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The Strategic Role of E-Commerce in Supply Chain Management

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Nowadays, organizations have turned to using various tools to gain competitive advantage. One of these tools can be considered information technology in the field of trade. The increasing advances in information technology have been able to create strategic changes in e-commerce and consequently in supply chain management. This article, by examining research in the field of e-commerce and supply chain, explains the strategic role of e-commerce on supply chain management. E-commerce can be considered a platform for improving supply chain performance, because the use of this tool can lead to cost reduction, improved scheduling, and system coordination.

Keywords: E-Commerce; Supply Chain Management; Strategic Management; Information Technology.

INTRODUCTION

Today, e-commerce can be considered a new way to improve business activities. Later, e-commerce became a strategic tool for small and large organizations. Also, with the increasing penetration of the Internet in all business processes, many experts predict that e-commerce will become the mainstay of the economy. The recent development of e-commerce has also contributed to the expansion of the logistics market, which promotes the development of logistics-related technologies. A large number of measures have been taken in the field of e-commerce logistics. (Ramanathan et al.2014)

Also, the daily progress of information technology in the field of e-commerce has enabled managers to gain significant mastery in integrating supply chain management. E-commerce facilitates coordination between supply chain components by designing electronic-communication systems of the organization or partners. Thus, in today's market, where competition is based on time, product quality, and on-time delivery of products to the customer (customer satisfaction), coordination between suppliers, distributors, and other components of the supply chain is very important for predicting and planning the delivery time of goods and services continuously and brings many competitive advantages.

Therefore, e-commerce is not only responsible for creating changes in supply chain management, but also allows for better information flow in various forms, including electronic data exchange, direct communication with suppliers, so that organizations can improve their competitive position with advantages such as increasing the speed of data transmission, reducing errors and increasing the accuracy of received and sent data, reducing inventory, planning logistics, controlling inventory, reducing the delivery time of goods, and improving their competitive position. (McIvor.et al. 2003)

Usually, every company has a fully integrated supply chain that ensures the uniform output of products and their timely delivery. This feature has taken on a new meaning with the advent of e-commerce, where the supply chain function may be destroyed or create a new organization. Supply chain management encompasses the business processes of manufacturing, sourcing, transporting, and physically delivering goods to end users.

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Effective supply chain management integrates all these processes in a smooth, coordinated, and efficient manner. In addition to company departments, supply chain management works with partners that include distributors, airlines, third-party companies, and information systems providers.

The supply chain is the most important element that must be implemented quickly, seamlessly, and securely for companies to thrive in e-commerce. However, hundreds of e-commerce companies are competing for market share, each identifying and developing innovative sales and delivery strategies (Sreenivasulu et al.2021)

2. Necessity and Importance of Conducting Research

Today, e-commerce, and especially the Internet, through information technology, has been able to create a harmonious and harmonious relationship between supply chain members by reducing costs and time. So that the successful models of previous supply chains have quickly become inefficient and obsolete, and their management has also changed. E-commerce is probably the most promising application of information technology that has led to the growth of the global economy and plays a fundamental role in the management of the intra-organizational network of supply chain members. (Gunasekaran, et al.2002)

A competitive necessity in the business field is the integration of supply chain management with information technology in order to improve the performance of the organization. For this purpose, organizations are required to study and examine the strategies of e-commerce on supply chain management, and if this requirement is not met, not only will the organization's performance not improve, but it will also cause a loss of market share.

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

3.1 Theoretical Framework

3.1.1 E-Commerce:

E-commerce includes transactions related to the online purchase and sale of products or services. These transactions are carried out using electronic systems such as the Internet and other computer networks. The volume of these types of transactions (conducted electronically) has increased exponentially.

The penetration and spread of the Internet have fueled such development. Today, various types of business transactions are conducted in this way, such as electronic funds transfers, supply chain management, Internet marketing, online transaction processing, inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems.

