The growth of reliance towards courier services through e-business verified during COVID-19: Malaysia

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Abstract. Background: E-business firms' dependence on courier companies was satisfactory. It was found that with organizations that had supply chains, inter-firm dependence not only had a positive effect on their financial performance, but the development of technology or e-business systems development is also improved. This occurred because the pressure from their partners' technologies made other partners feel the need to improve the technologies of their business. We realized that managing knowledge and creativity provided many benefits when it was combined with advanced technology especially in the Pandemic of COVID-19. Method/Analysis: This study uses a qualitative and quantitative method such as interview and observation (qualitative) to verify questionnaires (quantitative) by experts in the field of logistics especially in courier firms and e-business companies. Then for analyzing data we use SMART-PLS. Findings: This study proves that inter-firm dependence between courier companies and e-business firms are significant as well as they were able to contribute to new services developed especially for a crucial situation such as COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic is speeding up the trend towards digital. Small and medium-sized companies are also able to improve relationships with established customers while developing and leveraging new partnerships, especially with their logistics partners, by being active digitally. Application: In conclusion, it could help to recognize the current management and capacity levels, as well as the role of courier services and e-business performance. Thus, it could help both of them to renew their views of inter-company dependence management effects as well as to enhance their organizational practices, and that they'll survive the market.

1. Introduction
Previous research has explored inter-firm dependence. It has been widely recognized that enterprises cannot be independent and self-sufficient in terms of domestic capital, capacities and abilities to meet the demands of environmental change, market fluctuations and competition [7]. Companies relied on business partners to extend their capacities with inter-company tools built into supply chains [7, 8]. This study emphasizes that inter-company dependency is a shared business dependency between e-business firms and courier firms, with a win-win situation as its goal. Organizations should understand the importance of the complementary resources and skills of business partners, and rely on partners to fulfill mutual interests [3, 9].

Inter-company reliance is essential to logistics management in a supply chain [10]. First, it is formed from positive exchange experiences which tie partners together and shape relationships in the supply chain [11]. Consequently, as courier companies become supply chain partners for e-business firms, they can access peculiar or relationship-specific assets like the sharing of proprietary
information, expertise, and technological know-how [10]. Furthermore, inter-company collaboration may protect for supply chain partners to prevent opportunistic behavior, reduce counterparty risks, improve relationship interaction, and then increase partners’ efficiency [13]. This can also reduce the cost of negotiation and purchase, speed customer responses, and improve operational productivity [15].

Internet-based e-businesses are increasingly vital for courier services in supply chain operations, as companies begin to integrate business processes with partners in realizing the value and significance of inter-company dependency and cooperative advantage [15]; Inter-company reliance gives partners incentives such as knowledge sharing, complementary tools to be innovative and versatile [3]. This also offers a stable environment where opportunistic actions and transaction costs are minimized [13]. This also allows businesses to work together to build inter-company networks, integrate business operations and improve the flow of knowledge with business partners.

When business partners trust that their suppliers can increase their performance, there will be a stronger perception of strategic reliance [3, 16]. Moreover, if the dependence of e-business firms with courier companies are stronger, the strategic alliance will be effective [15]. For instance, courier companies can easily access information about demand and special requirements of e-business companies to satisfy their clients, because e-business companies are strongly dependent on courier services and especially on logistics management and parcel delivery [18]. Thus, courier companies need to develop and create a strategy of new services to fulfill the demand of e-business firms as partners [17]. As a result, e-business companies as courier partners will be able to make joint investments, which could contribute to the development of internet-based integration of routine process and operation e-business systems [18].

Furthermore, when e-business firms feel dependent on courier companies and recognize the importance of their services such as effective deliveries, track and trace online, and the sharing of clients' demographic data, there will be a need to integrate e-business systems. The implementation of e-business systems, therefore, has a significant effect on the performance of business efficiency [21]. It is important to note that this study determines inter-company dependence (ICD) as the degree to which e-companies rely on courier companies as supply chain partners to drive e-company success from a financial and non-financial perspective.

2. Literature Review

2.1. E-business companies and courier companies are interdependent.

The experience of receiving information about the product with a comprehensive process map connection has been an enriching experience for Malaysian consumers in recent years, up to the final minute where the courier alerts a customer [19]. A development in the Malaysian online retail market has been the strengthened expectations of customers with electronic operations [20]. The expertise gained was the result of carefully planned distribution logistics fitted with technical innovation, using CRM, to provide a new level of customer service [21].

