

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Developing cultural awareness competencies in purchasing and supply management education

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## Abstract

This paper examines the evolving demands of purchasing and supply management (PSM) education, especially in addressing topics that have gained prominence in global supply chains. One such topic is cultural awareness. However, despite its critical relevance in today's global landscape, the topic is often underrepresented in PSM curricula. This gap is further compounded by the unique learning preferences of Generation-Z, who are less inclined toward traditional “reading and writing” methods, presenting additional challenges for educators in teaching such complex topics. This underscores the need for innovative teaching strategies that engage students and improve knowledge retention. We propose employing an Entertainment-Education approach by integrating movies into PSM courses. We describe a specifically tailored activity for a PSM course that includes a movie available on an over-the-top platform implemented at two state universities in the United States. The outcomes from both universities offer evidence supporting the development of cultural understanding within the PSM domain among the students. Although numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of movies as educational tools, our research is one of the first within the PSM domain to investigate their potential for cultivating cultural awareness, thereby paving the way for further research into the role of movies in PSM education.

## KEYWORDS

cultural competencies, Entertainment-Education, pedagogy research, purchasing and supply chain management education

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Supply chain management (SCM) has rapidly grown to be a major field of study for undergraduate students. Over 150 schools across the United States now offer associate's or bachelor's degrees in SCM (Kaplan, 2018; Peacher, 2022), reflecting a significant increase in demand for SCM professionals. Within SCM, the purchasing function has garnered substantial attention. Historically focused on acquiring goods and services in accurate quantities at reasonable costs, the

function has transformed into a strategic element within organizations, crucial for achieving business goals and operational efficiency (Olander, 2023). Significantly, in the context of an increasingly globalized business environment, the role of purchasing professionals has extended into fostering long-term supplier relationships, which are vital for sustained success (Liker & Choi, 2004).

While SCM research extensively covers various relationship-building strategies, such as fostering trust (e.g., Suh & Houston, 2010), ethical considerations (e.g., Gullett et al., 2009), promoting justice (e.g., Liu et al., 2012), technological advancements (e.g., Moradlou et al., 2022), and so on, a critical approach lies in understanding the cultural aspects of such relationships, particularly in the context of

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global supply chains (Cannon et al., 2010). Culture plays a significant and far-reaching role in the interaction between stakeholders. Discrepancies stemming from cultural differences can lead to outright failures (Menziez, 2015). For example, a US-based firm must be aware of the cultural variances of their partners from China, as their business practices may be influenced by the Chinese ethos of collectivism and high-power distance (Zhao et al., 2006). Hence, the emergence of the term “cultural fit” describes the relationships built on the alignment of cultures between supply chain players (Donegan, 2023).

Purchasing professionals bear the crucial responsibility of fostering enduring relationships with suppliers. This responsibility ensures a cultural alignment between the buyer and the supplier (den Butter & Linse, 2008). Consequently, cultural competence is one of the sought-after skills in purchasing professionals, especially when interacting with international suppliers. In their article, Bals et al. (2019) underscored “Cultural Awareness” as one of the competencies for purchasing professionals. Given the role of business schools in meeting corporate entities’ educational and skill requirements through research and instruction, the importance of purchasing and supply management (PSM) education is more pronounced than ever (Birou et al., 2016).<sup>1</sup>

Yet, there remains a gap between the skillsets the industry seeks in purchasing professionals and the actual competencies being imparted by educational institutions (Liu & Mackelprang, 2023; Walden, 2023). For instance, the American Productivity & Quality Center’s report highlights a significant lack of “soft skills” among purchasing professionals, including embracing cultural understanding (Brown et al., 2019). Adding to this, Birou et al.’s (2016) comprehensive review of 44 PSM curricula from 28 universities revealed a predominant focus on sourcing processes, negotiations, cost analysis, and supplier evaluation, with a notable lack of emphasis on “cultural understanding.” Furthermore, their review shows minimal efforts in developing cultural awareness as a distinct student skill set. This gap is also evident in a subsequent review of undergraduate SCM courses by Birou et al. (2022), which indicated that while procurement knowledge was a priority in PSM courses, there was a lack of concerted effort in fostering cultural awareness skills.

So why is cultural understanding being overlooked in PSM education? While there could be multiple reasons, a major reason is the inherent difficulty of teaching “soft yet dynamic topics” through traditional lecture-based methods. SCM instructors have predominantly utilized conventional stand-and-deliver approaches (Camps, 2017; Schmidt et al., 2015), which might be effective for teaching standard topics like purchasing processes, forecasting, inventory management, and supplier evaluation, they fall short when addressing more dynamic and contemporary topics like cultural awareness (Al-Shammari, 2022; Salinas-Navarro et al., 2022). Furthermore, the unique characteristics of Generation-Z (Gen-Z) students pose additional challenges. These students, who form the current university cohort, have distinct perspectives on culture influenced by various sensitivities (Wilkinson, 2021), making it hard for instructors to effectively convey this crucial topic through traditional, teacher-centric lectures that often fail to consider the students’ perspectives in the learning process. Gen-Z students are also known for their shorter attention spans, which renders traditional

lectures less engaging (Schmidt et al., 2015), and their reduced inclination toward reading and writing further decreases their interest in assignments (Wolf, 2019). These behavioral traits of the current generation of undergraduate students present additional challenges for PSM instructors tasked with developing critical skill sets through traditional teaching methods. In other words, while conventional teaching methods might be able to talk superficially about cultural aspects of PSM, they might be inadequate in helping students internalize the concepts as they apply in the real world.

To address this issue, we draw on communication studies, particularly the Entertainment-Education (E-E) approach proposed by Singhal and Rogers (2002). The authors suggest that integrating entertainment with education can significantly enhance student engagement and knowledge retention, especially for complex and dynamic topics like cultural awareness. Given that Gen-Z predominantly consumes entertainment through digital means, especially movies (Winslow, 2022), incorporating these into PSM curricula offers a promising avenue for more effectively engaging students and fostering cultural understanding. While previous studies have examined the use of entertainment in business pedagogy—such as movies (e.g., Girish, 2019), gamification (e.g., Atkins & Drake, 2023), and role-playing (e.g., Inouye & Kling, 2020)—the potential of utilizing these entertainment mediums, particularly movies, in PSM education remains largely unexplored.

In this paper, based on E-E approach, we present an activity that integrates a movie available on one of the popular over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms, Netflix, into the PSM course curriculum. This activity is designed to incorporate cultural understanding, utilizing entertainment content to enhance student engagement, effectively convey intricate concept, and improve knowledge retention. While Netflix offers a wealth of content relevant to PSM courses and cultural understanding, our study focuses on an activity involving the documentary movie *American Factory* as part of an undergraduate SCM course at two state universities in the northeastern United States. One university is classified as R2 (referred to as University-A), and the other as R1 (referred to as University-B), according to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education®. The activity required students to watch the movie as a take-home assignment, followed by an instructor-facilitated discussion and/or debate session, and concluded with a post-session survey to assess the impact on student learning outcomes.

To assess the effectiveness of the activity, we analyzed students’ participation in the discussion/debate session and their responses to a postsession survey. The findings provide evidence that students had a positive learning experience. They not only grasped the importance of cultural awareness in PSM but also successfully connected it to the events depicted in the movie. Moreover, students maintained a high level of engagement throughout the activity. These results were consistent across both universities, despite variations in student demographics.

