



DAFFODIL INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Internship Report on

**“An Evaluation of Supply Chain Management Operations of
Shwapno,”**

Prepared For

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Letter of Transmittal

Professor Dr Shibli Sharhiar

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Subject: Submission of Internship Report on An Evaluation of Supply Chain Management Operations of Shwapno

Dear Sir,

I am delighted to share my internship report named “An Evaluation of Supply Chain Management Operations of Shwapno.” This report examines how one of the largest retail chains, Shwapno, manages and optimizes supply chains to provide efficiency and quality, as well as attain customer satisfaction.

I also learned how the retail sector intricately deals with the management of inventory, procurement, logistics, and value chains. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the effectiveness of Shwapno’s supply chain, highlight the challenges in the system, and suggest actionable strategies to address them.

I hope the level of diligence, analytical rigor, and interest in modern supply chain practices communicated through this work is in line with academic standards.

Sincerely yours,



S.M Zahidul Kabir

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Major: Supply Chain Management

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Letter of Approval

This is to verify that the MBA internship report “Shwapno’s Supply Chain Management Operations Evaluation” authored by S.M Zahidul Kabir, ID: 242-14-010, was submitted to the Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship, Daffodil International University. The report was considered for completion of the internship and for the degree requirements and approved for evaluation.

The report was completed under my supervision and I believe for the concerning effort; the report matches the required standards for completion of the internship.



Professor Dr Shibli Sharhiar

Director

Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship

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Declaration of the Student

I, S.M Zahidul Kabir, ID: 242-14-010, Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship, MBA Program (Major in Supply Chain Management) Daffodil International University, submitting the internship report “An Evaluation of Supply Chain Management Operations of Shwapno” in the fulfillment of my internship requirements. report is the product of my understanding, study, and analysis.

I have made sincere efforts to combine concepts learned in class with my observations during the internship, and the relevant organizational and secondary data. Also, I would like to state that it is not submitted anywhere else.



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I would also like to thank ACI Logistics Ltd. (Shwapno) for the invaluable information and materials, which helped me to better comprehend the retail supply chain management in Bangladesh.

I would also like to thank all the academic mentors, my peers, and the professionals whose input and collaboration made the successful completion of this internship report possible.

And last, I thank my family and friends for their universal motivation and support which assisted me throughout this academic journey.



Professor Dr Shibli Sharhiar

Director

Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship

Daffodil International University

Executive Summary

This report, titled “An Evaluation of Supply Chain Management Operations of Shwapno” analyze how effective and efficient Shwapno’s supply chains are, focusing on how the company manages its inventory, procurement, logistics and cold chain systems. It also analyzes how Shwapno, a top retail company in Bangladesh, balances the operations of its stores and online channel, and the distribution, forecasting and infrastructure challenges of demand and supply chain systems. The analysis is based on secondary data, and Porter’s Value Chain and Supply Chain Integration models, and identified gaps in technology use, collaboration with suppliers, and integrations of sustainable development goals in supply chain management. The report outlines performance and costs effective strategies to increase operational and structural flexibility and resilience of the supply chains. It shows the author’s deep insights on supply chain management within the competitive and dynamic retail sector.

Key Words: Supply chain, Shawpno, inventory management, procurement management, value chain management

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Organizational Profile and Origins

Shwapno (or Swapno) has captured the title of the largest retail supermarket chain in Bangladesh, and was set up and is still operated by ACI Logistics Limited (the retail arm of Advanced Chemical Industries (ACI) PLC). Advanced Chemical Industries (ACI) PLC is one of the most diversified business conglomerates in the country. The brand was launched in 2008, signaling the time onset of a modern retail revolution in Bangladesh (ACI PLC, 2024). ACI was set up to provide modern and dependable shopping facilities to Bangladeshi consumers, which was the most missing factor in the wet markets and unorganized retail shopping facilities.

Shwapno as a brand also symbolizes the transformation in the shopping experience of everyday Bangladeshi households, with Shwapno meaning Dream in Bengali. The first Shwapno outlet was opened with the Dhaka brand Fresh & Nearby, and was quickly rebranded and opened more shops in Shwapno. 2015 was a grand year, for not only had it become a household name, it was also known for selling affordable any time of the day, and getting the fresh vegetables (The Business Standard, 2023).

As of now, Shwapno has over 300 outlets in the country, which includes 300 company owned and franchised outlets, and operates in all the major urban areas: Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Barishal (ACI PLC, 2024). Shwapno caters to the needs of millions of customers every month through its brick-and-mortar stores and online home delivery service which is gaining popularity. The company is a one stop solution for urban and semi urban consumers, covering all essentials which includes fresh produce, groceries, frozen foods, bakery items, household goods, personal care items, and cloths.

1.2 Chronological Progress and Expansion

The initial years of Shwapno's journey are characterized by continuous growth and innovative initiatives. Between 2008 and 2013, the focus of the business strategy shifted to the integration and the disciplined functioning of modern supply chain techniques in expanded retail network. This also included integration of local suppliers, systematizing procurement, and assuring quality of products. As of 2014, Shwapno started its franchise-based business model expansion wherein Shwapno franchisees are permitted to open outlets under Shwapno's brand, controlled product sourcing, and logistics system (The Financial Express, 2024). This model permitted Shwapno to

extend its scope from the urban centers of Bangladesh into the peri-urban and rural districts, extending service delivery to the quality-controlled fringes of the district outer. The adoption of modern business techniques through technology integration into the growing business operating system also applied to the integration of other business techniques.

According to Hasan et al. (2023), 2018 marked the beginning of the next tier of tech advancements for Shwapno. An Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and Point of Sales (POS) systems were implemented at all retail shops. Shwapno aimed to operationalize business efficiency, improve accuracy of records, manage stock better and overall operational efficiency. The systems enhanced supply chain efficiency by managing dynamically through sales, inventory disbursement, and supplier evaluations over set periods.

The operationalization of the business efficiency systems meant the chains and branches were able to remain operational throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The branches strategically repositioned their supply chains to capture and meet the emerging e-grocery needs. Shwapno enhanced their business reputation through robust logistics systems, thin-slicing their supply chains to meet the country's e-grocery demand.

