

How PT. SINJ Distributes Products Across Indonesia : A Study of Hybrid Distribution Strategies

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Abstract: Distribution inefficiencies remain a persistent challenge for firms operating in geographically dispersed and infrastructure-limited markets such as Indonesia. Companies must navigate logistical complexity while maintaining service reliability and cost-efficiency. This study focuses on PT. SINJ, a major distributor of automotive spare parts headquartered in Gresik Regency, which addresses these challenges through a hybrid distribution strategy. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, data were gathered through interviews, direct observations, and document analysis involving internal managers and regional agents. The findings reveal that PT. SINJ utilizes multiple distribution levels—ranging from direct-to-consumer to agent-based and multi-tier intermediary systems—based on regional infrastructure and accessibility. While this approach enables broad market coverage, it also produces operational constraints, including frequent stockouts, delayed deliveries, and weak coordination between central and field operations. The study recommends actionable improvements, such as implementing real-time inventory tracking across agents, establishing micro-warehouses in underserved regions, integrating automated restocking protocols, and formalizing logistics partnerships with multiple freight carriers. These measures are essential to enhancing PT. SINJ's distribution resilience, reducing lead time variability, and sustaining competitive advantage in Indonesia's fragmented logistics landscape.

Keywords: distribution, management, hybrid, channels, inventory.

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1. Introduction

PT. SINJ is a large-scale automotive spare parts distributor headquartered in Gresik Regency, East Java, Indonesia. Operating since 1999, the company serves a vast national market segmented into western, central, and eastern regions, including remote islands such as Papua, Maluku, and Nusa Tenggara [1], [2]. With such a wide geographical reach, PT. SINJ faces significant challenges in ensuring timely and efficient product delivery to its diverse consumer base, especially given the varying infrastructure and logistics conditions across the archipelago [3], [4].

To address these challenges, PT. SINJ implements a dual-channel distribution strategy that combines direct and indirect methods. Direct channels are used when the company can interact with end-consumers in accessible regions, while indirect channels rely on agents and intermediaries to reach more distant markets [5], [6]. This strategic combination is intended to maximize market coverage, optimize logistics costs, and enhance customer satisfaction in both urban and rural areas [7], [8].

The effectiveness of a company's distribution strategy plays a critical role in its ability to meet customer expectations and gain competitive advantage. A well-structured distribution system not only facilitates the physical transfer of goods but also ensures timely information flow, transactional efficiency, and responsive service delivery [9], [10]. Conversely, weaknesses

in distribution—such as stockouts at agent locations or delays caused by unreliable transportation—can significantly reduce customer trust and negatively affect company revenues [11], [12].

Understanding the distribution strategy adopted by PT. SINJ is crucial, particularly in the context of Indonesia's fragmented geography and varying levels of regional market access. By analyzing PT. SINJ's current approach and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of its distribution channels, this study provides strategic insights into managing logistics in a developing economy setting [13], [14]. The findings also contribute to broader discussions on supply chain adaptation, distribution planning, and customer service enhancement in the automotive aftermarket sector [15], [16].

2. Methods

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach to explore and analyze the distribution strategy implemented by PT. SINJ in Gresik Regency. The qualitative method was chosen to capture the complexities and contextual realities of distribution practices within the company. According to Moleong [17], qualitative research allows researchers to understand the experiences and perceptions of subjects holistically, emphasizing depth over generalization. The research was designed to investigate how PT. SINJ's distribution channels operate across varied geographic regions and to assess their effectiveness in reaching target markets.

The research site was PT. SINJ's headquarters located in Gresik, East Java. The selection of this location was based on its strategic role as the central coordination point for the company's distribution activities nationwide. The participants involved in this study included key informants such as the company's operations manager, warehouse supervisor, and several customers from different regional markets. These informants were selected purposively based on their relevance and direct involvement in the distribution process, consistent with the concept of theoretical sampling in qualitative research [18].

Data were collected using three main techniques: interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather detailed insights from informants about distribution practices, logistics challenges, and customer satisfaction. Direct observations of operational activities were carried out to gain contextual understanding of the distribution flows, transportation methods, and warehouse management. Additionally, internal documents such as shipment records, price lists, and distribution schedules were reviewed to triangulate findings from interviews and observations.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw data collected during fieldwork. This was followed by data display, where organized information was presented in narrative and tabular form to facilitate pattern identification. Finally, conclusions were drawn through a continuous and iterative process of interpreting the data, identifying relationships, and formulating findings that answer the research objective.

