

Disruptive Technologies and performance in Logistics Firms: A Case Study of Sinotrans Ltd in Shanghai, China

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Abstract

Disruptive technologies are playing a pivotal role in reshaping the performance landscape of logistics firms worldwide. The integration of advanced technologies, such as big data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI), has resulted in improved operational efficiency, real-time tracking, and enhanced decision-making capabilities. Automation and robotics are streamlining warehouse processes, reducing labor costs, and minimizing errors in logistics operations. As logistics firms continue to embrace disruptive technologies, the industry is witnessing a paradigm shift towards innovation-driven strategies, aiming to stay competitive in an ever-evolving digital landscape. The study adopted the descriptive research design. The target population was 20 logistics firms in Shanghai, China. The study did sampling of 15 respondents that were chosen from the target population of 20 logistics firms in Shanghai, China. Questionnaires were used to gather the data. In conclusion, the case study of Sinotrans Ltd in Shanghai, China, illuminates the transformative impact of disruptive technologies on the performance of logistics firms. Sinotrans' strategic adoption of technologies like big data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) underscores the potential for significant operational enhancements and improved customer experiences. As the logistics sector continues to evolve, Sinotrans serves as a testament to the vital role disruptive technologies play in fostering innovation, sustainability, and competitive advantage within the industry. The study recommended that proactive investment in employee training programs to ensure a smooth transition to disruptive technologies, mitigating potential resistance and enhancing overall workforce adaptability. Additionally, fostering strategic collaborations with technology partners and startups can provide logistics firms with a continuous influx of innovative solutions, helping them stay at the forefront of technological advancements and maintain a competitive edge in the evolving industry landscape.

Keywords: *Disruptive Technologies, Performance, Logistics Firms, China*

1.0 Background of the Study

Disruptive technologies have become integral in reshaping the landscape of logistics firms worldwide, with particular relevance to the operations of companies like Sinotrans Ltd in Shanghai, China (Maurya, Munoz, Gaur & Singh, 2023). Sinotrans, being one of the leading logistics firms globally, has recognized the transformative potential of disruptive technologies in optimizing performance, efficiency, and overall competitiveness. The implementation of advanced analytics and big data in Sinotrans' logistics operations has revolutionized decision-making processes. By harnessing large datasets, the company can optimize route planning, inventory management, and demand forecasting, leading to significant improvements in overall supply chain efficiency. Moreover, Sinotrans has embraced the Internet of Things (IoT) to enhance real-time tracking and monitoring of shipments. Tran-Dang, Krommenacker, Charpentier and Kim (2022) mentioned that through IoT devices embedded in containers and vehicles, the company can provide clients with precise information on the location, condition, and status of their goods, thereby improving transparency and reducing the risk of delays or losses.

The adoption of blockchain technology has also played a pivotal role in Sinotrans' logistics operations. Blockchain ensures a secure and transparent record of transactions, reducing the risk of fraud and errors in documentation (Laroyia, Saxena & Komalavalli, 2020). Smart contracts powered by blockchain have streamlined the contractual processes, facilitating faster and more reliable transactions between Sinotrans and its partners. Automation and robotics have been implemented extensively in Sinotrans' warehouses and distribution centers. Robotic systems for sorting, packing, and even autonomous vehicles for internal logistics have significantly increased operational speed and accuracy, reducing labor costs and minimizing errors. In response to the growing demand for sustainable practices, Sinotrans has integrated green technologies into its logistics operations. Electric and hybrid vehicles, along with eco-friendly packaging solutions, showcase the company's commitment to environmental responsibility and compliance with stringent regulations. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Sinotrans' logistics operations has brought about predictive maintenance capabilities for its fleet and machinery (Aserkar, 2021). This proactive approach ensures minimal downtime and reduces maintenance costs, contributing to improved overall performance and customer satisfaction.