Therefore, the definition of e-commerce in the contemporary era implies that if a transaction typically uses the World Wide Web at least at any stage of the transaction life cycle, it is called e-commerce. This means that e-commerce can also include a wider range of technologies such as email. (Mohapatra,2013)

E-commerce is also a new way of doing business electronically using networks and the Internet. In this method, the process of buying and selling or balancing products, services, and information is carried out through computer and telecommunications networks, including the Internet. (Hanafizadeh, and Rezaei,2010)

3.1.2 Information Technology

Information technology is a set of techniques and tools that are used to optimize and support business activities. The organization's operations are based on information and knowledge. This includes the study, design, development, implementation, maintenance and management of computer information systems that

help the organization in collecting, recording, processing, storing, marketing, transmitting and distributing information.(Sarafizadeh,2004) Information technology involves collecting, storing and organizing information on existing tools and technologies.(Esfandiari, and Shahab,2010)

Advances in the field of information technology have played a significant role in the dynamic changes of the twentieth century. Information technology allows companies to create and conduct their business operations more efficiently, more flexibly and with greater economic power than was possible in previous decades. It also enables them to respond more easily, quickly and effectively to environmental changes. (Chen,2012)

Information and communication technology is the result of the integration of the three fields of information, computers and communications. Although the concept of information and communication technology seems to be clear, in fact it is not, and different definitions of information technology have been provided by different organizations and individuals. (Behan, and Holmz, 1998)

In their study, Behan and Holmes defined information and communication technology as follows: (The term information and communication technology is used to describe technologies that help us record, store, process, retrieve, transmit, and receive information. This term includes technologies such as computers, fax transmission, telecommunications, telephones, calculators, printing, and engraving. (Jafari et al.2009)

Information technology is also defined by the Information Technology Association of America as: Information technology is the study, design, development, implementation, support, or management of computer-based information systems, especially computer software and hardware programs. In short, information technology deals with issues such as the use of electronic computers and software to transform, store, protect, process, transmit, and retrieve information in a reliable and secure manner. Recently, this term has been slightly modified to clearly include the scope of electronic communications. Therefore, more people are inclined to use the term (information and communication technology.(Rezaei,, et al. 2015)

3.1.3 Supply Chain

Supply chain management is an integrated philosophy for managing the entire flow of a distribution path from the supplier to the final consumer and, as a management philosophy, includes the extent and scope of integrated behaviors for cooperation between the customer and the supplier in the process of external integration.(Handfield, et al.2000) Supply chain management as a management process includes a process of managing relationships, information and the flow of materials within defined boundaries to deliver services and economic value to the customer through the management of physical channels and related information from resources to consumption.(Stadler, and cristopher,2000) Another definition of supply chain management is: the integration of key business processes from the end user to the main supplier that add products, services and information and provide greater value to the customer and stakeholders.(Aalrdi,20017)

It is worth noting that Handsfield has defined the supply chain in a different way: the supply chain includes all activities related to the flow and transformation of goods from the raw material stage to the final state, as well as the information flows associated with them, and also defines supply chain management as the integration of activities related to the flow of materials and information, through improving chain relationships to achieve a reliable and sustainable competitive position.

3.1.4 Strategic Management

Strategic management is the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating multi-purpose decisions that enable an organization to achieve its goals. As is clear from this definition, strategic

management focuses on the integration of management, marketing, finance and accounting, production and operations, research and development and information systems to achieve organizational success.

The term strategic management is used synonymously in this text with the term strategic planning. The latter term is more commonly used in the business world, while the former is often used in academia. The term strategic management is sometimes used to refer to the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategy, and strategic planning refers only to the formulation of strategy.

The goal of strategic management is to exploit and create new and different opportunities for tomorrow. Conversely, long-term planning attempts to optimize today's trends for tomorrow.(Fred and David, 2010)The strategic management process enables managers to make decisions for the optimal allocation of resources with a long-term perspective.(David,1993)

3.2 External Background

With the advent of the Internet and its commercialization since 1994,(Peterson, et al.1997) a new business medium, commonly known as "electronic commerce", has rapidly emerged in the modern global economy.(Poon, & Jevons,1997) E-commerce can be defined as "the use of the Internet and other network technologies to conduct business transactions".(Turban, et al.2004)

Moreover, e-commerce not only involves online buying and selling, but also includes a set of activities that span the value chain of a company, such as promoting products and services on the Web, integrating billing and payments from customers, secure transactions, and handling customer inquiries online.(Kalakota, & Whinston, 1996) In short, e-commerce is a concept that integrates a wide range of existing and new applications.(Zwass,1996) Based on the type of applications, e-commerce can be classified into three categories:

- 1 Business to Business (B2B).
- 2. Intra-organizational (intra-business).
- .3. Business-to-consumer (B2C).

