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OPPO'S GLOBAL EXPANSION STRATEGY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMIZATION

STRATEGI EKSPANSI GLOBAL OPPO MELALUI OPTIMISASI RANTAI PASOK TEKNOLOGI

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Abstract

This study analyzes OPPO's global expansion strategy through the optimization of its technology supply chain within the framework of the Global Value Chain (GVC). The smartphone industry has experienced rapid growth in recent decades, with increasingly fierce competition among leading manufacturers. OPPO, a Chinese technology company founded in 2004 and part of BBK Electronics Corporation, has demonstrated significant competitiveness in the global market despite facing challenges in maintaining its market share from 2021 to 2024. This study uses a descriptive qualitative methodology, analyzing primary data from OPPO's official documents and secondary data from industry reports and academic literature. Findings show that OPPO implements production sharing in strategic geographic locations, with design and development centralized in China and manufacturing spread across countries that offer labor or infrastructure advantages. The study shows that OPPO's global expansion follows the Uppsala Model of internationalization, starting with culturally and geographically close markets such as Southeast Asia before expanding to more distant regions. Through technology-based supply chain optimization, digital integration, and the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI)-based coordination systems, OPPO has developed the ability to manage complex global networks while overcoming geopolitical challenges and supply chain disruptions. This research contributes to understanding how technology companies from developing countries leverage the Global Value Chain to enhance international competitiveness, providing insights into the relationship between supply chain strategy and the success of global expansion in the highly competitive smartphone industry.

Keywords : Global Value Chain, technology supply chain optimization, OPPO global expansion, supply chain strategy, smartphone industry, Uppsala Model.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis strategi ekspansi global OPPO melalui optimasi rantai pasok teknologi dalam kerangka Global Value Chain (GVC). Industri smartphone telah mengalami pertumbuhan pesat dalam beberapa dekade terakhir, dengan persaingan yang semakin ketat di antara produsen terkemuka.

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OPPO, perusahaan teknologi Tiongkok yang didirikan pada 2004 dan merupakan bagian dari BBK Electronics Corporation, telah menunjukkan daya saing yang signifikan di pasar global meskipun menghadapi tantangan dalam mempertahankan pangsa pasar dari 2021 hingga 2024. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif deskriptif, menganalisis data primer dari dokumen resmi OPPO dan data sekunder dari laporan industri dan literatur akademik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa OPPO menerapkan pembagian produksi di lokasi geografis strategis, dengan desain dan pengembangan terpusat di China dan manufaktur tersebar di negara-negara yang menawarkan keunggulan tenaga kerja atau infrastruktur. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa ekspansi global OPPO mengikuti Model Uppsala dalam internasionalisasi, dimulai dari pasar yang secara budaya dan geografis dekat seperti Asia Tenggara sebelum memperluas ke wilayah yang lebih jauh. Melalui optimasi rantai pasok berbasis teknologi, integrasi digital, dan adopsi sistem koordinasi berbasis kecerdasan buatan (AI), OPPO telah mengembangkan kemampuan untuk mengelola jaringan global yang kompleks sambil mengatasi tantangan geopolitik dan gangguan rantai pasok. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman bagaimana perusahaan teknologi dari negara berkembang memanfaatkan Global Value Chain untuk meningkatkan daya saing internasional, memberikan wawasan tentang hubungan antara strategi rantai pasok dan kesuksesan ekspansi global dalam industri smartphone yang sangat kompetitif.

Kata Kunci : Global Value Chain, optimasi rantai pasok teknologi, ekspansi global OPPO, strategi rantai pasok, industri smartphone, Model Uppsala.

1. INTRODUCTION

The smartphone industry has experienced remarkable growth over the past few decades, fundamentally changing global consumer behavior and the landscape of technological innovation. The global smartphone market share is dominated by major brands such as Apple and Samsung, along with increasingly competitive Chinese manufacturers that have changed the dynamics of competition. OPPO is among these competitive Chinese manufacturers, having established itself as a major player in the global technology sector since its founding in 2004. As a subsidiary of BBK Electronics Corporation—a Chinese technology conglomerate founded in 1995 whose name reflects a philosophy of "step-by-step" gradual growth—OPPO exemplifies how companies from developing economies can compete effectively in mature global markets (Xun, H., 2018).

