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A Hybrid Business Model in Action as a Blueprint for K-Culture Strategies: Insights from Amazon*

Young-Eun PARK¹

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how Amazon's hybrid business model, which integrates distribution, logistics, and online-offline channels, strengthens its sustainable competitive advantage. Building on this analysis, the study's primary aim is to identify business insights from Amazon's case that can guide Korean companies and K-Culture industry in developing global business strategies. **Research design, data and methodology:** A qualitative case study method was employed, focusing on Amazon as the primary subject. The research analyzed secondary data, including company reports, industry analyses, and financial records. Three theoretical frameworks, Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capabilities, and Complementary Effects, were applied to assess Amazon's resource deployment, multiple channels integration, and adaptability. **Results:** It reveals that Amazon's hybrid model successfully leverages rare internal resources, develops market-responsive capabilities, and creates effective synergies between online and offline operations. This strategic combination has enabled Amazon to establish a resilient, unique competitive position in rapidly evolving distribution and logistics environments. **Conclusions:** The research indicates that Korean firms and K-Culture enterprises can improve their global competitiveness by implementing analogous hybrid strategies. Specifically, the development of integrated distribution platforms, the promotion of dynamic market adaptation, and the reconfiguration of complementary value networks are essential for maintaining growth and extending their presence in international markets.

Keywords: Hybrid Business Model, K-Culture, Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capabilities, Complementary Effects, Amazon.

JEL Classification Code: F23, L14, L81, M10, Z11.

1. Introduction

The hybrid business model that combines distribution and logistics via online and offline channels has emerged as a key strategy for corporate competitiveness amid the acceleration of digital transformation and the market reorganization centered on consumer experience in recent years. This hybrid model emphasizes the seamless integration of physical distribution networks and digital platforms to meet two fundamental consumer needs and wants, speed and convenience (Nong & Ha, 2021).

Especially, the effectiveness of hybrid strategies is increasingly highlighted in the e-commerce environment where the boundaries between online and offline are becoming meaningless and blurring (Purwianti et al., 2025). This strategy is not simply about expanding distribution channels, but rather about strategic integration between logistics infrastructure, digital assets, customer contact points, AI, and data-based operating systems, and is evolving toward simultaneously enhancing operational efficiency and customer loyalty. A representative implementation example of this hybrid model can be found in the global retail

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¹ First and Corresponding Author. Associate Professor, Division of International Trade (Graduate School of Tourism, Convention & Entertainment), Incheon National University, Republic of Korea, Email: ypark77@inu.ac.kr

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platform, Amazon. Amazon has built a complex, integrated structure that organically connects online commerce, offline stores (Whole Foods, Amazon Go, etc.), and its own (micro) fulfillment centers by utilizing dual platforms called Vendor Central and Seller Central. In this way, Amazon has been able to provide customers with a fast and reliable, personalized service experience, while internally realizing control over the entire distribution process and optimizing operations using AI systems (Dept Agency, 2022.; Hahn et al., 2018; Tinuiti, 2018). This strategy establishes a foundational framework for long-term competitive advantage, as it reflects a holistic integration of resources and capabilities, rather than merely adopting technology.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze Amazon's hybrid business strategy through three theoretical lenses: Resource-Based View (RBV), Dynamic Capabilities (DC), and Complementary Effects. Based on this analysis, the main goal of this study is to derive actionable business insights. These insights can assist Korean companies and the K-Culture industry in formulating global strategies from the Amazon case. The Resource-Based View emphasizes that scarce and inimitable resources within a company are key to achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991), while the Dynamic Capabilities framework highlights the importance of sensing, capturing, and reconfiguring market changes (Teece et al., 1997). In addition, the complementary effects perspective provides a theoretical framework suitable for explaining today's online-offline, distribution, and logistics convergence strategies, in that different resources and functions are combined to produce higher performance than either alone. In particular, this study aims to overcome the limitations of existing hybrid model analyses that were limited to the technology and operation strategies of specific platforms or to short-term effects (Onggowidjojo, & Ellitan, 2023), and expand it into a strategic framework applicable to Korean companies and related industry companies, including K-Content and K-Culture companies (Park, 2017; 2019; 2021a; 2021b; 2024). Moreover, while Amazon's hybrid business model offers a robust case for strategic benchmarking, it is essential to position its practices within a comparative context. Major competitors such as Alibaba and Walmart have adopted different yet equally compelling approaches to integrating online-offline channels and logistics systems. For instance, Alibaba's synergy between e-commerce and its digital finance infrastructure (e.g., Alipay) exemplifies a platform-driven integration model, while Walmart's extensive physical footprint serves as the backbone of its same-day delivery network, especially across the United States. These variations highlight that hybrid strategies are neither uniform nor universally applicable. In particular, Korean firms face a distinct set of institutional and operational challenges, including a dense regulatory environment, high consumer

expectations, and limited domestic logistics scalability. Therefore, this study not only analyzes Amazon's model but also considers the contextual feasibility and strategic adaptability of hybrid models within the Korean market and broader K-Culture business environments. Furthermore, this analysis will contribute to establishing a strategic foundation for developing a global Hallyu (also, known as Korean Wave or K-Culture) business model that can be utilized in regional content cities, such as those featuring K-pop, drama, movie, beauty, food, fashion, vehicles, and other related industries, companies, and fandom commerce platforms.

2. Literature Review

Hybrid business models have evolved from multi-channel distribution strategies and have been the subject of numerous studies focused on optimizing distribution channel selection and predicting digital consumer behavior. Nong and Ha (2021) proposed a hybrid optimization model to address the problem of selecting physical locations for retail stores and quantitatively approached the complexity of distribution channels. Conversely, Purwianti et al. (2025) concentrated on analyzing consumer behavior by examining the relationship between customer experience and the intention for continuous use, along with time-saving orientation. While these studies provide an essential foundation for the hybrid model, they lack an analysis of the strategic system of the entire company and the synergy aspect of resource utilization (Hahn et al., 2018; Andreoli-Versbach, & Gans, 2024; Ratchford et al., 2022; Onggowidjojo & Ellitan, 2023). Therefore, this study aims to design a comprehensive research framework for a hybrid business strategy based on three theoretical perspectives: the resource-based perspective, the dynamic capabilities, and the complementary effect theoretical framework. Through this, it seeks to gain important insights for establishing global business strategies for Korean companies and the Korean Wave industry.