To ensure credibility, the study employed methodological triangulation by comparing information across interviews, observations, and documents. Researcher reflexivity and regular peer debriefings were also applied to minimize bias and improve the reliability of interpretations. The qualitative nature of this study does not aim for statistical generalization but rather for analytical depth that can provide transferable insights for similar companies in comparable market contexts.

3. Results

Overview of PT. SINJ

PT. SINJ is a legally registered company established in 1999 and headquartered in Gresik Regency, East Java, Indonesia. The company specializes in the distribution of automotive spare parts, particularly leaf springs and coil springs, which are essential components in vehicle suspension systems. As a large-scale distributor, PT. SINJ holds a classification under Indonesia's Standard Industrial Classification (KBLI 45301) and possesses an Angka

Pengenal Importir (API-U), allowing it to import and distribute automotive parts on a national scale.

Operating from its main office on Mayor Jenderal Sungkono Street, PT. SINJ oversees a wide-reaching distribution network that spans the western, central, and eastern regions of Indonesia. These regions encompass major islands such as Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Bali, and Papua. The company's expansive market coverage reflects both the scale and complexity of its distribution system, requiring a combination of direct-to-consumer logistics in accessible zones and agent-based distribution in more remote areas.

PT. SINJ has structured its internal organization to support strategic operations in logistics, marketing, sales, and customer service. The organizational structure is hierarchical, designed to streamline reporting and operational efficiency across departments. The company's leadership emphasizes its vision to become a globally reliable producer of high-quality automotive components, achieved through operational excellence and commitment-driven human resources.

The company's mission encompasses five key goals: distributing high-quality products while expanding market control, strengthening brand image and customer satisfaction, diversifying its business domains, becoming a top-tier supplier, and contributing to local employment by creating job opportunities. These mission objectives are tightly interwoven with the company's distribution strategy, which seeks to deliver not only products but also value to its stakeholders through timely and effective service.

The strategic scope and logistical complexity of PT. SINJ's operations position the company as a case study of interest in understanding how large-scale distributors navigate the challenges of delivering products across a geographically fragmented nation. The company's efforts to balance operational efficiency, market penetration, and customer responsiveness provide valuable insights into the application of hybrid distribution models in emerging economies.

Distribution Channel Strategy

PT. SINJ employs a hybrid distribution channel strategy that incorporates both direct and indirect approaches to maximize its market coverage across Indonesia. The company's selection of distribution channels is informed by the geographic, logistical, and market-specific characteristics of each region.

Table 1. Distribution Channel Levels at PT. SINJ and Their Context

Channel Level	Structure	Application Context
Zero-Level (Direct)	Producer → Consumer	Used in central and accessible regions (e.g., Gresik, Surabaya) where logistics are efficient and customer proximity allows direct transactions.
First-Level	Producer → Agent → Consumer	Applied in semi-remote areas (e.g., parts of Java, southern Sumatra) where agents facilitate last-mile delivery.
Second-Level	Producer → Agent → Retailer → Consumer	Implemented in areas where consumer demand is dispersed and retail presence is strong (e.g., Kalimantan urban centers).
Third-Level	Producer → Agent → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer	Used in highly fragmented or rural markets (e.g., Maluku, Papua) where multiple intermediaries are needed to penetrate local markets.

In areas with strong infrastructure and proximity to the company's central operations, PT. SINJ utilizes direct distribution channels, enabling it to sell products directly to end consumers through its sales team or centralized ordering systems. This approach provides the company with greater control over customer service, pricing consistency, and brand representation.

In contrast, indirect distribution channels are deployed in regions that are geographically distant or logistically challenging, such as parts of Eastern Indonesia. In these cases, PT. SINJ relies on a network of appointed agents and intermediaries to distribute products to local retailers or consumers. These agents act as the company's representatives and are responsible

for maintaining inventory, managing customer relationships, and ensuring product availability at the regional level. The indirect approach helps PT. SINJ extend its market reach while mitigating the high transportation and operational costs that would be incurred if the company were to distribute directly to all regions.