Sinotrans has capitalized on 5G technology to enhance connectivity and communication across its logistics network. The ultra-fast and reliable communication provided by 5G facilitates real-time data exchange, enabling quicker decision-making and response times, particularly in dynamic and time-sensitive logistics scenarios (Sheth, Patel, Shah, Tanwar, Gupta & Kumar, 2020). Sinotrans' focus on disruptive technologies extends to augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) applications. These technologies are utilized in training programs, allowing employees to simulate real-world logistics scenarios, thereby improving skills and minimizing errors in actual operations. Cybersecurity measures have been prioritized to safeguard sensitive data and ensure the integrity of Sinotrans' digital infrastructure. The company recognizes that with the benefits of disruptive technologies come increased risks, making robust cybersecurity essential in maintaining trust with clients and partners (Safitra, Lubis & Fakhurroja, 2023). In terms of customer experience, Sinotrans has implemented chatbots and AI-driven customer service systems. These technologies enhance communication, provide instant support, and streamline issue resolution, contributing to overall client satisfaction.

The integration of 3D printing technology into Sinotrans' logistics services has enabled on-demand production and reduced the need for extensive warehousing of spare parts (Martos Gutiérrez, 2021). This innovative approach enhances efficiency and agility in responding to client demands while minimizing excess inventory. Sinotrans' commitment to innovation includes participation in collaborative platforms and ecosystems. By partnering with tech startups and other industry leaders, the company stays at the forefront of emerging technologies, ensuring a continuous flow of fresh ideas and solutions. Government policies and incentives supporting the adoption of disruptive technologies in the logistics sector have also played a role in Sinotrans' strategic decision-making. The alignment of the company's initiatives with national goals for technological development has facilitated a conducive environment for experimentation and implementation. Despite the numerous benefits, Sinotrans acknowledges the challenges associated with adopting disruptive technologies, including initial investment costs, the need for employee upskilling, and the potential resistance to change (Liu, 2023). The company, however, views these challenges as integral to the ongoing process of evolution and remains committed to overcoming them for sustained success.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The integration of disruptive technologies in logistics firms, exemplified by the case study of Sinotrans Ltd in Shanghai, China, presents a complex set of challenges and opportunities. One key issue revolves around the substantial investment required for the adoption of advanced technologies such as big data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and artificial intelligence (AI). The financial burden associated with implementing these technologies poses a significant challenge for logistics firms, including Sinotrans, as they navigate the delicate balance between short-term costs and long-term gains. Another critical problem is the potential resistance to change among employees within logistics firms. The introduction of automation, robotics, and AI-driven systems may lead to concerns about job displacement and the need for reskilling. Addressing these human-centric challenges is crucial for the successful implementation of disruptive technologies, as a harmonious integration of technology and human expertise is essential to realizing the full potential of these innovations. Furthermore, interoperability issues among different disruptive technologies may impede seamless integration within logistics operations. Sinotrans, like other logistics firms, may face challenges in ensuring that diverse technological solutions work cohesively to optimize processes. Standardization and compatibility across various platforms become imperative to mitigate potential disruptions in the flow of information and operations.

The issue of cybersecurity emerges prominently in the context of disruptive technologies in logistics. The increased reliance on digital platforms, IoT devices, and interconnected systems amplifies the vulnerability to cyber threats. Sinotrans must grapple with the need to fortify its digital infrastructure and develop robust cybersecurity protocols to safeguard sensitive data, maintain operational continuity, and preserve trust with clients and partners. Moreover, the pace of technological advancements introduces a challenge of obsolescence. Logistics firms, including Sinotrans, must navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of disruptive technologies to ensure that their investments remain relevant and provide a sustained competitive advantage. The risk of adopting technologies that quickly become outdated poses a substantial concern for long-term strategic planning and resource allocation. The regulatory environment and compliance standards surrounding disruptive technologies in the logistics sector present a multifaceted challenge.

Sinotrans operates in a dynamic global context with varying regulatory frameworks, requiring continuous adaptation to ensure adherence to legal requirements while leveraging the benefits of innovative technologies. Navigating these regulatory landscapes adds complexity to the strategic decision-making process for logistics firms seeking to integrate disruptive technologies effectively.