2.1. Hybrid Business Strategy from the Resource-Based View (RBV) Perspective

It is widely recognized within the resource-based view that sustainable competitive advantage primarily arises from a firm's unique and valuable internal resources, rather than from external market forces and the environment (Barney, 1991). From this perspective, the hybrid business model aims to establish a complex resource structure that is difficult for other companies to imitate by integrating physical assets (logistics centers, offline stores), digital assets (platform algorithms, customer data), and organizational assets (internal logistics capabilities, technology integration

capabilities) owned by the company, rather than merely diversifying distribution channels. For instance, Li and Fung, a Hong Kong-based multinational corporation, developed a hybrid model that integrated various distribution channels by leveraging its core competencies in global supply chain management. They provide customized services to customers based on their extensive experience and technology in supply chain management, thereby securing a competitive edge. Moreover, global logistics firms such as UPS and FedEx utilize effective hybrid business models that integrate their logistics infrastructure with IT systems. By merging physical and digital assets, they provide fast and accurate services to customers, thereby enhancing their market position. These examples demonstrate how hybrid business models foster a competitive edge, leveraging a company's distinct resources from a resource-based perspective. Learning from these corporate instances, the resource-based view now serves as a crucial framework for understanding the fluid relationship between online and offline channels and the competitive advantage of distribution and logistics firms. This perspective emphasizes that maintaining competitive success heavily relies on a company's ability to effectively utilize and safeguard its unique, valuable, and scarce resources. Several studies have explored hybrid business strategies in the distribution and logistics field through the lens of the RBV. In a 2012 study, Gligor and Holcomb showed that logistics capabilities enhance supply chain agility by improving key factors such as customer service, quality, and innovation. They observed that this increased agility positively impacts overall company performance. Olavarrieta and Ellinger (1997) examined logistics-based business models from a resource-based viewpoint. They clarified how the strategic capabilities of logistics service providers lead to competitive advantage, particularly stressing the need to develop and leverage these capabilities. Additionally, Olavarrieta and Ellinger (1997) assessed the relevance of resource-based theory in strategic logistics research. They discussed how the strategic capabilities of logistics service providers contribute to gaining a competitive edge and underscored the significance of developing and applying logistics capabilities. Tadić, Zečević, and Aleksić (2020) utilized the resource-based view to evaluate logistics system development scenarios for trading companies. They analyzed various logistics system development scenarios to pinpoint the most effective strategy through a resource-based lens. Menchinella (2020) performed a resource- and competency-based analysis of fashion business models. This research illustrates how a company's resources and capabilities foster value creation, with significant implications for strategy, especially in the competitive fashion industry. Collectively, these studies illustrate that the resource-based view serves as a crucial theoretical framework for comprehending and crafting

hybrid business strategies in the distribution and logistics sectors, enabling companies to achieve sustainable competitive advantages by identifying and strategically employing their unique resources and capabilities. The resource-based view posits that a company's internal resources and capabilities are key to achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Onggowidjojo & Ellitan, 2023). This perspective suggests that integrating online and offline channels can serve as a strategy to bolster a company's market standing by effectively leveraging its existing resources. According to Kusmiyati and Priyono (2021), Indonesian MSMEs that adeptly merge online and offline business models typically exhibit five essential capabilities. These five capabilities (such as assimilative, ambidextrous, environmental, autonomous, and digital/non-digital cap.) are crucial for improving the performance of hybrid models.

Based on the analysis of these existing studies, Amazon's resources can be viewed from a resource-based perspective as follows. From this perspective, Amazon's success stems from the strategic deployment of core resources. The primary resources of Amazon can be largely categorized into physical resources, technological resources, and human resources. The resource-based view posits that a company's sustainable competitive advantage is determined by unique and valuable resources within the company rather than by the external environment (Barney, 1991; Onggowidjojo, & Ellitan, 2023). From this standpoint, the hybrid business model is not merely about diversifying distribution channels but rather about establishing a complex resource structure that is difficult for other companies to replicate by integrating the company's physical assets (logistics centers, offline stores), digital assets (platform algorithms, customer data), and organizational assets (internal logistics capabilities, technology integration capabilities). Amazon exemplifies this logic of RBV. Its logistics infrastructure (Fulfillment Center), Prime membership-based consumer data, and web services (Cloud Infrastructure) function not as isolated resources but as an interconnected complex resource portfolio. In particular, Amazon Prime membership underpins the enhancement of the company's predictive capabilities and maximizes distribution efficiency by accumulating purchase frequency, preferred products, and regional demand data in real-time (Hahn et al., 2018). This serves as an entry barrier for other companies in developing consumer-centered customized distribution and logistics strategies and acts as a mechanism for continuously creating competitive advantage from a resource-based perspective (Barney, 1991; Dept Agency, 2022). Furthermore, as data and algorithms have come to be viewed as 'resources' in the modern distribution environment, the hybrid model can be understood as a strategic restructuring of asset composition rather than merely an extension of distribution channels. At this juncture, big data analysis capabilities for enhancing

distribution efficiency and consumer experience are no longer supplementary elements but instead function as strategic core assets (Purwianti et al., 2025).