1.3 Mission, Vision, and Strategic Objectives

According to the ACI Logistics (2024), Shwapno's corporate vision is "to be the most loved one-stop retail brand in Bangladesh", and its mission is to "deliver the best value to the customer through trusted quality higher service and innovation."

Shwapno focuses on these strategic objectives to achieve its goals.

Focusing on the needs of customers: Making everything easy for the customers.

Partnership: By partnering directly with local farmers, we offer sustainable and ethically-sourced produce with full traceability.

Technology: They utilize things like data analytics and cloud ERP for all procurement, warehousing and delivery operation that make them efficient.

Expanding digital platforms: For tech-savvy customers and providing the medium of online ordering and home delivery services.

Shwapno's operations and supply chain strategy strikes a balance between cost-efficiency and service quality.

1.4 Current Activities and Business Operations

Currently, the activities of Shwapno are split into numerous mutually supporting divisions: procurement, warehousing, logistics, retail activities, and e-commerce.

Procurement: Shwapno requests fresh agricultural products through the farmers directly in Meherpur, Manikganj, and Rajbari (The Business Standard, 2024). The direct procurement model has the advantage of minimizing the impact of intermediaries, which guarantees fair prices to farmers and low costs to consumers.

Warehousing and Distribution: The company has centralized distribution center with cold storage facilities to keep perishable goods. Goods are shipped to the outlets on a daily basis according to forecasted performance and need of the stores.

Inventory Control: Shwapno uses its ERP and POS systems to monitor inventory quantities, the fast- and slow-moving products and restock shelves with them. This reduces the wastage and overstocking.

Retail Operations: The stores of Shwapno are designed using standardized layouts and product display mechanisms to provide a customer with a consistent experience.

E-commerce Delivery: Shwapno online shopping platform allows shoppers to browse online and the goods are delivered at homes. This service turned out to be especially important in the pandemic and is currently growing.

The centralized decision-making and localized implementation model by Shwapno have made it achieve uniform quality and service throughout its network of stores. Its supply chain policy not only contributes to the commercial success of the company but also to its dedication to social welfare- by empowering local producers and making safe food affordable to the consumers.

1.5 Relevance of Supply Chain Management to the Internship Study

Shwapno operates on the principle of developing a business on a supply chain. Managing supply chains efficiently is a core requirement of retail networks. They must deal with perishable goods,

a multitude of suppliers, fresh consumer demands, as well as competition. In order for the internship titled An Evaluation of Supply chain management operations of Shwapno to be truly useful, this report focuses on understanding and analyzing the procurement, inventory management and value chain systems in the company as they relate to me. These systems determine the pillars on which product availability, pricing, and consumer satisfaction rests.

Understanding this dimension gives an understanding of the retail systems within Shwapno, the first and perhaps still foremost player in the retail sector of Bangladesh and of complex supply systems in the country. Even more valuable is the opportunity to marry theory and practice in the intern's SCM education, in such concepts as logistics and optimization, vendor relations, and predicting demand, which works in one of the most complex and dynamic retail environments in the country.

Chapter 2: Background of the Study

2.1 Nature and Rationale

Supply chain management (SCM) continues to be a pillar of contemporary business management functions concerning organizational efficiency, operational cost minimization, and customer satisfaction. In developing countries like Bangladesh, formal retailing and retail supply chain management operations patterns have positively influenced developing global markets (Reardon et al., 2003). Therefore, this paper analyzes the SCM functions of ACI Logistics Limited's largest retailing chain Shwapno. This paper concentrates on the supply chain of Shwapno, particularly the inventory management systems, the performance assessment, procurement systems and value chain operations, and how these contribute to sustainability and customer satisfaction. A retailer's store execution and the supplier's supply chain to the store are critical to operational success. This is especially true for Shwapno for both profitability and evaluation of supply chain efficiency to the Shwapno store network in regard to the perishable and nonperishable items. Control over storage, direct delivery and producer-supplied items contribute positively to product freshness and profitability.

Rahman and Hoque (2022) noted that more cohesive supply chains would help Bangladeshi retailers deal with fundamental problems such as ineffective transportation, unregulated supplier behavior, and inconsistent market demand. Consequently, Shwapno's retail supply chain can be examined to understand how modern logistical innovations transform the retail landscape in Bangladesh.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Supply Chain in Emerging Economies

As noted by Chopra and Meindl (2019), supply chain management (SCM) involves the integration of strategic business functions of procurement, production, logistics, and customer service. Within developing economies, supply chain challenges noted by Iftekhar et al. (2020) include underdeveloped infrastructure, a lack of digitization, and poorly coordinated suppliers. However, the efficiency and quality supermarket innovations (as documented by Reardon et al. 2003) in developing countries supply chains demanded are improvements over previously poorly coordinated and inefficient systems. Shwapno, a retailer in Bangladesh, is a sign of the developing country transitional modern retail logistics. The Business Standard (2023) documented that

Shwapno is moving towards modern logistics by adopting centralized procurement systems, farmer direct sourcing, and ERP based farm tracking systems.

2.2.2 Inventory Management in Retail

As noted by Stevenson (2021), the balance of operational retail systems is maintained by the management of inventories. For Shwapno, the digitization of supply chains and the tracking of movement of stocked items, especially fresh produce under cold chain logistics, is an operational management use of technology. Digital tools in stock management help in real time assessment of overstocking and stockout situations, as noted by Hasan et al. (2023). Nevertheless, operational challenges of rural supply chain lag, wastage of perishable items, and gaps in digitization remain.

2.2.3 Procurement and Supplier Integration

Building and maintaining effective procurement management along with supplier relationships guarantees quality products. According to Mentzer et al. (2001) describes SCM as a constellation of firms accomplishing a specific purpose as a network of businesses compositionally interconnected to provide products and services. According to Alam and Uddin (2022) Shwapno has his farmer integration programs designed. Shwapno's Localized Procurement Plan aims to provide a sustainable supply chain with product traceability and product freshness to be sustainable with its rural community's lives.

