

Internship Report of

***Apparel Supply Chain Management and Challenges: An analysis on
Marks and Spencer (Bangladesh Sourcing Office)***

**Submitted by:
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An internship report submitted to the BRAC Business School in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Business Administration

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

September, 2023

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that:

1. The internship report submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Fardin Alam Omee

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Supervisor's Full Name & Signature:

Dr. Larry Leung Sau Kei, Assistant Professor, BRAC University.

Letter of Transmittal

Dr. Larry Leung Sau Kei,

Assistant Professor,

BRAC University

66 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Subject: Submission of internship report for course completion.

Dear Sir,

I am thrilled to have been given the opportunity to write and turn in a report on Marks and Spencer for the internship. In addition, the requirements of the BUS400 course will be satisfied by the report. My internship report was entitled “Apparel Supply Chain Management and Challenges: An analysis on Marks and Spencer (Bangladesh Sourcing Office)”. I would like to express that I have finished the report for my internship. Working with this company provided both educational and satisfying opportunities. I sincerely appreciate your assistance, cooperation, and advice while I prepared this report. I finished this internship report using my best efforts and diligent work. I would appreciate it if you would accept this report. I hope you were satisfied with my internship report. It would be my pleasure to answer any queries or issues you may have regarding these cases.

Sincerely Yours,

Fardin Alam Omee

ID: 20204087

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Date: September, 2023

Non-Disclosure Agreement

Fardin Alam Omee, a student at BRAC University, and Marks & Spencer has created and entered into this agreement in order to prevent the unlawful disclosure of the company's confidential information. Each party pledges not to disclose or exchange any private information acquired during the internship.

Fardin Alam Omee

ID: 20204087

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Marks & Spencer (M&S) is a British multinational retailer with a rich history spanning over 137 years. Founded in 1884, the company has evolved into a prominent player in the global retail industry, known for its commitment to quality, sustainability, and innovation.

M&S operates a diverse portfolio of products, including clothing, food, home goods, and financial services. With a presence in over 50 countries and more than 1,000 stores worldwide, M&S has established itself as a trusted brand for millions of customers.

Key Highlights

Heritage and Reputation: Marks & Spencer's long-standing tradition of offering high-quality products has built a strong reputation for reliability and trustworthiness among consumers. The company's commitment to ethical sourcing and sustainability practices further enhances its brand image.

- **Sustainability Initiatives:** M&S is a pioneer in promoting sustainability within the retail industry. The "Plan A" initiative, launched in 2007, exemplifies the company's dedication to reducing its environmental footprint, sourcing responsibly, and fostering community engagement.
- **Digital Transformation:** In response to changing consumer preferences and market dynamics, M&S has invested heavily in its digital transformation. The company's online presence and e-commerce capabilities have expanded significantly, allowing it to reach a wider customer base.
- **Food Division:** The food division remains a cornerstone of M&S's success. Its focus on high-quality, fresh, and innovative food products has made it a preferred destination for grocery shopping.
- **Fashion and Clothing:** M&S's fashion and clothing lines continue to evolve, offering a blend of style and affordability. Collaborations with designers and the emphasis on sustainable fashion reflect its commitment to meeting diverse customer needs.
- **International Expansion:** While M&S primarily operates in the UK, the company has strategically expanded its international footprint, targeting markets with growth potential. International growth remains a key part of M&S's future strategy.

- **Financial Services:** M&S offers a range of financial services, including banking and insurance, contributing to its diversification efforts and enhancing customer loyalty through loyalty programs.

Challenges

- **Competitive Landscape:** M&S operates in a highly competitive retail environment, facing both traditional competitors and e-commerce giants. Adapting to changing consumer behavior and staying ahead of the competition is crucial.
- **Economic Uncertainty:** Economic fluctuations and uncertainties, such as the impact of Brexit, can affect consumer spending and supply chain operations, posing challenges to M&S's growth.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Ensuring a resilient and sustainable supply chain in the face of global disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, remains a priority for M&S.
- **Digital Transformation:** While M&S has made strides in its digital transformation, it must continue to innovate and meet evolving customer expectations in the digital realm.

Conclusion

Marks & Spencer's legacy, commitment to sustainability, and diversified product offerings position it as a resilient and iconic player in the retail industry. To thrive in an ever-changing marketplace, M&S must continue to adapt, invest in digital capabilities, and expand its global presence while staying true to its core values of quality and sustainability. By addressing these challenges head-on and seizing new opportunities, Marks & Spencer is poised for a successful future in the dynamic world of retail.

Chapter 1: Internship Overview

1.1 Student Information

Name: Fardin Alam Omee

ID: 20204087

Program: Bachelor of Business Administration

1.2 Internship Information

Company Name: Marks & Spencer

Department: Merchandising

1.2.1 Job Description

As a merchandiser at Marks & Spencer (M&S), My job role involved various responsibilities related to planning, buying, and managing the products that the company sells. Here are some key aspects of the role:

1. Product Selection and Buying:

- Work closely with the buying team to select and purchase products that align with the company's brand and meet customer demand.
- Analyze market trends, customer preferences, and sales data to make informed decisions about product selection.