When a Malaysian customer thinks to buy a particular product, the very first step they would take is to test and compare the detailed descriptions and prices from a reputable source [21]. The conventional reputation assessment approach was for a customer to receive first-hand user knowledge and experiences [22]. It is very popular with the emergence of new technology in business transactions, namely e-business systems like CRM applications, online product survey and comparisons through various e-portals [23]. The CRM software has helped customers to such a point that a customer can quickly compare a couple of items on various websites like Mudah.com simultaneously. And instead Shopee.com. The customer achieves his / her needs through this method to purchase the commodity [21]. Everything is noted for future reference in an information system between B2B. The data and information is used by the manufacturer, supplier, and the provider of logistics services, the e-tailer and the customer [24].

When a customer has completed the product comparison, they are led to an e-retail portal where they can review product specifics such as cost, promotional structure, venue availability, delivery options and payment methods [22]. When the consumer has made up his mind to purchase the product
and the product is ordered, a message is sent to the consumer immediately via an information centre informing the customer that the order has been successfully placed [23]. The customer information-updating phase is the effect of e-retailing systems [25]. When the consumer places a purchase order, the consumer is directed to the payment option part which gives the customer the option of paying for the purchase by debit card or credit card or opting for cash on delivery option (COD) [23, 24]. It is compulsory to have online payments through a secured payment gateway such as ERP [26]. In e-commerce, the above processes are known as a business-to-consumer (B2C) processes [22].

If the price is paid, the purchase order is processed and supplier or retailer is made aware of the order through an automated system such as CRM and ERP. Thus, e-business systems and technology make their presence felt indirect [25]. E-business system has a lot of benefits, but not all of the use of e-business systems are seen by a consumer and retailer. For example, these systems will notify the retailer or the seller of a product through an e-retailer network once the order is checked and plans can be made by a retailer for the product's movement [22]. A well-defined and stable SCM framework makes this method practically and error-free [23, 24].

In the meantime, as soon as a product is made available by a seller, it is packaged as per company standard and packed more tightly according to the nature of the product such as items made of glass, crystal or including foods [23, 24]. With fragile objects, the extra cushion is given so a product can survive the journey it has to make, so it does not crack during the journey. Meanwhile, for pack food, they need to make sure it is liquid free, customers can not post food that has short expiry date, and customers also need to know to avoid all kinds of food that is not suitable to be sent to distant places, so the package is not destroyed during the trip. Once a customer opens the packet it will also not be split [24]. It makes the product ready for shipping. At this point, the role of courier companies becomes crucial, in honoring the e-retailer's commitment [26]. When the product is packed securely and safely, the product is made ready at the required address to be delivered or shipped to the customer. When the product is dispatched, the customer receives a notification confirming that the order has been dispatched [26]. The message about the confirmation of dispatch is conducted through information systems (IS), such as a smartphone application or e-mail. Thus, in e-business, these processes are called business-to-business (B2B) processes. It refers to business operations between two companies where both of them have a mutual dependence on a supply chain through technology systems [25].

Consumers can easily monitor their order and display the product's current status right up to delivery of the product to them. This service is known as a track and trace online service [24]. When the consumer receives the notification, it tells them of their product's tentative delivery date. In addition, the product is normally shipped to the customer at his / her chosen address on or before the delivery date [26].

The role of e-business system equipped information center becomes crucial from the beginning of a product survey until a product is delivered (see Figure 1). For the future, a customer's preference, surveyed goods, links visited and other types of information are tailored and personalized to remind a customer of their past purchasing activities. Specifications of a product, comparisons, cost analysis and the expected delivery date have never been given in the past. Guest visitors can receive this information at e-portals or websites. When a product is put in a cart, the information management infrastructure will start chasing a customer once an order is made. The best aspect of e-retailing is being able to track a customer on what happens to their order. At any time, each stage is linked to an information center and a customer, who can check the status of the product journey. The e-portal also frequently sends the user SMS and e-mails to make him or her feel like they are part of the supply chain [23, 24, 26].
Figure 1. B2B; e-retailing process flow chart through e-business systems (Between e-business firms and courier companies)

Thus, the main benefit of technology for online businesses and logistics management by courier companies is easy tracking of parcels. When a product order is verified, a message is sent to a consumer's cell phone and email indicating the product's current status. Information management technology has advanced to such an extent that the customer can track and trace his order at any point, for example from order confirmation, payment (in the case of internet banking), shipment of the product from the supplier, transit status, arrival at the destination supplier, delivery at the consumer's home or office, payment (e.g. COD or inter-bank) and return of the product. Then the customer will trace their order from the beginning to the end.