Our study contributes to the pedagogical literature in PSM by introducing an activity that leverages entertainment mediums i.e., movies, to enhance student learning outcomes, particularly in the area of cultural awareness—a topic often underemphasized in PSM

education. By adopting an E-E perspective, we propose that integrating educational content with engaging and entertaining elements can significantly improve knowledge retention and student engagement among today's undergraduate students, especially when addressing complex topics that are difficult to teach through conventional methods. We provide evidence—from two universities—of the successful application of this approach in a PSM course, based on both qualitative and quantitative student feedback, and we encourage PSM educators to consider incorporating similar activities in their classrooms. Although this paper centers on a single movie case study, it is one of the first to explore the application of movies in PSM education to teach cultural awareness, laying the groundwork for further research on the effective use of movies to teach intricate topics within the PSM domain.

In the remainder of this paper, we first examine the unique characteristics of Gen-Z—currently the predominant demographic in business schools—and how these traits present challenges for PSM faculty. We then discuss the effectiveness of the E-E approach and movies in enhancing student learning, followed by a detailed description of the implemented course activity and its impact on learning outcomes. The paper concludes with a discussion of our findings, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

## 2 | BACKGROUND

### 2.1 | Gen-Z and PSM education

Gen-Z, or iGen or postmillennial, refers to individuals born between the late 1990s and the early 2010s (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). Unlike previous generations, they possess a deep understanding of technology from an early age and prefer digital platforms for various activities, including school (Prensky, 2001). On average, they spend 6 h or more daily on their phones and laptops, enjoying instant access to information (Smith & Yamakawa, 2020). The generation began arriving at universities in 2016 and will remain the predominant student population until 2030 (Moore et al., 2017). According to a study by Barnes and Noble College (2023), Gen-Z students are not interested in attending lecture-based classes to take notes merely. Further, PowerPoint-packed lectures are often considered boring for them, and if they are not engaged, they tend to lose focus quickly—*low attention span*—frequently resort to off-task behaviors (Schmidt et al., 2015). They also dislike reading and writing, finding them tiresome rather than educational (Wolf, 2019).

Despite the characteristics of Gen-Z, most PSM courses rely on traditional stand-and-deliver lectures, which may not effectively engage these students (Camps, 2017; Schmidt et al., 2015), especially in developing their culture awareness competencies. Instructors often struggle to deliver captivating lectures, leading to student boredom and distraction (Schmidt et al., 2015). Time constraints also result in incomplete coverage of topics, leaving gaps in students' understanding of such complex topics (Schmidt et al., 2015). While attempts to generate engagement through group projects, contests, and electronic

textbooks have been made, the content still predominantly reflects the instructor's perspective and may not address industry requirements (Grasas & Ramalinho, 2016; Trautrim et al., 2016). As a result, both PSM practitioners and students often find the curriculum lacking value (Fawcett & Rutner, 2014). This sentiment aligns with the viewpoint expressed by Jacobs (2009) in the Wall Street Journal, where the author suggests that business schools need to reconsider their teaching methods for the next generation of leaders.

### 2.2 | Entertainment-Education

E-E is defined as the “intentional placement of educational content in entertainment” to increase audiences' understanding about an educational topic (Singhal & Rogers, 2002, p. 117). This approach, initially developed in the Communications field, aims to provide valuable educational lessons through popular forms of entertainment (Shen & Han, 2014). Entertainment refers to captivating spectacles that give pleasure or satisfaction, while education involves instructional programs to enhance knowledge and skills (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). The E-E seeks to engage individuals using popular entertainment mediums and improve their understanding of educational topics that may not be effectively conveyed through traditional learning methods (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). Entertainment can take various forms, such as movies, TV/radio shows, documentaries, music, games, and so on, depending on the interests and preferences of the target audience (Wang & Singhal, 2018). The approach has been widely applied in multiple disciplines, such as Communication Science (e.g., Reinermann et al., 2014), Health Informatics (e.g., Shen & Han, 2014), Electronic Media (e.g., Sood & Rogers, 2000), and Social Justice (e.g., Chattoo, 2021). While E-E has mainly promoted social change, its fundamental aspect is capturing individuals' interest in educational issues through entertainment mediums they enjoy. Given this, we propose that E-E can be a valuable approach to implement in PSM courses. It can stimulate Gen-Z's interest in the course material, leading to increased engagement and, consequently, better knowledge retention of complex topics like cultural awareness.

### 2.3 | Entertainment mediums—Movies

When using the E-E in PSM education to teach cultural awareness, educators must be aware of Gen-Z's entertainment preferences. One of the popular choices among this generation is movies, particularly due to the widespread accessibility of OTT platforms such as Netflix, Hulu, and Disney+, which provide a vast array of audio-visual content. According to eMarketer Daily, Gen-Z constitutes the largest user group of OTT content (Lebow, 2022). Additionally, a study found that 65% of surveyed Gen-Z individuals in the United States watch movies/shows daily on OTT platforms (Taylor, 2020). Similarly, a report by Berens and Noorda (2023) indicated that for Gen-Z, movies are the second most influential medium, surpassed only by celebrity influence. These findings underscore the significant role of movies in Gen Z's media consumption. Moreover, given the focus on developing

cultural awareness in PSM education, a report by Manfredi (2024) revealed that a large majority of Gen-Z enjoy watching movies to learn about different cultures. In fact, Gen-Z prefers gaining educational content through movies rather than traditional teaching methods (Broadpeak, 2024). A Pearson (2018) report further highlighted that 60% of Gen-Z favor the integration of movies into their coursework, demonstrating the potential effectiveness of this medium in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes in PSM education.

Given these considerations, we recommend that PSM educators incorporate movies into their curricula, particularly for teaching cultural awareness, which is often difficult to impart through traditional lecture-based methods. This approach not only engages the current generation of students but also enhances their interest in PSM course material, potentially leading to improved knowledge retention. While previous studies have examined the use of movies in SCM education, there are not many studies regarding their application in PSM contexts. Our study introduces a movie-based activity within a PSM course, highlighting its potential to enrich the student learning experience, regarding the complex topic of cultural awareness.

### 3 | ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Figure 1 provides an overview of the implementation of the activity in the two universities.

#### 3.1 | Implementation of the activity at University-A

The activity was introduced in the Fall'22 and Spring'23 semesters at University-A as part of an undergraduate SCM course. The three-credit hour's course was taught by two different instructors each semester, following a similar course outline. Table 1 displays the

course's learning outcomes, with italicized outcomes highlighting those specifically related to the activity and relevant to PSM.

