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Designing an inflation management tool for sourcing

VINCENT DELKE
UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

LIZ GREVEN
UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

FABIO FONTES
UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

HOLGER SCHIELE
UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

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Introdução

Inflation poses growing challenges for strategic sourcing, affecting costs, supplier relationships, and operational efficiency. Existing sourcing models lack tools to manage inflation's complex dynamics, leaving firms vulnerable. This paper addresses the gap by developing a practical model tailored to inflation handling. Using literature review and expert interviews, it identifies key inflation drivers and sourcing levers. The goal is to support manufacturing firms in optimising sourcing strategies under inflationary pressures through a structured, actionable framework.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

The paper addresses a critical gap in procurement: traditional sourcing models lack tools to manage inflation effectively. While frameworks like Hesping and Schiele's guide strategic decisions, they do not offer levers tailored to inflation's complex, dynamic nature. Rising input costs and supply uncertainties expose this shortfall, leaving firms unprepared. The study identifies the need for a structured model that incorporates inflation-specific variables—like supply risk and cost pass-through ability—to guide procurement professionals in mitigating inflation-related risks.

Fundamentação Teórica

The paper builds its theoretical foundation on strategic sourcing, risk management, and inflation economics. It draws from Hesping and Schiele's multi-level sourcing framework, the Kraljic matrix, and sourcing lever theory, highlighting their lack of inflation-specific tools. It distinguishes between supply- and demand-side inflation and integrates literature on risk mitigation, supplier management, and cost pass-through. This interdisciplinary base supports the development of a model that addresses inflation as a hybrid financial and operational risk within procurement strategy.

Metodologia

The study follows the Design Science Research (DSR) methodology (Stange et al. 2022) to create and validate an inflation management model. It begins with a literature review and exploratory interviews to identify key inflation-handling levers. These insights inform the development of a conceptual model, refined through expert interviews and tested in a focus group workshop. The model combines supply risk and cost pass-through ability, enabling practical sourcing decisions. Validation ensures real-world applicability and relevance across industries.

Análise dos Resultados

The study developed an inflation management model combining supply risk and cost pass-through ability into a matrix, helping firms identify suitable sourcing levers. Nine inflation-handling methods were mapped, supported by a heat map tool distinguishing supply- and demand-side inflation. Expert validation confirmed the model's practical value, showing it helps tailor strategies to inflation scenarios. It offers actionable guidance for procurement, enhancing decision-making and resilience in inflationary environments.

Conclusão

The study concludes that current sourcing frameworks lack tools to manage inflation effectively. By integrating cost pass-through and supply risk into a practical model, the research offers a novel approach to inflation-responsive sourcing. The validated model supports procurement professionals in selecting tailored levers, enhancing strategic decisions. It bridges academic theory and industry needs. Future research should test the model quantitatively and explore digital integration to increase its applicability across different sectors and firm sizes.

Contribuição / Impacto

The paper contributes to sourcing theory by introducing inflation as a distinct, hybrid risk factor and integrating it into procurement strategy through a practical, validated model. It extends existing frameworks like the Kraljic matrix by adding cost pass-through as a key dimension. The inflation heat map tool enhances decision-making by aligning specific levers to inflation scenarios. This bridges academic insight and industry application, offering procurement professionals a structured method to respond to inflation. The model supports more resilient, adaptive sourcing strategies in volati

Referências Bibliográficas

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