The advanced of e-business systems challenges the retail segment especially e-retailing. E-business systems give a new experience for customers, where e-business companies provide a lot of choices to their customers, and customers able to buy various goods at one time. The improved experiences of customers will enhance the performance of courier companies and online businesses. Thus, the impacts of technology on the business operations of entrepreneurs are significant [23]. Moreover, the technology of information systems within courier companies is also significant, especially with managing supply chains [26]. Furthermore, this researcher [3] found that all of the courier companies in Malaysia have already adopted technology in e-business systems namely SCM, CRM, and ERP software.

2.2. Covid-19 pandemic shows the need for small and medium enterprises to embark on digital transformation

Although the Covid-19 outbreak may have brought a crippling wave of economic disruption from big business to small and medium-sized businesses, it may also have paved the way for digital transformation as companies adapt their operations to cope with office closures, restricted movement and supply disruption [5].

Moreover, these kinds of seismic movements occur frequently in times of crisis. As small and medium-sized companies, seeking to thrive in this demanding market climate, businesses have been forced into an accelerated digitalization state everywhere [4, 6], whether they like it or not.

Indeed, the majority of large firms are already stable with their technologies and finances, but for most small and medium-sized businesses are clearly unprepared to cope with such a pandemic [4].
It is always during a crisis, however, that small and medium-sized companies begin to search for new ways to keep their businesses going [5]. Now is the perfect time for them to accept Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4.0) and begin their path toward digital transformation.

Though shops have begun reopening under the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) with loosened restrictions, doing business is still challenging physically [4]. All are expected to learn new ways to communicate with clients and understand social distancing rules. Retailers should put less emphasis on brick-and-mortar stores in the new standard, and exploit emerging e-commerce platforms. In addition, small and medium-sized businesses, including electronic point-of-sale systems (e-POS), enterprise resource planning (ERP) and electronic payroll systems, need to accept digitalisation for their business operations [3].

The recession, taking advantage of this, gives small and medium-sized businesses an opportunity to develop a digital business strategy. Many other e-commerce websites have reported a spike in customers and orders, and in this time are doing fairly well [4]. The pandemic is spurring the trend towards digital. Small and medium-sized companies are also able to improve relationships with established customers and create more trust with mutual support by developing new alliances and exploiting them [3].

2.3. Impact of COVID-19 into courier and e-business companies directly: Malaysia situation

Most of the local industries have done online business to continue the survival of the industry throughout the Movement Control Order (MCO). This can indirectly improve the performance of e-business in Malaysia. In 2018, e-business performance grew by 7.9 percent compared to 11.9 percent in the previous year [1].

Good e-business performance comes from one of contributions by Malaysian Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) projected a 20 percent growth in e-business as well as e-commerce contributions to the digital economy even under MCO enforcement. The projected growth can be achieved through the active intervention of various agencies and the contribution to GDP is expected to reach RM170 billion for 2020.

While, E-business platforms, such as Lazada Malaysia and TNG Digital Sdn Bhd introduced an incentive program worth RM6 million named #KitaBantuKita to stimulate the national economy after COVID-19 and protect more than 320,000 small and medium enterprises, as well as the digital economy, is a factor important in the recovery of the Malaysian economy [1].

Lazada Malaysia’s incentive program in collaboration with TNG Digital has accelerated the use of digital and payment platforms among consumers and merchants, especially small and medium enterprises. Besides, it enhances the e-commerce convert into e-business systems and digitization ecosystem in new norms as well as the regeneration of the national economy [3].

Cooperation between Lazada Malaysia and TNG Digital Sdn. Bhd. is a good example to show increasing growth in Malaysia’s e-business. E-business is not only between businesses to business however between supply chains [3]. As we know each business has its supply chain such as the supply of transportation and delivery, where Lazada has collaborated with Pos Malaysia, Nationwide, Skynet, and other courier companies. This relationship is also called e-business as long as they are sharing information and system during the operation between them and their customers [21].

