

## **E-Commerce in the Distribution Management**

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### **Abstract**

*Internet is emerging as one of distribution tools in recent years. E-Distribution has effect consumers on purchasing the product. The consumer satisfaction, behavior and loyalty are important for enterprise to enhance their performance. This study would like to investigate companies adopted E-distribution would be an important factor to influences consumer behavior, satisfaction and loyalty, and how the E-distribution effect on consumer satisfaction, behavior and loyalty. The survey sample will be chosen managers of Taiwanese companies that adopted E-Distribution. In this study, the results found that the companies with E-distribution had impact on their consumer satisfaction, behavior and loyalty. Therefore, there were the relationships among E-distribution, consumer satisfaction, consumer behavior and consumer loyalty.*

**Keywords:**E-Distribution, Consumer Behavior, Consumer Satisfaction, Consumer Loyalty

### **1. Introduction**

One of the greatest challenges for the business owners would be managing their distribution in the most cost-effect manner. The distribution problems are including highly administration cost, distribution breakdown, loss of stocks, dissatisfaction of customers, waste of time, and incapability to enhance sales performance. The Internet power eliminates corporate boundaries and geographic restrictions, and creates communication path among partners, manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, and customers. Electronic commerce (E-commerce) development could provide advantage to an entire supply chain distribution (Chang & Graham, 2012; Gabriel, Woo & Radesh, 2010). The logistics service providers maintained cost efficiency in the distribution system for the online shopping business (Anderson & Leinbach, 2007). Therefore, business enterprises apply electronic commerce in their distribution channel that becomes important. Consumer satisfaction, behavior and loyalty may effect by the E-distribution.

### **2. Literature Review**

#### **2.1 E-Distribution**

Distribution basically proved logistics service such as transportation, warehousing, consolidation, product mixing. Distribution's job is to make sure that the right amount of products arrives at the right time and at the right places. Supply chain distribution is integrated an organization network that transforms raw materials into finished goods for customers. There are several types of distribution channels, e.g. producer direct to consumer, producer to retailer to consumer, or producer to wholesaler to retailer to consumer. Business distribution with four flows is including business flow, good flow, cash flow, and information flow. Distribution is under remarkable changes and effect by using Internet. The distribution network consistently with online shopping that can improved its cost efficiency and service reliability (Lim & Shiode, 2011). Electronic distribution is emerging as one of the most important distribution tools in recent years. E-commerce builds the new way to organize production and transact business that can be improved organization performance (Mehta, 2008). Technology brings to supply chain management for distributors that may build manageable and trustworthy. E-distribution is provided the users buying and the suppliers selling of products and services over a public network without the use of physical media (Mehta, 2008). Net marketplaces are able to gather numbers of suppliers and customers together. Suppliers enabled controlling E-distribution and directly to reach out their customers. Companies will be the leaders of the global marketplace if invest e-distribution strategy to capture their virtual customers.

There are many benefits for firms adopted business to business (B2B) to their distribution, including lower cost to supplier, lower inventory investment, better product quality, lower transaction costs, better market efficiencies, reduce sales and distribution costs, improve customer service, reduce inventory and progress costs, promote new products and services, lower customer interaction costs, better supply chain benefits, and lower cost for procurement administrative (Nikakhtar & Jianzheng, 2012; OECD, 2001). Organization adopted e-commerce in their distribution that is able to manage its warehouse inventory, take its customer orders, and ship the items to its individuals and businesses. Internet can also create supply chain value, cut down the bullwhip effect, and increase collaboration.

Kleindl (2003) mentioned that retailing adopted e-distribution strategy that may allow customers to customize their car purchases online, track their orders, and reduce working capital by lowering inventory. The supplier adopted e-distribution strategy that may develop auto manufacturing marketplace for all parts and supply purchasing, reduce transaction costs, and speed prices through quantity discounts (Kleindl, 2003; Mehta, 2008). The financing adopted e-distribution strategy that may allow for online financing and payments, cut costs, and speed payment flows (Kleindl, 2003; Mehta, 2008). The marketing adopted e-distribution strategy that may use online communication systems to inform, persuade and develop leads, and improve efficiency by gaining insight to customer's needs and design preferences (Kleindl, 2003; Mehta, 2008). The customer service adopted e-distribution strategy that may allow customers to use online system to check financing warranties, service updates, and improve service with instant access and collect data on customer problems (Dutta & Manaktola, 2009; Kleindl, 2003; Mehta, 2008).