Traditionally, the course had been taught using a lecture-based approach, relying on PowerPoint slides, business case studies, Wall Street Journal articles, and a textbook. The only digital media used were short videos inserted into the lectures. Feedback and evaluations from previous semesters revealed that students expressed concerns about the course being too theoretical and heavily focused on PowerPoint slides and the content from the textbook. An anonymous comment from the Fall '21 semester course evaluation is noteworthy:

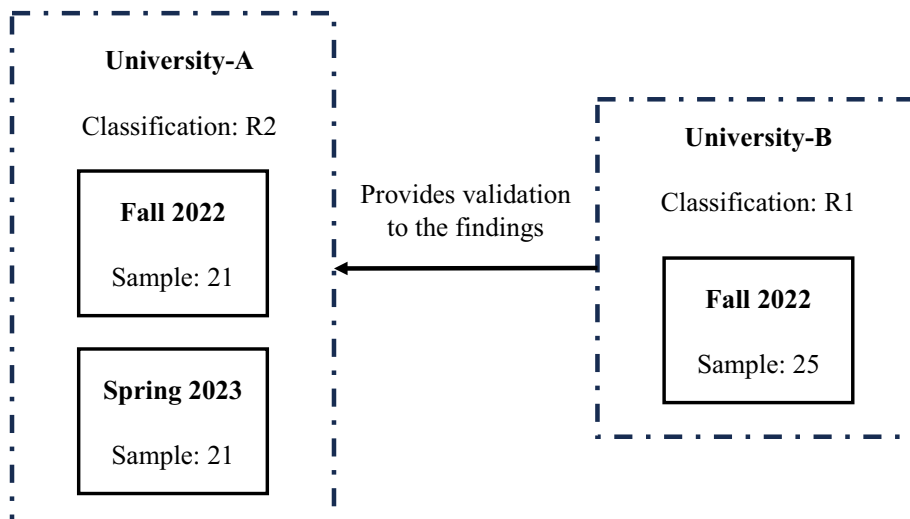
One thing I would change is to have less reliance on lecture slides and reading material in class because I rarely learn from them.

Further, in the Spring'22 semester, both instructors conducted a poll in their classrooms for the same course. The poll revealed that most students ranked "reading case studies and writing reports" as

**TABLE 1** SCM course learning outcomes (bold refers to PSM relevant outcomes).

Learning outcomes
1. Understand the role of Logistics, <b>Purchasing</b> , and Operations in the design and operation of Global Supply Chains.
2. <b>Understand how recent pandemic, technological, political, and economic developments shape supply chains globally.</b>
3. <b>Identify critical activities that differentiate U.S. business practices from other countries—and how they affect the management of the supply chain.</b>
4. Conduct research on cutting-edge/contemporary supply chain topics.
5. Develop teamwork and presentation skills.

Abbreviations: PSM, purchasing and supply management; SCM, supply chain management.



**FIGURE 1** Activity implementation in two universities (Source: Authors).

their least preferred learning method. To address these concerns, the instructors sought to enhance student engagement by incorporating entertainment elements into the curriculum. Acknowledging the influence of movies on Gen-Z, they designed an approach centered around the introduction of digital content to evaluate its impact on student learning and engagement. Their initial strategy involved integrating a single movie, assessing its effectiveness, and considering the inclusion of additional content in future semesters based on the results.

Consequently, during the summer of 2022, the instructors conducted a comprehensive review of content available on different OTT platforms. One advantage of using OTT platforms is the ease of access compared to traditional modes like obtaining DVDs (as used in Desai et al., 2018). As Chilakamarri (2023) highlights, while movies can be selected by genre, it is essential for instructors to apply specific criteria that align with the overall objective of the activity. For instance, many movies on OTT platforms are relevant to PSM, but not all address cultural awareness or related competencies, which could divert student learning from the core topic. Therefore, the selection of a movie—whether fiction or nonfiction—required careful consideration. The primary criterion was that the movie must be set within a PSM context and address cultural implications stemming from global, rather than local, cultural differences. Furthermore, to ensure the movie's relevance to the course material, the setting needed to reflect a physical (not service) supply chain environment where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds collaborate. Thus, the criteria for selecting an appropriate movie were as follows: it must be situated in a PSM context, involve cultural tensions between individuals from different global backgrounds, and demonstrate the impact of these dynamics within a physical supply chain setting.

After careful consideration and discussion, the instructors reached a consensus and selected “American Factory,” a documentary movie on Netflix, to incorporate into the course. While studies in fields other than PSM, like Human Resource Management, have utilized the same movie (e.g., Schmidt, 2021), they lack evidence regarding students' increased interest in course material and their ability to retain knowledge. This paper addresses this gap by providing such evidence.

### 3.1.1 | American Factory's relevance to the course

American Factory chronicles the takeover of a former General Motors manufacturing facility in Dayton, Ohio, by Fuyao, a Chinese automotive glass company. Over the course of its 110-min runtime, the documentary movie examines several key concepts in PSM, including risk management, supply chain relationships, automation, offshoring, and global regulations and compliance. Most notably, the movie highlights cultural differences and conflict resolution between US and Chinese workers. By weaving together these themes, the movie provides a compelling exploration of the complexities and challenges inherent in modern PSM, particularly those arising from cross-cultural dynamics. The movie is available in five different languages, namely English, French, Spanish, Italian, and German, with subtitles available in four languages: English, Spanish, French, and Chinese. Table 2 summarizes the movie's key areas and their relevance to the course topics.

**TABLE 2** Topics covered during the course and their link to key areas illustrated in the movie.

Key PSM issues in the movie	Topics in the course
Cultural differences	Countries that impact PSM (RB); Half a Century: Walmart (CS); UPS in India (CS); COVID-19 and India as potential market (CS)
Regulation and compliance issues	Reshoring & FDI (TB); INCOTERMS (TB)
Supply chain partners relationship	Supplier Relationship Management (TB, CS)
Sustainability	Global Sourcing/Sustainability (TB)
Risk Management	Risk Management in Global Supply Chains (TB)
Offshoring	Globalization, Global Strategy & Global SCM (TB); INCOTERMS (TB)

Note: TB, Textbook Lecture, Case Study Lecture (TB), Research-Based Presentation (RB).

Abbreviation: PSM, purchasing and supply management.

### 3.1.2 | Activity implementation

Students were introduced to the course content, expectations, deliverables, and grading scheme on the first day of class. The instructors also informed them about an upcoming activity involving content on Netflix in the second half of the semester. The decision to schedule the activity later in the course was made to allow students sufficient time to study and become familiar with the course's core concepts, especially since it was open to all business majors, not just those specializing in SCM. Also, the instructors were interested in determining whether students had access to Netflix. As expected, all students, or someone they knew, had a Netflix account, eliminating access issues. Still, considering that Netflix no longer offers a free trial service, the instructors had prepared an alternate assignment for students who either lacked access to Netflix or chose not to watch the movie due to personal preference.

The activity comprised three key milestones. Milestone 1 involved students watching the assigned movie as a take-home assignment. Given the movie's duration of 110 mi (about 2 h) and limited class time of 75 min, it was not feasible to screen it during class. While the activity was introduced to the students in the first week of the course, it was made available on the learning management system (LMS) in week seven. The uploaded activity document included the activity's objective, main deliverables, grading incentives, and a general overview of the movie. Appendix A provides the activity document uploaded on the LMS.