The global smartphone market showed significant volatility during the 2021-2024 period. The market grew by 4% in 2021 with shipments reaching 1.391 billion units, driven by strong post-pandemic demand (EEtasia, 2022). However, according to Omdia (2025), consecutive declines of 11.3% in 2022 and 2.8% in 2023 were triggered by global economic pressures, supply chain disruptions, and a decline in consumer purchasing power. The market recovered in 2024 with growth of around 6%, reaching 1.240 billion units, in line with improving economic conditions and increased consumer interest in artificial intelligence-based smartphone innovations.

OPPO's market performance reflects the challenges faced by Chinese manufacturers despite their established competitive position. The company shipped 143 million units (11% market share) in 2021, but this figure fell to 103.3 million units (8.6% market share) in 2022 and stabilized at around 100.7 million units (8.8% market share) in 2023. In 2024, OPPO recorded a marginal increase to 103.6 million units, although its market share continued to

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decline to 8.5%, reflecting increasingly fierce competition from other Chinese manufacturers such as Xiaomi and Vivo, as well as changing consumer preferences and evolving global market conditions (Tran, 2023).

According to Shim & Shin, (2016), Ying, (2025), and Zhang, (2023), the fierce competitive environment in the smartphone industry forces manufacturers to continuously adapt to market changes. OPPO faces challenges not only from traditional competitors but also from competitors with different expansion and product innovation strategies. Under these challenging conditions, technology companies must optimally manage their supply chains to ensure the stability of raw material supplies while overcoming geopolitical challenges and fluctuations in raw material prices. The Chinese government's support for domestic technology development through high-tech industry policies provides OPPO with significant opportunities to enhance its global competitiveness. These multifaceted factors—including the development of China's smartphone industry and global market share dynamics—collectively influence OPPO's competitive position in this critical sector.

Within the framework of the Global Value Chain (GVC), OPPO is an example of a technology company that leverages global production sharing to improve efficiency and competitiveness (Xing, 2020). Rather than centralizing the entire production process in one country, OPPO distributes critical stages such as research and development, design, manufacturing, assembly, and distribution to strategically selected global locations. Design and development activities are primarily conducted in China to leverage domestic technological capacity and government policy support, while manufacturing and assembly operations are spread across countries that offer labor or production infrastructure advantages (Lua, 2020).

This geographic distribution reflects sophisticated technology supply chain management, which encompasses not only the movement of physical goods but also involves information flows, innovation generation, and control of strategic components including chipsets and software. Understanding this phenomenon is important for explaining how companies from developing countries such as China can compete effectively in global markets through supply chain optimization. The interaction between supply chain strategies, geopolitical considerations, and competitive dynamics in the smartphone industry warrants substantial academic attention (Xing, 2020; Lee & Gereffi, 2021; Jiang, Md Isa, Ng, & Bhatti, 2023).

a. Research Objectives

This study analyzes OPPO's global expansion strategy through technology supply chain optimization, specifically by exploring how the company utilizes the Global Value Chain concept to strengthen its international competitiveness. This study answers the following key questions: What is the core of OPPO's global expansion strategy in the technology supply chain?

b. Global Value Chain Theory

The Global Value Chain (GVC) refers to an international production network involving several countries in the process of producing goods or services, from design to production, distribution, and final consumption (Gereffi, 2018). Ponte, Gereffi, and Raj-Reichert (2019)

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define GVC as "a series of activities carried out by companies and workers in various geographical locations to produce a product."

The GVC framework has several distinguishing characteristics, including production modularity, coordination by leading companies, geographic dispersion of value added, and the importance of global standards. Production is carried out in various countries based on comparative advantage, for example, software design is carried out in technologically advanced regions while manufacturing is carried out in cost-efficient locations. Multinational companies serve as the main coordinators, setting production standards, technical specifications, and global market strategies. These leading companies control the production and distribution processes, setting rules and specifications for suppliers and business partners throughout the value chain (De Marchi, Giuliani, & Rabellotti, 2018; Gereffi, 2018; Ponte et al., 2019).

A critical concept in GVC involves "value-added enhancement"—a process whereby companies or countries increase value-added through improved production efficiency, product diversification, or technological innovation (De Marchi et al., 2018; Gereffi, 2018). Digitalization has significantly changed Global Value Chain management, with artificial intelligence, big data, and the Internet of Things technologies improving coordination efficiency and real-time decision-making (Butollo, Gereffi, Yang, & Krzywdzinski, 2022; Reddy & Sasidharan, 2023). These technologies enable companies to manage complex cross-border economic activities while optimizing costs and improving operational efficiency.