Additionally, the collaboration between e-business companies and courier companies will increase the profit rapidly [3, 20, 21]. Proven by Pos Malaysia Bhd which posted a reduced net loss from RM141.1 million in the same quarter last year in its first quarter of RM49.2 million. Revenue at RM558.5 million was 6.1 percent lower [1]. Malaysia’s courier industries however, saw a 6.7 percent year-on-year rise in parcel volume, driven by stronger demand from e-commerce and online marketplaces, active digital and conventional sales and marketing push, as well as improved mid-mile and last-mile performance. At the same time, the mail company saw a 1 percent year-on-year rise in revenue contributed by the latest revision of postage rates that was introduced on Feb 1. The monthly revenue of the mail sector rose by RM11 million in February 2020 but the mail volume declined in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic [1]. Thus, with this cooperation, it’s able to cover the loss.

Besides that, other benefits for this cooperation we can see that the quality of courier service in Malaysia is improving. According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission
(MCMC), the quality of the country's courier industry services increased 4 percent to 70 percent in 2019 compared to 66 percent in the previous year, the assessment was made based on the Courier Industry Services Customer Index [2].

Furthermore, MCMC, (2019) has highlighted that the best quality strongly depends on the main criteria. It is important also, to determine the winners of the 2019 Annual E-Commerce Delivery Award provided by MCMC to the industry of courier Malaysia. The main criteria is i) the speed of delivery. The delivery performance of packages also showed a positive development with an average of 87 percent of packages received within three days in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak. ii) Waiting time. In terms of customer service, the average waiting time to get service at the counter is three minutes and the average service period for each customer is between five and 10 minutes. iii) Customer satisfaction; based on price and punctuality. From the consumer point of view, it was found that they emphasize the price dimension to their satisfaction as a deciding factor, followed by timeliness in delivery.

3. Methodology

The methodology is described as "the body of knowledge that defines and analyzes methods, indicates their limitations and resources, clarifies their assumptions and implications and relates their potential to advances in science" [27]. The methodology and data analysis strategies used in this research aimed at validating the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. The data analysis strategy employed in this research particularly the use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using the Partial Least Square (SmartPLS 3) software. We test our model using a sample composed of members of the employees of courier companies and e-business firms.

3.1 Data Collection

The study design uses mail surveys to include key sources from managers and top employees of courier and e-business firms. By reporting on a collective or organizational property [29], key informants may provide information to the aggregate or corporate unit of study and are selected because they hold specific credentials, such as a particular position in the firm or advanced expertise [28]. Due to their knowledge of the business, familiarity with its atmosphere and access to strategic and financial information, informants become important.

The top managers have assisted us by providing their members with a mailing list. First, by traditional mail to (i) screen, we contacted 200 (non-academic) members to determine whether their company uses a courier service provider that listed courier companies' warehouse, delivery, and transportation management offers and (ii) requests the member's participation in the study. Second, after receiving the respondents' responses, when multiple respondents from the same firm agreed to participate, the questionnaire was subsequently sent only to the respondent whose official job title suggested that the member was most knowledgeable, along with a cover letter and prepaid return envelope. Third, they mailed another copy of the questionnaire and a reminder letter three weeks after the questionnaire was posted. Besides that, the researcher also goes to their companies to give the questionnaires by hand. Overall, 250 respondents in which, representing 125 by courier services from different courier companies and involve vice president, senior managers, branch managers, leader, and frontline employees, while the rest 125 respondents by e-business firms, which involve founders firms, manager director, financial managers, and middle employees, they are agreed to participate.

4. Results and Discussions

Coefficients of the direction of the structural model may be viewed as being relative to one another. When one path coefficient is greater than the other, its influence is greater on the latent endogenous variable. More specifically, the path model's individual track coefficients can be interpreted just like the standardized beta coefficients in an OLS regression. Such coefficients reflect the expected change to a unit shift in a predictor model in the endogenous system [30].
4.1. Results
A separate calculation model was implemented [30], and a description was created for the performances of e-business firms. The complete measuring model, with two constructs and six items, was then tested and re-specified to enhance model fit using five criteria: (i) insignificant loadings, (ii) high, unexplained shared variance with other objects, i.e. large adjustment indices, MI > 3.94, (iii) large, shared common variance of items with the items of other buildings, (iv) large uniform residuals, NR > 2 and The complete model of measurement shows good fit: $\pi^2 = 98.65$, d.f. = 73, $p < 0.01$; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.93; incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.95; and estimated root mean square error (RMSEA) = 0.051.