The distribution channels employed by PT. SINJ can be classified into four levels based on the number of intermediaries involved. The zero-level channel (producer to consumer) is used primarily in central Java and surrounding areas where logistics support direct interaction with customers. The first-level channel (producer–agent–consumer) is used in semi-remote areas where agents act as immediate points of contact. The second-level channel (producer–agent–retailer–consumer) and third-level channel (producer–agent–wholesaler–retailer–consumer) are used in more complex or layered regional markets to ensure product availability and service continuity.

To ensure consistency and standardization across these varying channels, PT. SINJ issues centralized price lists and product specifications that must be adhered to by all agents and resellers. This ensures that regardless of the distribution level or region, customers receive the same quality assurance and pricing structure. The company also maintains periodic communication and performance evaluations with its agents to ensure alignment with corporate standards and market expectations.

Overall, this dual-channel strategy allows PT. SINJ to optimize its resources, minimize distribution delays, and maintain customer satisfaction across Indonesia's highly segmented and archipelagic market. By leveraging the strengths of both direct and agent-based distribution, the company enhances its responsiveness to local demand while preserving operational efficiency.

Order Fulfillment Process

The order fulfillment process at PT. SINJ is designed to ensure operational accuracy, logistical efficiency, and timely delivery across its diverse customer base. The process begins with the placement of an order by either an agent, a retailer, or a direct consumer. Each order must be accompanied by complete purchase documentation and payment confirmation in accordance with the company's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Once all administrative requirements are verified, the fulfillment process is initiated without delay.

Order processing is centralized at the company's main office in Gresik, where inventory levels are monitored in real time. The warehouse team is responsible for preparing goods for dispatch, including verification of product specifications, packaging, and labeling according to destination requirements. The logistics team then coordinates with transportation partners—primarily land and sea freight services—to determine the most suitable delivery schedule. For urgent or time-sensitive shipments, particularly in remote or high-priority markets, the company opts for air cargo to expedite delivery.

The shipping schedule is closely tied to the availability of transportation modes. For regional destinations within Java and southern Sumatra, land transportation is typically used due to its affordability and accessibility. Meanwhile, destinations in eastern Indonesia require shipping coordination via sea freight, which is dependent on vessel departure schedules. In exceptional cases, especially when agents or customers report emergency stock-out conditions, the company authorizes expedited delivery using air freight.

Communication is a key component of the fulfillment process. The logistics department maintains continuous contact with both the shipping providers and the recipients to ensure the smooth transit and accurate receipt of goods. After dispatch, delivery tracking is conducted, and confirmation of receipt is collected from agents or end-users to close the fulfillment loop. Any discrepancies or delays are documented and followed up as part of PT. SINJ's continuous improvement framework.

Overall, the company's order fulfillment process is built around responsiveness, documentation integrity, and logistical adaptability. While it is highly structured to minimize errors and ensure product traceability, it also incorporates a degree of flexibility to accommodate urgent orders and distribution challenges. This dual focus on structure and responsiveness supports the company's commitment to customer satisfaction and operational excellence.

Distribution Challenges

Despite having a well-defined distribution strategy and structured fulfillment process, PT. SINJ continues to face significant challenges in executing seamless product deliveries across its national network. One of the most pressing issues is inventory inconsistency at the agent level, where some regional agents experience frequent stockouts of high-demand items. These shortages often occur during peak demand periods or in areas with unpredictable ordering patterns, leading to urgent requests from agents and customers that require accelerated response from the central warehouse.

Another critical challenge involves transportation delays, particularly for shipments bound for remote or island regions such as Papua, Maluku, and Nusa Tenggara. These areas depend heavily on sea freight, which is subject to weather disruptions, port congestion, and limited vessel departure schedules. Even with proper planning, delays in these regions are difficult to eliminate entirely due to external logistical factors beyond the company's control. In such cases, customers may experience extended wait times, which can reduce satisfaction and increase the risk of switching to competitors with locally stocked alternatives.

PT. SINJ also contends with infrastructure-related bottlenecks that affect both inbound and outbound logistics. Poor road conditions, limited access to reliable transportation fleets, and inconsistent courier services in rural areas often complicate last-mile delivery. These logistical constraints contribute to increased distribution costs and can compromise the company's ability to offer competitive delivery lead times in underdeveloped markets.

In addition to physical logistics, communication gaps between central operations and regional agents pose operational risks. Misalignment in product availability data, delayed updates on shipping schedules, or lack of timely coordination can cause inefficiencies and inaccurate order fulfillment. To address this, the company has been investing in better digital communication tools and training programs to improve coordination across the supply chain.