GVC theory remains highly relevant for analyzing the global expansion of contemporary multinational companies, explaining how production processes are divided across countries based on regional comparative advantages and specialization (Gereffi, 2018). This framework emphasizes how leading companies manage cross-border relationships while implementing enhancement mechanisms, including increased production efficiency, new product development, and digital technology adoption (Ponte et al., 2019). For OPPO specifically, GVC provides an analytical framework for analyzing how the company breaks down production in strategic locations, manages relationships with suppliers for critical components, and implements supply chain digitalization to enhance global competitiveness.

c. Uppsala International Expansion Model

The Uppsala model, developed by Johanson and Vahlne (1977), explains the pattern of a company's international expansion in stages based on accumulated market experience and incremental learning. This model emerged from empirical studies of Swedish companies showing that international expansion occurs through a gradual process depending on the growth of market knowledge and risk management capabilities.

According to this model, expansion follows a chain of formation: indirect exports through local intermediaries, development to direct exports, establishment of representative offices in target markets, and finally the development of overseas production subsidiaries. Each stage represents an increase in resource commitment as understanding of foreign markets grows and uncertainty decreases. Key features of this model include gradual expansion into markets that are geographically, culturally, or politically closer before advancing to more

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distant regions; experience learning, where market knowledge is accumulated through direct international experience; risk management through gradual expansion based on prior evaluation; and mitigation of foreignness risk through increasing involvement as knowledge develops (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 2009; Schweizer, 2022).

The network approach has gained attention in international business literature, emphasizing inter-company relationships including suppliers, distributors, and local partners as important facilitators in global market expansion (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009; Forsgren, 2016). These relationships facilitate risk reduction, market information access, and trust development in international business. In the context of OPPO, the Uppsala Model explains the company's gradual global expansion, starting from culturally adjacent regional markets such as Southeast Asia and South Asia, which share cultural similarities with China, before expanding into more geographically and culturally distant markets, including Europe and Latin America (CKGSB Knowledge, 2025; Tien, 2019).

d. Previous Research

Yuqing Xing (2019) examined the role of the Global Value Chain (GVC) in the evolution of China's smartphone industry innovation through GVC integration. This study shows how GVC integration enables Chinese mobile phone companies to reduce their dependence on foreign technology by developing local innovation capacity. OPPO exemplifies this pattern, not only relying on imported components but also investing in research and development and expanding production capacity in emerging markets. However, Xing emphasizes that even though local value added has increased, foreign companies still dominate high-value components such as chipsets and cameras, making technology supply chain optimization crucial for companies pursuing innovation independence and strengthening global competitiveness.

Seifert, Zheng, Chen, and Yuan (2017) analyzed the supply chain and distribution strategies of OPPO and Vivo in the Chinese smartphone market, which accounted for about one-third of global mobile phone sales in 2016. This IMD Business School case study examines how these subsidiaries of BBK Electronics developed an extensive offline distribution network, particularly in lower-tier cities and rural areas of China. This approach enabled market penetration in regions less accessible to global competitors, significantly increasing sales volume. The study highlights that supply chain optimization and distribution strategy are not merely internal supporting factors, but critical strategies for strengthening competitiveness in international market expansion. OPPO's global expansion reflects the strategic integration of market penetration, technological innovation, and adaptive supply chain and distribution network management.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

a. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research approach to understand and describe the phenomenon of OPPO's global expansion strategy through supply chain

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optimization. The descriptive qualitative method (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2000, 2010) facilitates a deeper understanding of the topic through systematic data collection, allowing researchers to explore how OPPO manages its global supply chain and international expansion strategy by leveraging technology.

b. Data Sources

This study uses primary and secondary data from various sources. Primary data was obtained from OPPO's official website and related official documents, including the company's annual reports and statements regarding global expansion strategies and technology supply chain optimization. Secondary data includes previously collected and published materials, including research reports, academic journals, news articles, and institutional research documents.

Secondary data sources include:

- ✓ Industry Reports: Studies from institutions such as IDC, Canalys, Counterpoint Research, and Gartner that analyze OPPO's market share and smartphone industry supply chain trends
- ✓ Academic Journals: Articles indexed in Scopus and Sinta discussing the global expansion of technology companies and supply chain strategies
- ✓ Government and International Organization Publications: Data from the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Economic Forum (WEF), and industry ministries on global trade and supply chain regulations

c. Scope Of Research

This research analyzes OPPO's global expansion strategy in smartphone products through technology supply chain optimization, examining how OPPO manages its global supply chain, implements innovation strategies, and addresses business expansion challenges and opportunities in various countries. This research is limited to the period 2015-2025 to ensure the relevance of data and analysis to the latest developments in the smartphone industry.

d. Data Collection Techniques

Literature Review: This approach collects theories and concepts from books, academic journals, and previous studies relevant to the Global Value Chain framework and corporate internationalization. Current literature is prioritized to ensure contextual relevance to the dynamics of the global technology industry.