2.2.4 Value-Chain Management

As stated, Porter (1985) Competitive advantage of businesses is to be gained through management of all the Value chains. In the case of retailers, inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and customer serving is all to be optimized. Shwapno aims to build a classical integrated value chain as a case. Having centralized the warehousing, coupled with distribution of e commerce and modern tools of digital tracking (internal to the company) systems of his integrated value chain. Presence of over 300 outlets, service reliability to manage and cost-efficient service are interdependent and still a problem that is faced. (ACI PLC, 2024)

2.3 Research Gap and Contribution

Even though there is some research on Bangladeshi retail supply chain management, for example, Saleheen et al. (2018), and Rahman & Hoque (2022), little work has been done on Shwapno's operational efficiency and internal logistics configuration. The few documented accounts tend to

review the retail sector's expansion without examining the alignment between the organization's internal strategies and tangible supply chain management results. Moreover, Shwapno's procurement processes, inventory management, and value chains are yet to be evaluated in the literature, especially in a quantitative, data-driven context.

In contributing to this understudied area, the present research utilizes secondary data sources including company reports, authoritative newspaper articles, and scholarly work to perform a descriptive analysis of Shwapno's supply chain management system. The results are likely to be beneficial to retail logistics practitioners in Bangladesh, as well as to academics interested in the operational efficiency of retail logistics.

Chapter 3: Scope of the Study

This study will focus on ACI PLC's Shwapno's operations. The title of the study, Shwapno Supply Chain Management Operations, indicates that there will be a singular focus on the supply chain management functions within the organization. The operational functions of the supply chain that will be evaluated in this study include inventory management, procurement management, and value chain management vis-a-vis their influence on the operational performance of Shwapno and customer satisfaction.

This study will also focus on the organization's retail network and centralized logistics system. The other ACI PLC divisions will not be included, that is, pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals, and consumer brands. The focus of this study will be on the end-to-end supply chain, that is, Shwapno's management of sourcing local suppliers, warehousing, distribution, and retail operations.

The functional scope will focus on three overlapping areas:

- **Inventory Management:** Assessing cold-chain management systems (Hasan et al., 2023) and other systems used to forecast, store, and replenish inventory.
- **Procurement Management:** The design and implementation of sustainable procurement frameworks and the management of buyer-supplier relationships (Alam & Uddin, 2022).
- **Value-Chain Management:** The analysis of the integration of logistics, digital interfaces, and customer support as components of competitive advantage (Porter, 1985).

The study is temporally grounded within the years 2020–2025, encapsulating the recent operational developments captured in the ACI PLC annual reports and other pertinent media publications (ACI PLC, 2024; The Business Standard, 2023).

Chapter 4: Problem Statement and Objectives

4.1 Problem Statement

In Bangladesh's evolving retail landscape, sophisticated supply chain management (SCM) determines strategic positioning, customer satisfaction, and profitability. Over 300 outlets Shwapno retail chain and operational challenges such as value chain disruptions, inaccurate inventory and ineffective purchased Shwapno retail chain (The Financial Express, 2024). Operational challenges also include the need to be innovative regarding perishability, dependence on suppliers, infrastructural gaps and the dominance of fresh grocery (i.e., Rahman & Hoque, 2022).

Shwapno provides and valuable operational benchmark as one of the largest retail chain stores in Bangladesh. While Shwapno positioning and operational challenges are numerous, operational responsiveness and efficiency within the logistics service gaps provide reliable customer value and service usability or cost.

4.2 Broad Objective

To evaluate the supply chain management operations of Shwapno.

Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the inventory management of Shwapno.
2. To analyze the procurement management of Shwapno.
3. To analyze the value-chain management of Shwapno.

Chapter 5: Methodology / Design of the Study

5.1 Research Design

This study is descriptive in character, in that, the study seeks to assess and analyze the current supply chain management (SCM) activities of Shwapno using facts and documented details. The descriptive method applies appropriately in explaining the structure, roles, and issues of the supply chain of Shwapno without controlling any variable (Kothari, 2004). This research aims at determining the role of inventory, procurement and value-chain management in operational efficiency of the largest retail network in Bangladesh.

5.2 Types and Sources of Data

The research uses secondary data, as all information used was publicly disclosed. This ensured the research was unbiased. Used information included the following:

Corporate Reports: Background information, logistics infrastructure, and operational frameworks were obtained from the annual and sustainability reports of ACI PLC and Shwapno, as well as from ACI PLC's website (ACI PLC, 2024).

Academic and Peer-Reviewed Journals: SCM frameworks and challenges within emerging markets were identified from scholarly articles accessed via ScienceDirect, Emerald Insights, and ResearchGate (Rahman & Hoque, 2022; Hasan et al., 2023).

Media Publications: Shwapno's retail expansion and the development of its logistics service were discussed in business newspapers, such as The Financial Express, The Business Standard, The Daily Star, and TBS News.

Industry Reports: For contextualization, documents pertaining to the retail and logistics industry in Bangladesh were also utilized.

The research is based purely on secondary information, obtained through real and publicly available sources of information to guarantee integrity and impartiality. The data sources include:

5.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Documents were analyzed and inconsistencies were cross-verified to ensure the validity of the data. The data was thematically organized into qualitative analyses within three areas inventory,

procurement, and value-chain management. Gaps and opportunities for improvement were determined in reference to the SCM frameworks of Mentzer et al. (2001) and Porter (1985) while benchmarking Shwapno's practices.

5.4 Reliability and Ethical Considerations

Constructing a cohesive set of data for analysis involved triangulation from the corporate, academic, and media spheres. The data utilized in the study were public information, thus there were no ethical concerns relating to confidentiality or informed consent.

Chapter 6: Limitations of the Study

However, in spite of the cautious planning and implementation of this internship report, there are various constraints that have affected the general breadth and depth of the analysis. First, the time limits did not allow collecting as much data and conducting a detailed field observation to obtain direct experience in all functional domains of supply chain management of Shwapno. Secondly, some internal operational data like procurement contracts, supplier performance records and detailed logistics information were not allowed because of confidentiality concerns. These limitations did not allow the study to provide a broad quantitative analysis. Moreover, the study was based solely on secondary data sources, such as company reports, scholarly articles, and media publications, which can be subjective in their interpretation or reporting bias. Reliability was ensured by means of data triangulation and validation with several credible sources.

In the end, the limited experience with large-scale retail logistics and supply chain management was something that detracted from the technical interpretation. Despite these weaknesses, this study can be a good reference in understanding and analyzing the supply chain operations of Shwapno in a realistic and contextual way.