On the distribution channels, wholesalers and retailers are the paths that producers or manufacturers obtain their goods to specific group of people. Then, retailers sell goods to their consumers. The Internet gives enterprises numbers of effective content distribution channels. On the online distribution channels, producers can sell products directly to their target audiences to cut out the middle man and eliminate intermediaries' layer (wholesalers and retailers) (Mehta, 2008). Online stores possibilities have a national or even international distribution channel.

Nyo (2013) identified that there are several distribution channels available online such as social networks, social bookmarks, social media, blogs, widgets and gadgets, browser extensions, and search engines. For the business and end users could create qualified traffic to store web and enhance store business visibility (Nyo, 2013). The Internet using as a distribution channel that would attract business managers who believed this tool would increase business sales and boost organizational performance (Corley, Jourdan & Ingram, 2013). Businesses have to certain each piece of web content that you have published, and the valuable information that you distributed to your target clients (White, 2013). Therefore, companies may create a blog, write a newsletter, set up an RSS feed, write an eBook, utilize social media, record a video, start a podcast, host a teleseminar, host a webinar, and create a group to advance your online distribution (White, 2013). Hitt and Frei (1999) mention firms are increasingly using E-distribution methods to enlarge or possibly substitute their exiting traditional service and product delivery procedure. On-line distribution is cost saving and lead to revenue enhancement for firms, become a competitive necessity (Hitt & Frei, 1999).

## **2.2 Consumer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is consumers' fulfillment response, and an emotional state that occurs in reply to the evaluation of a product and service (Howard & Seth, 1969; Mai et al., 2014; Oliver, 1997; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Westbrook, 1981). Bechwati and Xia (2003) mention customer satisfaction with the process mentions to satisfaction derived from judgments of the determinate process consumers experience before product purchase (Bechwati & Xia, 2003). Consumer satisfaction is defined as an evaluative response a particular consumption experience outcome (Wirtz & Mattila, 2001). Customer satisfaction is a major issue for companies wishing to enhance the value of customer assets and improve a better business performance (Kristensen, Martensen & Nholdt, 1999). Consumer satisfaction significantly increased with firm's value (Echeverria, 2015; Richard, 2000). Consumer perception of value is critical for any product or service provider. Not all consumers to seek value is similar in their needs and wants, it is depends on quality, cost, and timely delivery of their products and service (Cudney et al., 2010). The high-quality services are the key to the profitability of an organization and enhance customer satisfaction. Oliver (1980) mention consumer satisfaction is seen the outline psychological state resulting from emotions encompassing disconfirmation or confirmation of the consumer's expectations or a service prior feelings and thoughts about the real consumption experience.

### **2.3 Consumer Behavior**

Consumer behavior can be affected by psychological processes that occur outside of conscious awareness (Chartrand, 2005). Consumers' behavior towards a product may change over time depending on social network and the perceived social facts influence (Vag, 2007). Consumer behavior is the submission of behavioral economics and behavioral psychology to comprehend the market place of human purchase behaviors (Foxall, 2015). Advertisements and price changes psychological effects also change individual's attitude (Vag, 2007). Some people who as opinion leaders have deeper effect on other consumers' buying decisions (Karakaya, Berdur & Aytakin, 2011). Word-of-mouth also changes individual's attitude toward products and services. Stratton and Werne (2013) suggest advertisements and brand reputation prompt consumer response and consumer buying behavior. Consumer behavior is active and driven by the importance of different chronic or momentarily dynamited goals. Consumer behavior is consumer's final decision making process through using, buying and disposing of goods and services in a specific time period (Innis, 2008).

