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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN LOGISTICS: A CASE STUDY OF THE LORRY

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Abstract: *This case study examines TheLorry, a digital logistics platform founded in 2014 by Nadhir Ashafiq Zainal Abidin and Goh Chee Hau, which has transformed the lorry rental industry with its innovative digital platform. TheLorry, which serves Malaysia's competitive logistics business, uses technology to improve processes, increase transparency, and maximize efficiency. The platform provides customers with on-demand access to verified lorry, truck, and van owners, allowing them to schedule transportation services online while increasing service providers' exposure and employment chances. Strategic collaboration, continuous innovation, and a customer-centric attitude are critical to its success. TheLorry uses AI, IoT, and cloud-based platforms to customize services and develop trust. To attract and keep customers, it utilizes a dynamic pricing strategy as well as digital marketing methods. Despite competition from big companies and operational concerns, TheLorry is expanding geographically and experimenting with new technologies and partnerships. The company's efforts to increase service quality and operational efficiency have established it as a prominent participant in the Southeast Asian logistics sector, with plans for future expansion and technology integration. This study provides insights into TheLorry's practices, success factors, and challenges, offering valuable lessons for digital entrepreneurship in the logistics industry.*
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Keywords: *Digitalization, Digital Entrepreneurship, Logistics, On-demand Logistics, TheLorry*

Introduction

Digital technologies and the rise of innovative business ideas have undoubtedly transformed the transportation industry in recent years. A prime example of this shift is TheLorry, a company that has redefined the lorry rental process through the smart use of digital entrepreneurship. By embracingtechnology, TheLorry's journey highlights how digital tools have reshaped the transportation sector, modernized traditional business models and significantly enhanced customer value through advanced digital solutions. One of the key factors behind TheLorry's success is its ability to integrate digital platforms and leverage data-driven insights. This combination has made truck hiring more efficient, flexible, and customer-centric, ultimately revolutionizing the way the industry operates.

As a result, TheLorry's approach demonstrates how innovation and business practices in transportation have evolved, driven by digital transformation. In fact, studies have shown that the adoption of new digital technologies has not only reduced the uncertainty surrounding innovation but has also prompted a radical rethink of how individuals, groups, and organizations pursue creative projects (Antonizzi & Smuts, 2020). Furthermore, digital entrepreneurship thrives on the opportunities created by rapid technological advancements, opening up new revenue streams for businesses across various industries. In the case of TheLorry, its success in transforming the lorry rental space through digital technologies is a clear reflection of its innovative mindset. This case study provides valuable insights into how digital entrepreneurship reshapes the transportation industry, offering a blueprint for other companies aiming to adapt to the ever-changing digital landscape.

Literature Review

This case study was developed utilizing both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained through an in-depth interview with TheLorry's General Manager, Mr. Zakaria Hashim. Secondary data was collected from the company's official website, relevant articles, and other online resources. The three-hour interview took place at TheLorry's office in Shah Alam, Selangor, and was fully audio recorded to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information gathered. The recorded information was subsequently transcribed, analyzed, and verified.

Company Overview

TheLorry is Malaysia's pioneering digital logistics platform, created in 2014 by two young entrepreneurs, Nadhir Ashafiq Zainal Abidin and Goh Chee Hau. Both co-founders are from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Their common dissatisfaction with inefficiencies in the logistics business inspired them to start TheLorry. During their tenure at a global aviation company, they witnessed the conventional logistics sector's numerous issues, such as a lack of transparency, high operational costs, inconsistent service quality, lack of integration, and outmoded systems that hampered efficiency. Nadhir and Goh saw a potential to disrupt the logistics industry through technology and created a digital platform that would bridge the gap between transportation service providers and clients, making the process more automated and accessible. They chose to address the logistical issues they had found by developing a platform

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that used technology to link consumers and businesses with lorry, truck, and van operators. Their objective was to streamline logistics and transportation services, making them more efficient, economical, and user-friendly for everyone involved.