Milestone 2 involved a group discussion/debate session held in Week 9. Students were divided into groups at the beginning of the class and assigned either a “for” or “against” position on various statements related to cultural awareness and related topics depicted in the movie. Each group had around 15 min to collaborate, discuss their position, agree on key points, and prepare their spokesperson for the debate. The instructor(s) moderated the discussion during the debate and invited the spokespersons to present their arguments. To

**TABLE 3** Demographic breakdown of students.

Variable		<i>n</i>	%
Semester	Spring'23	21	50.0
	Fall'22	21	50.0
Gender	Male	32	76.2
	Female	10	23.8
Year	Senior	17	40.5
	Junior	25	59.5
Major	SCM	26	62.0
	General Business	9	21.4
	Marketing	5	11.9
	Others	2	4.7
Ethnicity <sup>a</sup>	White	28	66.7
	Black	5	11.9
	Hispanic	4	9.5
	Asian	5	11.9

Note: *N* = 42.

Abbreviation: SCM, supply chain management.

<sup>a</sup>Ethnicity was determined using the online machine learning tool Namsor (<https://namsor.app/>).

encourage quality points and an engaging debate, the instructor(s) offered an extra credit point to the team that presented the best argument supported by references from the movie. Additionally, each spokesperson received an extra point for representing their respective teams.

Milestone 3 involved the students taking an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved survey by the end of Week 9. The survey consisted of two open-ended questions and nine quantitative questions adapted from Kwon et al. (2021).

### 3.1.3 | Participants

In both the Fall 22 and Spring 23 sections, there were 21 students enrolled in each section. All the enrolled students were either juniors or seniors majoring in SCM, General Business Administration, Marketing, International Business, and Political Science. Among the enrolled students, there were 32 males and 10 females. The demographic breakdown of the students is presented in Table 3.

## 4 | ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIVITY

The effectiveness of the activity was tested based on cognitive (e.g., knowledge and skills) and affective (e.g., value, attitude, and motivation) outcomes through students' discussion during the group discussion/debate session and postsession survey responses, respectively (Wei et al., 2021).

### 4.1 | Group discussion/debate session

In Week 9, all students attended a discussion/debate session, indicating their interest in the activity. The instructor(s) asked for their views on the movie to assess if they had watched it and made connections to the course content. This was also important to ensure students recognized the movie's educational value and did not just watch it for entertainment (Sunderland et al., 2009). Students were allowed to volunteer or respond as a group, creating an inclusive environment.

In both sessions (Fall and Spring), it was observed that students grasped the underlying issues portrayed in the movie and connected them to the PSM course content. During their discussions, most students highlighted cultural clashes in the global environment, worker unions, and local laws and regulations that foreign companies must comply with to operate in a foreign country—all these topics directly related to the activity's objective. Therefore, the objective of knowledge retention among students was successfully achieved.

However, Sunderland et al. (2009) argue that simply asking students to watch a movie and express their opinions does not truly reflect their productivity. Going beyond general discussion and encouraging critical thinking through debates is essential. To achieve this, after the general discussion, the instructor(s) initiated a debate session by assigning positions, "For" and "Against" to the groups (already created by the instructor). They presented six major topics for discussion: Labor Unions, Risk Management, Local Laws, Cultural Awareness, Automation, and Offshoring. For example, the instructor(s) raised whether Labor Unions benefit foreign companies operating in the United States. The groups were then asked to write down their points and present their arguments within the context of PSM based on their assigned position. The instructor(s) moderated the discussion, ensuring each group had sufficient time to present their points. This exercise assessed the students' knowledge retention and encouraged them to think critically as they constructed their arguments, something which the traditional lecture-based approach falls short of. Each topic was debated for 15 min (instructor(s) kept time) before moving on to the next one. Through these debates, the students demonstrated their ability to analyze the topics covered in the classroom critically.

The session lasted for 75 min. Overall, the group discussion and debate session successfully achieved its objectives. It generated interest among the students, as evidenced by their active participation and attendance. Moreover, the session promoted knowledge retention through high-quality discussion points related to cultural awareness in PSM. In addition, it helped foster critical thinking skills through engaging and thoughtful debates among the students.

### 4.2 | Postsession survey

After the group discussion/debate session, an IRB-approved survey was distributed. The survey, developed on Qualtrics, included two open-ended questions and 9 Likert-scale questions adapted from

Kwon et al. (2021) (see Appendix B). The survey link was shared as an announcement through the LMS. A total of 40 complete surveys were analyzed ( $N = 40$ ).

#### 4.2.1 | Qualitative analysis

The first open-ended question sought to uncover the main takeaways students gained from the movie and the second question aimed to gather students' perspectives on the activity as a whole (including experience with discussion/debate sessions). The analysis of the two questions was conducted separately. Since no pre-existing coding framework existed, an inductive coding approach, following Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed. One of the authors carefully read the responses multiple times, highlighting and taking notes to identify concepts. An open-coding process was then used to establish initial categories assigned to higher-level themes. The coding process was validated through input from another researcher. NVivo-12<sup>®</sup> software was utilized for coding processes. Table 4 lists the themes for the greatest takeaway from the movie, and Table 5 lists the themes for the greatest takeaway from the overall activity.

The responses to the greatest takeaway from the movie question revealed that students grasped the key issues portrayed in the movie and connected them to important topics in PSM. The most prominent takeaway mentioned by all the students was the "Impact of Culture," showing the effectiveness of the movie in teaching culture awareness to the students. The students recognized how the movie demonstrated that cultural differences within a PSM context can give rise to problems that can adversely affect a company's performance. They highlighted communication issues among employees, differences in task execution, and misunderstandings arising from cultural disparities. Furthermore, the students acknowledged the importance of various company practices, such as safety procedures, automation, lean manufacturing, and sustainability, which are major decisions to make when developing relations with suppliers, specifically if they belong to different cultures. They emphasized the significance of building strong relationships with global supply chain partners for business success—a major expectation from the PSM professionals. Finally, the students identified the challenges posed by globalization, including compliance issues that can hinder a company's progress. The students' observations aligned with the topics covered throughout the semester, especially cultural awareness, indicating that watching digital content, that is, movies can aid in knowledge retention.

**TABLE 4** First- and second-order codes from greatest takeaways from the movie.

Second-order code (theme)	First-order code (category)	Illustrative quotations example	Relative frequency
Impact of Culture	a. Cultural Differences	"The most important lesson I learned from this assigned movie was that, despite the best of intentions, bringing a foreign corporation to the United States was not without its difficulties, with culture being the biggest obstacle the two sets of employees had to overcome."	45%
	b. Communication Issues	"Within the plant, mechanics had a hard time even asking the person next to them for a tool."	
	c. Different Working Styles	"The greatest takeaway that I had gathered from this film is the difficulties that can be brought up when trying to merge two polar opposite work styles under one roof."	
Company Functioning	a. Safety Focus	"Fuyao struggled because they weren't prepared to successfully handle poor working conditions and keeping the work environment appropriate for the workers."	14%
	b. Automation	"Automation is here, it's not coming but it's here already. I think that the jobs will become more managerial and integrated with improving the robots' processes with a six-sigma outlook."	
	c. Lean Manufacturing	"The greatest take away was how you get a look into what goes into working in a factory. Seeing how the process works and how every working fits into the system that is set in place."	
Corporate Social Responsibility	a. Employee Rights	"What should constitute fair labor, and how can the interests of employees and the objectives of management converge?"	9.5%
	b. Diversity and Inclusion	"Combining different ethnic groups can greatly impact a business or company in many ways. It is important to create an awareness and spread of inclusion and diversity."	
Globalization	a. Compliance Issues	"American and Chinese cultures are very contrasting cultures and have different labor laws."	12%
	b. Globalization Challenge	"One of the biggest takeaways from the film that I got was the true difficulty of globalization."	
Developing Relationships	a. Conflict Resolution	"My greatest takeaway is people working together from China and United States to make this company of glass for cars successful."	17%
	b. Collaboration	"Regardless of different culture and languages, it is interesting to see how these workers can collaborate, connect, and bond with each other."	