2.2. Hybrid Business Strategy from the Perspective of Dynamic Capabilities (DC)

The dynamic capabilities perspective serves as a core theoretical framework for distribution and logistics companies to respond effectively to the rapidly changing market environment and secure sustainable competitive advantage. This perspective emphasizes a company's ability to adapt to the evolving external environment by integrating, building, and reconfiguring its resources and capabilities. In essence, dynamic capabilities represent a firm's ability to adjust resource allocations and promote innovation to tackle the obstacles posed by a constantly changing environment. The theory of dynamic capabilities is based on the premise that a firm's talent for quickly reallocating or restructuring its resources in a fast-evolving market is crucial for maintaining competitiveness (Teece et al., 1997). Specifically, the hybrid business model highlights a situation where dynamic capabilities are increasingly important in the omnichannel era, characterized by the fading of distribution channel boundaries. This transformation is critical, as addressing swiftly shifting consumer expectations, unpredictable logistics supply chain uncertainties, and the emergence of technology-driven delivery systems cannot be effectively handled with a static approach. For example, Swedish fashion retailer, H&M, shifted its supply chain strategy from a push-centric to a push-pull hybrid model, enabling it to swiftly react to changing consumer demands. This strategy allows H&M to adapt fluidly to market fluctuations and sustain its competitive advantage. Moreover, GE Gas Power has enhanced its logistics operations' efficiency and sustainability by optimizing various transportation methods and integrating deliveries. They manage intricate logistics networks effectively by utilizing dynamic capabilities. These cases demonstrate how hybrid business models play a significant role in securing competitive advantages by improving corporate flexibility and adaptability through the lens of dynamic capabilities. Major research that examined the strategies of distribution and logistics firms from the perspective of dynamic capabilities includes the following:

Sandberg (2021a) investigated the dynamic capabilities essential for achieving logistics flexibility through a case study of a Swedish fast fashion retailer. The research elaborates on how three dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring) enhance logistics flexibility's breadth and responsiveness. Eriksson, Sandberg, and Abrahamsson (2022) studied the influence of dynamic capabilities on the omnichannel transformation process through a multi-case analysis of grocery retailers. Their

findings reveal six micro-foundations of dynamic capabilities that are crucial for successful omnichannel shifts, detailing how these capabilities contribute to overall success. Similarly, Sandberg (2021b) examined the dynamic capabilities necessary to tackle two logistics issues: geographical expansion and omnichannel transformation, focusing on a large Swedish retailer. This research underscores the significance of both internal and external dynamic capabilities in managing logistical hurdles effectively. Additionally, Zhang and Wang (2024) assessed the dynamic capabilities needed to foster logistics business model innovation through digital technologies. Their study shows how the dynamic capabilities of sensing, capturing, and reconfiguring are amplified by digital technologies, driving innovation in logistics business frameworks. Collectively, these studies illustrate that the perspective of dynamic capabilities is an essential theoretical framework for developing and executing strategies in distribution and logistics firms. To effectively navigate the fluctuating market landscape and achieve sustainable competitive advantages, businesses must cultivate and leverage dynamic capabilities. Concurrently, Kusmiyati and Priyono (2021) emphasized the importance of these capabilities in their research, asserting that companies must possess the ability to adapt to evolving environments and stimulate innovation while integrating online and offline business strategies.

Amazon showcases dynamic capabilities by quickly responding to changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. A prime example is the company's real-time adjustments in supply and the dynamic reassessment of inventory priorities for products experiencing increased demand during this period, exemplifying distribution efficiency achieved through internal capability restructuring. Additionally, Amazon is realizing innovation in channels and customer experiences through drone delivery, AI prediction systems, and offline unmanned store strategies, such as Amazon Go (Purwianti et al., 2025; Tinuiti, 2018). These dynamic capabilities starkly contrast the fixed channel operation methods of existing distribution companies, illustrating the mechanism by which the hybrid model operates within the cyclical process of sensing environmental changes, seizing opportunities, and reallocating resources (Teece et al., 1997). In fact, a system that analyzes distribution structures in real time based on data and possesses a feedback structure indicates that these capabilities are not mere a matter of technology but the result of strategic design.

2.3. Hybrid Business Strategy from the Perspective of Complementary Effects

In a hybrid business strategy, complementary effects play a pivotal role in creating synergy through the integration of

online and offline channels for distribution and logistics companies, thereby enhancing customer experience and strengthening corporate competitiveness. Complementary effects refer to the interaction of multiple resources and functions to achieve synergy beyond that. They are based on the theory that when different resources, functions, and technologies integrate, they can create greater value and effects than when existing individually (Milgrom & Roberts, 1995). The hybrid business model represents the structural form that most dramatically implements this complementary effect. When physical and digital assets, offline and online platforms, and customer experience management work in combination, they can achieve higher performance than a single system. The following are major studies that analyzed the online and offline strategies of distribution and logistics companies from the perspective of complementary effects. Zhang and Wang (2023) analyzed the impact of integrating online and offline channels on innovative ambidexterity. Based on the dynamic capabilities theory and the concept of complementary effects, this study emphasizes that enterprises can achieve both exploratory and exploitative innovation simultaneously by integrating these channels. In particular, it explains that the flexibility of online channels and the reliability of offline channels combine to contribute to customer value creation. Zhou and Wang (2023) found that when a company's products and the products of third-party sellers are complementary in a hybrid platform, the hybrid platform model consistently provides the highest profits. By employing a theoretical framework, the study assessed the extent to which product distribution expenses, retail price points, and competitive dynamics impact strategic business model selection. Wei, Li, and Zhang (2023) studied the integration strategies of two supply chains with complementary products. They analyzed the effects of top-down, bottom-up, and vertical integration between manufacturers and retailers on decisions and profits of supply chain members and overall supply chain performance. The results indicate that as the number of integrated players increases, the total profit of the supply chain also increases, and vertical integration can be more profitable than bottom-up or top-down integration. Xu, Wang, and Chen (2023) explored the effects of hybrid channel structures and product quality distribution strategies on operational decisions within the platform. This study demonstrates that in a hybrid channel structure, where the platform employs both resale and agency channels, the platform can expand overall market demand and maximize profits by selling high-quality products directly through the product quality distribution strategy while selling low-quality products through third-party sellers. Additionally, Ratchford, Soysal, Zentner, and Gauri (2022) conducted a study on the interaction and complementary effects between online and offline distribution channels and future distribution channels.