Chapter 7: Findings and Dissuasion

7.1 Inventory Management of Shwapno

Inventory management is essential in modern retailing. It must balance the customer's need for product availability against the costs of holding stock and the risk of spoilage. Perishable categories are the most affected (Stevenson, 2021; Chopra & Meindl, 2019). For Shwapno Bangladesh's largest organized supermarket chain operating more than 300 outlets inventory practices determine customer satisfaction, waste levels, and working-capital requirements (ACI PLC, 2024). This section evaluates Shwapno's inventory management by combining available secondary data (company reports and reputable press coverage) with descriptive analysis of how inventory is organized, controlled, and optimized across the company's network. The section is structured into (a) data-based parameters, (b) documented systems and processes, (c) strengths and challenges, (d) implications for financial and operational performance, and (e) recommendations.

7.1.1 Data-based parameters and evidence

Where possible, the analysis uses quantifiable public facts to ground the evaluation. Table 1 summarizes the most relevant inventory-related parameters that are publicly available from ACI PLC disclosures and reputable media/academic sources.

Table 7.1: Key Inventory Parameters for Shwapno

Parameter	Value (public)	Source
Number of outlets (approx.)	300+ outlets	ACI PLC, Annual Report 2023–24.
Total SKUs managed (approx.)	30,000+ SKUs (includes perishables & non-perishables)	ResearchGate: Distribution Management for Shwapno.
FY24 Revenue (Retail segment)	Tk 2,285 crore	The Business Standard (FY24 report).
Accumulated loss (15 years)	Tk 1,661 crore (to Feb 2024)	The Daily Star (Feb 2024).
Recent H1 pre-tax loss	Tk 291.42 crore (H1 reported)	TBS News (H1 report).
Q1 pre-tax loss (Jul–Sep)	Tk 155 crore	TBS News (Q1 report).

Cold-chain / refrigerated DCs	Centralized DCs with cold storage (company disclosure & media)	ACI PLC / The Business Standard.
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Several operational KPIs that would normally allow a full quantitative assessment (SKU-level turnover, days-of-inventory by category, spoilage percentage, daily throughput) are not disclosed in public reports; where data are unavailable this is stated and the analysis relies on process descriptions and available financial indicators (ACI PLC, 2024; UIU Repository, n.d.).

Sources: ACI PLC (2024); ResearchGate (Distribution Management for Shwapno); The Business Standard (2024); The Daily Star (2024); TBS News (2024).

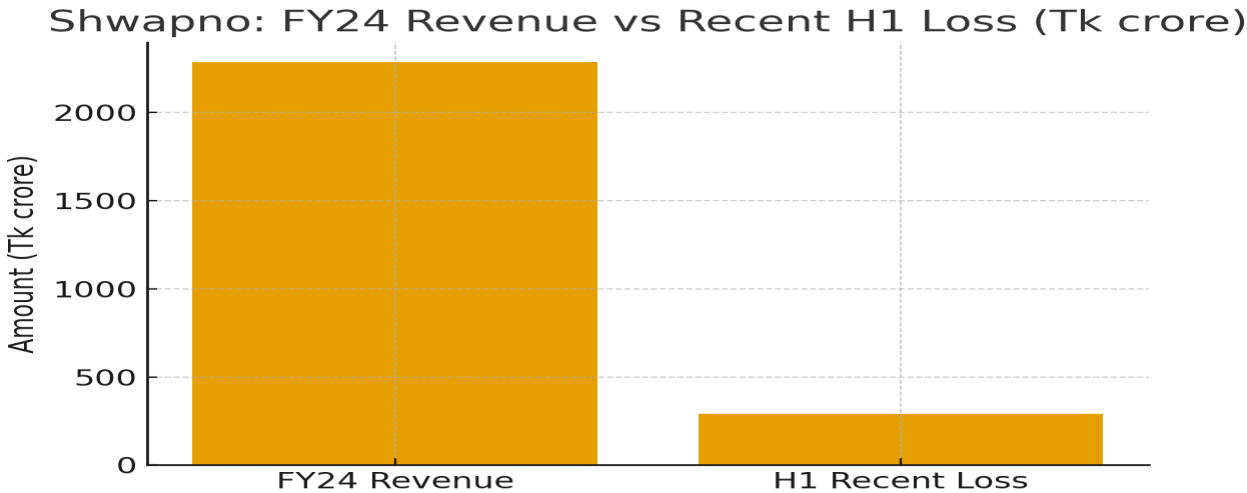


Figure 7.1: FY24 revenue vs Recent H1 loss

This figure compares Shwapno’s FY24 revenue (Tk 2,285 crore) with a recent H1 pre-tax loss (Tk 291.42 crore) reported in media coverage.

This juxtaposition is intended to show scale (revenue) and an operating/finance pressure signal (loss) that is relevant to thinking about inventory carrying costs and working capital.