2.0 Literature Review

Arifin (2022) conducted study to find out how disruptive technology has affected the efficiency of German insurance companies. This research made use of a desktop literature review strategy, with an emphasis on academic publications with a PDF focus that discuss insurance company performance in relation to technological developments. We identified fifty articles that discussed the relationship between technology and the efficiency of insurance companies. Thirty papers were selected at random from a list of published journals in PDF format that dealt with disruptive technology and the performance of insurance corporations for the research. According to the literature study, mobile phone technology is a major factor in the expansion of micro-insurance in Germany. Financial institutions, such as insurance companies, see an uptick in their bottom lines as a result of rising levels of technical innovation, social digital trends, and industrial convergence. The research also found that insurance innovation strategies have a favorable and robust correlation with company success. If insurance firms want to boost their competitiveness and non-financial performance, their leadership and management should prioritize adopting innovative technology. Among them, you may find digital currency technologies, cloud computing, analytics, artificial intelligence systems, and big data. In order to boost market share and save operating expenses, businesses should improve their processes to make them more efficient and productive. Also, the insurance sector should keep looking at disruptive technologies, as they are crucial to improving the efficacy and efficiency of company operations. It is the responsibility of the insurance authority to formulate regulations that promote technological advancement and new ideas. While carrying out its responsibility to safeguard customers, the authority should make sure that regulations do not limit the innovation and development of insurance companies. Another goal of the regulatory agency should be to facilitate the widespread use of innovative technology.

According to Muharam, Andria and Tosida (2020), despite the fact that the idea of disruptive technologies is still in its early stages, there is a great deal of interest in disruption at the moment. Although the concept of disruption first developed in the late 1990s in relation to ideas of disruptive technology change, it has recently made a comeback in popular discourse under new names including digitalization, globalization, big data, and many more. In addition, businesses and organizations worldwide are already experiencing the consequences of disruption. Using a case study of a Danish multinational SME, the researcher aims to describe and demonstrate some of these consequences. A more learning-based approach to strategic management has been substantially implemented by the example firm as a result of the difficulties brought about by disruption.

Fontes de Meira and Bello (2020) argued that digital currency's disruptive potential in the Caribbean sub region, with an eye on highlighting the phenomenon's potential benefits and drawbacks. A literature review of sub-regional and international sources, an expert survey of those working in the field of electronic payments, and a formal survey of the central banks in the sub-region to gauge their knowledge of digital currency and mobile money in relation to the changing

electronic payment landscape were the three primary methods of data collection used in this study. According to the research, advancements in payment technologies may be useful for the Caribbean. Despite the potential benefits of digital currency and mobile money, their growth was hindered by banking authorities' unwillingness to deal with them. However, the survey did not demonstrate how businesses that have used digital currency technologies have fared financially.

Vives (2019) performed study to look how digital disruption has affected the financial performance of Nepalese commercial banks, particularly NMB Bank. This was the overarching goal of the research, which set out to determine how factors including social digital trends, technological innovation, industrial convergence, and digital competition affected NMB Bank's ROA, or return on assets. The bank's financial performance improved as a result of rising industrial convergence, technical innovation, and social digital trends, according to a regression study. Nevertheless, financial performance is negatively impacted by a rise in digital competition. The study's examination of technological innovation, social digital trends, industrial convergence, and digital competition as disruptive technologies reveals a conceptual gap, nonetheless.

Fuertes, Alfaro, Vargas, Gutierrez, Ternero and Sabattin (2020) discovered that an awareness of how the South American long-term insurance sector makes use of strategic information for the purpose of strategic management. This qualitative research sought out the thoughts and feelings of senior managers and executives in the South American long-term insurance sector on the strategic intelligence practices of their respective companies. There was a discernible disparity between big and small businesses in terms of the survey's findings on the adherence to and use of strategic intelligence and its constituent parts. Nevertheless, the consensus was that a strategic intelligence framework could significantly improve decision-making. There is a disjuncture between the study's setting a mature economy with a 13% insurance penetration rate and Kazakhstan's context and developing country with a 3.4% penetration rate. There is an emphasis on external information and surroundings, as well as strategic intelligence and competitive analysis in major industrial companies. In order to better manage and capitalize on the massive amounts of competition information gathered from the environment, the research set out to expand our understanding of the many intra-organizational processes used by corporate organizations. Even this research took place in a developed nation.