In the case of Amazon, by integrating offline retail (Amazon Go), the online platform (Amazon.com), and the logistics system (FBA), it implemented a multi-channel consumption pattern in which customers search for products and experience them in stores or order them online and receive them quickly. This functions as a structural synergy beyond the omnichannel strategy in that it provides consumers with 'consistency of experience' rather than channel distinction (Dept Agency, 2022). In addition, this complementary effect also works in internal processes. Inventory management systems, delivery optimization algorithms, and customer review analysis functions are combined to simultaneously improve efficiency and customer satisfaction throughout the entire distribution process (Nong & Ha, 2021). This shows that we should pay attention to the synergy derived from the linkage and interaction between functions, rather than the improvement of a single function. Ultimately, the hybrid model creates 'integrated structural competitiveness' that cannot be explained by the efficiency of a single distribution channel alone, and the complementary effect perspective serves as the most essential theoretical tool to explain this. These studies show how the complementary effects of online and offline channels in a hybrid business strategy contribute to improving customer experience and strengthening corporate competitiveness. Through this integrated strategy, companies can flexibly respond to the changing market environment and achieve sustainable growth.

2.4. Research Model and Research Questions

The hybrid model is not unique to Amazon. While traditional offline retailers are entering online e-commerce, digital-centric companies are establishing offline stores. In addition, distribution companies are broadening their scope to include the logistics sector, while logistics companies are also expanding to collaborate with or enhance distribution. In this context, existing studies on hybrid business models primarily focus on the strategic effects of channel integration or shifts in consumer behavior. For instance, Nong and Ha (2021) proposed a hybrid optimization model for selecting the optimal location for retail stores and emphasized a mathematical approach to distribution channel management. Moreover, Purwianti et al. (2025) examined how customer intentions to continue using online food delivery services are influenced by incorporating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Although these studies have validated the effectiveness of the hybrid model within their respective fields, the analysis of the broader structural strategic dimension of distribution and logistics integration is relatively lacking. Additionally, many prior studies have focused solely on the tactical level of the hybrid model, limiting their connection to a company's

resource-based strategy or dynamic capabilities (Hahn et al., 2018; Andreoli-Versbach & Gans, 2024; Ratchford et al., 2022). In other words, there has been a deficiency in theoretical consideration regarding how hybrid business models relate to a company's long-term competitive advantage, and few studies have comprehensively analyzed the strategic asset deployment and capability development of platform-based companies. In contrast, this study conducts a multi-layered analysis of how Amazon's hybrid business model contributes to securing a company's competitive advantage through the framework of the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities, and complementary effects (Barney, 1991; Teece et al., 1997). By applying these three complementary perspectives to real global corporate cases, this study contributes to academic theory and provides meaningful implications for practitioners and policymakers on how integrated digital-physical infrastructure can enhance competitiveness, operational agility, and customer-centric value creation in rapidly evolving markets. Therefore, this study offers a timely and in-depth analysis of hybrid strategy as a business imperative, ultimately bridging theory and practice in the context of next-generation retail innovation. In particular, this study aims to derive strategic implications from the perspective of the total value chain, encompassing not only the combination of distribution channels but also logistics infrastructure, data utilization, and customer experience management. In doing so, this research significantly advances theory and practice by moving away from the existing tactical-centered approach and illuminating the mechanism through which the hybrid model serves as a core axis of corporate strategy.

Accordingly, the analysis of this study is structured around the following three theoretical frameworks. First, based on the resource-based view, Amazon's physical infrastructure, digital assets, customer data, and operational processes are regarded as scarce and inimitable resources, which are analyzed in terms of their function as competitive advantages in hybrid strategies (Barney, 1991). Second, drawing on the dynamic capabilities view, it conducts a structural analysis of how Amazon responds in real-time to changing market demands and reallocates or innovates organizational resources (Teece et al., 1997). Finally, guided by the complementary effects view, it analyzes the synergy effects that arise from the integration of online and offline channels, owned products, and third-party sales products, distribution, and logistics (Zhou et al., 2023; Wei et al., 2023). To analyze Amazon's hybrid business model strategy, this study has established the following three research questions based on the three theoretical perspectives. The research model developed is shown in Figure 1.

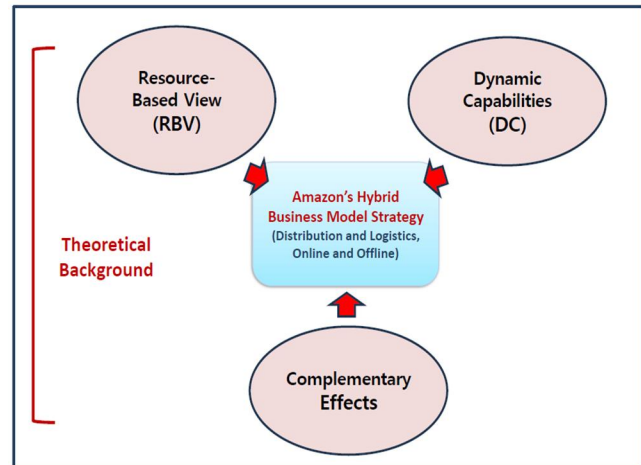


Figure 1: Theoretical Research Framework

Research Questions

RQ1. How do Amazon's tangible and intangible resources support the sustainability of its hybrid business model within the Resource-Based View (RBV)? What are the implications for K-Culture businesses and related companies?

RQ2. How do Amazon's dynamic capabilities, including sensing demand shifts, harnessing technological innovations, and reconfiguring its logistics network, facilitate competitive adaptation in a hybrid retail setting? What are the implications for K-Culture enterprises?

RQ3. To what degree do the complementary interactions between Amazon's online and offline channels improve customer experience and operational efficiency? What implications does this have for K-Culture businesses and related companies?

