic, multifaceted approach to managing and preventing food loss across the supply chain. Addressing food loss requires a comprehensive supply chain strategy that encompasses every stage, from production to distribution. Holistic approaches also include leveraging renewable energy and climate-resilient technologies to reduce food losses.

Reduction Policies and Technological Innovation. Reducing waste and improving product quality through policy implementation and technological advancements. Waste reduction strategies can be further enhanced through growth reduction models, such as degrowth strategies that emphasize re-localization, re-vegetarianization, and re-seasonalization of food production. Technological innovations in smart production systems, preservation, and remanufacturing also contribute to waste reduction.

Table 2. Waste Reduction Strategy

Waste Reduction Strategy	Literature support
Optimization of Supply Chains and Production Processes	[8], [9], [10]
Adoption of 3R Principles (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)	[11], [12]
Circular Economy Implementation	[13], [14]
Smart and Innovative Technology	[15], [16]
Carbon Emission Reduction and Construction Waste Management	[17], [18]
Food Waste Management	[9], [19]
Green Investments and Reverse Logistics	[20], [21]
Sustainable Materials and Energy Utilization	[22], [23]
Holistic Approaches to Reducing Food Loss	[24], [25]
Reduction Policies and Technological Innovation	[26], [27]

b. Impact of Waste Reduction on Supply Chain Resilience

Resource Optimization and Cost Reduction. Waste reduction strategies optimize resource use and cut costs throughout the supply chain, enhancing efficiency and resilience. Strategies aimed at reducing food wastage or other forms of waste directly contribute to risk mitigation by optimizing the use of resources and cutting operational costs. For example, reducing food waste can optimize resource management and enhance supply chain resilience by making operations more efficient. Additionally, production optimization and reduced carbon emissions lower overall costs and boost supply chain sustainability.

Reduced Environmental Impact. Reducing waste and carbon emissions strengthens supply chain resilience by minimizing environmental impacts and enhancing sustainability. Environmental sustainability is critical to maintaining resilient supply chains. Halving food waste could reduce the environmental impact of the U.S. food system by 8-10%, thus improving resilience. Moreover, innovative interventions targeting key supply chain stages, such as feed production and transportation, significantly lower environmental footprints and strengthen overall sustainability. Optimizing production processes to lower emissions further reinforces supply chain resilience.

Strengthened Supply Chain Collaboration. Enhanced collaboration between stakeholders strengthens supply chain resilience by improving efficiency and reducing waste. Collaboration across the supply chain leads to more efficient resource use and waste reduction. Joint efforts between suppliers and buyers in cost and waste reduction initiatives improve supply chain resilience by minimizing resource losses. Additionally, involving new stakeholders in food recovery and redistribution networks boosts the resilience of food supply chains. Improved coordination and visibility reduce food loss and reinforce supply chain resilience.

Enhanced Supply Chain Sustainability. Waste reduction strategies improve supply chain sustainability by reducing resource consumption, lowering carbon emissions, and supporting global sustainability goals. Sustainability initiatives play a key role in enhancing supply chain resilience. Improving resource utilization and cutting economic losses and environmental impacts make supply chains more robust. Aligning waste reduction efforts with sustainable development goals and reducing food loss leads to more sustainable supply chains.

Improved Food Security and Resilience. Reducing food waste improves food security and supply chain sustainability by optimizing resource use and mitigating risks. Reducing food losses strengthens the resilience of supply chains, particularly in the food industry, by improving food security. Optimizing resource use reduces waste and strengthens sustainability efforts. Additionally, efforts to minimize food waste improve food security and supply chain resilience by mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and enhancing efficiency.

Integration of Circular Economy Practices. Implementing circular economy principles helps reduce resource consumption and turn waste into value, thus improving supply chain sustainability and resilience. Circular economy practices enhance resilience by creating secondary value from waste, such as turning copper tailings into valuable products. These strategies reduce resource consumption, support long-term sustainability, and promote waste valorization, which strengthens supply chain viability.