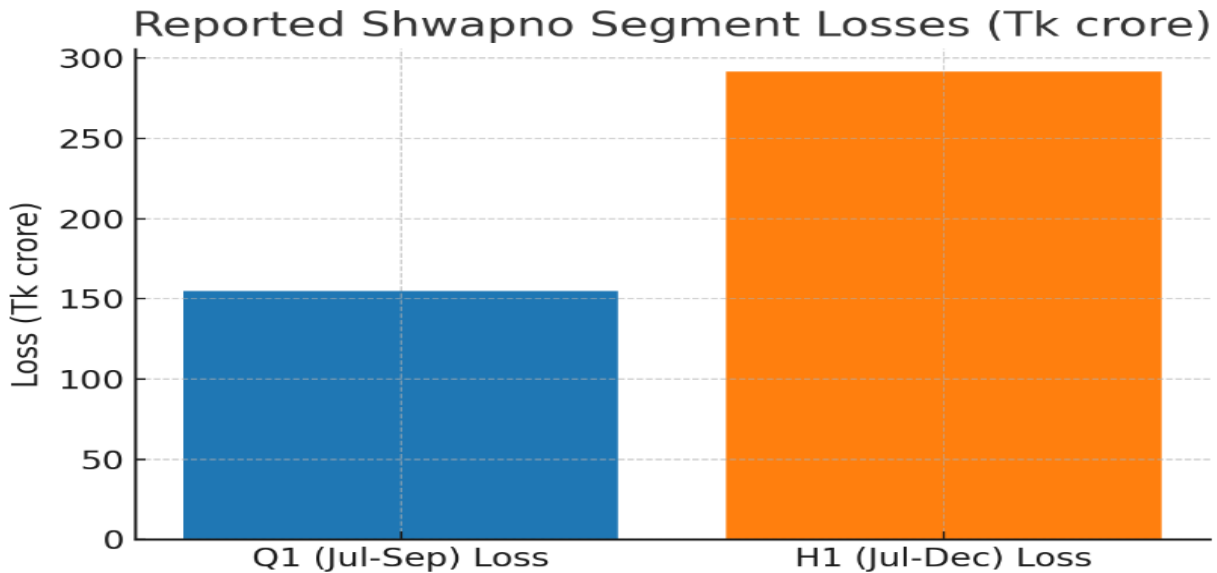


Figure 7.2: Reported Segment Losses

Figure 2 shows reported segment losses over Q1 (Tk 155 crore) and H1 (Tk 291.42 crore) to demonstrate trending in reported losses that contextualize operating stresses the retail chain faces.

7.1.2 Documented inventory systems and operational processes

Centralized procurement and distribution model

With respect to procurement and distribution, Shwapno largely practices a centralized model. The company aggregates demand at the store level and consolidates orders to negotiate with the suppliers; this includes direct procurement from farmers in Meherpur, Manikganj, and Rajbari (The Business Standard, 2024). Such centralization enables the company to control consistency and quality, take advantage of bulk purchase discounts, and control the standardized handling of products at the distribution centers (DCs) before dispatch to outlets (ACI PLC, 2024).

Warehouse and cold-chain infrastructure

Public information indicates Shwapno has central distribution centers with cold storage facilities to protect perishables (ACI PLC, 2024). For Shwapno, centralized cold storage along with temperature-controlled transport to stores forms the backbone of managing perishables, especially in the distribution of fresh produce, dairy, meat, and frozen goods (The Business Standard, 2024).

IT backbone: ERP, POS, MIS and barcode systems

To drive replenishment from the central warehouses, the enterprise IT system combines sales and stock data collected at the outlets under the ERP, POS, and store MIS frameworks (Hasan, Rahman, & Karim, 2023; ResearchGate case reports). This system record barcode scanning and expiry tracking and integrates with replenishment/repurchase to permit store personnel to identify near-expiry products and central planners to track SKU performance at the item level (ResearchGate; UIU Repository).

Replenishment cadence and ordering logic

Industry- and project-level analyses suggest that Shwapno achieves a short-holding days model for perishables. This is due to the fact that sales data for each store is captured on a daily basis and the DC orders for replenishing stock are compiled in a way to minimize holding days for perishables in order to mitigate potential spoilage (ResearchGate case). This type of frequent replenishment is expected in supermarket chains dealing with perishable goods. By prioritizing the minimization of holding days for perishables, Shwapno's model aligns with industry best practices (Chopra & Meindl, 2019).

7.1.3 Strengths inferred from public evidence

- **Scale of operations:** Shwapno has 300+ outlets which allows the organization to attain network scale and allows Shwapno to bulk procure and negotiate with vendors and centralized- quality control (ACI PLC, 2024). Scale provides a strategic advantage in retail inventory control as it improves the aggregation of demand and the overall logistics cost per unit (Porter, 1985).
- **Technology adoption:** Shwapno's ERP/POS and MIS backbone offers and supports data-driven analysis for replenishment, expiry control, and performance tracking to aid in decision, which scholars and practitioners acknowledge as parameters for effective contemporary inventory control systems (Hasan et al., 2022).
- **Direct sourcing initiatives:** Presuming the proper attention is given to logistics and quality checks, direct farmer procurement can enhance cost-saving and improve procurement

freshness and traceability which can be a competitive advantage as it reduces intermediaries, and can be effective when quality checks are instituted (Alam & Uddin, 2022; The Business Standard, 2024).

- **Cold-chain commitment:** In order to minimize spoilage concerning perishable lines, public statements and corporate disclosures acknowledge the significance of the investment in cold storage facilities at Distribution Centers (DCs).

7.1.4 Key challenges and operational constraints

- **Deficient public KPI disclosures.** No public documents detail SKU-level turnover, days-of-inventory, spoilage/wastage %, or daily throughput data. Consequently, external assessment and benchmarking are hindered (ACI PLC, 2024).
- **Operational and financial pressure:** The reported cumulative loss of around 1,661 crores as of February 2024 and pre-tax operational losses in the retail sector for the recent Q1 and H1 periods indicate retail sector financial distress. While financing and expansion-related costs are key drivers, inefficient holding, shrinkage, and wastage of inventory are also significant contributors to the losses (The Daily Star, 2024; TBS News, 2024).
- **Last-mile and cold-chain reliability risks:** Maintaining cold chain integrity in Bangladesh's warm climate and varied infrastructure is challenging. For perishables, even slight deviations in temperature can exponentially increase spoilage risk (Iftekhar et al., 2020). The more nodes in the network the inventory passes through, the greater the cumulative risk.
- **Forecasting complexity and demand volatility:** Demand for perishables is highly seasonal and sensitive to festivals, weather, and macroeconomic factors creating risk. Accurate, automated demand forecasting in such circumstances, even with POS data, requires advanced analytics and machine learning models. Shwapno has not made such capabilities public (Hasan et al., 2023; research reports).
- **Franchise heterogeneity:** With a franchise-heavy expansion model, the inconsistency arising at the store level (shelf management, adherence to FIFO, timely data entry) can

compromise the performance of consolidated replenishment algorithms (The Business Standard, 2023).

7.1.5 Analysis: linking inventory practices to performance

Inventory posture and working-capital implications

Nonetheless, the strategy at Shwapno involves shorter holding days for perishables, as well as frequent replenishment cycles. Conceptually, this preserves perishables and reduces holding and spoilage costs, though it increases reliance on logistics and supplier responsiveness. In practice, however, such an operational cadence is likely to inflate transaction costs (by frequent pickups and legs of transportation) and impose stricter operational discipline. The reported financial losses and top line revenue (Tk 2,285 crore in FY24) suggest that operating margins and leverage are financially constrained. Carrying costs of inventory and waste likely drag cash flow and profitability (ACI PLC, 2024; The Daily Star, 2024).