The name “TheLorry” was chosen for its simplicity, familiarity, and relevance to Malaysian and Southeast Asian consumers. The availability of the .com domain further solidified their decision. By adopting a popular and easily understandable word, they were able to instantly connect with their target audience. Driven by a desire to improve the logistics sector, Nadhir and Goh began by testing their concept. Before formally starting the company, they created a simple blog and used Google Ads to attract their first clients. This lean strategy allowed them to validate their proposal and demonstrate the need for a more efficient logistics platform. As they gained popularity, they officially launched TheLorry in 2014, marking a significant shift in the logistics industry. Today, TheLorry serves many prominent local clients such as Lotus’s, Coca-Cola, Shopee, Lazada, Ikea, and Goodyear, and is expanding its business internationally. TheLorry's platform helps organizations and people manage their transportation needs in a transparent, cost-effective, and easy manner. By providing on-demand access to a network of verified lorry, truck, and van owners, the firm enables consumers to discover the best logistical solution for their needs. Customers may simply schedule transportation services online, while service providers get more visibility and job prospects. Under Nadhir and Goh's direction, TheLorry has become a regional logistics technology leader. The platform's success is due to its unique use of technology to streamline logistical operations, promote transparency, and increase efficiency for both clients and drivers. TheLorry is expanding its reach across Southeast Asia via strategic partnerships, continual innovation, and a customer-centric approach, firmly establishing itself as a leader in the digital logistics market.

Today, TheLorry serves as a perfect example of how technology can disrupt conventional businesses, making logistics more efficient and accessible to everybody. The founders' vision and commitment to tackling real-world difficulties have established TheLorry as a trusted and important platform for both businesses and individuals, contributing to the company's quick development and success throughout the area.

Industry Background

The logistics industry is crucial to our global economy, helping goods and services move smoothly across different sectors. It involves everything from transportation and warehousing to inventory management and supply chain coordination. By effectively linking producers with consumers, logistics not only supports trade and commerce but also fuels economic growth and development. In Malaysia, the logistics sector is a significant contributor to the nation’s GDP, driven by the country’s strategic location and well-developed infrastructure. In 2018, the transportation and storage sector, a crucial part of logistics, contributed 3.65% to Malaysia’s overall GDP (Ministry of Transport Malaysia, 2018), while in 2023, the logistics sector contributed approximately 3.5% to Malaysia’s GDP (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).

Evolution and Trends

Over the past decade, the logistics industry has undergone substantial transformation, largely driven by advancements in technology and the rise of e-commerce. The advent of Industry 4.0 has introduced innovative solutions such as automation, Internet of Things (IoT), and data analytics, which have significantly enhanced operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

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These technologies enable real-time tracking, predictive maintenance, and optimized route planning, thereby reducing costs and improving service delivery (Jaafar, 2015; Albrecht et al., 2023). In Malaysia, logistics providers are increasingly adopting these technologies to improve efficiency and reduce costs (Mordor Intelligence, 2023). The industry is also placing a greater emphasis on sustainability, focusing on reducing emissions and waste (TCI Transportation, 2024). Additionally, Malaysian businesses are seeking ways to enhance supply chain resilience to better withstand disruptions (Inbound Logistics, 2024).

The Malaysian Context

In Malaysia, the logistics industry comprises a combination of large multinational corporations and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It encompasses a wide range of activities and services, including freight forwarding, which organizes shipments for individuals or companies; warehousing and storage, providing storage solutions for goods; customs brokerage, assisting with customs clearance and documentation; courier services, offering fast, door-to-door delivery of small packages; and supply chain consulting, which offers expertise to optimize supply chain operations (Rushton et al., 2020; Christopher, 2016). The sector is highly competitive, with companies striving to offer faster, more reliable, and cost-effective services. The Malaysian government has also recognized the importance of the logistics sector and has implemented various initiatives to support its growth, such as the Logistics and Trade Facilitation Masterplan (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).

Competitive Landscape: Digital Entrepreneurship in Malaysia

Malaysia's digital economy is rapidly evolving, driven by government initiatives and a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. Digital entrepreneurship is a critical component of this transformation, with numerous programs aimed at fostering innovation and supporting startups. The Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) plays a pivotal role in this landscape, offering various programs to enhance digital skills and entrepreneurship (MDEC, 2023). Key initiatives include the eUsahawan program, which provides digital entrepreneurship training to students, micro-entrepreneurs, and communities. These programs aim to equip participants with the necessary skills to leverage digital tools for business growth, thereby fostering a competitive and innovative business environment (MDEC, 2023).