Table 1. The Path Coefficient of ICD and E-Business Performance

| Items          | Path Coefficient | P-Value | Sig. Level |
|----------------|------------------|---------|------------|
| ICD 1          | 0.709            | (0.000) | ***        |
| ICD 2          | 0.681            | (0.000) | ***        |
| ICD 3          | 0.818            | (0.000) | ***        |
| ICD 5          | 0.658            | (0.000) | ***        |
| ICD 6          | 0.743            | (0.000) | ***        |
| ICD towards E-Business Performance | 0.239 | (0.005) | ***        |
| FP             | 0.883            | (0.000) | ***        |
| NFP            | 0.916            | (0.000) | ***        |

*** Significance at level 0.01 (two-tailed)
ICD : Inter-Company Dependence
E-BIZ PERFOM : E-Business Performance
FP: Financial Performance
NFP: Non-Financial Performance

Table 1 shows the path coefficient of each Items in ICD equals to 0.709 (Sig. 0.000) for ICD1, 0.681 (Sig. 0.000) for ICD2, 0.818 (Sig. 0.000) for ICD3 and ICD6 are 0.743 (Sig. 0.000) and 0.239 (Sig. 0.000) respectively. Based on that result, the path coefficient of ICD towards E-Business Performance shows equals to 0.239 (Sig. 0.005), which is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) (see Figure 2). Therefore, Inter-Firm Dependence is significantly related to E-Business Performance in a positive direction, which is e-business performances are measured from two sides; financial and non-financial performance.
Figure 2. Relationship of ICD and E-Business Performances

4.2. Discussions: Inter-Company Dependent on Courier companies and E-Business firms performance

The networks and dependence of inter-firms had a direct impact on performance. Furthermore, inter-firm dependence also has an indirect impact on performance by influencing firm creativity to develop new services [15]. This researcher [3] revealed that inter-firm dependence can boost relationships on business partner performances and firm creativity, and also to develop new services directly. It means that increasing e-business companies’ dependence on courier companies would increase the creative service creation and then improve the performance of their business partners. The dependence of e-business companies will encourage demand for courier services and logistics, in line with the advancement of adopted technologies in e-commerce transactions. E-business companies will ask for better services over time, which will force and affect courier companies to try and develop creative services to meet customer needs [e.g., 18, 31].

The creativity sources do not reside exclusively within companies but are also found externally. Nonetheless, external sources from business partners can be crucial to the creation of substantial innovation [18]. Thus, if a company wants to increase its ability to create, it should identify and exploit the efficiencies of partners holding complementary resources and attempt to internalize these external resources available through their network [32]. The outcome of creativity will then go back to their business partners in the form of better services. Moreover, the newness of the service will make their business partners feel more satisfied [33]. Thus, networks of inter-firms are therefore generally found to have a positive impact on firm creativity, which drives business partner's performance [3].

Recent studies have shown that companies must learn to deal with network complexity by capturing inter-firm experiences and dependences to improve firms’ performances [3, 6], especially when the world suffered from infection by COVID-19. Courier companies need new strategies developed to provide creative services for all types of businesses. Increasing inter-company dependency and partnership management capabilities thus also improve firm ingenuity by fostering network leverage [34]. So the interplay between networks of inter-company dependence is increasingly deciding company performance [32]. Creative services were formed based on inter-firm experiences and dependence, which enhanced the performance of business partners [15]. Thus, both courier companies and e-business firms must build stronger networks between them.

Creativity involves the creation of more effective services and processes through the application of new knowledge [35]. The new knowledge will generate new services and processes [34]. Today, many firms race to learn new knowledge. This is also the case for courier companies, who can get new information and knowledge in their collaboration networks. From previous experience of services provided, they can obtain information about their business partners’ satisfaction levels. Consequently, improvement in services will be based on actual business partner requirements [15]. Thus, their creativity in new services can compete in the market and industry.

The literature on supply chain management and strategic management has clarified that the dependence or network of partners that inter-firms are embedded in, influences its creativity outcomes.
[e.g. 15, 18, 33]. Companies capable of identifying and exploiting strengths with partners that share complementary resources and skills may achieve a competitive advantage over other companies [36]. Access to unique and valuable knowledge acquired through inter-company partner dependency can be leveraged to benefit in-house creativity. This also helps work processes to be updated, developing new services and business models also reconfigured [36, 37]. Besides this, participation in inter-company dependency provides companies with vast knowledge and data advantages in terms of exposure, timing and learning [14, 38]. Organizations increase and enhance their access to inter-company dependency networks such as number and consistency of ties, and then develop in-house innovation capabilities. Thus their competitive position also improves with inter-company cooperation, as their quest costs and new knowledge discovery costs are reduced [34].