Understanding the Influence of Digital Systems on Control of Uncertainty

Visibility gained from ERP systems and POS systems helps control flexibility; however, this is only true to the extent that data and controls in the process are of high quality. For reductions in chain-wide shrinkage and stockouts, systems should combine transactional data with environmental data and condition monitoring in real time using IoT temperature monitoring systems, automated expiry-aware replenishment, and supplier scorecards. These steps are recommended in supply chain management and may be found in the literature though in public disclosures of Shwapno they are less documented (Chopra & Meindl, 2019; Iftekhhar et al., 2020).

Balancing Availability and Waste

A classic scenario in the retail industry is the trade-off of perishables. Bulk safety stock increases the likelihood of spoilage, but it also protects against stockouts. Shwapno's short-hold strategy mitigates the waste risk but increases the stockout risk if supply is disrupted. Moreover, the company's direct procurement initiative does reduce lead times; however, it increases variability and the need for supply chain development to stabilize flows due to smallholder supplier capacity constraints (Alam & Uddin, 2022).

Shwapno's inventory management demonstrates a modern retail posture: centralized procurement, cold-chain investment, and an ERP/POS backbone appropriate for large-scale perishables retailing. Public evidence shows significant scale (300+ outlets, 30,000+ SKUs) and strong revenue performance, but also notable operating losses that require deeper operational diagnosis. The company's existing systems are necessary but not sufficient; closing the gap will require granular KPIs, sensor integration, supplier development, and advanced forecasting. Given the public data constraints, these recommendations are grounded in industry best practice and the available secondary evidence.

7.2 Procurement Management of Shwapno

7.2.1 Introduction

A retail chain's procurement is an essential upstream supply chain management function due to the diversity and perishability of products. Procurement of inventory means stocking the inventory requirement at the right cost, time, and quantity. It acts as a connecting bridge between supplier networks and operations at stores (Chopra & Meindl, 2019). Shwapno must manage the trade-off between cost, freshness, and reliability of the supplier along with scalability across hundreds of outlets. In this section Shwapno procurement performance and strategy as well as performance using published data and reports has been examined, with the aid of descriptive insight. As a result, strength and weakness with findings and recommendations have been provided.

7.2.2 Data-driven procurement parameters

The procurement side is less fully transparent than inventory, but several recent reports offer insight into how Shwapno sources produce and scales operations.

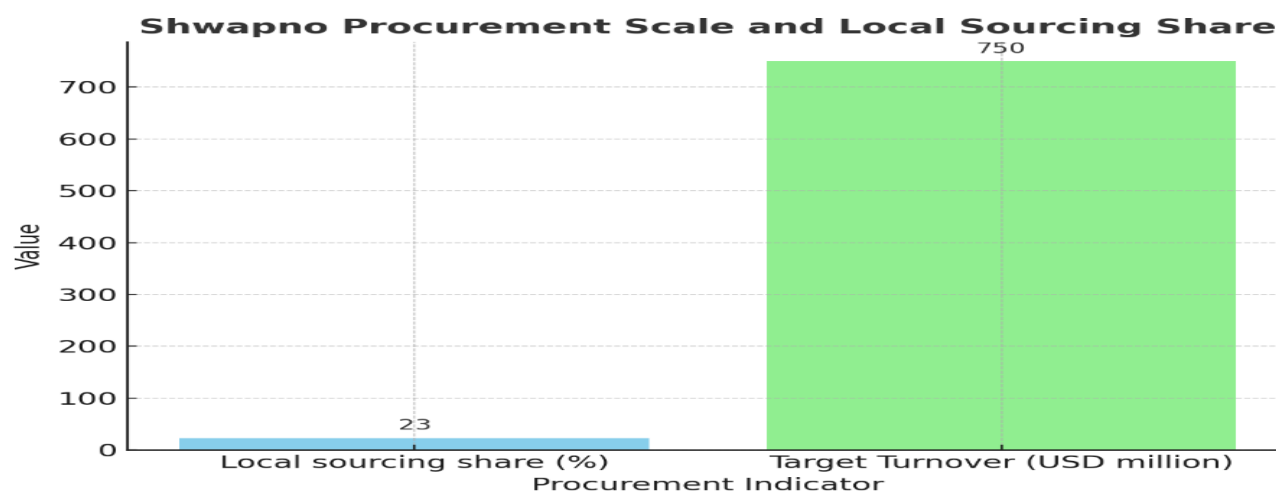
Table 7.2: Procurement Related Public Indicators

Indicator	Value / Description	Source
Share of locally-sourced farm outputs in merchandise	~ 23% of total items	New Age / ACI (as of 2021) (§ Shwapno increases share of locally-sourced farm outputs to 23%) (New Age, 2021)

Number of outlets (procurement scale requirement)	450+ outlets across 62 districts	ACI PLC website: “more than 450 outlets” (ACI PLC, n.d.)
Direct sourcing geographic spread	Procuring produce directly from Manikganj, Bogura, Meherpur, Rajbari districts	TBS News coverage (Fresh produce direct sourcing) (TBS, 2024)
Turnover target / procurement scale	Target turnover USD 750 million	The Financial Express interview (Shwapno targets \$750m) (Financial Express, 2025)

Although they’re not detailed procurement KPIs, such as supplier numbers or lead times, they illustrate payments and receipts, plus procurement’s scale and direction. The data above indicates that Shwapno has made a public commitment to source a considerable chunk of its goods from local farmers (23%) and this shifts the complexity of procurement to dealing with many small producers (New Age, 2021). The fact that there are over 450 outlets indicates an extensive sourcing network with corresponding logistical costs. According to the media, Shwapno’s direct procurement initiatives are already in progress, for instance, it has recently started buying cauliflower directly from farmers in Meherpur and Rajbari districts for supplying various outlets. This practice cuts out the middleman and can improve margins if done right. (TBS. News, 2025).

Also, in one interview, Shwapno’s MD mentioned that technological upgrades in inventory and supply chain integration have improved procurement efficiency, lowering operating cost percentages to 17.8%. (Financial Express, 2025)



Source: ACI PLC (n.d.); New Age (2021); The Financial Express (2025); TBS News (2024)

Figure 7.3: Shwapno procurement and local sourcing share

Source: ACI PLC (n.d.); New Age (2021); The Financial Express (2025); TBS News (2024).