The competitive landscape in Malaysia's digital entrepreneurship sector is marked by a mix of established tech companies and emerging startups. In the logistics sector, digital entrepreneurship has led to the development of innovative platforms and solutions that enhance efficiency and service delivery. Companies are leveraging digital tools to offer real-time tracking, automated scheduling, and data-driven decision-making, which are critical for meeting the demands of modern logistics operations (World Bank, 2021). The government's focus on improving digital connectivity and reducing costs further supports the growth of digital businesses in the logistics sector. Initiatives such as the National Fiberisation and Connectivity Plan (NFCP) aim to enhance internet connectivity across the country, enabling logistics companies to adopt advanced digital solutions and improve their competitive edge (World Bank, 2021). Overall, the competitive landscape in Malaysia's digital entrepreneurship sector is dynamic and supportive, offering numerous opportunities for logistics companies to innovate and expand their services. Based on World Bank (2021) data, the adoption of digital technologies in logistics enhances operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and industry growth.

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Operation and Management

TheLorry operates as an online platform that connects customers requiring logistics services with a network of professional drivers and movers. Serving as an intermediary, it facilitates transactions between both parties. TheLorry does not own the vehicles used for transport; instead, it utilizes a network of third-party logistics providers who supply the necessary vehicles. This model enables the company to scale its services without significant capital investment. TheLorry maintains a large and expanding fleet, comprising up to 10,000 trucks, ready to meet diverse logistics needs. Customers can access TheLorry's services through the company's website or mobile app, where they can place orders and customize their bookings by selecting the type of vehicle, the required manpower, and any additional services. Once a booking is confirmed, TheLorry assigns and notifies drivers to ensure they arrive at the customer's location as scheduled. The drivers then pick up the items and deliver them to the specified destination on time. The rental cost for lorries is determined by TheLorry based on the type and size of the vehicles and the distance to be covered. From the total revenue generated, TheLorry keeps a portion as a commission, while the rest is paid to the driver upon completion of the delivery job. Customers have the flexibility to pay online using e-wallets or online banking, or they can choose to make payment after the job is completed. Additionally, TheLorry provides channels for customers to submit after-service reviews, ensuring continuous improvement and customer satisfaction. TheLorry diligently reviews issues presented by clients while also taking into account the ratings provided by customers for its services. When issues develop, the company aims to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome by providing compensation to clients and applying penalties or suspensions for partner drivers as needed. Additionally, the company provides weekly reminders to partner drivers and mandates additional training for drivers facing issues to maintain the company's high service standards.

The Lorry's commitment to digital integration and a client satisfaction-focused business model significantly influences its operations. Utilizing digital tools allows for customized services, clear communication, and adaptable scheduling, enhancing overall satisfaction. By leveraging technology, logistics companies can maintain competitiveness and build trust (Raza et al., 2023). The implementation of AI, IoT, and cloud-based platforms has revolutionized TheLorry's operational efficiency. According to Mr. Zakaria Hashim, the General Manager, these advancements align with industry trends prioritizing data-based decision-making and transparency, enhancing customer trust and loyalty. For example, AI is used for predictive analytics and route optimization, reducing expenses and improving delivery speed and reliability. IoT enables real-time monitoring, providing full visibility across the supply chain, essential for inventory management and timely deliveries. Digital technology allows service providers to personalize services, offer instant updates, and boost transparency, meeting the growing demand for prompt, reliable, and clear logistical solutions (Nagy et al., 2023).Although TheLorry places a strong emphasis on technological advancement and meeting client needs, it faces significant obstacles to staying ahead in a rapidly changing market. To navigate the highly competitive market, TheLorry has made many strategic adaptations, such as the use of dynamic pricing models and a strong emphasis on specialized services like house moving. These measures help to set them apart from their competitors. The organization also consistently monitors rival activities and adjusts its plans accordingly, further exemplifying a flexible and responsive management strategy.