### **2.4 Consumer Loyalty**

Customer loyalty is certainly important because they assist to the profitability of the service providers (Anderson & Mittal, 2000; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). Loyalty behavior includes as repeat purchase to the good or service. Loyalty has both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions (Baumann et al., 2005). Consumer's loyalty is that customers will repeatedly choose a particular good or services, or customers were enthusiastic a particular brands. Reichheld and Scheffer (2000) observed that a recent update on e-loyalty, current beliefs trust does 'rule the Web; price does not. E-services are extremely important, ease of use, usefulness, and enjoyment of the site is very important in online marketing for customer (Childers et al., 2001; Davis et al., 1992). Loyal customers recommended the service to customers who ask for advice and guidance, thus reducing the company's costs for offering help (Toe et al., 2003). According to Rayport and Sviokla (1994) loyal customers in the online context are the importance, the changing role of the context, the content, and the infrastructure in the marketplace. Loyal customers are definitely important because they conduce to the service providers' profitability (Anderson & Mittal, 2000; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993).

### **2.5 E-Distribution & Consumer Satisfaction Relationship**

Satisfaction, efficiency, and effectiveness are the entire value of the customer (Toe et al., 2003). Customer relationship management is important in the Internet distribution strategies (Corley, Jourdan & Ingram, 2013). E-distribution strategy would be a highly relevant factor to influence online consumer's trust and satisfaction in a positive and direct way (Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu, 2011). E-distribution innovation is a multi-disciplinary process that involved individual functions to deliver products and services to entirely satisfy the online customers (Yu & Dong, 2013). Internet distribution enhanced consumer experience that will bring to the best rewards (Scanlon, 2009; Azadavar et al., 2011). Hitt and Frei (1999) mention customer in customers can have a great effect on the measured value of E-distribution investments. E-distribution maintains customer intention by raising customer satisfaction mainly through increasing trust (Mai, 2014).

### **2.6 E-Distribution & Consumer Behavior Relationship**

Consumers have shown increased interest in purchasing goods through online. Distribution through Internet has substantial effect on consumers on purchasing the product (Nuseir, Arora, Al & Gharaibeh, 2010). E-distribution is to build customer behavior to enhance customer service or e-commerce sales (Jung Kook & Lehto, 2010). Stratton and Werne (2013) mention consumers' positive emotional experiences and trust can be affect purchasing behavior.

### **2.7 Consumer Satisfaction & Consumer Behavior Relationship**

Companies to assure their customers are satisfied that can go through concentrated the steps of the complaint conducting process of consumer behavior (Bolkan, Goodboy & Bachman, 2012). The customer satisfaction higher, common complaint behavior will be less (Yu et al., 2014). Oliver (1980) suggests that satisfaction finally impacts one's entire attitude toward future consumption behavior. Satisfaction with an organizational answer to consumer complaining that is an important consumer behavior predictor following business rehabilitation efforts (Bolkan, Goodboy & Bachman, 2012).

## 2.8 Consumer Satisfaction & Consumer Loyalty Relationship

Consumer satisfaction is a mean issue in marketing practice (Oliver, 1997; Yi, 1990). Customer satisfaction will be positively related to repurchase intention and loyalty (Bolkan, Goodboy & Bachman, 2012; Martin, 1996). Satisfied customers are most often repeat customers (Yu et al., 2014). Consumer satisfaction plays a central role in long-term consumer-business relationship (Martin, 1996). Customer satisfaction can help establish consumer loyalty toward a business by promoting customer faithfulness (Bolkan, Goodboy & Bachman, 2012).

Customer satisfaction is a major result of marketing activity and serves to connect processes of decision making such as complaining behavior, word-of-mouth, attitude change, repeat purchase and brand loyalty (Bearden & Teel, 1983; Fornell, 1992; Oliver, 1980). Consumers Satisfaction affects Consumers Loyalty (Kristensen, Martensen & Nholdt, 1999). Satisfied customers tend to be loyal to the products and services that leading to customer retention and increased revenue generation (Yu et al., 2014).

