



E-commerce Adoption For Supply Chain Management in U.S. Apparel Manufacturers

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ABSTRACT

E-commerce made supply chain management (SCM) technically viable and unleashed the practice of SCM. The U.S. apparel industry, due to its own characteristics, has not utilized E-commerce for SCM as widely as it could have. The purpose of this exploratory study is to increase understanding of the determinants for adoption of E-commerce in SCM within the U.S. apparel industry, and to test the value of supply chain structure and company strategies in explaining E-commerce adoption. Mail and email surveys were conducted to collect the data. Simple regression and ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses. The results confirmed with the literature that perceived E-commerce characteristics and organization characteristics influence the E-commerce adoption level although not every factor of these two groups does so. The study also showed that one of the factors in supply chain structure, SCM integration level, was significantly related to the E-commerce adoption level.

Keywords: E-commerce, supply chain management, innovation adoption, apparel industry

The U.S. apparel-manufacturing sector continues to experience intensive competition. Challenges come from different interacting factors, such as demanding consumers, the uncertain nature of apparel demands, shifting global sourcing, and powerful retailers. These challenges result in later commitments from retailers, shrinking available lead-time, and increasing information needs. Apparel manufacturers are forced to search for ways to shorten the lead-time, cut costs, and to improve product quality and customer service.

Ideas from the Industrial Revolution pointed organizations to increase efficiency as the best way to remain competitive. Today, however, “The revolution of the 1990s is driven not by changes in production and transportation but by changes in coordination. Whenever people work together they must communicate, make decisions, allocate resources and get products and services to the right place at the right time” (Malone and Rockart, 1991, p. 128). Supply chain management (SCM), which expands the scope of the organization being managed beyond the enterprise level to include interorganizational relationships,