Lacson (2021) performed research to examine how mobile broadband, a potentially game-changing technology, has affected the non-life insurance markets in Singapore and Thailand. The purpose of this research was to determine whether mobile broadband was contributing to growth in the non-life insurance sectors of the Thai and Singaporean economies. The study compared the effects of Singapore's third-generation (3G) mobile phone network to those in Thailand. To better understand what to expect when Thailand launches its 4G mobile phone network later on, it looked at how the network has fared in Singapore. In order to compare the trend before and after the adoption of mobile technology by those nations, piecewise regression was used. Both nations' non-life insurance sectors continued to expand unabated in the face of mobile broadband, whether measured in terms of 3G or 4G technology. They showed that insurance firms couldn't leverage mobile broadband to generate opportunities, increase sales, and profit since they weren't able to catch up with mobile integration. Due to its exclusive focus on mobile broadband technology as a disruptive force impacting the insurance business, the research fails to adequately account for both methodology and context.

Schuelke-Leech (2018) mentioned that a company may help itself keep its competitive edge in the market by using disruptive technologies. Disruptive technologies are often described using different words in the literature when discussing risk and uncertainty. After defining and comparing "sustaining technology" with "disruptive technologies," the former is defined and explained. Finding out how disruptive technologies affect an organization's information and communication technology environment is the main goal of the study. The researcher examines the effects of disruptive technology on the following: the organization's value network; the present security architecture of its information technology; business procedures and standards; methods for developing company strategies; the participation of senior management; and the organization's consumers and clients. Three companies operating in the South American market consented to be profiled in this case study. Upon finishing the investigation, they were detailed and suggestions were offered.

Wang, Guo and Zhang (2023) conducted study to investigate the direct and indirect effects of disruptive innovation on business performance. Using two waves of questionnaires comprising explanatory and outcome variables, 207 companies were sampled from China's high-tech industry. The questionnaires were sent to senior managers and R&D managers. According to this data, disruptive innovation has a favorable effect on company performance, and the connection between the two is mediated by innovation pace and innovation quality. Institutions that encourage free trade have a moderating effect on the correlation between innovation velocity and company success, but the opposite effect on the correlation between innovation quality and company success. It seems from this research that market-supporting institutions moderate the relationship between disruptive innovation and firm performance, with innovation pace and quality mediating the relationship. The primary method of data collection was a questionnaire, which is a limitation of the study. To boost company performance, businesses should use disruptive innovation as a strategy, and governments should increase the number of institutions that support the market. This would help businesses innovate faster and with better quality. This study finds that disruptive innovation has a positive effect on firm performance that innovation speed and innovation quality mediate this relationship, and that market-supporting institutions have contingency effects on these effects.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The target population was 20 logistics firms in Shanghai, China. The study did sampling of 15 respondents that were chosen from the target population of 20 logistics firms in Shanghai, China. Questionnaires were used to gather the data.

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Correlation Analysis

The findings presented in Table 1 shows the correlation analysis

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

		Performance	Disruptive Technologies
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Disruptive Technologies	Pearson Correlation	.294 **	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000

The correlation results from Table 1 indicate that the disruptive technologies was positively and significantly related with performance ($r=.294$, $p=.000$). This concurs with Fontes de Meira and Bello (2020) who reported that disruptive technologies are revolutionizing the performance metrics of logistics firms globally. From the integration of artificial intelligence and big data analytics to the widespread use of Internet of Things (IoT) devices, these innovations are optimizing supply chain management, enhancing operational efficiency, and ultimately transforming the logistics landscape. The strategic adoption of disruptive technologies is proving instrumental in bolstering performance, ensuring adaptability, and securing a competitive advantage in an increasingly digital and dynamic industry.

4.2 Regression Analysis

The section includes model fitness, analysis of variance and regression of coefficient. The results in Table 2 show the model fitness

Table 2: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.294a	0.283	0.232	0.098061

The results from Table 2 reveal that disruptive technologies was found to be satisfactory in explaining the performance in logistics firms in Shanghai, China. This was supported by the coefficient of determination, which is R square of 0.283. It indicates that disruptive technologies explain 28.3% of the variations in the performance in logistics firms in Shanghai, China.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.19	1	4.19	10.72	.000b
	Residual	7.81	20	0.391		
	Total	12.00	19			

The findings in Table 3 reveals that the overall model was statistically significant. The findings indicate that performance is a good predictor in explaining the disruptive technologies among the logistics firms in Shanghai, China. This was supported by an F statistic of 30.05 and the reported p-value of 0.000 which was less than the conventional probability significance level of 0.05.

