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Innovation-oriented supply chain integration for combined

competitiveness and firm performance

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1. Introduction

The emergence of mainland China and other developing countries have threatened Taiwan's position as the world's manufacturing center, a position established on the basis of high cost effectiveness. A superior manufacturing advantage is no longer sufficient for sustaining Taiwan's competitiveness; firms must launch more innovative products or services to achieve a controlling position in the marketplace. No firm can rely on a single set of advantages to maintain competitiveness because competitors develop counterstrategies. In addition, consumer preferences are likely to change as the market environment changes. The manufacturing orientation of Taiwan results in an endless pursuit of lower production costs. A marketing-based orientation, which stresses superior marketing strategies and distributors, has become mainstream because of the Internet and relevant advancements in technology. Nonetheless, these two orientations can be easily replicated by competitors. In this cloud era, when products are swiftly replaced, forming innovation-oriented supply-chain partnerships and creating innovative products that cannot be rapidly copied by competitors are crucial for increasing a firm's profitability.

Supply-chain-related studies have empirically shown the impacts of supply chain management (SCM) on firm performance and competitive advantages (Vickery et al., 2003; Min and Mentzer, 2004; Zailani and Rajagopal, 2005; Sezen, 2008; Wiengarten et al., 2012). Supply chain integration (SCI) is a concept concerning the improvement of the performance of SCM and the creation of value (Frohlich and Westbrook, 2001; Corsten and Felde, 2005; Fabbe-Costes and Jahre, 2007; Krause et al., 2007). Kim (2009) considered that SCM enables firms to sufficiently integrate internal functions and effectively collaborate with suppliers, consumers, and other supply chain participants to increase their competitiveness. To obtain and sustain required resources, organizations must change their structure and behavior and form alliances that foster mutual benefits. As global competition intensifies, firms must rethink the importance of SCI (Lambert and Cooper, 2000; Wisner and Tan, 2000). Improving cross-organization flow through supply chain partnership integration, mutual aid, reciprocity, and mutual benefits should be prioritized (Zhao et al., 2008). High supply chain performance can be

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