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Marketing Strategies

TheLorry's platform provides a range of services including vehicle transport, professional house moving, furniture disposal, office moving, and business logistic solutions. In addition to their core services, TheLorry also provides specialized logistics solutions. They also collaborate with businesses for B2B logistics, offering fleet management and goods delivery options. By integrating digital tools like AI and data-driven insights, TheLorry optimizes routes and operations, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and cost-effectiveness for everyone involved. These features help TheLorry stay competitive in Malaysia's fast-paced logistics sector. TheLorry utilized Google and Meta advertisement services as well as social media such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to increase awareness and customer engagement. As of January 2024, Malaysia had 28.68 million social media users, representing 83.1% of the population (Statista, 2024). TheLorry leverages this by combining targeted ads with engaging content marketing. In order to keep their audience engaged and connected, TheLorry shared relatable stories, customer testimonials, and real-time updates through their social media. In addition, TheLorry utilizes data analytics to monitor each post and identify what resonates best with its audience. For instance, updates featuring compelling stories or new promotions on social media lead to noticeable increases in customer engagement, inquiries, and bookings. This consistent tracking allows TheLorry to tailor its content, enhancing customer connections and fostering brand loyalty.

Apart from its paid digital marketing efforts, TheLorry has integrated Search Engine Optimization (SEO) into its marketing strategy to attract organic traffic. By optimizing their website for search engines, TheLorry increases its visibility in relevant searches, driving more potential customers to its platform. This SEO-driven approach complements their paid digital marketing efforts and enhances their online reach. To further enhance visibility, TheLorry has incorporated Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) into their marketing strategy by collaborating with Malaysian social media influencer and actress Yumi Wong, who, at the time of writing, has 1.3 million Instagram followers. KOLs, respected by their followers, offer significant advantages by boosting brand visibility and fostering trust, making it easier for businesses to penetrate new markets (Xiong et. al., 2021). Influencers like Yumi Wong shared her personal experiences with TheLorry's services, creating stories that resonate with their audiences via social media.

Additionally, TheLorry's pricing strategy addresses common customer frustrations around hidden fees or unclear rate structures. Customers often feel uncertain about how much they will end up paying, as many companies do not offer clear, upfront rates. With a transparent dynamic pricing model based on kilometers, TheLorry offers upfront rates, building customer trust compared to traditional logistics companies that often have fluctuating charges. To attract and retain customers, TheLorry regularly rolls out discount campaigns, including seasonal promotions and monthly discounts based on booking size. Some examples include monthly percentage discounts where TheLorry regularly offers discount campaigns based on the booking amount, such as 5% off for smaller moves or deliveries and 15% off for larger bookings or deliveries. These promotions are heavily advertised through social media and their website. TheLorry's platform also offers verified drivers, transparent booking systems, and a dedicated support team, ensuring a smooth and trustworthy customer experience. TheLorry's digital platform (mobile app, website, and social media) connects customers with lorry, van, and truck drivers, facilitating the booking process for both short- and long-distance moves. Their services cover a broad geographic area. For domestic transportation, TheLorry's services

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are available throughout Peninsular Malaysia. They also extend their services to neighboring countries, including Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia. Their online booking systems (company website and mobile app) and customer support via WhatsApp ensure accessibility and convenience for customers across these regions.

Challenges and Future Plans

The logistics industry in Malaysia is highly competitive, with key players like DHL Express Malaysia, Pos Malaysia, Nippon Express Malaysia, GD Express (GDEX), Tiong Nam Logistics, and CJ Century Logistics. These companies offer a range of services, including freight forwarding, warehousing, last-mile delivery, and supply chain management. In addition to the main players, viable substitutes like Lalamove offer services similar to those provided by TheLorry, an on-demand logistics platform. Lalamove caters to various logistics needs, from same-day delivery and last-mile solutions to B2B logistics, contributing to the industry's diversity and dynamism in Malaysia. Its business model prioritizes speed, scalability, and a diverse fleet, making it adaptable to a wide range of logistics requirements. The company's rapid growth in Malaysia can be attributed to its aggressive marketing strategies and the flexibility of its services. Unlike TheLorry, which primarily focuses on house moving and large cargo transportation, Lalamove offers a variety of vehicle options, from motorcycles to trucks. This enables Lalamove to cater to both small and large-scale logistics demands, enhancing its visibility and capturing a larger market share. This strategic advantage has exerted pressure on TheLorry, necessitating adaptations to remain competitive in the evolving market.