## 2.9 Consumers Behavior & Consumers Loyalty Relationship

Zeithaml (2000) states customer loyalty as being effect by either behavioral or attitudinal. The behavioral approach is that customers are loyal as long as they keep on using and buying services or goods (Woodside et al., 1989; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al., 1996). Day (1969) four decades ago mentioned the concept that loyalty has both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions (Baumann et al., 2005). The behavior approach includes standard such as share-of-wallet, repeat purchase, loyalty and word of mouth referrals, while the attitudinal approach consists of standard like trust, commitment or emotional attachment (Baumann et al., 2005; Day, 1969). The customers feel belonging or commitment to the good or service that is attitudinal approach (Reichheld, 2003). Baldinger and Rubinson (1996) found that the stronger the behavioral commitment the more likely consumers were to remain loyalty. Reichheld (2003) states that the strong evidence of customer loyalty is the percentage of customers who were behaving eager enough to refer friends or colleagues to a particular good or service. The fundamental an tool that can be used for business purpose to improve the customer benefits and reduce the cost of the computer industry or enhance the profit of computer industry and also obtain the customer more loyal to the company by providing good services to the customer and meet the customer requirements that is online marketing (Azadavar et al., 2011; Kopetz et al., 2011).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Model

The study's research model proposed that E-distribution had a great effect on consumer loyalty. The concept model was grounded in generic E-distribution, consumer satisfaction, consumer behavior, consumer loyalty, as shown in Figure 1.

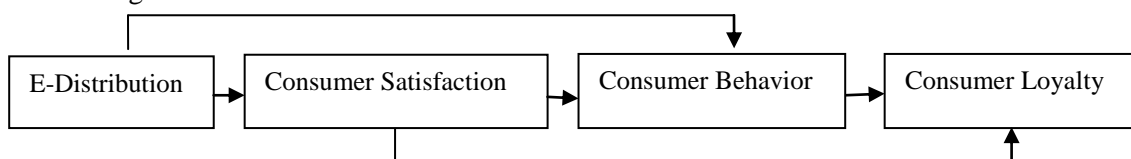


Figure 1. Research Model.

The survey sample will be managers of Taiwanese firms that adopted E-distribution. In this study, the researcher examines a research model (Figure 1) of e-commerce in the distribution management. This study is based on the theory of a literature review and uses quantitative research methods to answer the research question and support the hypotheses. The study was used SPSS18 to test and analysis data, and used convenience sampling approach to collect data. The research uses correlation analysis and regression analysis to analyze the data collected.

### 3.2 Results

There were 250 questionnaires sent and 122 collected with 101 valid. The effective response rate was 40%. In this study, the reliability analysis for variables, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was 0.76.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is asignificant correlation between E-distribution and consumer satisfaction.

The consumer satisfaction and wellbeing were highly correlated, and reached significant levels ( $r = 0.337$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and the dimensions also showed significant positive correlation, as shown in Table 1.

The results shown E-distribution was positively correlated to consumer satisfaction. Therefore, company with a higher E-distribution, consumer satisfaction was also higher. Therefore, H<sub>1</sub> was supported.

**Table 1 Correlations**

	E Distribution	C Satisfaction
E Distribution Pearson Correlation	1	.337**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
N	102	102
CSatisfaction Pearson Correlation	.337**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
N	102	102

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant correlation between E-distribution and consumer behavior.

From Table 2 shows the E-distribution and consumer behavior positive correlation, reached significant levels ( $r = 0.203$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and the dimensions also show significant positive correlation. The results showed E-distribution positive correlation to consumer behavior. Overall, company E-distribution was correlated to the consumer behavior. Therefore, H<sub>2</sub> was supported.

**Table 2 Correlations**

	EDistribution	CBehavior
EDistribution Pearson Correlation	1	.203*
Sig. (2-tailed)		.041
N	102	102
CBehavior Pearson Correlation	.203*	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	
N	102	102

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**H<sub>3</sub>:** There is a significant correlation between customer satisfaction and consumer loyalty.

From Table 3, the customer satisfaction and consumer loyalty shown with a positive correlation, and reached significant levels ( $r = 0.474$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and the dimensions also show significant positive correlation. The results shown customer satisfaction positively correlated with consumer loyalty. The customer satisfaction was higher; their consumer loyalty was higher. Therefore, H<sub>3</sub> was supported.

**Table 3 Correlations**

	CSatisfaction	CLoyalty
CSatisfaction Pearson Correlation	1	.474**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	102	102
CLoyalty Pearson Correlation	.474**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	102	102

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**H<sub>4</sub>:** There is a significant correlation between customer satisfaction and consumer behavior.