**TABLE 5** First- and second-order codes from greatest takeaways from the activity.

Second-order code (theme)	First-order code (category)	Illustrative quotations example	Relative frequency
Connect with Reality	a. Bridge between Class and Real-world	“My greatest takeaway from this assignment was seeing how things we learn about in class take place in the real world.”	25%
	b. Knowing Real-world Challenges	“I took away a better understanding of how things can go wrong even for big companies. I usually find myself thinking most issues in the working world are pretty simple and easy to figure out, but this assignment has opened my eyes to the many complexities that truly exist.”	
Visual Learning	a. Understanding Concepts	“As a visual learner, this assignment was a great way to further expound on concepts we have covered in class.”	25%
	b. Showing Real Events	“Over the past few years in school we have been told that technology is going to be quintessential to the future of manufacturing. However, this movie actually showed how that can/has been done.”	
Deviating From Traditional Lectures	a. Alternate Learning Method	“My greatest takeaway from this assignment is that alternate learning methods are super beneficial to gaining a better understanding of teachings in their application to the real world.”	17%
	b. Good Change	“I just enjoyed being able to watch a movie and then reflect on it. I feel like professors do not give an assignment like this a lot and it was nice to get something like this for a change.”	
Academic Exploration	a. Motivation to Explore More	“This film makes me really want to look deep into the future companies that I will devote my time to.”	21%
	b. Critical Thinking	“By watching this film, I was able to critically think about the different lessons and six sigma techniques we earned in class, and realize how they relate back to glass company in the film.”	
	c. Different Perspective	“This assignment gave me another perspective on how terrible some working conditions are and how powerful these rich owners are.”	
	d. Emotional Understanding	“This assignment was very technical and reliant on data, and watching this documentary helped me understand more emotion.”	

The students' perspective on the overall activity revealed that it successfully bridged the gap between classroom knowledge and the real world. Watching a movie followed by a debate session offered a more realistic portrayal of the challenges they may encounter in professional settings. This approach proved particularly effective, as students reported that they learned more actively from visual experiences compared to passive methods, such as traditional lecture-based teaching using PowerPoint slides. According to the feedback, incorporating movies was an effective tool for understanding complex concepts, with students expressing appreciation for the shift away from conventional teaching methods toward content that aligned with their interests. Watching movies also encouraged students to explore deeper underlying issues, motivating further engagement with PSM topics through binge-watching. Moreover, seeing characters in realistic, culturally diverse settings helped students form emotional connections to the subject matter, allowing them to empathize with the challenges faced by workers in cross-cultural environments. Such valuable insights are often difficult to achieve through traditional lecture-based approaches. Overall, the feedback from the two evaluation questions provided strong evidence that the objectives of incorporating movies into the PSM curriculum to develop cultural awareness were successfully met.

#### 4.2.2 | Quantitative analysis

In the survey, we also asked students to rate their agreement with nine statements about their experience with the activity using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Table 6 shows the percentage of students who agree or strongly agree with each statement.

The survey findings indicate that the movie incorporated into the lecture was highly satisfactory for the majority of students (97.5%). The overall activity provided valuable experience, resulting in an improved understanding of important PSM issues related to culture (100%). Students expressed that the activity helped them retain knowledge from the lectures (77.5%) and considered it a superior learning tool compared to traditional approaches (87.5%). They regarded the activity as relevant to the course (95.0%) for bridging the gap between classroom knowledge and real-world PSM issues (90.0%). While only 20% of students faced difficulties in comprehending the movie's underlying topics, the majority (92.5%) expressed a keen interest in watching more movies to support their learning. Overall, these results demonstrate that the activity was highly beneficial, enhancing students' understanding of the role of culture in PSM education (knowledge retention) and stimulating their curiosity for similar activities (interest).



**TABLE 6** Student responses to the postsession survey ( $N = 40$ ).

Item	1	2	3	4	5	4 + 5	Mean
I am satisfied with the movie being part of this course.	0%	0%	2.5%	60.0%	37.5%	97.5%	4.35
I gained valuable experience from this activity.	0%	0%	2.5%	50.0%	47.5%	97.5%	4.45
The activity improved my understanding of important PSM issues.	0%	0%	0%	57.5%	47.5%	100%	4.43
The activity helped me retain the knowledge I learned in the course.	0%	5.0%	17.5%	50.0%	27.5%	77.5%	4.00
The activity helped me to learn more than learning from the conventional course material.	0%	7.5%	5.0%	45.0%	42.5%	87.5%	4.23
The movie was relevant to the course.	0%	2.5%	2.5%	50.0%	45.0%	95.0%	4.40
It was difficult for me to understand the issue portrayed in the movie. (Reverse coded)	20.0%	50.0%	10.0%	12.5%	7.5%	20.0%	2.31
The activity helped me bridge classroom knowledge with real-world supply chain issues.	0%	7.5%	2.5%	67.5%	22.5%	90.0%	4.05
I would like to watch more movies regarding contemporary supply chain management issues.	0%	2.5%	5.0%	52.5%	40.0%	92.5%	4.30

Abbreviation: PSM, purchasing and supply management.

### 4.3 | Implementation of the activity at University-B

To assess the effectiveness of the activity, a similar activity was conducted at University-B, which had a more diverse student population compared to University-A (as per publicly available student demographic data on the school website). This was important because content available on OTT has less censorship control, potentially causing offense to certain ethnic groups (Naik, 2023). Additionally, the Gen-Z cohort, known for their sensitivity toward politically incorrect content, tends to express their opinions more openly (Zhang, 2020). Given that the assigned movie included characters from different cultures, it was crucial to include the perspectives of a diverse sample that is not dominated by one ethnic background (66% whites in the activity carried out at University-A) and ensure that the activity could be implemented without causing offense. Further, University-B, being an R1 institution, had a higher GMAT/GRE score requirements for its business school, indicating a different academic quality of students compared to University-A. Therefore, University-B provided an ideal environment to evaluate the effectiveness of the activity in a different demographic context.

University-B offered a comparable undergraduate course in SCM with similar PSM objectives as University-A. In Week 10, students at University-B were instructed to watch “American Factory” and engage in a discussion session moderated by two guest speakers who were instructors at University-A. Unlike University-A, the session at University-B was conducted over Zoom® and emphasized on discussion rather than debate. The aim was to evaluate the activity’s influence on students’ knowledge retention and interest in PSM topics. Attendance was voluntary, with bonus points given to participants. After the session, students were given a similar survey.