TheLorry encounters several operational challenges. Primarily, its focus on larger vehicles, such as lorries and trucks, limits its capacity to handle smaller delivery needs. The shift from in-person to online driver training has also made it difficult to maintain consistent driver quality. Despite tracking and assessing drivers, issues like unfair customer ratings can affect job allocation, and drivers' personal responsibility for vehicle upkeep can impact service quality. Another significant challenge lies in TheLorry's customer service and payment systems. The use of the electronic payment gateway for online transactions leads to delays in refund processing, often frustrating customers who prefer quicker resolutions. Cash on Delivery (COD) remains a popular option due to its immediacy but managing COD payments can pose risks and operational hurdles. Additionally, TheLorry faces challenges in maintaining service consistency due to not owning trucks or directly employing drivers. This leads to variability in drivers' personal styles, impacting customer satisfaction and complicating operations with transaction tracking discrepancies. As TheLorry relies on digital platforms such as apps and websites, it can be a barrier for customers in rural areas or those less familiar with online tools. To address this, TheLorry provides customer service support via WhatsApp, but this approach still limits access for less tech-savvy users. Despite these challenges, TheLorry has substantial opportunities for growth in Southeast Asia. The company aims to expand its regional presence, enhance its technological infrastructure, and improve operational efficiency. Its vision includes optimizing the platform with real-time tracking, seamless booking, and advanced data analytics for better route planning and fuel efficiency. The company recently launched Beyond by TheLorry, an air freight service designed to meet the increasing demand for cross-border logistics, starting with Indonesia. This service provides affordable air freight solutions for merchants and personal shipments, especially for routes like Malaysia to Singapore and Indonesia, where previous options were costly.

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Furthermore, TheLorry is exploring collaborations with major property developers like Sime Darby Berhad and Sunway Group. These partnerships would integrate TheLorry's services into property apps, offering them as value-added features for property buyers. For instance, Sunway is interested in cross-marketing efforts, while Sime Darby has initiated collaborations that provide buyers with coupons for TheLorry's services, with the costs absorbed by the developers. This approach offers a seamless solution for both buyers and developers, expanding TheLorry's reach. In addition to that, TheLorry's partnership with IKEA to provide same-day delivery services further underscores its niche strength in urban markets where customers demand fast, reliable delivery options. This partnership highlights TheLorry's focus on same-day services, particularly for large-item transportation, setting it apart from traditional scheduled services and solidifying its role as a reliable partner for retailers like IKEA.

Discussion and Conclusion

This case study illustrates TheLorry's transformative impact on Southeast Asia's logistics sector through digital innovation. Founded by two young entrepreneurs, TheLorry has successfully connected customers and service providers via an efficient, user-friendly platform. By leveraging AI, IoT, and cloud-based solutions, TheLorry has streamlined operations, increased transparency, and provided cost- effective logistics solutions. Despite facing challenges such as intense competition, driver management issues, and evolving customer preferences, TheLorry has demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Its customer-centric business model, strategic partnerships, and continuous technological integration have enabled it to maintain a competitive edge. The company's regional expansion and innovative services, such as Beyond by TheLorry for cross-border logistics, highlight its ambition to extend its capabilities.

TheLorry's commitment to emerging technologies, sustainability, and market responsiveness positions it as a leader in the region's logistics sector. This success underscores the importance of integrating technology, strategic planning, and customer-focused solutions in the dynamic logistics industry. Efficient operations and management are crucial for logistics companies to enhance service quality, reduce costs, and adapt to market changes, providing a competitive advantage (Ning & Yao, 2023). In conclusion, TheLorry's journey exemplifies how digital innovation can revolutionize traditional transportation services. By prioritizing operational efficiency and technological integration, TheLorry has set a benchmark for the logistics industry in Southeast Asia. Its strategic approach and adaptability ensure that it will continue to shape the future of logistics in the region.

Disclaimer

The findings and discussions within this case study are intended to provide insights and understanding of the company's operational dynamics. They do not serve as an indicator of the overall success or failure of the company.

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Authors' Contribution

Awee, A., Adrus, N., Lai, K.F., & Maznorbalia, A. S. planned and conducted the interview for primary data collection. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape the research, analysis and manuscript.

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