Companies around the world have reaped numerous benefits by implementing e-commerce. Some of the benefits include improved operational efficiency and revenue generation by integrating e-commerce into their value chain activities (Brynjolfsson & Kahin,2000) access to a wider range of markets(Brunn,, et al.2002), (Essig,& Arnold, 2001), (Fariselli, et al.1999), (Senn,2004), greater potential for partnerships with suppliers and vendors, (Koch,2002), (Tumolo,2001), improved customer service, (Bakos,1998), (Burton, & Mooney, 1998)24-hour availability (Deeter-Schmelz, et al.2001), (Lin & Hsieh,2000)

flexibility in management and partnerships, up-to-date information (Baron, et al. 2000), (Stanoevska-Slabeva, & Schmid, 2000), lower transaction costs (Clemons, et al. 1993), (Malone, 1987), product and service differentiation, and the ability to enter the supply chain of larger companies. (Erbschloe, 1999)

Although the use of e-commerce offers various benefits and it is widely accepted that the use of e-commerce by businesses in developing countries is an important economic indicator of growth (Molla, & Licker,2005) many companies In developing countries such as India, China or South Africa, the full benefits of e-commerce have not yet been realized.

According to Cupachino, the supply chain can be defined as follows: The supply chain includes all the activities required to provide a product to the final customer, or all the activities related to the flow and transformation of goods from the raw material stage to delivery to the final consumer, as well as the

information flows associated with them, which in a general view include the three areas of logistics, production and distribution.(Shafiee,2009)

According to Stevens, the supply chain includes a set of related activities that are related to the planning, coordination and control of raw materials, parts and manufactured goods from suppliers to customers.(Faqhi,2010)

There are several models of e-commerce that differ depending on the type of transactions that are made. For example, business-to-business, customer-to-business and customer-to-customer are some of the e-commerce models. For efficient supply chain management, business-to-business e-commerce models can be effective. To improve communication between customers and suppliers, the Internet, the Web, and electronic data interchange are useful tools for exchanging information about products and services. Many companies have little knowledge and skills related to e-commerce. This can be due to a lack of understanding of the implications of e-commerce and a lack of sufficient money to invest in this type of business. Implementing and using e-commerce requires training, as well as government support in providing easy access to Internet services and developing websites for e-commerce. (Gunasekaran, & Ngai,2004)

The Internet helps manage supply chain activities by providing information about the type of product needed, goods in stock, products in process, and items leaving or entering physical facilities or customer sites. For example, an organization's planning system through extranets provides communication not only between organizations but also between network partners, such as suppliers, distributors, and third-party logistics.(Cooper, et al. 1997)

The interaction between technology and business processes is key to understanding the effects that ecommerce can have on economic transactions and ultimately on the economy as a whole. What distinguishes e-commerce from traditional commerce is essentially the method or pathway through which information is exchanged and processed between buyers and sellers.

In e-commerce, information is exchanged over a digital network or other electronic channels, rather than being transmitted through direct person-to-person contact. E-commerce may create an additional sales, marketing, or distribution channel alongside traditional commerce channels, or may create new goods, services, and markets.(Wolfgang,etal.2005)

Researchers have offered several explanations to show what factors affect a firm's adaptation to the environment. In general, we can distinguish internal and external factors related to the environment. Stakeholder pressure, environmental regulations, firm size, industry sector, geographic region, globalization, position in the supply chain, strategic perspective, management perspective, motivations, manager personality traits, and human resources are environmental and organizational variables that have been repeatedly seen in research results.(Gonzalez, et al.2006)

3.3 Internal Background

Electronic commerce has been widely welcomed by human societies in recent years. Companies and organizations that provide products and services, in line with the global developments in the field of electronic commerce, are trying to change the logical and physical structure of their organizations in this field. The development of electronic systems such as the Internet has affected all institutions and organizations and banks.