2. Range Planning:

- Collaborate with other departments, such as marketing and sales, to develop a comprehensive product range that meets the needs of the target market.
- Ensure that the product range is well-balanced in terms of styles, sizes, and price points.

3. Inventory Management:

- Monitor and manage inventory levels to prevent overstock or stockouts.
- Implement effective replenishment strategies to optimize stock levels and minimize excess inventory.

4. Promotions and Sales Events:

- Plan and coordinate promotional activities and sales events to drive customer traffic and boost sales.
- Collaborate with the marketing team to create visually appealing displays and promotions.

5. Data Analysis:

- Utilize data and analytics to assess the performance of products and make data-driven decisions.
- Regularly review sales reports, stock levels, and other relevant data to identify opportunities for improvement.

6. Supplier Relationships:

- Build and maintain strong relationships with suppliers to ensure timely delivery of products and negotiate favorable terms.
- Work with suppliers to resolve any issues related to quality, delivery, or other concerns.

7. Price Management:

- Set and manage product prices in line with the company's pricing strategy and market conditions.
- Monitor competitor pricing and adjust strategies accordingly.

8. Collaboration with Cross-Functional Teams:

- Work closely with other teams, such as marketing, sales, and store operations, to ensure alignment in product strategies and goals.

9. Visual Merchandising:

- Contribute to the development of visually appealing product displays to enhance the customer shopping experience.

10. Forecasting:

- Collaborate with the forecasting team to accurately predict product demand and adjust procurement plans accordingly.

11. Compliance and Standards:

- Ensure that all products meet quality and safety standards and comply with relevant regulations.

Chapter 2: Organization part

Company Introduction

2.1 History

Marks & Spencer (M&S) is a British multinational retailer that has a rich history spanning over a century. Here is an overview of the key milestones and historical aspects of Marks & Spencer:

1. Founding (1884-1894):

- Marks & Spencer was founded by Michael Marks, a Polish-Jewish immigrant, in Leeds in 1884.
- In 1894, Michael Marks formed a partnership with Thomas Spencer, a cashier from the wholesale company IJ Dewhirst. This partnership laid the foundation for the retail chain.

2. Penny Bazaars (1894-1920s):

- The first store to carry the name "Marks & Spencer" opened in 1894 in Manchester. It was known for its "Penny Bazaar" concept, where everything was priced at one penny.
- M&S expanded rapidly, opening more stores across the United Kingdom.

3. Introduction of the St. Michael Brand (1928):

- In 1928, Marks & Spencer introduced the "St. Michael" brand, which became synonymous with quality and reliability.

4. Post-War Expansion (1940s-1950s):

- Marks & Spencer played a significant role in the post-war reconstruction period, providing affordable and high-quality products.
- The company continued to expand its product range to include clothing, food, and household items.

5. Food Expansion (1970s-1980s):

- Marks & Spencer strengthened its position in the food retail sector during the 1970s and 1980s, emphasizing high-quality and fresh produce.

6. International Expansion (1970s-2000s):

- Marks & Spencer expanded internationally, opening stores in various countries, including Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

7. Financial Challenges (2000s):

- In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Marks & Spencer faced financial challenges and a decline in its market share. The company underwent restructuring and changes in leadership to address these issues.

8. Focus on Sustainability and Ethical Practices (2007 Onwards):

- Marks & Spencer has been a pioneer in promoting sustainability and ethical practices in the retail industry. Initiatives include the "Plan A" program launched in 2007, focusing on environmental and social responsibility.

9. Digital Transformation (2010s Onwards):

- Marks & Spencer embraced e-commerce and digital channels to adapt to changing consumer preferences. The company invested in online retail and digital initiatives to enhance the customer experience.

10. Recent Developments (2020s):

- Marks & Spencer continues to evolve its business model, responding to industry trends and challenges. The company focuses on sustainability, innovation, and meeting the changing needs of consumers.

Marks & Spencer remains an iconic British retail brand, known for its commitment to quality, customer service, and ethical practices. The company has navigated through various challenges and changes in the retail landscape, maintaining its presence both in the United Kingdom and internationally.

2.2 Vision & Mission

Marks & Spencer's vision and mission statements were focused on delivering high-quality products and services while incorporating sustainability and ethical practices. However, it's essential to note that these statements may evolve over time, and I recommend checking the company's official website or recent reports for the most up-to-date information. As of my last update, here's an overview of Marks & Spencer's vision and mission.

Vision: Marks & Spencer's vision emphasizes its commitment to being a leading retailer with a focus on delivering quality, value, and sustainability. The company aims to meet the evolving needs and expectations of its customers while maintaining its reputation for excellence.

Mission: The mission of Marks & Spencer typically involves providing customers with high-quality products across various categories, including clothing, food, and home goods. The company often emphasizes sustainability and responsible business practices as integral parts of its mission. Marks & Spencer has historically undertaken initiatives related to environmental responsibility, fair trade, and ethical sourcing.