The discussion session lasted 75 min, and 25 out of 32 enrolled students attended, resulting in an 85% participation rate. All participants were SCM majors, either seniors or juniors. Among them, there

were 14 females and 11 males. In terms of ethnicity, the attendees were more diverse compared to University-A. The session had 12 white students (48%), 6 Asian students (24%), 5 Black students (20%), and 2 Hispanic students (8%) (ethnicity determined using the Namsor.app tool). During the session, one speaker led the discussion while the other monitored participation and time. The goal was to assess students’ understanding of the movie’s themes and their connection to PSM topics. Encouragingly, most students actively participated, showing they retained the knowledge.

All 25 attendees also completed the survey, and the data analysis followed a similar coding process. Major themes that emerged from the key takeaways from the movie included Cultural Difference, Corporate Social Responsibility, Global Business Challenges, Labor Union issues, Developing Relationships, and Company Functioning. These themes were relevant to the PSM course content—specifically Cultural Understanding which is the primary goal of this activity—and also, closely matched to those identified at University-A, affirming the activities’ effectiveness in retaining cultural awareness-related knowledge. Table 7 provides the themes and the supportive excerpts from the student’s responses.

The students highly valued the inclusion of the movie for bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world applications. They found it to provide a unique perspective beyond traditional lectures. Integrating the movie into the curriculum as a supplement to lectures was appreciated, capturing their interest, and offering a refreshing change. Many students enjoyed the assigned movie and acknowledged they would not have watched it otherwise. Considering watching digital content is a major part of life for these students, it enabled them to retain the information portrayed in the movie and reflect on its content and critically analyze its relevance to PSM. Like University-A, students at University-B expressed a desire for more movies in the course. Table 8 showcases the themes and relevant excerpts from the students’ feedback on their reflection of the overall activity.

**TABLE 7** Thematic analysis of student responses to the greatest takeaway from the movie.

Theme	Illustrative quotations example	Relative frequency
Cultural Difference	<p>“My greatest takeaway from this film is seeing the true impact of culture differences. I got a taste of how different China was when I volunteered there, but it was even more impactful to see what was being said in the Chinese employee meetings and how the Chinese plant operated.”</p> <p>“Cross Cultural difference is a great issue when you want to venture in foreign direct investment. To be successful and avoid failing in foreign direct investment, or entering into a new market or country to expand your business cultural difference and working styles should be addressed.”</p>	43%
Corporate Social Responsibility	<p>“Thousands of employees are subjected to harsh working conditions with little to no breaks, and a lack of representation. Although the opening of the new factory provided thousands of new jobs, it did not provide an adequate quality of life for those employees.”</p> <p>“Working condition and safety of workers should be important to every business for workers to be able to perform well at work especially manufacturing plants.”</p>	17%
Global Business Challenges	<p>“The fact that managing an international business is complex and entering new markets is difficult cannot be avoided, but there can be ways to mitigate errors and confusion so that things work out better for all who are involved.”</p> <p>“The fact that managing an international business is complex and entering new markets is difficult cannot be avoided, but there can be ways to mitigate errors and confusion so that things work out better for all who are involved.”</p>	10%
Labor Union Problems	<p>“My greatest takeaway is how important unions are and how far businesses will go to destroy them. If a boss wants to destroy unions, then there's likely a reason why.”</p> <p>“I also have a new perspective on the challenges of working with unions, which is definitely something that is (or can be) a major component of supply chain management and working with large labor pools.”</p>	10%
Developing Relationships	<p>“In supply chain management, managing relationships between parties involved is just as important as managing the flows of financials, products and materials in the supply chain. The film really demonstrated this well, and opened my eyes to the many different challenges that can come in a business situation like this.”</p> <p>“One should use conflict management techniques when talking to both employees and employers. A compromise must be met, and labeling your employees as ‘lazy’, and not paying attention to credible issues is not the way to go.”</p>	10%
Company Functioning	<p>“My greatest takeaway from this film is that I never realized that how efficient the Chinese supply chain is compared to the US one. Seeing the energy they have going into work, having all of the processes connected to each other without hesitation, and most important, everyone putting in equal effort and being passionate about the job amazes me.”</p> <p>“The different ways of proceeding in relation to the production chain, and the efficiency of the production chain.”</p>	10%

The quantitative analysis of the Likert-scale questions is shown below in Table 9.

Overall, the quantitative survey results indicate a high level of student satisfaction with the activity. Students enjoyed watching the movie and demonstrated the ability to retain and connect their knowledge to the classroom material. Furthermore, a *t* test comparing mean scores between the two universities showed no significant differences ( $t\text{-stat} = 0.44$ ,  $p = 0.334$ ), suggesting that incorporating movies into the PSM courses is effective regardless of student demographics and university classification.

## 5 | DISCUSSION POINTS

Overall the activity was successfully implemented at both universities, with several key benefits emerging from its integration into the course curriculum. One of the most significant advantages was the ease of accessing the movie through the OTT platforms on

smart devices, which greatly simplified the process for instructors. All students, including non-Gen-Z, had direct or shared access to Netflix, eliminating the need for additional logistical arrangements. Moreover, the implementation required no special resources, such as software tools, license keys, or access to lab computers and library databases, making it a straightforward addition to the curriculum. Additionally, the availability of the content in multiple languages addressed potential language barriers, particularly for international students—an important consideration at University-B. While selecting a suitable movie to teach cultural awareness required careful consideration, the OTT platform offered a wide range of relevant content, providing instructors with multiple options to choose from.

However, despite these benefits, some challenges were observed and anticipated in both universities during the sessions. It is important to discuss these challenges so that PSM educators can address them before integrating the activity into their courses, ensuring smooth implementation and maximizing the output.

**TABLE 8** Thematic analysis of student responses to the most valuable takeaway from the activity.

Theme	Illustrative quotations example	Relative frequency
Connect with Reality	“This assignment allowed me to see a real connection between what we learned in the classroom surrounding the logistics and how cultural differences can bring extra complications for the supply chain.”  “I think my biggest takeaway was that films, particularly personal and up-close documentaries such as this one, are great tools for studying real world examples. They are excellent pairings to course material and have the potential to allow us to visualize key class topics.”	32%
Alternate to Traditional Teaching Approaches	“This assignment made the issues and systems in place in factory work clearer than it would have been just learning about it in a typical lecture setting. It was easier to see the requirements of factory workers and what their lives truly look like. Overall, I learned a lot from watching this documentary film.”  “I enjoyed learning from a Netflix documentary. It is not a typical learning style in the modern classroom, but it provides real world insight. It also helped that this documentary was critically acclaimed and a good watch. In a class like International Supply Chain, this was a great supplemental piece of learning.”	26%
Allowed Critical Insights	“I appreciated this assignment as it introduced me to the documentary that makes a lot of excellent points (in a very natural, organic and mostly unbiased way) that provided critical insight that I believe will be infinitely beneficial in virtually any future career.”  “Watching American Factory to apply lessons learned about international business, its complexities, and how it impacts people was quite powerful.”	16%
Enjoyed Watching	“I enjoyed learning more about how foreign businesses work to invest in the United States.”  “I thoroughly enjoyed this assignment and definitely gained useful knowledge from it.”	11%
Motivated to Reflect	“This assignment forced me to not only watch a very interesting and beneficial film, but also reflect on what I had just watched afterwards.”  “My greatest takeaway from this assignment is that I really believe that I am passionate about diving deeper into how to improve supply chain and what I can do to help a company become a leader in their field by increasing efficiency of the production line.”	10%
Interest to Watch More	“In general, this assignment has got me interested in learning and watching more documentaries about international business. It was an excellent assignment to do.”	5%