Table 4: Regression of Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.391	0.092		4.250	0.044
Disruptive Technologies	0.776	0.201	0.792	3.861	0.011

Based on the findings in Table 4, it was discovered that disruptive technologies was positively and significantly associated to performance ($\beta=0.776$, $p=0.011$). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 3.861 that is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. These results indicates that when disruptive technologies increases by one unit, the performance in logistics firms in Shanghai, China will increase by 0.776 units while other factors that influence the performance of logistics firms remain unchanged. Wang, Guo and Zhang (2023) articulated that disruptive technologies are shaping the performance landscape of logistics firms. Sinotrans' proactive integration of advanced technologies such as big data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly improved operational efficiency, enabling real-time tracking, predictive maintenance, and streamlined supply chain processes. Automation and robotics within Sinotrans' logistics operations showcase how disruptive technologies can reduce labor costs and enhance accuracy in tasks such as sorting and packing. The successful implementation of these technologies positions Sinotrans as a forward-thinking industry leader, setting a precedent for other logistics firms to strategically leverage innovation for improved performance.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the case study of Sinotrans Ltd in Shanghai, China, underscores the transformative potential of disruptive technologies in reshaping the landscape of logistics firms. Sinotrans' proactive adoption of advanced technologies such as big data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), and others exemplifies its commitment to innovation and staying at the forefront of the industry. The integration of these disruptive technologies has yielded tangible benefits, ranging from enhanced operational efficiency and improved customer experiences to a more sustainable and environmentally responsible logistics approach. The successful implementation of disruptive technologies by Sinotrans also highlights the importance of strategic foresight and adaptability. By recognizing the evolving needs of the industry and aligning its operations with emerging technologies, Sinotrans has positioned itself as a leader in the logistics sector. The company's commitment to collaboration, both within its organization and through partnerships with external stakeholders, has played a crucial role in fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

However, the study also reveals that the journey toward embracing disruptive technologies is not without its challenges. Sinotrans, like other logistics firms, grapples with issues such as financial constraints, employee resistance to change, interoperability concerns, cybersecurity risks, technological obsolescence, and navigating complex regulatory landscapes. Successfully addressing these challenges requires a holistic and adaptive approach, encompassing not only technological solutions but also strategic planning, employee engagement, and a commitment to ongoing learning and improvement. As Sinotrans continues to navigate the dynamic intersection of logistics and disruptive technologies, the case study serves as a valuable roadmap for other industry players seeking to leverage innovation for sustained growth and success. The experiences and lessons learned from Sinotrans' journey underscore the importance of a comprehensive and strategic approach to adopting disruptive technologies, ensuring that logistics firms not only survive but thrive in an era of rapid technological advancement and digital transformation.

6.0 Recommendations

Logistics firms should put strategic emphasis on fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning. It is essential for companies to invest in ongoing training programs to upskill employees and mitigate resistance to technological change. By creating an environment that encourages collaboration and embraces new ideas, logistics firms can harness the collective intelligence of their workforce to successfully integrate and adapt to disruptive technologies. Additionally, fostering partnerships with technology providers, startups, and industry experts can facilitate the exchange of knowledge, ensuring logistics firms stay abreast of the latest innovations and emerging trends. Furthermore, logistics firms should prioritize the development and implementation of robust cybersecurity measures. As disruptive technologies become integral to operations, the increased digitalization and interconnectivity expose firms to heightened cyber threats. Investing in state-of-the-art cybersecurity protocols, regularly updating systems, and conducting thorough risk assessments will help protect sensitive data, ensure operational continuity, and maintain the trust of clients and partners. As the logistics industry continues to evolve, a proactive and comprehensive approach to cybersecurity will be instrumental in safeguarding the integrity and resilience of logistics firms leveraging disruptive technologies.

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