2.3. Services

Marks & Spencer (M&S) provides a range of services to its customers, covering various aspects of retail, including food, clothing, and home goods. Here are some of the key services offered by Marks & Spencer:

1. Clothing and Apparel:

- **Clothing Lines:** Marks & Spencer offers a diverse range of clothing lines for men, women, and children. This includes casual wear, formal wear, activewear, and accessories.
- **Personal Styling:** Some M&S stores may offer personal styling services to assist customers in finding clothing items that suit their preferences and style.

2. Food Retail:

- **Food Products:** Marks & Spencer is renowned for its high-quality food products, including fresh produce, prepared meals, snacks, and beverages.
- **Dine In and Meal Deals:** M&S often provides special meal deals, allowing customers to purchase a combination of food items at a discounted price for a convenient dining experience at home.

3. Home and Living:

- **Home Goods:** M&S offers a range of home products, including furniture, bedding, kitchenware, and decor items.
- **Furniture Delivery and Assembly:** Depending on the location and product, Marks & Spencer may offer delivery and assembly services for furniture.

4. Online Shopping:

- **E-Commerce:** Marks & Spencer operates an online platform that allows customers to browse and purchase products from the comfort of their homes.
- **Click and Collect:** Customers can order items online and choose to pick them up at a nearby Marks & Spencer store through the click-and-collect service.

5. Financial Services:

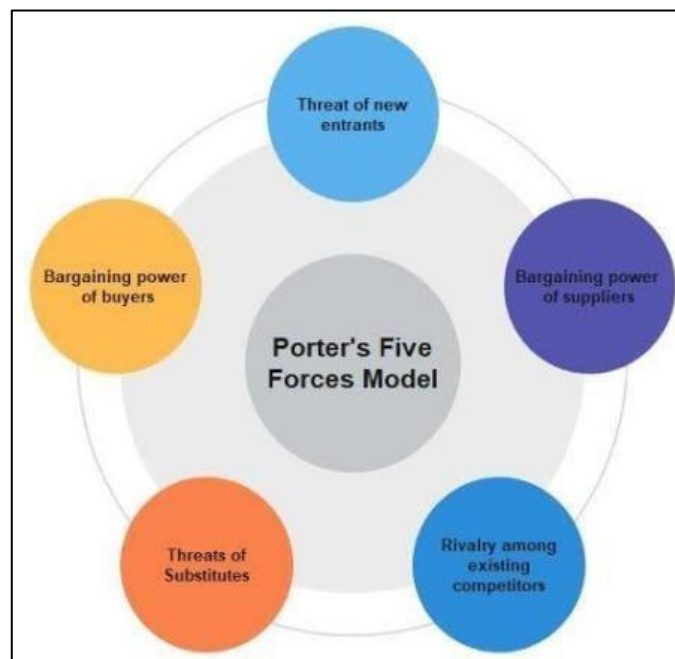
- **Credit Cards:** Marks & Spencer has offered financial products, including credit cards, in partnership with banking institutions.

6. Customer Support:

- **Customer Service:** M&S provides customer support services to address inquiries, resolve issues, and assist with product-related questions.
- **Returns and Exchanges:** Marks & Spencer typically has a return and exchange policy, allowing customers to return or exchange products within a specified period.

Analyses and Competitive part of Marks & Spencer

2.4 Porter's Five Forces of Analysis



Porter's Five Forces is a framework developed by Michael Porter to analyze the competitive forces within an industry. It helps identify the sources of competition in an industry and assess the attractiveness of that industry. Here's an analysis of Porter's Five Forces for Marks & Spencer:

1. Threat of New Entrants:

- **Barrier to Entry:** The retail industry has relatively low entry barriers, but establishing a strong brand like Marks & Spencer requires significant investment. Additionally, economies of scale in sourcing and distribution can be a barrier.
- **Brand Loyalty:** Established brands like Marks & Spencer may benefit from customer loyalty, making it harder for new entrants to gain market share.

2. Bargaining Power of Buyers:

- **Consumer Switching Costs:** The switching costs for consumers in the retail industry are generally low. Buyers can easily switch from one retailer to another based on factors like price, product availability, and customer service.
- **Price Sensitivity:** Consumers often have a high sensitivity to prices, making it important for retailers to offer competitive pricing

3. Bargaining Power of Suppliers:

- **Supplier Concentration:** Marks & Spencer, being a large retailer, may have some power over its suppliers due to its scale. However, certain unique or specialized products may be dependent on specific suppliers.
- **Availability of Substitute Inputs:** If there are readily available substitute inputs, the bargaining power of suppliers may be reduced.