**TABLE 9** Student responses to the postsession survey ( $N = 25$ ).

Item	1	2	3	4	5	4 + 5	Mean
I am satisfied with the movie being part of this course.	0%	0%	7.4%	22.2%	70.4%	92.6%	4.63
I gained valuable experience from this movie.	0%	0%	0%	18.5%	81.5%	100%	4.81
Watching the movie improved my understanding of important GSCM issues.	0%	3.7%	3.7%	33.3%	59.3%	92.6%	4.50
Watching the movie helped me retain the knowledge I learned in the course.	0%	7.4%	18.5%	22.2%	51.9%	74.1%	4.20
The movie helped me to learn more than learning from the conventional course material.	0%	7.4%	14.8%	37.0%	40.8%	77.8%	4.11
The movie was relevant to the course.	0%	0%	3.7%	22.2%	74.1%	96.3%	4.70
It was difficult for me to understand the issue portrayed in the movie. (Reverse coded)	40.7%	48.1%	3.7%	0%	7.4%	7.4%	1.85
The movie helped me bridge classroom knowledge with real-world supply chain issues.	0%	0%	3.7%	40.7%	55.6%	96.3%	4.52
I would like to watch more movies regarding contemporary supply chain management issues.	3.7%	3.7%	11.1%	11.1%	70.4%	81.5%	4.41

## 5.1 | University-A—Debate session

The debate sessions presented several challenges that are important to address to maximize student participation and learning outcomes.

One significant issue was the unequal participation among students. Not all students felt confident enough to actively engage in the debates, leading to an imbalance where a few students dominated the discussion while others remained largely silent. This dynamic was particularly noticeable as the more vocal students were often those

who had been consistently active throughout the semester, while quieter students continued to remain passive. To address this, we propose structuring the debate into multiple rounds. For instance, in Spring 23 debates session (1 h 15 min), each debate topic was allocated 15 min, divided into three rounds: *Round 1*: Opening statements (2 min per team, for and against); *Round 2*: Rebuttal by the “for” team (2 min) and response by the “against” team (2 min); *Round 3*: Rebuttal by the “against” team (2 min) and response by the “for” team (2 min). Teams were guided that a different team member would speak in each round. This allowed more students the opportunity to participate without the pressure of being cold-called. The structure is particularly effective in classes with fewer than 30 students, where five debates can be conducted in one session with teams of three students each.

Managing student behavior during the debates also proved challenging. Some students were observed distracting their peers, while others became overly aggressive during rebuttals in an attempt to undermine the opposing team. This behavior highlighted the importance of the instructor’s role as a referee. To address this issue, we propose developing a set of debate rules before the session. These rules must emphasize respect and courtesy, prohibiting personal attacks, name-calling, and disrespectful language. Additionally, students sometimes strayed from the debate topic or made unsupported claims. To ensure that the discussion remained relevant and factually accurate, we involved the audience as referees, offering bonus points to those who fact-checked statements made during the debate. This strategy not only kept nondebating students engaged but also motivated them to participate actively in the session.

Finally, the timing of group assignments also posed a challenge. Students were informed of their debate groups only on the day of the session, which led to difficulties in last-minute coordination and planning. This issue consumed valuable class time as students struggled to organize themselves. To avoid this, we suggest that instructors notify students of their debate groups several days in advance. Even if the specific debate topics are not disclosed, this advance notice allows students to coordinate roles and plan effectively, ultimately saving time during the session and improving the overall quality of the debate.

Given the complexity of managing such a dynamic activity, we recommend that instructors do not conduct the debate sessions alone. Having a teaching assistant (TA) or another student assist with timekeeping and monitoring participation can greatly enhance the session’s effectiveness. This support allows the instructor to focus on moderating the debate and maintaining order.

## 5.2 | University-B—Discussion session

In cases where class sizes exceed 30 students, we recommend conducting a class discussion, as was done at University-B. While the majority of students actively participated in the discussion, a key challenge in this setting is encouraging shy students to speak up. Unlike the structured debate session, where all students were required to participate, the discussion at University-B relied on voluntary contributions. To

ensure broader participation and maintain engagement, guest speakers occasionally used cold-calling. Although some instructors avoid cold-calling out of concern that it may make some students uncomfortable (e.g., Dallimore et al., 2013), we argue that, when implemented thoughtfully, it can significantly enhance both participation and critical thinking. Specifically, we propose employing cold-calling techniques suggested by Klein (2024), which involves asking a question first, allowing 5–10 s of wait time, and then calling on a student. According to Klein (2024), this approach encourages students to think about their responses, knowing they could be asked to contribute. Conversely, if a student’s name is called before the question is asked, it can catch them off guard, leading to less thoughtful responses, and cause other students to disengage once they know they will not be called upon. The Zoom room feature, which displays students’ names, can facilitate this process, allowing instructors to effectively manage participation. However, if it is an in-person session, we recommend that instructors ask students to bring name tags if they do not already have them for the discussion session. Additionally, as Klein (2024) recommends, instructors should consider breaking down complex questions so that multiple students can contribute to the overall answer.

While the activities were smoothly implemented in both sessions, instructors should remain mindful of an important consideration: although the content on OTT platforms is popular among Gen-Z, careful attention must be paid to the selection of content. Educators should ensure that the material does not contain any offensive content related to specific ethnicities or backgrounds. Prioritizing inclusivity and sensitivity in content selection is essential to creating a respectful and supportive learning environment.

## 5.3 | University-A and University-B—Resulting analyses

In analyzing the postsurvey responses from both universities, we observed that students across both institutions identified similar themes, with cultural understanding being the most prominent takeaway from the movie. However, there were some differences in the overall key takeaways from the activity. Specifically, students from University-B expressed additional themes that did not emerge in the analysis of University A’s responses. In particular, students at University-B demonstrated a strong eagerness to watch more movies similar to the one assigned on Netflix, highlighting their preference for binge-watching.

In terms of quantitative data, although there were no statistically significant differences in the mean scores between the two universities, the mean scores at University-B were generally higher regarding satisfaction, learning outcomes, and the willingness to engage in similar activities in the future. Despite this, considering the lack of significant difference between the means, the findings suggest that both approaches are effective. Nonetheless, we recommend utilizing debate sessions for smaller class sizes and discussion sessions for larger class sizes to optimize student engagement and learning outcomes.

**TABLE 10** Suggestions for PSM educators.

Content	OTT	Topics relevant to PSM
Movies/documentaries		
Downfall: The Case Against Boeing	Netflix	Corporate coverup, ineffective management, culture differences, manufacturing process, profit over people.
Why Global Supply Chains May Never Be the Same	YouTube	Reshoring, e-commerce/consumer demands, automation.
Fast Fashion: The Shady World of Cheap Clothing	YouTube	Fast fashion, sustainability, human flows, e-commerce, offshoring.
Podcasts		
SupplyChainBrain: Are US Manufacturers Making a U-Turn on Reshoring Plans?	SCB podcast/Apple Podcasts	Reshoring, culture, COVID-19 impact, ocean trade.
Episode 16: Why Automation Could Be the Key to Employee Engagement with Esker's Dan Reeve	SCN podcast/Apple Podcasts	Digital transformation, automation, service supply chain, human flows.
FreightWaves: Shippers Seek Sustainable Suppliers	FreightWaves podcasts	Logistics, sustainability, technology, supply chain audits.
Fresh Takes on Tech, ep 52. Walmart: Building a healthy Supply Chain from Soil to Shopping Cart	Apple Podcasts	Food SCM, buyer-supplier relations, sustainability, retail SCM, transparency.
Walmart Corporate Podcasts	Apple Podcasts/Google Play/Stitcher	Buyer-supplier relations, retail supply chain, technology in SCM, reshoring, human flows, blockchain, sustainability, etc.