Reduction of Carbon Emissions. Lowering carbon emissions through waste reduction and green investments strengthens supply chain resilience and improves sustainability. The reduction of carbon emissions, often achieved through innovative technologies and waste heat recovery, contributes to more resilient energy supply chains by reducing environmental impact and operational costs. Additionally, low-carbon management and recycling initiatives in the construction materials supply chain help strengthen resilience against resource shortages. Alternative energy sources further contribute to supply chain sustainability.

Increased Efficiency and Profitability. Waste reduction strategies boost operational efficiency and profitability, enhancing overall supply chain resilience. By cutting down on waste and improving operational efficiency, businesses can increase profitability while enhancing supply chain resilience. This is evident in industries where reduced food loss and resource management improvements lead to lower operational costs. Moreover, waste reduction efforts that increase operational efficiency also have positive impacts on profitability and environmental sustainability.

Strengthened Vendor-Buyer Relationships. Improved collaboration between suppliers and buyers reduces waste and enhances supply chain resilience through better communication and coordination. Strengthened relationships between vendors and buyers play a key role in waste reduction efforts and improve overall supply chain resilience. Initiatives that focus on optimizing production processes and reducing carbon emissions also contribute to building stronger, more resilient relationships between supply chain partners.

Improved Product Quality and Waste Management. Effective management of deteriorating products and improved product quality through waste reduction strategies enhance supply chain reliability and sustainability. Managing waste effectively in terms of product quality and minimizing losses is essential to maintaining reliable and sustainable supply chains. This is particularly important in industries where product degradation impacts supply chain performance. Reducing waste and improving resource efficiency helps ensure the long-term sustainability and reliability of supply chains.

Table 3. Impact on Supply Chain Resilience

Impact on Supply Chain Resilience	Literature support
Resource Optimization and Cost Reduction	[9], [17], [28]
Reduced Environmental Impact	[20], [22], [29]
Strengthened Supply Chain Collaboration	[11], [15], [30]
Enhanced Supply Chain Sustainability	[19], [24], [31]

Improved Food Security and Resilience	[14], [25], [32]
Integration of Circular Economy Practices	[12], [13]
Reduction of Carbon Emissions	[10], [18], [23]
Increased Efficiency and Profitability	[9], [21]
Strengthened Vendor-Buyer Relationships	[15], [20]
Improved Product Quality and Waste Management	[26], [27]

c. Supporting Factors vs Obstructing Factors in Waste Reduction Strategies

Supporting factors. Supporting factors are the elements or conditions that facilitate the successful implementation of waste reduction strategies. These factors help enhance efficiency, minimize waste, and promote sustainability in supply chains. They act as enablers, creating favorable environments for sustainable practices and reinforcing the resilience of the supply chain.

Advanced Technology and Infrastructure. The availability of advanced technologies such as smart production systems, preservation technologies, and circular economy approaches enhances the effectiveness of waste reduction strategies. Efficient infrastructure, including logistics and warehouse management systems, supports smooth operations and minimizes resource wastage.

Government Policies and Green Investments. Favorable government policies and financial support, such as subsidies for green investments, provide a strong foundation for businesses to adopt waste reduction strategies. Green preferences from contractors and stakeholders further encourage sustainable practices.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Support. Strong collaboration among supply chain members, including buyers, suppliers, and local communities, helps streamline waste reduction efforts. Community involvement and stakeholder participation are key drivers in the success of sustainability initiatives Circular *Economy and Sustainability Frameworks*. The integration of circular economy principles, such as reusing, recycling, and repurposing materials, supports waste reduction efforts and promotes long-term sustainability. These frameworks encourage businesses to adopt greener practices, reducing their environmental footprint.

Knowledge and Training. Personnel training, capacity building, and knowledge sharing enable companies to implement waste reduction strategies more effectively. Well-trained employees are better equipped to manage waste, optimize resources, and adopt innovative practices

Obstructing factors. Obstructing factors, on the other hand, are the barriers or challenges that prevent the successful implementation of waste reduction strategies.