3. Research Method and Materials

This study aims to derive strategic implications that a hybrid business model can provide to the cultural content industry, particularly for establishing a K-content business strategy. It focuses on Amazon's distribution and logistics strategy and its integrated online and offline structure. To this end, a qualitative case study methodology was adopted to interpret multi-layered phenomena in context deeply. In addition to its online-based e-commerce platform, Amazon has built its own hybrid model through offline stores (e.g., Whole Foods, Amazon Go), its logistics center (Fulfillment Center), cloud-based digital infrastructure (AWS), and a dual platform structure for third-party sellers (Vendor Central & Seller Central). This study focuses on deriving strategic insights from the complex operating structure of cultural

content-based companies, particularly domestic firms that are expanding the reach of the Korean Wave through K-pop, K-drama, movies, entertainment, K-fashion, beauty, food, and others. This study was structured according to a theory-based qualitative case study design (Yin, 2014; Stake, 1995; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), and attempted an in-depth analysis through a single case study of Amazon. The study was conducted through a secondary literature review and qualitative and quantitative data analysis. First, Amazon's official investor report, SEC disclosure, industry analysis report, academic materials related to global logistics, and media reports were systematically collected to examine Amazon's business model development process and distribution/logistics operation strategy. Furthermore, for qualitative data analysis, executive interviews and analysis reports from accountants and market experts were referenced, and the context of management decisions and strategic transformations of related companies were traced. Finally, for quantitative supplementary analysis, performance-based data such as Amazon's quarterly sales, logistics costs, conversion rate, customer loyalty, and delivery time reduction indicators were used to identify the impact of strategic changes on performance. Additionally, differentiation and competitive factors were diagnosed through comparative analysis with similar global companies (e.g., Walmart, Alibaba, Coupang). The analysis results were derived based on Amazon's strategic case but go beyond a single case study, showing that it can be expanded into a practical framework applicable to the development of global strategies for Korean companies and K-content businesses. In particular, platform-based K-pop companies, drama production companies with global fandoms, and startups with K-beauty and K-food distribution networks can establish a foundation for localizing and applying Amazon's strategic integration model to fit their businesses.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Amazon's Growth and Business Expansion

Amazon was founded in 1994 by Jeff Bezos, a former Wall Street investment analyst. He noticed that the number of Internet users was rapidly increasing each year, and he founded the company believing in the potential of online business. Amazon initially started as an online bookstore (Amazon.com) specializing in book sales. On July 16, 1995, the website officially opened, introducing a new market known as online shopping. The company's vision was to be more than just a bookstore; it aimed to be "the world's most customer-centric company." Following this vision, Amazon rapidly broadened its product offerings to include music, videos, electronics, and toys. In 1997, Amazon went public

on NASDAQ, marking the beginning of its serious growth as a global corporation. Although the early 2000s saw the dot-com bubble burst, leading to the downfall of many Internet companies, Amazon navigated the crisis with effective financial restructuring and a strategy of business diversification. In 2002, Amazon made its entry into the cloud computing sector by launching 'Amazon Web Services (AWS)'. Initially serving as a basic IT infrastructure provider, AWS eventually became central to the company's profitability. Furthermore, in 2005, it launched the membership program 'Amazon Prime', which significantly boosted customer loyalty by offering numerous perks, including free shipping and streaming options. This Prime service, introduced during this time, marked a pivotal moment for Amazon's long-term success. Throughout the 2010s, Amazon ramped up its global expansion and explored new business areas. In 2012, it acquired Kiva Systems, a robotic logistics firm, to improve logistics automation, resulting in enhanced delivery speed and cost savings. By 2017, Amazon made a major move into offline retail by acquiring Whole Foods Market, a prominent American organic grocery chain, for around \$13.7 billion. This is viewed as an event that symbolizes Amazon's strategy to break down the barriers between online and offline. Moreover, it established a leading position in the smart home market through the voice recognition-based AI secretary service 'Alexa' and the smart speaker 'Echo'.

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented both opportunities and challenges to Amazon. As demand for non-face-to-face shopping surged worldwide, Amazon's sales and Prime subscribers exploded. However, it also faced new social demands, such as safety issues for logistics center employees and labor union organizing movements. In 2021, Jeff Bezos stepped down as CEO, with Andy Jassy, who was then AWS CEO, taking the reins. Since then, Amazon has been exploring new growth engines such as cloud, AI, and healthcare, while also working to strengthen ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) management. As of 2025, Amazon continues to invest heavily in expanding AI infrastructure and cloud services. AWS still maintains the No. 1 position in global cloud market share and is actively pursuing technological innovations in autonomous delivery robots, healthcare services, and satellite internet projects (Kuiper Project). Furthermore, it is reinforcing its investments in e-commerce and cloud infrastructure in India, the Middle East, and South America to diversify its global market while expanding various consumer touchpoints through the operation of offline stores (Amazon Fresh, Amazon Style). Currently, Amazon is transforming from a platform company into a massive global entity that encompasses various industries such as logistics, cloud, AI, healthcare, and the space industry. This diversification strategy is expected to accelerate further over the next 10

years (Amazon.com, Inc., 2025; Brad Stone, 2013; Business Insider, 2025; The Wall Street Journal, 2025; Time, 2025). The following Table 1 clearly illustrates the process through which Amazon began as an online business and gradually expanded to offline.

Driven by the growth of its online, offline, and distribution and logistics businesses, Amazon is expected to record net sales of \$638 billion in 2024, an 11% increase year-over-year. Operating profit surged 85.9% to \$68.6 billion, and net income nearly doubled to \$59.2 billion. Specifically, the AWS division reported sales of \$107.6 billion, marking a 19% increase year-over-year, which accounts for approximately 17% of total revenue (Amazon.com, Inc., 2025). Moreover, Amazon announced plans to invest \$100 billion in expanding its artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure by 2025. This investment includes constructing data centers that utilize its self-

developed AI chip, Trainium 2, and developing a supercomputer for training AI models. The AWS Trainium 2 chip is regarded as a pivotal asset for Amazon's next-generation success in cost-effective, high-performance generative AI, providing up to four times the performance of the first-generation Trainium. Additionally, Amazon has launched a system to address the GPU resource shortage issue through 'Project Greenland' and to optimize GPU allocation based on the ROI (return on investment) of AI projects (Business Insider, 2025). In response to global supply chain instability and tariff increases, Amazon has entered into 'cost support agreements' with vendors to maintain consumer price competitiveness despite rising costs. Furthermore, it is flexibly adjusting its investment strategy, including temporarily suspending or modifying data center expansion in certain regions (The Sun, 2025; The Times, 2025; Wall Street Journal, 2025).