Abbreviations: OTT, over-the-top; PSM, purchasing and supply management; SCM, supply chain management.

Here, it is also important to underscore two key observations. First, despite the widely cited claim of Gen-Z's limited attention span, the strong appeal of digital content on their favorite OTT platforms motivated students to spend 110 min watching the assigned movie, with many expressing a desire to binge-watch additional content. This phenomenon, referred to as "Netflixification" by Young (2024), highlights how students, who often struggle to maintain focus in traditional classroom settings, are nevertheless capable of dedicating extended periods to movie watching due to their intrinsic interest in the medium. Second, while our study focused on the use of a single movie, it did not specifically assess the impact of various OTT platform features that could further enhance students' engagement with the activity. For instance, OTT platforms offer unique capabilities such as real-time collaborative viewing (such as Tele Party) and integration with virtual reality headsets, which may further enhance students' willingness to participate and engage with the content. Therefore, there is significant potential for PSM educators to leverage these tools to improve student engagement in the activity.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

PSM has gained popularity, with many students eager to pursue their degrees in this field. However, a review of syllabi from prominent SCM programs reveals that "cultural awareness"—a crucial topic in the PSM domain—has been largely overlooked. To address this, our study proposes that PSM educators design curricula that align with the distinctive learning preferences of today's students. Specifically, we suggest incorporating movies into the curriculum, as this medium resonates strongly with this generation. Our findings indicate that integrating movies into PSM courses not only enhances student satisfaction with the course material but also sparks their interest in

exploring complex topics in PSM, ultimately leading to improved knowledge retention. Importantly, this approach proved particularly effective in helping students grasp the nuanced aspects of cultural awareness in PSM. The evidence supporting this study was drawn from two university samples with differing ethnic compositions and academic profiles, underscoring the broad applicability of the findings.

Here, it is important to acknowledge that the use of full-length movies as teaching tools, particularly for complex topics, is well established. However, our study offers a few distinctive contributions that make it unique from other studies. First, this is among the first studies to examine how movies can specifically enhance PSM education, with a focus on addressing the critical issue of cultural awareness. Cultural awareness is often underrepresented in traditional PSM curricula, and our study demonstrates how movies can effectively fill this gap. Second, our approach extends beyond passive movie viewing. We integrate a structured postviewing activity, that is, a debate or discussion session, to actively engage students. This interactive component fosters critical thinking and promotes active learning (as shown in the postsurvey results), distinguishing our study from others that rely solely on movie viewing without additional discourse. Finally, our study includes a comparative analysis of student responses from two universities with different demographic profiles, adding depth to our findings. By collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, we offer a more in-depth understanding of student learning experiences. This aspect is often missing in previous research, which tends to focus solely on the activity's narrative (e.g., Chilakamarri, 2023). The collected data also supports our argument regarding Gen-Z's unique learning traits, highlighting their preference for engaging in activities they are passionate about and their ability to learn through them. Therefore, our study makes important contribution to pedagogical research in the PSM domain and lays the groundwork for future studies to evaluate the effectiveness of entertainment mediums, such as movies, in teaching complex topics like cultural awareness.

In addition, there are several other opportunities for PSM educators to explore. First, our findings are based on a single movie case; therefore, PSM educators must assess the effectiveness of other course-relevant content on OTT, including HBO, Hulu, and YouTube, and may also incorporate audio content from platforms like Spotify. To assist PSM educators, we provide a list of suggested audio and video content for PSM courses in Table 10.

Further, we suggest PSM educators incorporate multiple content from these platforms throughout the semester since these platforms are easily accessible for the students. One approach could be creating a menu of audio and video content available on these platforms, allowing students to voluntarily choose and engage with the content according to their preferences. By doing so, educators can evaluate the effectiveness of these various content options. Second, while the activity presented in this study conducts a discussion/debate session, PSM educators can consider alternative approaches. For instance, PSM educators can explore role-playing activities where students assume roles based on the movie's characters. This approach can facilitate further understanding of cultural awareness along with other important complex and dynamic topics in PSM education, such as supplier–buyer relationship, role of trust, and so on. Third, our analysis focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the activity in the United States only. It is important to consider that students in universities outside the United States may have different perceptions and experiences regarding movies. It would be intriguing to explore the impact of incorporating movies in these settings and compare the outcomes to further understand the potential benefits and challenges. Similarly, it would be worth analyzing the impact of demographics—such as age. Non-traditional students might react differently than Gen-Z students. Finally, we encourage empirical research to investigate features of OTT platforms—such as VR integration, subscription-based models, Tele party, multilingual content, and reduced censorship—and their impact on student learning regarding cultural awareness.

Overall, this study lays the foundation for several pedagogical research avenues in PSM education related to entertainment mediums that are well accepted by the current generation of undergraduate students.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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## ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup> The terms procurement, purchasing, and sourcing are often used interchangeably, though they have some subtle differences. However, differentiating between these terms is beyond the scope of this study and is not relevant to our ultimate goal. Therefore, we will use these three terms interchangeably when discussing PSM.

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**APPENDIX A: –ACTIVITY DOCUMENT**

Movies are powerful mediums for understanding significant, complex issues that are impossible to grasp otherwise. Your task is to watch one such movie (assigned to you by your instructor) that may relate to your course. After watching the film, please take a survey attached to this document. *Please note:* To gain maximum credit for this assignment, you are also required to participate in the special session for the discussion/debate on the movie on [DATE], led by the instructor.

*Assigned Film:* AMERICAN FACTORY.

*Movie Platform:* NETFLIX; *Movie Length:* 1 h 50 min.

*Available Languages:* English, Italian, French, and Spanish & German.

*Available Subtitles:* English, Spanish, French, and Chinese.

Students who cannot access the movie due to technical or subscription issues must contact the course instructor. The instructor will provide an alternate assignment.

**APPENDIX B: –POSTSESSION SURVEY**

Short Answer Questions:

1. What is your greatest takeaway from this film?
2. What are your thoughts about this activity in general?

Likert Scale Questions (1: Strong Disagree to 5: Strongly Agree):

1. I am satisfied with the movie being part of this course.
2. I gained valuable experience from this activity.
3. The activity improved my understanding of important PSM issues.
4. The activity helped me retain the knowledge I learned in the course.
5. The activity helped me to learn more than learning from the conventional course material.
6. The assigned movie was relevant to the course.
7. It was difficult for me to understand the issue portrayed in the movie. (Reverse coded)
8. The activity helped me bridge classroom knowledge with real-world supply chain issues.
9. I would like to watch more movies regarding contemporary supply chain management issues.