It visually compares Shwapno’s local sourcing share (23%) with its annual procurement turnover target (USD 750 million), based on data from ACI PLC Annual Reports, The Financial Express (2025), TBS News (2024), and New Age (2021).

7.2.3 Procurement strategies and operational practices

Although many retail outlets operate as franchises, Shwapno utilizes a centralized approach to procurement. In this model, franchisees perform retail operational functions, including the staffing of the store, the lease of the store, and local marketing. Meanwhile, Shwapno Central remains responsible for control of contract negotiation, supplier qualification, logistic oversight, and quality control. Such arrangements help Shwapno Central procurement divisions achieve consistency and standardization as well as economies of scale. (Brand Practitioners, 2024)

Fresh produce procurement from farmers and not from middlemen is a strategic procurement change that Shwapno has undertaken. This enables Shwapno to capture more profit margin, obtain produce that is fresher and more easily traceable, and improve its competitive position. For instance, Shwapno directly procured cauliflower from farmers of Meherpur and Rajbari for outlets across and beyond Dhaka. (TBS News, 2025) Also, Shwapno has been reported to procure other vegetables like eggplants, papayas, and gourds from farmers in Manikganj and Bogura (TBS, 2024).

This aligns with the model of the “supermarket revolution” in which organized retailers’ source directly from producers (Reardon et al., 2003). Direct sourcing, however, comes with its unique set of challenges, such as agricultural production variability, fragmented supplier structures, quality control, and logistic risks.

The public records for Shwapno do not mention how many suppliers there are or how long contracts last, however, some ACI supply chain related documents imply that there is an institutional process that ACI has in place- selection, evaluation, performance review, contracting, and renewal management. (Md Zaki, BBA thesis, 2016).

The Shwapno supply chain likely has a mix of long term flexible and short-term volatile suppliers which is a common retail practice. Long term and flexible suppliers allow to manage contracts however, contracts for fresh long-term produce may have included delivery and quality clauses to manage risk of volatile supplier contracts.

To manage reputation risk, Shwapno along with public commitment to HACCP systems for food safety, has stated commitment (New Age 2021) to GLOBALG.A. P membership (Good Agricultural Practices) for produce sourcing (New Age, 2021) public statements would include sourcing statements of food products in reference to Shwapno produce.

In addition to stated commitments to GLOBALG.A. P and HACCP systems (New Age, 2021) Shwapno would have had to operate with internal MAL-based systems that would include monitoring channels (aggregation points, gates of transport, and distribution centers). Controlled and traceable quality sampling systems that enabled substandard shipments to be rejected are part of Forward Traceability and Auditing systems.

As stated with MAL-based internal systems, Shwapno would have operated with internal ERP and MIS systems for integrated real-time monitoring of procurement and architectural systems of control that predict supplier performance, sales, and demand dynamic. Shwapno estimated operating expenses decrease to 17.8% (Financial Express, 2025) which is explained as a value of such systems. The systems also control volatility of demand from the stores.

7.2.6 Strategic recommendations for procurement enhancement

Procurement segmentation and hybrid sourcing

Use dual sourcing: central stable contracts for core non-perishables, agile local procurement for perishables to buffer risk.

Supplier capacity-building and aggregation

Organize farmers into cooperatives or aggregation hubs to improve consistency, enable bulk contracts, and reduce fragmentation.

Performance-based contracting

Introduce measurable supplier KPIs (on-time delivery, quality, consistency) and provide incentives/penalties accordingly.

Integrated procurement forecasting

Develop procurement models using demand forecasts, seasonal trends, and supplier constraints to optimize purchase quantities.

Decentralized emergency buffer sourcing

Allow limited local sourcing in emergencies to reduce store stockouts when central procurement or logistics fail.

Transparency and traceability systems

Expand procurement traceability (e.g., through blockchain or aggregation logs) to increase trust in quality and reduce risk.

Procurement analytics dashboard

Build dashboards to monitor cost trends, supplier performance, lead-time variability, order fulfillment rates, and gross margin per SKU.

7.3 Value-Chain Management of Shwapno

7.3.1 Introduction

Value-chain management involves all of the activities needed to bring a product to market. According to Porter (1985), these activities include procurement and inbound logistics, operations, distribution, marketing, and sales and service. In the case of Shwapno supermarket, cost containment and value creation (freshness, reliability, availability) and absence of inefficiencies in supermarket chain value configuration (warehousing, transportation, store operations, and e-commerce fulfillment) integration are essential. In this section, the configuration of Shwapno's value chain will be discussed focusing on distribution networks, omnichannel logistics, and structural weaknesses and strengths based on secondary verifiable data.

7.3.2 Network scale and distribution footprint

According to Shwapno's website, the supermarket chain has over 450 outlets and operates in 62 districts. A Shwapno's retail space is 1,208,868 square feet and company employs more than 7,000 people (n.d). Such a large expanse network poses a greater challenge to the company in terms of coordinating transportation, inventory, and distribution (ACI PLC, n.d.).

Regarding the supply chain management of perishables in the Shwapno Distribution Centers (Sujoya, 2023) states there are 6 DC's facilities across the country that support the company's logistics operations. This multi-DC configuration can be interpreted to mean the company employs a hub and spoke system which is a recognized technique to minimize service lead times and enhance service reach.

A case study on Shwapno's distribution recognizes that, during a prior timeframe, the chain ran 56 stores across a cumulative floor area of nearly 310,000 square feet, managing more than 30,000 SKUs, including perishables. Several establishments keep modest "safety stock" inventories to mitigate supply variability (Takvir, 2018).

These facts allow construction of a curated summary:

Table 7.3: Value chain networks for Shawpno

Parameter	Publicly Reported Value	Source
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Number of outlets	450+ outlets across 62 districts	ACI PLC, n.d.
Total retail area	~1,208,868 sq ft	ACI PLC, n.d.
Workforce size	Over 7,000	ACI PLC, n.d.
Number of distribution centers	6 DCs	Sujoya (2023)
Number of SKUs managed	30,000+ SKUs	Takvir (2018)
Safety stock policy	Stores maintain small buffer inventory	Takvir (2018)

These metrics underscore the scale and complexity of Shwapno’s value chain, as it must coordinate inventory flows across many outlets, maintain storage capacity, and transport goods cost-effectively.