Table 1: Amazon's History Timeline

Year	Business Area	Major Events Milestone
1994	Online	Amazon founded by Jeff Bezos
1995	Online	Launch of Amazon.com as an online bookstore
1997	Online	Amazon goes public on NASDAQ
1998	Online	Expands business beyond online books to music and video
2000	Online	Amazon Marketplace launched, providing a platform for external sellers to sell their products
2002	Online	Launch of Amazon Web Services (AWS)
2005	Online	Introduction of Amazon Prime membership
2007	Online	Amazon Kindle e-book reader launched
2012	Online	Acquisition of Kiva Systems (logistics automation), Amazon Air freight starts
2013	Online	Amazon Web Services (AWS) expands cloud business
2014	Offline	First logistics center, 'Amazon Robot Logistics Center', begins operation
2017	Offline	Acquisition of Whole Foods Market
2018	Offline	Launch of Amazon Go stores
2020	Offline	Pandemic-driven growth in e-commerce and logistics, In-store Pickup Service, Amazon Fresh physical supermarket opening
2021	Online, Offline	Andy Jassy becomes CEO, succeeding Jeff Bezos, Micro-fulfillment centers, Amazon Style clothing store opening announcement
2023	Online, Offline	Prime One-Day Delivery, expansion of integrated online and offline platform offering
2024	Online, Offline	Expansion of Amazon Pharmacy & Fresh
2025	Online, Offline	Major investments in AI, healthcare, and satellite internet (Project Kuiper)

Source: Amazon.com, Inc. (2025) and Author reconstruction.

Meanwhile, Amazon's major competitors include Walmart, Alibaba, and Microsoft Azure, a significant player in the cloud market. First, Walmart maintains the top position in both the US and global markets in terms of sales, holding the title of the retailer with the highest sales in the US for at least seven consecutive years. Walmart is enhancing its omnichannel strategy by offering same-day delivery service targeting 93% of the US population based on offline stores. This fast logistics network coupled with its offline base acts as powerful factors that Amazon must continuously defend against in the North American market.

If Walmart is considered the primary competitor in offline channels, Alibaba has emerged as a formidable global distribution rival in the online commerce sector. Alibaba dominates the online commerce market in China with sales of approximately \$130.3 billion as of 2023, and its global market share is also significant at 17.7%. Notably, its wide range of products and integration with digital ecosystems such as Alipay continue to challenge Amazon's expansion strategy in the global market. Meanwhile, in the cloud market, Amazon's AWS retains the lead with a market share of approximately 31%, but Microsoft Azure is growing

rapidly through its enterprise solution and MS Office software linkage strategy. Its corporate customer-focused strategy is consistently putting pressure on AWS in the B2B cloud service market. Generally, Amazon is currently pursuing continuous growth by strengthening its core AI and cloud-based business groups, but it faces various challenges such as increasing global regulations, geopolitical risks, and market encroachment by competitors. For Amazon to maintain its market leadership in the future, it is essential to continue customer-centered innovation while enhancing internal capabilities to respond flexibly and swiftly to market changes. Therefore, Amazon's hybrid business model strategy that integrates distribution and logistics, online and offline, will play a crucial role in sustaining Amazon's growth. The following Table 2 and Figure 1 show the global distribution market share of Amazon and its major competitors' online and offline sales combined as of 2025.

Table 2: Global Distribution Company Sales and Market Share in 2025

Company	Revenue (Billion USD)	Market Share (%)
Amazon	638	12
Walmart	681	12.8
Alibaba	944	17.7
eBay	10.1	0.2
Shopify	319	6
Target	107	2
Others	2650.9	49.3



Source: Retail Statistics (Capital One Shopping Research, 2025)

Figure 1: Global Distribution Company Revenues in 2025

The research objective of this study is rooted in the idea that Amazon's competitive advantage is sustained through the strategic integration of core resources (physical, technological, and human resources), dynamic adaptive and innovative capabilities, and the interactions that create synergies between digital and physical business components.

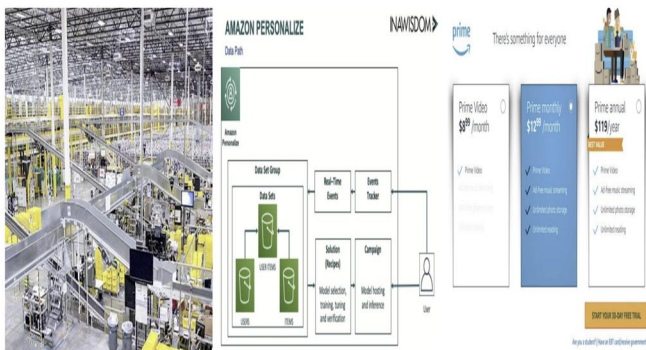
The foundation for this research hypothesis relies on three theoretical perspectives (Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capabilities, and Complementary Effects). First, from the resource-based view, Amazon possesses valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIO) assets such as a global fulfillment network, proprietary AI technology, and human capital expertise. Second, through dynamic capabilities, Amazon adapts to market changes via continuous innovation (e.g., Amazon Go, AWS, drone delivery) and internal capability reconfiguration. Finally, Amazon's ability to enhance the value of each division by integrating business units such as AWS, logistics, and retail clearly illustrates mutual complementarity, creating cost efficiency and added consumer value. Empirical observations of Amazon's historical evolution and strategic milestones (e.g., acquisition of Whole Foods, integration of Alexa Shopping and Prime, expansion of fulfillment centers) support this multidimensional approach.

4.2. Amazon's Hybrid Business Model Strategy Based on Three Theoretical Perspectives

This study analyzed Amazon's distribution, logistics, and online and offline integration strategies through three theoretical perspectives: the Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capabilities, and Complementary Effects. The main analysis results based on the Amazon case are as follows.