These factors hinder progress, increase operational difficulties, and often lead to inefficiencies and higher waste levels within the supply chain.

High Costs and Financial Barriers. The high initial costs of implementing waste reduction technologies, including setup costs and investments in new infrastructure, are significant obstacles for many organizations. These costs often deter businesses from adopting sustainable practices, particularly in developing regions.

Insufficient Infrastructure and Technology. Lack of advanced infrastructure and technology, particularly in developing countries or rural areas, hinders the effectiveness of waste reduction strategies. Inefficient logistics, outdated technologies, and insufficient transportation networks create bottlenecks in the supply chain.

Policy Limitations and Regulatory Gaps. The absence of strong regulatory frameworks and inconsistent policies across regions hinder the adoption of waste reduction practices. Outdated or fragmented policies often lead to inefficiencies in waste management and prevent companies from implementing circular economy models.

Market and Consumer Behavior. Resistance from consumers and market participants to change their habits and adopt sustainable products can obstruct waste reduction efforts. Consumer reluctance to accept recycled or repurposed products, along with improper handling practices, hampers progress.

Logistical and Operational Challenges. Logistical barriers, such as poor transportation networks, inefficient warehouse management, and supply chain coordination issues, impede the efficient execution of waste reduction strategies. These operational challenges often lead to higher levels of waste and inefficiencies

Table 4. Supporting/Obstructing Factors

Supporting Factors	Literature support
Advanced Technology and Infrastructure	[9], [13], [22]
Government Policies and Green Investments	[18], [21], [25]
Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Support	[12], [15], [24]
Economy and Sustainability Frameworks	[23], [24], [31]
Knowledge and Training	[16], [28]
Obstructing Factors	**Literature support**
High Costs and Financial Barriers	[10], [17], [20], [26]
Insufficient Infrastructure and Technology	[9], [19], [29], [32]
Policy Limitations and Regulatory Gaps	[12], [24], [31]
Market and Consumer Behavior	[29], [31], [32]
Logistical and Operational Challenges	[9], [15], [20]

4. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of key strategies for waste reduction in supply chains, their impact on supply chain resilience, and the supporting and obstructing factors that influence their implementation. Through the review of 25 articles, several key strategies and challenges were identified.

Key findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of strategies such as supply chain optimization, adoption of 3R principles (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), circular economy practices, and smart technologies in reducing waste and improving supply chain efficiency. The study also found that resource optimization and cost reduction through waste minimization significantly contribute to supply chain resilience, enhancing operational efficiency and mitigating risks. Reducing waste leads to a reduction in environmental impact, strengthening sustainability by lowering carbon emissions and aligning with global sustainability goals. Additionally, supporting factors such as the availability of advanced technologies, government incentives, and stakeholder collaboration promote the successful implementation of waste reduction strategies. However, obstructing factors including high initial costs, insufficient infrastructure, logistical challenges, and policy limitations pose significant barriers to the effectiveness of these strategies.

While waste reduction strategies are essential for improving supply chain resilience and sustainability, overcoming financial, infrastructural, and regulatory barriers is crucial to fully realizing their potential. Collaborative efforts between businesses and policymakers, along with technological advancements and supportive regulations, will be key to ensuring the successful adoption of these strategies and fostering more resilient global supply chains.

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the use of a narrative review approach may limit the generalizability of the findings, as it does not involve empirical data directly from respondents or specific case studies. Additionally, the focus on articles published between 2019 and 2024 might overlook some important research conducted prior to this period. Another limitation is the restricted access to advanced technological resources and government policies in certain regions, which may not be comprehensively represented in this study.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct more in-depth empirical research by collecting primary data from companies that implement waste reduction strategies, providing more comprehensive insights into real-world applications. Additionally, studies that focus on cross-country or regional comparative analyses on the impact of policies and infrastructure on the effectiveness of waste reduction strategies can offer a deeper understanding of the barriers and opportunities in different contexts. Future research could also explore the application of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, to support more efficient waste management practices.

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