7.3.3 Distribution, logistics, and channel integration

Multi-echelons and Hub-and-Spoke Logistics Design

With multiple DCs, Shwapno seems to implement a Hub-and-Spoke model, where primary or regional DCs allocate to stores and possibly sub-hubs or spokes. This is in line with best practice for large retail chains attempting to minimize transport distance and delivery time (Chopra & Meindl, 2019). In the case of Takvir, the company uses both its own fleet and 3PL depending on the cost and coverage of the route (Takvir, 2018).

Local safety stocks at outlets as buffers to replenish disruptions is also a best practice (Takvir, 2018). Having a safety stock at the outlet will help mitigate the effects of demand surges, dispatch delays, and supply disruptions.

Use of Omnichannel in Grocery

As with many retail outlets, Shwapno offers e-commerce as an extension of its physical stores (aci-bd.com “Our Outlets”). For order fulfillment, DCs and stores must be integrated as part of the

value chain. Online demand and in-store replenishment must be factored in during inventory allocation.

Challenges in last-mile delivery and fulfillment

Bangladesh has challenges in last-mile logistics in urban and rural settings. Traffic congestion, vague addresses, attempted delivery failures, and road access difficulties all contribute. Added and unnecessary risk is especially problematic when it comes to perishable goods. Cost-effective routing, use of micro-hubs, and dynamic delivery scheduling are all critical. The value-chain improvements (waste reduction, transport streamlining) must explain why Shwapno delivered record operational performance in FY24, even with substantial finance costs (TBS News, 2025).

7.3.4 Strengths in Shwapno's Value Chain

Extensive network with DC infrastructure

The combination of 450+ outlets and 6 DCs allows Shwapno to achieve broad reach while maintaining logistical feasibility (ACI PLC, n.d.; Sujoya, 2023).

Flexible transport model

Using both own fleet and contracted 3PL enhances cost-coverage and operational flexibility, enabling route-specific optimization (Takvir, 2018).

Safety stock at outlets

Local buffers help maintain service levels amid variability in delivery or demand (Takvir, 2018).

7.3.5 Challenges and constraints

Shwapno faces several interconnected value chain hurdles that undercut efficiency and challenge cost control. The allocation of stock between physical stores and online channels presents an ongoing coordination challenge, as inventory balance must meet embargo replenishment and e-commerce order prep simultaneously. The cost of last-mile delivery - especially over long distances or in low-demand regions - erodes profit margins and deepens uncompensated territory maintenance. Preserving the cold chain of perishable goods adds another layer of complexity and potential loss as goods pass through multiple transport legs. During off-peak periods, the distribution centers and delivery fleets are designed to be fully underutilized, thus shifting excess

fixed cost to the business. Shifting localized demand and poor infrastructure are also issues, forcing the business to overstock or understock distribution centers. Lags in delivery attributable to congested or impassable roads and border areas erode enterprise driven service levels, contributing to Shwapno's loss of promise.

7.4 Findings

1. Shwapno uses the ERP, POS and MIS technology to operate a more or less centralized inventory and procurement system. With this system, we can have a standardized control and visibility although the integration of data in real-time to fully optimize the system is still lacking.
2. The company has invested in cold storage and refrigerated distribution centers, but keeping cold-chain consistency in the climate and infrastructure of Bangladesh is difficult particularly with perishables.
3. Shwapno adheres to a brief inventory holding model in order to minimize spoilage. It, however, increases reliance on the accuracy of logistics and responsiveness of the suppliers, putting operational load and costs of transactions.
4. Although the company achieves high revenue performances, it experiences high financial losses. These losses seem to be caused by inefficiencies in the inventory turnover, spoilage, and working capital management.
5. Direct procurement of farmers (approximately 23% of merchandise) also enhances freshness, traceability and cost-saving, but puts Shwapno at risks of low supplier quality consistency and supplier fragmentation.
6. Running 450 and more distribution centers and 6 distribution centers in 62 different districts nationwide provide Shwapno with a national presence, but also presents some coordination difficulties in logistics, store replenishment, and online/offline (omnichannel) integration.
7. The lack of publicly available data regarding SKU-breaking turnover, spoilage rates, and the accuracy of demand forecasting restricts internal benchmarking as well as third-party performance assessment of the supply chain.

Chapter 8: Recommendations

After assessing the supply chain management of Shwapno, particularly systems for inventory management, procurement and coordination in the value chain, the following recommendations were made for improving efficiency and ensuring sustainability.

1. Use artificial intelligence and machine learning applications to forecast demand and minimize out-of-stock items and spoilage, particularly with perishable products. Improve
2. Invest in highly developed warehouse management systems (WMS), temperature sensors (IoT sensors) and automated cold-chain tracking that would guarantee freshness and reduced losses.
3. Introduce digital traceability systems and performance contracts with suppliers to remain reliable, quality, and in line with food safety.
4. Establish collaborative-based sourcing centers to local farmers so as to stabilize supply, enhance quality uniformity, and mitigate risks of smallholder fragmentation.
5. Reduce transport charge, lessen delays, and better delivery performance, particularly on congested urban routes with the help of route planning software and GPS tracking.
6. Introduce small city fulfillment centers to improve the efficiency of last-mile delivery to respond to the increasing online grocery demand in time.
7. Use environmentally friendly packaging, energy-saving transportation, and recycling processes to create the image of sustainability and correspond to the national environmental interests.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Using secondary data from ACI PLC reports, peer-reviewed articles, and other business reports, this work analyses Shwapno's supply chain management practices within inventory, purchasing, and value-chain management systems. Shwapno is the first retail chain in Bangladesh to develop an integrated supply chain network for over 450 retail chain outlets and 6 distribution network and centers. Shwapno is also the first retail chain in Bangladesh to source and warehouse in a hybrid manner and implement efficiency through data systems in operational management for developing market supply chains. Cold chain systems, demand forecasting, delivery and distribution systems, network and consolidated systems still remain pe frontiers of growth. As competition within organized retail in Bangladesh increases, expansion of these systems within Shwapno will become even more critical to current sustainability, profitability and market dominance. The strategies of digital systems adoption and green logistics concepts will provide the retail industry in Bangladesh efficiencies fundamental for the policy shifts needed.

Shwapno and its clientele represent the frontier growth modern supply chains and systems within the context of an evolving retail market while equally modernizing supply chains and practices within the market.

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