Connecting to a vast network enables businesses to open themselves to new ideas and learning that leads to their innovative abilities [39]. Companies closer to the center of their inter-company dependence will, in principle, be exposed to more sources of information and have a higher level of access to relevant complementary resources. In other words, a high degree of centrality increases a company’s relation to all other network members in the fewest number of steps [40]. Overall, the results of this study show that inter-company reliance between courier companies and e-business firms is important and significant as well as being able to contribute to new technologies built like development of new services specifically for a critical situation like COVID-19.

This saw Malaysia’s courier industry record a 69 per cent monthly leap to an average daily volume of 590,000 parcels in April, during the full month of the Movement Control Order (MCO). In May its average output surpassed recorded levels in the Malaysia courier industry’s best years. Pos Malaysia is experiencing something similar, as its current rates are significantly higher than the average of about 300,000 parcels it used to handle every day. In addition, the courier’s industry in the Integrated Parcel Centers (IPC) at Shah Alam and the newly built facility in KLIA increased their processing capacity by 77 per cent from 300,000 to 530,000 parcels per day, enabling them to cope with rising demand from e-business and e-commerce companies [1]. Therefore, this crucial situation would pursue courier companies to develop better services to fulfill the demand from their business partners as well as customers especially to manage hundreds of packages. As a result, towards enhancing e-business companies’ performance as their business partner directly, from the side of financial and non-financial [3].

5. Conclusion
This study finds that the positive effects of creative courier services on e-business firm performance, it occurs when courier companies work as business partners. The core of operation at all courier service are efficient delivery and pick-up of items, for parcels and/or documents [41]. The parcels process of courier operations consists of parcels collection, input sorting, organizing the movement of parcels, output sorting, and distribution of the parcels [42]. Challenges relating to courier services and logistics operations include: firstly, the delivery network changes daily; secondly, there is real-time customer demand for pick-ups during delivery; and thirdly, there is a growing trend for courier companies to deliver micro-logistics services, particularly online services, including deliveries of high-value items of small sizes, such as cellular phone sets, or internet connection packages [43]. The services are not necessarily delivered the next day, but delivery may be performed within a certain pre-agreed period between business partners. Thus, the complexity of the courier process needs to be assisted by creative development through ICT and advanced technology, to ensure that correct parcels can be received by the customer, at the right time [24].

Additionally, the economy of Malaysia not only facing of COVID-19 challenge. There have other issues such as inflation, financial challenges, the development of rapid technology, the presence of international courier companies, and the existence of more courier companies in Malaysia. The increase in companies will result in supply exceeding demand. Thus, supply chain partners need to identify exactly what they need from logistics operations and courier services. Courier companies need to approach their business partners, respond to their requirements, and then disseminate information obtained to research and development departments. They should not just wait until their business partners make complaints. The Post-on-Wheels service is an example of a creative courier service that
courier companies in Malaysia provide to e-business firms. This is a postal service moving van, equipped with a satellite facility which is capable of providing high-tech services such as a post office, Post-Automated-Machine, Dropbox Prepaid, Flexi Prepaid, and EziDrive-Thru [3].

Inter-company dependency basically motivates businesses to build ties and establish business relationships with regard to e-business structures and supply chain operations [7]. This researcher [15] showed that by integrating e-business systems with business partners, there was a significant direct causal effect of inter-firm trust on supply chains operations. Then supported by this researcher finding [3] her study has identified that most of the courier companies in Malaysia have adopted e-commerce systems for a long time and have already adopted e-business systems such as SCM, ERP, and CRM software. Thus, it was easy to connect to and collaborate with business partners [3, 44]. In the meantime, inter-company trust has helped boost operational efficiency and served as a reliable safeguard for e-business integration and supply chain operations, mitigating suppliers' opportunistic activity 273, minimizing operational risks and inter-company operating costs [9, 15]. In this way, trust between companies helped boost behavioral predictability and the morale of supply chain partners [15, 45]. To conclude, courier companies could build many creative services and improve old services and operations based on actual business partners’ demand.

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