4. Threat of Substitute Products or Services:

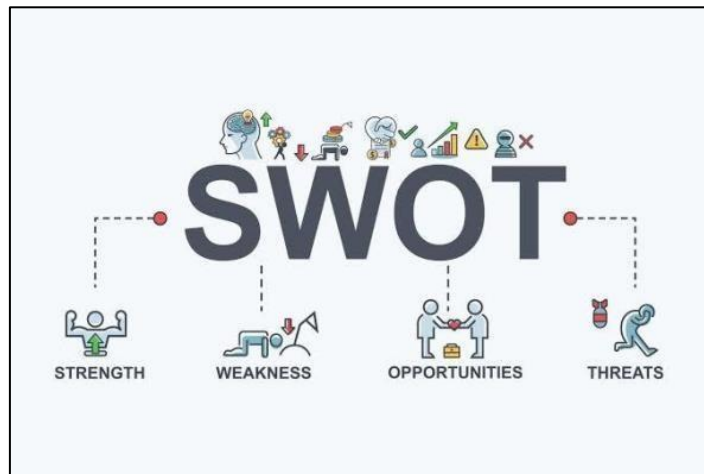
- **Availability of Substitutes:** The retail industry faces a constant threat from substitutes, including online retailers, other brick-and-mortar stores, and alternative shopping channels.
- **Brand Differentiation:** Marks & Spencer's brand reputation and the uniqueness of its products can help mitigate the threat of substitutes.

5. Intensity of Competitive Rivalry:

- **Number of Competitors:** The retail industry is highly competitive, with numerous players ranging from large multinational corporations to small local businesses.
- **Product Differentiation:** Marks & Spencer's focus on quality and unique product offerings can help differentiate it from competitors.
- **Industry Growth Rate:** A slow-growing industry may intensify competition as companies vie for a larger share of a limited market.

In summary, Marks & Spencer faces a moderate to high level of competition in the retail industry. Its established brand, customer loyalty, and product differentiation are strengths that can help mitigate some of the competitive pressures. However, the industry's overall dynamics, including the threat of substitutes and the bargaining power of buyers, require ongoing strategic management and adaptation.

2.5 SWOT Analysis of Marks & Spencer



A SWOT analysis involves assessing the internal Strengths and Weaknesses of a company, along with external Opportunities and Threats it faces. Here's a SWOT analysis for Marks & Spencer:

Strengths:

- 1. Brand Reputation:** Marks & Spencer has a strong and well-established brand with a reputation for quality and reliability.
- 2. Product Diversity:** The company offers a wide range of products, including clothing, food, and home goods, catering to diverse consumer needs.
- 3. Global Presence:** Marks & Spencer has a global presence, with stores in various countries, providing it with a broad customer base.
- 4. Supply Chain Control:** The company has control over its supply chain, allowing it to maintain quality standards and respond to market demands efficiently.
- 5. Focus on Sustainability:** Marks & Spencer has made efforts to adopt sustainable practices, which can be a positive factor in attracting environmentally conscious consumers.

Weaknesses:

- 1. Financial Performance:** Marks & Spencer has faced challenges in terms of financial performance, including declining sales and profitability in certain periods.
- 2. E-commerce Competitiveness:** While the company has an online presence, it faces intense competition from online retailers, and its e-commerce strategy may need continuous improvement.
- 3. Aging Store Image:** Some stores may have an outdated image, and the company may need to invest in revamping its physical stores to attract a modern customer base.
- 4. Overreliance on UK Market:** A significant portion of Marks & Spencer's revenue comes from the UK market, exposing it to economic fluctuations in that region.
- 5. Operational Challenges:** Like many retailers, Marks & Spencer faces operational challenges, including supply chain disruptions and inventory management issues.

Opportunities:

- 1. Digital Transformation:** Investing in digital technologies and enhancing the online shopping experience can help the company stay competitive in the evolving retail landscape.
- 2. International Expansion:** Exploring and expanding into new international markets can provide growth opportunities and reduce dependency on a single market.
- 3. Partnerships and Collaborations:** Forming strategic partnerships with other brands or retailers can open up new avenues for growth and innovation.
- 4. Health and Wellness Trends:** Capitalizing on the growing consumer interest in health and wellness by expanding product lines or introducing healthier food options.
- 5. E-commerce Growth:** The continued growth of e-commerce presents opportunities for Marks & Spencer to strengthen its online presence and reach a wider audience.

Threats:

- 1. Intense Competition:** Marks & Spencer faces strong competition from both traditional brick-and-mortar retailers and online platforms, impacting market share.
- 2. Economic Downturn:** Economic recessions or downturns can lead to reduced consumer spending on non-essential items, affecting the company's sales.

3. Changing Consumer Preferences: Shifts in consumer preferences and shopping habits can pose a threat if Marks & Spencer fails to adapt quickly.

4. Brexit Impact: As a UK-based company, Marks & Spencer may be affected by the economic and trade implications of Brexit, including changes in tariffs and regulations.

5. Supply Chain Disruptions: Events such as natural disasters, geopolitical tensions, or global health crises can disrupt the supply chain, affecting product availability and costs.

This SWOT analysis provides an overview of the internal and external factors that can influence Marks & Spencer's business. It's important for the company to leverage its strengths, address its weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and mitigate potential threats to maintain competitiveness and sustainability in the market.

2.6 Comparing Marks & Spencer with Walmart

Marks & Spencer (M&S) and Walmart are two retail giants, but they operate in different markets and have distinct business models. Below is a comparison of various aspects of Marks & Spencer and Walmart

1. Business Model:

- **Marks & Spencer:** M&S operates as a multinational retailer, primarily focusing on clothing, food, and home goods. It has a strong emphasis on quality and has both physical stores and an online presence.
- **Walmart:** Walmart is a multinational retail corporation with a diverse range of products, including groceries, general merchandise, and electronics. It is known for its low-cost strategy and operates various store formats, including discount stores and supercenters.