First, the businesses related to Amazon's Resource-Based View are outlined as follows. In implementing a hybrid business model, Amazon strategically combined its unique and hard-to-imitate core resources. Representative examples include Amazon's online-offline store integration and the integration of distribution and logistics. Amazon acquired Whole Foods in 2017, securing an offline distribution network and enhancing its hybrid strategy by integrating it with its online platform. The structure of utilizing Whole Foods stores as exclusive discount spaces for Prime members, along with allowing online orders to be picked up in-store, exemplifies the combination of offline assets (physical space) with the online purchasing experience. Additionally, Amazon Go operates an unmanned offline store system that integrates online and offline technologies, enabling consumers to scan products and automatically pay using a smartphone app in-store. Meanwhile, Amazon's performance in integrating distribution and logistics is also remarkable. Amazon provides logistics infrastructure (warehouses, delivery, customer service, etc.) to sellers through Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA) and unifies its own sales with third-party sales within the distribution network. It optimizes demand forecasting and inventory management by utilizing AWS-based logistics data systems, while assets such as robot-

automated warehouses and drone delivery (Amazon Prime Air) help shorten delivery times and function as inimitable resources. In particular, Amazon's global fulfillment network (Fulfillment Center), AI-based recommendation system, and extensive customer database through Prime membership are assets that clearly differentiate it from competitors. In the offline sector, it secured a physical distribution base through the acquisition of Whole Foods and commercialized unmanned store technology through Amazon Go. Furthermore, the real-time management system of logistics and sales data based on Amazon Web Services (AWS) contributes to optimizing distribution efficiency and enhancing the customer experience simultaneously. The combination of these physical and digital assets plays a critical role in forming and maintaining Amazon's sustainable competitive advantage by satisfying the RBV conditions of scarcity, inimitability, and non-substitutability from a resource-based perspective (Barney, 1991; Dept Agency, 2022; Hahn et al., 2018).



Source: Amazon.com (2025)

Figure 2: Amazon's Fulfillment Center, AWS AI System, Amazon Prime

Meanwhile, Amazon's acquisition of dynamic capabilities was achieved through its operations in online and offline channels and its flexibility in distribution and logistics structures. To keep pace with evolving market demands and emerging technologies, Amazon has progressively developed and refined its dynamic capabilities. In response to the surge in online demand immediately after the pandemic, Amazon quickly expanded its 'In-store Pickup' and 'Amazon Fresh' services offline and implemented technology-based reconfigurations while responding nimbly to changes in demand. In particular, the ability to analyze regional demand patterns in real-time and adjust inventory layouts in offline stores or redesign customer paths based on data corresponds to the typical dynamic capability process of sensing → seizing → transforming. Through this, Amazon achieved seamless online-offline integration. Additionally, Amazon reduced its

dependence on external courier companies by building microfulfillment centers across the United States for Prime One-Day Delivery and directly operating logistics subsidiaries for truck and air deliveries. This strategy of enhancing last-mile logistics efficiency by installing microfulfillment centers (MFCs) nationwide represents an innovative approach that reconfigures the existing large-scale, logistics center-centered operation method. This case illustrates that the dynamic capability process of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring is deeply internalized within Amazon. Consequently, it reorganized its existing relationships with UPS and FedEx, demonstrating dynamic capabilities that flexibly adjust internal assets to the altered delivery cost structure and customer expectations. Netflix's data-driven content localization and Tesla's vertically integrated supply chain serve as compelling examples of dynamic capability deployment in adjacent industries. These cases complement Amazon's adaptive capacity and underscore the broader applicability of dynamic capabilities as an industry-transcending strategic principle. This serves as a strong example of preemptively responding to market changes by building dynamic capabilities suitable for the digital environment, following the three stages of sensing–seizing–transforming defined by Teece (1997) (Teece et al., 1997; Sandberg, 2021). Moreover, drone delivery (Prime Air), unmanned stores (Amazon Go), and AI-based demand forecasting systems are typical examples of capturing technological innovation and integrating it into business (Teece et al., 1997; Tinuiti, 2018).

Finally, the complementary integration (Complementary Effects) of Amazon's online and offline stores, along with the complementarity of distribution and logistics processes, played a major role in shaping Amazon's hybrid business model. Amazon designed the product display and store location of offline stores based on customer purchase data generated from the online platform (Amazon 4-Star, Amazon Books stores). Furthermore, the experience of customers scanning products in advance on the Amazon app and then checking and purchasing the actual items at an offline store strengthened the connection between the two channels. In May 2022, Amazon opened its first offline clothing store, 'Amazon Style,' in Glendale, California, in the western United States. Then, in October 2022, it opened its second store in Columbus, Ohio, in the Midwest. 'Amazon Style' is an offline store offering a shopping experience that utilizes a smartphone app. Customers can check product information such as size, color, and reviews through the QR code attached to the hanger, and if they tap on the product they want, the clerk will bring the clothes to the fitting room. They can also check the availability of the changing room through the app. However, in November 2023, Amazon decided to close 'Amazon Style.' After only a year and a half since opening, the company opted to

Strategic elements	Specific examples	Functional effects
Complementary effects: Application cases	Amazon Fresh pickup + online order linkage, Supplementing third-party sellers and own products through FBA Structure	O2O Customer experience consistency and Strengthening distribution efficiency

4.3. An Integrated Review of Hybrid Strategies and Their Application to Korean Wave (K-Culture) Business Strategies

This study comprehensively examines Amazon's hybrid business strategy through three theoretical frameworks: the resource-based view, the dynamic capabilities perspective, and complementary effects. Internally, Amazon strengthens its resource-based strategy by accumulating unique assets such as logistics centers, IT infrastructure, and customer data. Externally, it demonstrates dynamic capabilities by responding flexibly to changes in customer demand and actively reorganizing the market structure. Additionally, it creates complex synergies by enhancing customer experience through the structural complementarity between online and offline channels, as well as between its own and third-party platforms. This strategy is not simply an integration of online and offline channels, but rather a system-level hybrid integration encompassing AI and big data technology-based fusion, real-time customized recommendations, local logistics optimization, situation-responsive experience provision, and enterprise-wide systems, including AI, cloud technologies, robotics, customer contact points, operating systems, supply chains, and profit models, rather than just focusing on POS and ERP systems. This model particularly reconstructs customer contact points based on data and involves a strategic design that integrates enterprise-wide resources.