Another layer of complexity arises from unexpected environmental and social disruptions, such as natural disasters, strikes, or security concerns, which occasionally hinder distribution activities. These factors are difficult to predict and require contingency planning and flexible policies. PT. SINJ has adopted mitigation strategies, such as prioritizing critical shipments via air freight and diversifying its logistics partnerships, but complete risk elimination remains a challenge.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that PT. SINJ's hybrid distribution strategy effectively accommodates Indonesia's complex geographical landscape by combining both direct and indirect distribution methods. This approach allows the company to reach diverse markets efficiently while optimizing its resource allocation and service delivery capabilities [19], [20]. The application of multiple channel levels—ranging from zero-level to third-level—demonstrates the company's strategic flexibility in tailoring distribution routes to the specific logistical and market challenges of each region [5], [21].

However, while the hybrid model increases reach, it also introduces operational complexity, particularly in inventory coordination and fulfillment timing. Stockouts at regional agent levels indicate an imbalance between demand forecasting and supply chain responsiveness, a common issue in extended channel networks [22], [23]. PT. SINJ's efforts to standardize product pricing and improve direct communication with agents are aligned with best practices in channel control but require continued investment in information systems and demand planning tools [24], [25].

Transportation delays and limited infrastructure in remote areas remain a structural constraint for many companies operating in archipelagic nations like Indonesia. These challenges are not unique to PT. SINJ and have been well-documented as barriers to equitable distribution in emerging markets [26], [27]. The company's use of air cargo and flexible logistics solutions illustrates an adaptive response, although these methods come with higher operational costs and lower scalability [28], [29].

Moreover, gaps in inter-organizational communication between central operations and regional distributors reveal a need for stronger channel integration and coordination mechanisms. Effective supply chain collaboration is crucial to achieving synchronized fulfillment and minimizing service disruptions, especially under conditions of uncertainty [30],

[31]. Training programs, performance monitoring systems, and digitally enabled feedback loops are potential solutions that PT. SINJ could implement to close this coordination gap.

External risk factors such as extreme weather, civil unrest, or port inefficiencies are beyond the company's control but must be addressed through proactive risk management strategies. This includes building redundancy in logistics networks and maintaining emergency inventory buffers in key locations [32], [33]. PT. SINJ's practice of using express shipment channels during crisis periods is consistent with supply chain resilience literature, although it should be accompanied by predictive risk modeling for long-term sustainability [34].

In summary, PT. SINJ's distribution strategy reflects a mature understanding of channel segmentation, logistical adaptation, and customer-centered delivery. However, the challenges encountered—particularly in inventory alignment, last-mile logistics, and information flow—mirror broader distribution issues faced by companies in developing logistics environments. Addressing these concerns systematically would further enhance PT. SINJ's competitiveness and resilience in the automotive parts distribution sector [35], [36].

4. Conclusion

This study examined how PT. SINJ deploys a dual-channel distribution strategy to serve its wide-reaching customer base across Indonesia. The company leverages direct distribution in accessible markets and indirect distribution through agents and intermediaries in more remote or logistically challenging regions. This hybrid model enables broad market coverage while balancing costs and responsiveness. However, the strategy is not without its limitations. Field data revealed issues such as frequent stock unavailability at agent warehouses, reliance on inflexible shipping schedules—particularly for island destinations—and weak synchronization between central operations and field agents. These inefficiencies, though managed reactively, remain critical friction points in PT. SINJ's fulfillment cycle.

The practical implications of these findings suggest a clear set of operational priorities. PT. SINJ should invest in a centralized inventory tracking system that is accessible to agents in real time, enabling stock visibility and proactive replenishment. Establishing regional micro-warehouses in high-demand zones such as South Kalimantan or East Nusa Tenggara would reduce delivery lead time and alleviate dependence on slow, long-haul shipments. Moreover, implementing automated reordering rules tied to sales thresholds can prevent stockouts before they occur. On the logistics front, diversifying freight partnerships—including contracts with air cargo providers for periodic deliveries—would offer scheduling flexibility, especially during peak seasons or adverse weather. Finally, integrating a unified communication platform for internal operations and agent coordination would help close information gaps, reduce order errors, and accelerate problem resolution.

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