2. Geographic Presence:

- **Marks & Spencer:** While M&S has a global presence, it is more concentrated in the UK and a few other international markets.
- **Walmart:** Walmart is a global retail giant with a significant presence in the United States and operations in multiple countries worldwide.

3. Business Focus:

- **Marks & Spencer:** M&S has a focus on quality and is known for its premium products. It has a strong brand reputation for offering high-quality clothing, food, and home goods.
- **Walmart:** Walmart is known for its "Everyday Low Prices" strategy, aiming to provide a wide range of products at affordable prices. It caters to a broad customer base, including budget-conscious consumers.

4. Retail Format:

- **Marks & Spencer:** M&S typically operates in department store formats, combining a variety of product categories under one roof.
- **Walmart:** Walmart operates various store formats, including discount stores, supercenters, and warehouse clubs, each catering to different customer needs.

5. E-commerce:

- **Marks & Spencer:** M&S has an online presence and e-commerce platform, allowing customers to shop for its products online.
- **Walmart:** Walmart has a significant focus on e-commerce and has been expanding its online presence to compete with digital retailers. It acquired Jet.com and has made investments in enhancing its online capabilities.

6. Supply Chain and Logistics:

- **Marks & Spencer:** M&S has control over its supply chain, emphasizing quality control and sustainability in its sourcing and distribution.
- **Walmart:** Walmart is known for its efficient supply chain management, using advanced logistics to maintain low costs and streamline operations.

7. Market Position:

- **Marks & Spencer:** M&S occupies a niche in the market with a focus on quality and premium products. It caters to a diverse customer base, including those looking for higher-end goods.
- **Walmart:** Walmart is positioned as a mass-market retailer, targeting a broad spectrum of consumers with its low-cost products and services.

8. Sustainability Initiatives:

- **Marks & Spencer:** M&S has undertaken various sustainability initiatives, including commitments to reduce environmental impact, ethical sourcing, and social responsibility.
- **Walmart:** Walmart has also implemented sustainability initiatives, including efforts to reduce its environmental footprint and promote sustainability throughout its supply chain.

In summary, Marks & Spencer and Walmart are both major players in the retail industry, but they differ in their business models, market focus, and strategic approaches. M&S emphasizes quality and a premium image, while Walmart is known for its low-cost strategy and broad market appeal.

2.7 The 4Ps of M&S



The 4Ps, also known as the marketing mix, represent the core elements of a marketing strategy. Let's examine the 4Ps for Marks & Spencer:

1. Product:

- Marks & Spencer offers a diverse range of products, including clothing, food, and home goods.
- The company is known for its emphasis on quality, and its product lines often include premium and unique items.
- M&S regularly introduces new collections and collaborates with designers to enhance its product offerings.

2. Price:

- Marks & Spencer positions itself as a premium brand, and its pricing strategy reflects a focus on quality.
- While not a discount retailer, M&S may implement promotional pricing and sales events to attract a wider customer base.
- The pricing strategy varies across product categories, with a balance between value and perceived quality

3. Place:

- Marks & Spencer operates through a combination of physical stores and an online platform.
- The company has a strong presence in the United Kingdom, and its international operations contribute to its global reach.
- The distribution strategy involves both company-owned stores and partnerships with other retailers.

4. Promotion:

- M&S engages in various promotional activities to build brand awareness and attract customers.
- Advertising campaigns across different media channels, including TV, print, and online, are part of the promotional efforts.
- The company may also use social media platforms to connect with consumers and promote its products.
- Loyalty programs, discounts, and special events contribute to promotional strategies aimed at customer retention.

In summary, Marks & Spencer's marketing mix involves a combination of high-quality products, a premium pricing strategy, a multi-channel distribution approach, and a mix of advertising and promotional efforts to create brand awareness and attract and retain customers. Adjustments to these elements may occur based on market conditions, consumer trends, and competitive dynamics.

2.8 Conclusion and Recommendations

Marks & Spencer (M&S) faces a dynamic and competitive retail landscape, characterized by changing consumer preferences, the rise of e-commerce, and economic uncertainties. The company has several strengths, including a strong brand reputation, product diversity, and a commitment to sustainability. However, it also grapples with challenges such as financial performance fluctuations, an aging store image, and the need to enhance its e-commerce competitiveness.

To thrive in this environment, Marks & Spencer should strategically leverage its strengths while addressing its weaknesses and capitalizing on emerging opportunities. The company's commitment to sustainability aligns with contemporary consumer values, providing a unique selling point. Furthermore, its focus on quality and product differentiation can be leveraged to attract and retain customers.

Recommendations

1. Enhance E-commerce Capabilities:

- Invest in technology and user experience to improve the online shopping platform.
- Implement innovative digital marketing strategies to drive online sales.
- Explore partnerships or collaborations to expand the reach of online offerings.