The World Wide Web has fundamentally changed customer expectations regarding speed, accuracy, price and service. Geographical distance has lost its meaning and the availability of services, ease and speed of

service distribution create a competitive advantage for organizations and institutions. In order to compete in this complex business environment, organizations are forced to provide the latest and most attractive services that customers demand.(Farajian,2006)

Electronic commerce does not mean having a website, but much more than that. There are many applications, including banking, job searching, buying and selling stocks, buying and selling in real-time markets, electronic marketing and advertising, customer service, auctions, travel services, electronic collaboration in research and development projects in electronic commerce. To implement these applications, it is essential to have supporting information and organizational infrastructure.(Hanafizadeh, and Rezaei,2010)

In today's world, information and communication technology is one of the main sources of development, and one of the most important indicators of development is the ability to produce and use information in any society. In other words, information is an indicator of power, and the amount of information that a country produces or uses is the most important factor that determines the distinction between different societies.

Information technology has been mentioned as the best tool for the dissemination (distribution and expansion) of information and communication, none of today's activities will be carried out without the use and application of information technology in the world. (Hosseini,2010)

Supply chain management is the result of the evolution of warehousing management. In the 1960s, experts were able to reduce their inventory by studying the internal relationship between warehousing and transportation and integrating them, which resulted in the name (distribution management). In the course of evolution, with the addition of manufacturing, procurement and order management topics to distribution management, the concept of logistics emerged. Then, along with improvements in production processes and the application of reengineering patterns, managers of many industries realized that in order to continue to be present in the market, only improving internal processes and flexibility in the company's capabilities was not enough; rather, suppliers of parts and materials must also produce materials with the best quality and lowest cost, and product distributors must also have a close and tight relationship with the manufacturer's market development policies. With this attitude, the supply chain management approach came into existence Institution.(Afshar,et al.2009)

The goals of modern supply chain management are to reduce uncertainty and risk in the supply chain, and yet, it has a positive impact on inventory levels, cycle times, business processes, and customer service time. This chain is a dynamic process that includes simultaneous activities, continuous assessments of the parties involved, the technologies used in it, and the organizational structure.

This technology provides customers with the opportunity to have multiple choices and increasingly access information. In general, all these factors help to transfer value to the customer and increase profitability and competitiveness. Electronic commerce is a processing technology and a set of activities that are carried out automatically in networks and through information technology during commercial exchanges.

According to different perspectives, several definitions of electronic commerce have been proposed, all of which share at least two things in common: All definitions focus on the process of buying and selling or exchanging goods and services, and the use of some kind of electronic tool is considered. (Khodad Hesni, et al.2006)

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is classified as applied research in terms of its purpose because it seeks to understand the best strategy in the field of supply chain management from the perspective of e-commerce, and in terms of data collection method, it is classified as a review of library documents and documents.

5 QUESTIONS

5.1 Main Question

What is the strategic role of e-commerce on supply chain management?

5.2 Sub-questions

What is the impact of e-commerce on suppliers in adopting an optimal strategy in view of market changes?

What is the impact of e-commerce on the coordination of production and distribution systems and strategies?

What is the impact of e-commerce on improving supply chain scheduling?

6 FINDINGS

In short, the e-commerce industry will be one of the leading sectors in the field of commerce in the coming years. The revolution in e-commerce has a great positive impact on the trading industry by rapidly providing new markets and crossing borders. This has had a great impact on the global market and has improved people's lives. Although e-commerce is an advantage for customers and sellers, it is also known as an obstacle for small businesses to create a sustainable business. Developing countries face many challenges in implementing e-commerce effectively.