Document Analysis: This technique reviews annual reports, business strategy reports, OPPO's official publications, and industry data from market research institutions including Canalys, IDC, and Counterpoint Research, to obtain actual performance data and supply chain strategies.

e. Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive-qualitative analysis methods are applied, involving the systematic collection and analysis of data to describe phenomena. The analysis is conducted through the following stages:

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- ✓ Data Reduction: Selecting, simplifying, and focusing the raw data collected to identify information relevant to the research focus
- ✓ Data Presentation: Organizing classified information into an easily understandable form, including tables and thematic categories
- ✓ Conclusion Drawing: Compiling interpretations of data analysis to answer research questions.

3. RESULT AND DISCCUSSION

a. Oppo's Market Position And Performance Trends

Market performance analysis shows that although China-based smart mobile device manufacturers have maintained a relatively stable market position, they face intensifying competitive challenges. Structural shifts in the global smartphone market landscape between 2021 and 2024 reveal a significant reorientation in market share distribution among major industry players. Samsung, as the traditional leading manufacturer, maintained its market dominance with a share of approximately 21% in 2021, although experienced a moderate decline to 18.1% in 2024. In contrast, Apple shows positive growth, with its market share increasing from 16% to 18.8% over the same period, reflecting a more aggressive market penetration strategy. Among Chinese manufacturers, Xiaomi manages to maintain its competitive position with a relatively minor change in market share, from 14% to 13.6%. However, OPPO experienced a substantial contraction in market share, declining significantly from 11% to 8.5%, signaling competitive erosion related to intensified industry competition and the repositioning of global players' strategies (Le Viet Tin, 2025).

An analysis of absolute unit shipment volumes provides a more comprehensive picture of the structural challenges OPPO faces in consolidating its competitive position in the global smartphone market. Historical data shows a significant downward trend in OPPO's shipment volume since 2021, when OPPO recorded shipments of 143.2 million units with an annual growth of 28% relative to the previous period. However, 2022 marked an important turning point in the direction of the company's performance, with total shipments falling sharply to 103.3 million units in 2022, representing a 27.8% contraction in the volume of units sold. This downward trend continued into 2023 with shipments reaching 100.7 million units, although in 2024 the OPPO Group recorded a return to growth of 2.8% year-on-year with shipments reaching 103.6 million units. An analysis of the performance of the brands within the OPPO group of companies shows quite clear differences in performance. The 2.8% growth at the group level in 2024 was mainly driven by the improved performance of the OPPO brand as the main brand. In contrast, the OnePlus brand experienced a decline in sales of more than 20% during the same period. This condition indicates a shift in the company's strategic focus to strengthen the position of the OPPO brand in the high-end segment, in an effort to offset the decline in the performance of other brands in the group, particularly in the premium and upper-middle segments (Omdia, 2025).

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b. Supply Chain Division And Geographic Distribution

OPPO's global expansion strategy fundamentally reflects the division of production across strategically located geographic areas, each offering specific competitive advantages. Design and development activities are concentrated in China, leveraging domestic technological capabilities and accessing the Chinese government's high-tech industry support policies. This geographic concentration facilitates a rapid innovation cycle aligned with China's market dynamics and facilitates coordination with Chinese component suppliers and research institutions. (Technode, 2024).

Manufacturing and assembly operations are spread across several countries strategically selected based on labor cost advantages or production infrastructure capabilities. This division strategy enables OPPO to achieve significant cost efficiencies while maintaining quality standards through parent company coordination. The technology supply chain encompasses not only the movement of physical goods but also the flow of information, innovation processes, and the procurement of strategic components, including chipset purchases and software development. (Technode, 2024).

c. Alignment And Enhancement Of The Global Value Chain

Within the GVC framework, OPPO functions as the lead company coordinating a complex production network while implementing enhancement mechanisms. The company is gradually increasing local innovation capacity by establishing research and development centers in various countries, rather than concentrating innovation solely in China. This enhancement strategy includes developing proprietary design capabilities, forming local manufacturing partnerships in emerging markets, and applying technological innovations throughout the supply chain.