2. Modernize Physical Stores:

- Revamp and modernize physical stores to create a more appealing and contemporary shopping environment.
- Integrate technology within stores to enhance the overall customer experience.
- Consider store layout and design changes to cater to evolving consumer preferences.

3. Diversify Product Offerings:

- Continuously analyze market trends and consumer preferences to introduce new and innovative products.
- Explore partnerships or collaborations to introduce exclusive or limited-edition product lines.
- Consider expanding into complementary product categories to attract a broader customer base.

4. Global Expansion and Market Development:

- Evaluate opportunities for international expansion into emerging markets.

- Conduct thorough market research to understand the unique needs and preferences of consumers in target regions.
- Establish strategic partnerships or alliances to facilitate market entry and growth.

5. Cost Management and Operational Efficiency:

- Continuously assess and optimize the supply chain for efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- Implement cost-saving measures without compromising on product quality.
- Leverage technology for inventory management and operational efficiency.

6. Customer Engagement and Loyalty:

- Implement customer loyalty programs to reward and retain existing customers.
- Actively engage with customers through social media, surveys, and other channels to gather feedback and improve offerings.
- Personalize marketing strategies to enhance the customer experience.

7. Adaptability to Market Changes:

- Stay agile and responsive to changing market trends and consumer behavior.
- Foster a culture of innovation within the organization to encourage new ideas and approaches.
- Regularly review and update strategies based on market dynamics.

8. Risk Mitigation and Contingency Planning:

- Develop comprehensive risk management strategies to address economic uncertainties and external threats.
- Establish contingency plans to navigate unforeseen challenges, such as supply chain disruptions or economic downturns.
- Monitor geopolitical factors, regulatory changes, and other external influences that may impact the business.

By implementing these recommendations, Marks & Spencer can position itself for sustained growth, improved competitiveness, and resilience in the ever-evolving retail landscape. Continuous adaptation to market dynamics, customer-centric strategies, and a commitment to innovation will be key to the company's long-term success.

Chapter 3: Project Part

3.1 Introduction

Marks and Spencer (M&S), a renowned British multinational retailer, faces significant supply chain challenges that have become increasingly complex in the dynamic business landscape. One major hurdle is the need to strike a delicate balance between maintaining high product quality and sustainability while managing cost efficiency. M&S operates in a global market, sourcing products from various regions, which exposes them to geopolitical uncertainties, trade disruptions, and fluctuations in currency exchange rates. Additionally, the evolving consumer preferences and the rapid pace of technological advancements pose challenges in forecasting demand accurately. The company continually grapples with the optimization of inventory levels, ensuring timely deliveries, and enhancing overall supply chain resilience. Addressing these challenges is paramount for M&S to remain competitive and meet the expectations of modern consumers in an ever-changing retail environment.

3.2 Literature Review

Marks and Spencer (M&S), a renowned British retailer, has faced significant supply chain challenges in recent years. One key issue revolves around the complexity of its global sourcing network and the need to balance cost-effectiveness with sustainability goals. M&S has strived to enhance supply chain visibility and resilience, but the evolving geopolitical landscape, trade uncertainties, and disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the vulnerability of its supply chain. Additionally, the company has grappled with the implementation of advanced technologies, such as automation and data analytics, to optimize inventory management and streamline distribution processes. Despite M&S's commitment to ethical sourcing and environmental sustainability, aligning these principles with operational efficiency in the supply chain remains an ongoing challenge. The literature suggests that addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach, incorporating technology, strategic partnerships, and a continuous commitment to sustainability across the entire supply chain.

3.2.1 Broad Objective

The primary goal of this article is to complete the required educational research for the internship.

3.2.2 Specific Objective

Marks and Spencer (M&S) faces various supply chain challenges that require specific objectives to enhance efficiency and resilience. One key objective is to optimize inventory management by implementing advanced forecasting and demand planning systems, reducing the risk of overstock or stockouts. Additionally, the company should focus on enhancing supplier collaboration through improved communication channels and real-time data sharing to foster a more responsive and agile supply chain. Another objective is to invest in technology and automation to streamline warehouse operations and enhance order fulfillment processes, reducing lead times and operational costs. Implementing sustainable and ethical sourcing practices is also crucial to address consumer demand for responsible supply chains. By prioritizing these objectives, Marks and Spencer can navigate and overcome its supply chain challenges, ensuring a robust and adaptable system that meets the evolving demands of the market.

3.3 Data Type and Method to Collect Data

Marks and Spencer face various supply chain challenges that require specific objectives to enhance efficiency and resilience. One key objective is to optimize inventory management by implementing advanced forecasting and demand planning systems, reducing the risk of overstock or stockouts. Additionally, the company should focus on enhancing supplier collaboration through improved communication channels and real-time data sharing to foster a more responsive and agile supply chain. Another objective is to invest in technology and automation to streamline warehouse operations and enhance order fulfillment processes, reducing lead times and operational costs. Implementing sustainable and ethical sourcing practices is also crucial to address consumer demand for responsible supply chains. By prioritizing these objectives, Marks and Spencer can navigate and overcome its supply chain challenges, ensuring a robust and adaptable system that meets the evolving demands of the market.