The affordable price of the Internet increases the growth rate of e-commerce, so many companies usually turn to implementing e-commerce. Easy access to this type of business is one of the major advantages of e-commerce for consumers and, as a result, increases customer loyalty. This is why consumers can place their orders from anywhere they are by accessing the Internet. E-commerce is essential for a company that offers integrated functionality and multiple payment options and should offer more functionality that is accessible online. (VIPIN and SATYENDRA, 2021)

This study showed that organizational performance can be achieved by effective supply chain management. Supply chain management can only be effective if it can meet various planning, inbound, outbound, reverse and order management. This study showed that organizational macro-planning are key issues that significantly affect the organization's goal. The researcher found that yield and inventory management are key issues that should be considered when studying supply chain management, especially in the e-commerce market. (Sreenivasulu,2021) Developing effective strategies to leverage competitive advantages through e-commerce will be essential for success in the 21st century.(Mohapatra,2013)

By increasing and facilitating communication between organizations, e-commerce, collaboration and reducing production cycle times as well as reducing costs by creating opportunities for international trade, it provides a basis for coordination and integration. E-commerce offers optimized supply chain management benefits to all organizations, regardless of their size and financial resources, through the establishment of a global network.

E-commerce enhances supply chain management in various forms such as electronic data interchange, direct communication with suppliers, the Internet, extranets, intranets, electronic catalogs, etc. But its greatest impact is from the Internet. The Internet has provided users with the opportunity to take advantage of this opportunity and has enabled managers to maneuver more in supply chain management and, with the

ability to integrate and integrate business activities with customers and suppliers, has created a competitive advantage for organizations. By implementing innovation in e-commerce, these changes move suppliers from a passive state to a strategic and active resource. (McIvor, et al. 2003)

What has happened to business in recent decades is the change in the nature of business due to the great impact of information technology. The Internet has fundamentally changed the international trade environment. These changes may cause fundamental changes in the methods used in supply chain management.

All the discussions of supply chain management in the current electronic world are presented in electronic and internet markets. Today, we consider supply chain management as one of the basic infrastructures for implementing e-commerce in the world. In the current global competition, we have to offer various products according to customer demand. What causes more pressure is the customer's demand for high-quality and fast services, which is not the same as in the past.

As a result, it is not possible for companies to do all the jobs individually. In the current competitive market, all economic and manufacturing agencies not only consider their internal organization and resources, but also consider themselves in need of managing and monitoring related resources and principles outside the company. The real reason is to find competitive advantages with the aim of finding a greater market share.

Accordingly, some of the activities including supply and demand planning, material procurement, production and product planning, product storage, inventory control, distribution, delivery and customer service have been transferred to the supply chain level, which were previously carried out within the company. The key to a supply chain is the coordinated management and control of all these activities.

Supply chain management is a phenomenon that may do this for customers so that they can receive reliable and fast services with high quality and low cost. One of the important discussions in finding an effective supply chain is the use of electronic tools for greater coordination and integration of the supply chain. In addition, to find an effective supply chain management in this new business environment, it is necessary to recognize the main function of effective information technology as one of the important elements of information technology.

The final discussion is to pay more attention to customer needs and pay more attention to all customers of the organization. In the meantime, electronic supply chain creates a significant role in gaining more competitive advantages for the organization against competitors.(Navid,2011)

In this article, an attempt was made to study the strategic role of e-commerce on supply chain management by studying previous research in the field of e-commerce and supply chain management and to reach a comprehensive conclusion.

CONCLUSION

Today, the advancement of information technology in societies, by facilitating the stages of collecting, processing, storing and transferring information, has helped managers to achieve the strategic goals of the organization in the field of e-commerce, and information technology can also be considered as an effective factor in strengthening the foundation of the organization. In recent years, developed countries have gradually abandoned traditional methods in the field of trade and turned to e-commerce. E-commerce can be considered a suitable platform for saving time, increasing productivity, and reducing costs.

Considering the goal-setting of organizations in order to achieve goals and also maintaining a competitive advantage over competitors, the use of information technology in improving supply chain performance is

considered vital. Strategic planners must be prepared to create a set of technical solutions to advance the organization's goals.

This article examines the strategic role of e-commerce on supply chain management and ultimately explains the importance of the impact of e-commerce on the supply chain. What is certain is that organizational strategists are required to create coordination between organizational components, improve scheduling, and also examine the obstacles facing the organization in order to provide appropriate solutions.

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