Despite these enhancement efforts, OPPO remains dependent on foreign suppliers for high-value components. Foreign companies continue to dominate the chipset and camera component markets, requiring continuous supply chain optimization to ensure component security and manage price volatility. OPPO's strategy emphasizes strategic partnerships with reliable component suppliers, developing backup suppliers in various regions, and investing in technologies that facilitate supply chain visibility and risk mitigation (Omdia, 2024).

d. Digital Alignment And Technology-Based Coordination

OPPO is increasingly adopting digital technologies for supply chain management and international coordination. Artificial intelligence and big data applications facilitate real-time supply chain visibility, improved demand forecasting accuracy, and inventory optimization. Internet of Things technology facilitates the monitoring of manufacturing facilities, logistics tracking, and quality assurance at dispersed production sites (Reddy & Sasidharan, 2023).
These digital integration efforts address critical supply chain challenges, including geopolitical risk management, the impact of natural disasters, and pandemic-related disruptions that occurred during the 2020-2024 period. Digital systems facilitate rapid identification of alternative suppliers, production location flexibility, and logistics network reconfiguration—

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capabilities that proved essential during the global supply chain disruptions affecting the semiconductor industry (Reddy & Sasidharan, 2023; Zhang, 2023).

e. Application Of The Uppsala Model In Oppo's Expansion

OPPO's international expansion shows clear alignment with the supply chain concepts established in the Uppsala Model. The company initially expanded into geographically and culturally adjacent markets in Southeast Asia and South Asia, including Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and India—regions that share cultural similarities with China and offer a responsive consumer base. In the early stages, OPPO relied on partnerships with local distributors to channel its products to foreign markets, before gradually investing directly to build independent operations.

The next phase of expansion involved establishing representative offices and developing local distribution networks in target markets, with a gradual increase in resource commitment as market knowledge and experience accumulated (Blackburne, 2019). Only after establishing a strong position in neighboring markets did OPPO expand into more geographically and culturally distant regions, including Europe, Latin America, and Africa.

In executing its global expansion, OPPO adopts a gradual and cautious approach, as described in the Uppsala Model, by slowly expanding market involvement in line with increasing experience and understanding of foreign markets. Network relationships with local partners, component suppliers, and distribution channels facilitate market entry while reducing the risk of operational uncertainty and dependence on foreign factors.

f. Challenges And Strategic Responses

OPPO faces multifaceted challenges in maintaining its competitive position amid increasingly fierce smartphone market competition. The decline in market share from 11% to 8.5% between 2021 and 2024 reflects intensifying competition from rivals offering aggressive pricing, comparable technology, and specific market positioning. Geopolitical tensions affecting semiconductor supplies, trade restrictions targeting Chinese companies, and raw material price volatility create ongoing supply chain uncertainty.

Strategic measures taken include expanding the supply chain network to reduce dependence on a single region, increasing the number of suppliers to reduce dependence on a single source, and using alternative component sources to maintain supply continuity (Omdia, 2024). Additionally, OPPO is accelerating its research and development (R&D) investments to deliver technological innovations through new features and enhanced user experiences (IDC, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Global Value Chain (GVC) offers a robust analytical framework for understanding OPPO's global expansion strategy through the integration of international production organization principles, technology-based supply chain optimization, and a gradual internationalization pattern in line with the Uppsala Model. From a GVC perspective, OPPO demonstrates a structured production division strategy by centralizing

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design and development in China while distributing manufacturing and assembly operations across multiple countries that offer specific competitive advantages in line with global value-added logic.

The GVC perspective reveals how technology companies from developing countries such as OPPO can effectively position themselves in a mature global value chain architecture through strategic supply chain management combined with the adoption of digital technology. Although OPPO has faced recent market share challenges, the GVC approach shows that the company's supply chain optimization capabilities, digital integration investments, and international network development provide a sustainable strategic position in the global value ecosystem.

This research contributes to the academic understanding of how the GVC framework explains the multinational expansion strategies of technology companies from developing countries, including the application of technology-based coordination and the management of complex international expansion. These findings offer insights into broader patterns regarding how GVC facilitates the development of Chinese technology companies' competitive advantages through supply chain excellence and international network development in an increasingly competitive global technology market.

Further research could explore how geopolitical developments and semiconductor supply constraints shape OPPO's future supply chain strategies within the GVC context, investigate the company's response to new competitive threats from smartphone manufacturers such as India and other countries with similar global value structures, or analyze how artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing technologies are transforming the structure of smartphone supply chains within the contemporary GVC framework.

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