3.4 Answers Recovered from the Interviews

The interviews revealed a complex picture with multiple critical obstacles when it comes to Marks & Spencer's supply chain activities in Bangladesh. Interviewees highlighted the ongoing problem of delayed shipments, which caused substantial interruptions to the flow of the supply

chain. Furthermore, issues related to stakeholder and personnel management have arisen as crucial matters, highlighting the significance of efficient coordination and communication among different departments and stakeholders. Moreover, the interviewees emphasized challenges in acquiring raw materials and managing port operations, which worsened delays and added to the complexity of logistics. Nevertheless, in the face of these hurdles, perceptive suggestions were put forward to tackle these problems. Proposed recommendations encompassed the harmonization of departments, harnessing technological improvements to optimize operational efficiency, implementing effective time management strategies, fostering a strong consumer base, and allocating resources towards local manufacturing capabilities. These recommendations are based on a strategic approach that focuses on optimizing operations, enhancing resilience, and leveraging local resources and market opportunities to effectively traverse the challenges of the garment supply chain in Bangladesh.

3.5 Factors Found from the Interviews

The interviews that were conducted for this internship report included multiple administrative individuals from different departments of M&S. However, most of their responses were indicating some common factors regarding the supply chain issues in M&S Bangladesh. They are listed below—

1. Late Shipment: Delayed shipment, a significant issue in the management of supply chains, frequently occur as a result of complex obstacles inside the logistical structure. The factors that contribute to late shipments include delays in production, inefficiencies in transportation, and unexpected disruptions along the supply chain path. The supply chain department is specifically responsible for carefully managing the dispatch of purchase orders by sea or air shipments, or a mix of both, in a timely manner. Nevertheless, any interruption in this procedure can have far-reaching consequences for the entire supply chain, leading to challenges in managing inventories, increased expenses associated with expedited shipping options, and potential tensions in customer relationships as a result of unfulfilled delivery expectations.

2. Stakeholder Management: Managing stakeholders in the clothing business in Bangladesh poses distinct problems, especially in relation to innovation. While nations such as China, India, and Sri Lanka have successfully positioned themselves as centers of innovation in the industry, Bangladesh mostly functions as a hub for production. Therefore, it is essential to have efficient stakeholder management in order to close the gap in innovation and guarantee that the interests and expectations of all stakeholders are in line. However, the absence of inventive

concepts within the local sector may give rise to difficulties, resulting in reliance on other regions for pioneering products and solutions. This dependence can worsen problems such as conflicting priorities, failures in communication, and disputes over contractual terms, impeding the effectiveness of efforts to manage stakeholders. Neglecting to tackle these obstacles not only poses the risk of delays and quality problems, but also weakens the brand's reputation.

3. Personnel Management: Personnel management is of paramount importance in the operations of Marks & Spencer, particularly due to the diverse departments and consumer bases they serve. Every department in M&S has distinct requirements and challenges, especially when it comes to developing products that cater to various consumer demographics and interests. Hence, proficient personnel management involves not only the acquisition and retention of competent staff, but also the assurance that they possess the necessary comprehension of the specific client demographic for each product category. This calls for strong human resources plans that focus on hiring the right people and making training and development programs that are specific to the needs of each area. Additionally, creating a positive work environment that supports teamwork and new ideas is important for keeping employees motivated and upbeat.

4. Raw Material Management: Sourcing is a major factor in the management of raw materials within Marks & Spencer's supply chain. Acquiring unprocessed commodities from nations such as China and Sri Lanka involve considerable delays, usually lasting between 20 to 25 days, which presents significant difficulties in managing time gaps and lead times. Price changes aren't as much of a problem because labor-intensive production is cheaper and energy and electricity costs aren't too high in Bangladesh, but other problems still exist. The obstacles encompass supply chain disruptions, variations in quality, and sustainability concerns associated with ethical sourcing procedures.

5. Port Insufficiency: The only port situated at Chattogram, Bangladesh, experiences significant pressure as a result of the high amount of orders, frequently reaching millions in number. The substantial increase in orders poses a logistical issue, especially considering that ships usually only come to the port on Tuesdays and Fridays. The infrequent arrival of vessels worsens congestion and causes delays in cargo handling, which are made even worse by insufficient port infrastructure and capacity limitations. These problems highlight the crucial requirement for improving infrastructure and investing in order to increase the efficiency of ports.

6. Dependency on other Regions for Raw Material Sourcing: The end-to-end support of Marks & Spencer's supply chain is severely hampered by Bangladesh's reliance on different countries for basic raw materials like yarns, fabrics, and trims. This interdependence creates vulnerabilities, especially during holidays celebrated in diverse cultures, which can disrupt the smooth movement of resources and affect production timetables.

7. Inefficient Backlog Supply Chain: In Bangladesh, the supply chain backlog, which encompasses warehousing, inventory management, and distribution, experiences inefficiencies that are worsened by the country's dependence on external sources for raw materials. The presence of these inefficiencies leads to an overabundance of inventory, higher expenses associated with holding inventory, and a decreased ability to promptly meet client demand for Marks & Spencer.