From Table 4 shows the customer satisfaction and consumers behavior positive correlation, reached significant levels ( $r = 0.736$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and the dimensions also show significant positive correlation. The results showed the customers satisfaction positive correlation to consumer behavior. Overall, customer satisfaction was highly effect to the consumer behavior. Therefore, H<sub>1</sub> was supported.

**Table 4 Correlations**

	CSatisfaction	CBehavior
EDistribution Pearson Correlation	1	.736**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	102	102
CBehavior Pearson Correlation	.736**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	102	102

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**H<sub>5</sub>**: There is a significant correlation between consumer behavior and customer loyalty.

From Table 5 shows the consumer behavior and customer loyalty positive correlation, reached significant levels ( $r = 0.554$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and the dimensions also show significant positive correlation. The results showed consumer behavior positive correlation to customer loyalty. Overall, the consumer behavior was correlated to the consumer loyalty. Therefore, H<sub>2</sub> was supported.

**Table 5 Correlations**

	<b>CBehavior</b>	<b>CLoyalty</b>
<b>CBehavior</b> Pearson Correlation	1	.554**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	102	102
<b>CLoyalty</b> Pearson Correlation	.554**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	102	102

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**H<sub>6</sub>**: Consumer satisfaction mediates the relationship between E-distribution and consumer loyalty.

Table 6.1-6.3 shown, E-distribution to consumer loyalty, R<sup>2</sup> was 0.229, F value of 15.993, reached significant levels  $p < .000$ . Therefore, E-distribution to consumer loyalty had significant influence. The company with higher E-distribution can own better consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty. To enhance company E-distribution will improve their better degree of consumer loyalty. Therefore, H<sub>6</sub> was supported. E-distribution of company has the significant impact on consumer loyalty. Model 1: The results found an mediator variables (consumer satisfaction) was added, the independent variable (E-distribution) on the dependent variable (consumer loyalty) reached a significant level of regression coefficient,  $p < 0.000$ . Therefore, the consumer satisfaction has mediating effect between E-distribution and consumer loyalty, as displayed in Table 6.1-6.3. H<sub>6</sub> was supported.

**Table 6.1 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.494 <sup>a</sup>	.244	.229	.329

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSatisfaction, EDistribution

**Table 6.2 ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	3.459	2	1.730	15.993	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	10.707	99	.108		
Total	14.167	101			

a. Predictors: (Constant), EDistribution, CSatisfaction

b. Dependent Variable: CLoyalty

**Table 6.3 Coefficient**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.764	.390		4.529	.000
CSatisfaction	.396	.087	.423	4.558	.000
EDistribution	.143	.089	.150	1.616	.109

a. Dependent Variable: CLoyalty

**H<sub>7</sub>**: Consumer behavior mediates the relationship between E-Distribution and consumer loyalty.

Table 7.1-7.3 shown, E-distribution to consumer loyalty, R<sup>2</sup> was 0.327, F value of 25.520, reached significant levels  $p < .000$ . Model 1: The results found an mediator variables (consumer behavior) was added, the independent variable (E-distribution) on the dependent variable (consumer loyalty) reached a significant level of regression

coefficient,  $p < 0.000$ . Therefore, the consumer behavior has mediating effect between E-distribution and consumer loyalty, as displayed in Table 7.1-7.3.  $H_7$  was supported.

**Table 7.1 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.583 <sup>a</sup>	.340	.327	.307

a. Predictors: (Constant), CBehavior, EDistribution

**Table 7.2 ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	4.819	2	2.410	25.520	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	9.347	99	.094		
Total	14.167	101			

a. Predictors: (Constant), CBehavior, EDistribution

b. Dependent Variable: CLoyalty

**Table 7.3 Coefficient**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.504	.363		4.138	.000
EDistribution	.180	.080	.188	2.252	.027
CBehavior	.425	.069	.515	6.181	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CLoyalty

#### 4. Conclusion

The virtual integration distribution is one of the different solutions used by enterprises to collaborate and integrate processes across the company barriers. Businesses adopted e-commerce technology or information systems on their distribution that would be changed on their consumer's satisfaction, behaviors and loyalty, and provided better opportunities in the marketplace. It is clear to provide an electronic distribution environment in the future that is important for the businesses.

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