8. Logistics Delay: Logistics delays during shipment are common in Bangladesh due to a variety of circumstances such as political concerns, labor unrest, material shortages, and defective supplies. The delays cause disruptions in the supply chain processes, resulting in higher costs and longer lead times for Marks & Spencer. To alleviate these logistics delays and improve supply chain efficiency, it is necessary to implement tactics like as route optimization, real-time tracking, and proactive risk management.

9. Lead Time Issues: Marks & Spencer faces considerable problems due to lead time issues, including the present 41-day lead time required to reach UK docks, which exceeds that of other competitive countries. The prolonged duration of time required for completion affects the arrangement of manufacturing activities, the control of inventories, and the levels of customer service, which could ultimately result in the company falling behind in the worldwide market.

10. Insufficient Container: Container shortages can cause disruptions in supply chain operations, especially in international trade, resulting in shipping delays, higher transportation expenses, and difficulties in reaching client delivery dates. Possible approaches to tackle container shortages may involve enhancing container efficiency, refining container management procedures, and partnering with logistics providers to ensure adequate container capacity.

3.6 Recommendations

1. Enhanced Inter-Departmental Coordination: The significance of coordinated efforts among multiple departments, such as supply chain, merchandising, suppliers, and raw material

providers is necessary to optimize operational processes, improve communication channels, and promote collaborative efforts across the whole supply chain.

2. Improving Technology for Optimal Record-Keeping: It is important in the current era to allocate resources towards technological advancements in order to enhance the efficiency of record-keeping procedures. Through the utilization of sophisticated technological solutions, organizations may effectively manage their records, resulting in improved efficiency and precision in supply chain processes.

3. Establishing Stakeholder Communication: The establishment of effective communication channels with stakeholders pertaining to purchase order (PO) shipments is vital in order to guarantee transparency, foster alignment of expectations, and facilitate punctual delivery. The idea illustrates the significance of proactive communication in order to reduce possible delays and improve stakeholder satisfaction.

4. Efficient Time Management: The optimization of supply chain operations and the timely completion of tasks heavily rely on the implementation of efficient time management strategies. M&S should put more time in management strategies at the top of their list of priorities in order to make the supply chain more productive and responsive.

5. Inauguration of Mongla Deep Sea Port: Utilizing the Mongla deep sea port as a means to diversify the distribution of shipments and mitigate congestion in ports is necessary for M&S to ship more cargo in the international market. It can strengthen supply chain resilience and reduce lead times by using a strategy of evenly dispersing goods across multiple ports.

6. Elaborate Planning for End-to-End Operations: Comprehensive planning, encompassing the entire process from placing orders to delivering the end product, is crucial for guaranteeing seamless and effective supply chain operations for the company.

7. Investment in Local Manufacturing Plants: The implementation of investments in local manufacturing plants can yield substantial reductions in lead times and reliance on external sources by facilitating the production of essential raw materials, e.g., yarns, textiles, and trims. This initiative might improve the effectiveness and durability of the backlog supply chain by enabling the local manufacturing and acquisition of crucial materials.

8. Adhering the Critical Paths of the Company: The adherence to critical measures is crucial in maintaining compliance with predetermined schedules and milestones within the supply chain of M&S. It is significant to prioritize important processes in order to mitigate disruptions and facilitate seamless advancement towards the attainment of supply chain goals.

9. Ensuring Compliance with PO Deadlines and Quality Standards: The prioritization of achieving purchase order (PO) dates, quality criteria, and quantity parameters is crucial for manufacturing companies in order to maintain customer satisfaction and keep their brand reputation. The need of maintaining rigorous compliance with purchase order (PO) standards throughout the entirety of the production process is necessary for a better supply chain management of the company.

10. Diversification of Forwarders for Container Handling: The diversification of forwarders for container handling can enhance the accessibility of containers and alleviate container shortages by distributing the task among multiple rivals. The primary objective of this suggestion is to augment the flexibility and robustness of the supply chain by mitigating reliance on a sole forwarder for container logistics.

3.7 Conclusion

Marks & Spencer (M&S) encounters numerous complex supply chain challenges that impede its operations and market competitiveness. These obstacles include shipment delays, stakeholder and labor management issues, difficulties in acquiring raw materials, and inefficiencies in logistics. Nevertheless, thorough examination and insightful interviews have produced strategic solutions to these problems.

The ideas that were presented promote interdepartmental collaboration, technological advancement, effective communication with stakeholders, optimization of time, and investment in local manufacturing expertise. Emphasis is also placed on gaining entry to alternative port facilities, engaging in meticulous planning, adhering to crucial routes, and fulfilling deadlines and quality standards for purchase orders. The act of diversifying container handlers helps to mitigate container shortages and enhance the resilience of the supply chain.

Implementing such solutions may assist M&S in resolving its supply chain challenges by enhancing flexibility and agility, hence optimizing operations, reducing queue times, and enhancing customer satisfaction. M&S may also synchronize its supply chain with changing consumer preferences and global regulations by prioritizing sustainability and ethical sourcing. Implementing strategic initiatives and fostering effective cooperation can enhance the resilience and competitiveness of M&S, thereby securing sustained success in a dynamic sector.