The Amazon case suggests significant business implications and applicability to Korean companies and the Hallyu industry. First, Amazon's experience offers valuable insights for establishing asset-based strategies that leverage the combination of digital and physical resources. Hallyu content and related companies possess their own intellectual property (IP), fandom data, and platform user experiences as core assets, and a hybrid experience design that combines these with physical spaces (such as pop-up stores, fan meetings, and exhibitions) is essential. For example, global K-pop brands such as BTS, BLACKPINK, and Seventeen have already secured strategic resources that enable them to design offline product experiences based on their fandom's digital assets. They need to establish a "digital-offline combined content distribution infrastructure" similar to Amazon. Second, it is crucial to establish a market response structure based on dynamic capabilities. Hallyu content or product is characterized by rapid consumption cycles and

high uncertainty in predictions. Consequently, platform operators or planning companies must possess dynamic capabilities that allow them to flexibly reorganize content production, distribution channels, and fandom management strategies in response to changing demand. For example, fan platforms like V LIVE, Weverse, Bubble, and Universe can achieve agile market responses by analyzing user data in real-time and incorporating it into the production of goods, live broadcasts, and offline event planning. Third, it's important to establish a cross-channel strategy rooted in complementary effects. One of Amazon's core competitive advantages is its ability to design and operate structurally complementary relationships among online and offline, distribution and logistics, and its own and third-party platforms. K-content and related companies also require a structural integration strategy that merges offline concerts, exhibitions, and experience spaces (e.g., HYBE INSIGHT, SMTOWN EXPERIENCE) with online content and commerce. In particular, the strategy of expanding into a tourism-content-linked hybrid model by collaborating with domestic regional content cities (e.g., Jeonju Hanji Culture Center, Busan Cinema Center, etc.) offers significant applicability.

Amazon's hybrid strategy serves as a "systematic integration strategy" that extends beyond simple platform operation, offering valuable insights for Hallyu companies to achieve sustainable competitiveness in the global market. A hybrid strategy that organically links digital-based resources with offline contact points, responds flexibly to market changes, and maximizes complementary effects among various elements will serve as a core strategy for the future Korean Wave or K-Culture industry (Park, 2017; 2019; 2021a; 2021b; 2024).

5. Conclusions

This study analyzed Amazon's hybrid business model using three theoretical frameworks—Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capabilities, and Complementary Effects—and identified strategic directions that the Hallyu content industry and Korean companies can apply in the global distribution and logistics market. In particular, the characteristics of the Hallyu industry, which combines content distribution centered on digital platforms with offline fandom-based activities, are closely aligned with hybrid strategies. Accordingly, the implications and suggestions for a three-tier roadmap related to the development of hybrid strategies for Hallyu businesses and Korean companies are as follows. First, Hallyu companies possess unique assets on multiple levels, including content IP (such as drama, music, and characters), fandom platforms (like Weverse and Universe), goods and merchandise

products, and performance and exhibition infrastructure. These assets can serve as a strategic foundation that can be transformed into their own distribution networks, similar to Amazon's Fulfillment Center or Prime service. For instance, YG+, HYBE, and others can design a complex distribution structure that integrates physical spaces (such as pop-up stores and exhibition halls) and digital commerce by leveraging the global fandom of their artists. Therefore, the case of Amazon examined in this study serves as a valuable precedent for strengthening the asset-based distribution strategy of K-culture companies beyond K-content. It means investing in digital fulfillment infrastructure tailored to local demand is necessary. Second, the K-content industry operates in a market environment where the global trend cycle is short and regional fan consumption characteristics are diverse. Accordingly, content producers and platform operators require cyclical capabilities for real-time trend sensing, productization to meet regional demand, and the transformation of online and offline channels, including partnering with logistics platforms or third-party warehouses. For example, optimizing regional goods production/delivery, linking overseas concert schedules with commerce, and product planning based on real-time fandom responses can be viewed as designs for dynamic capability-based strategies. Therefore, this study is significant in that it emphasizes the importance of building market-sensitive dynamic capabilities. Finally, from the perspective of complementary effects, Hallyu companies should enhance their strategies by combining digital fan experiences (content consumption, app-based communities, and online goods purchases) with offline physical experiences (concerts, fan signing events, exhibitions, and experiential spaces). HYBE INSIGHT, SMTOWN Experience, and CJ ENM's on-site operation of KCON exemplify how continuity and loyalty of fan experiences can be enhanced by extending digital-centered content experiences offline. This approach is structurally similar to Amazon's online ordering-offline pickup-delivery ecosystem. Therefore, this study suggests that fan experiences can be expanded through online and offline complementary strategies. Also, from the perspective of complementary effects, leveraging data analytics to customize cultural products and forecast demand can significantly enhance the integration between content creation and distribution systems. When combined with small-scale hybrid pilot initiatives—such as pop-up experiences linked to e-commerce platforms—this strategy reinforces cross-channel synergy. Such models not only bridge the gap between digital consumption and physical engagement but also offer a practical framework for validating market responsiveness in export environments. The resulting interaction between online data-driven insights and offline experiential formats exemplifies how

hybrid structures can produce value that exceeds the sum of their parts.

Meanwhile, this study offers essential insights into Hallyu business strategies through a hybrid business model that integrates distribution and logistics, both online and offline. However, it has the following limitations, which will be addressed in follow-up research. First, this study focused on theoretical analysis and case studies based on the global giant platform called Amazon, without including application cases based on specific empirical data from K-content companies. Future studies should empirically analyze the applicability to specific industries, such as K-pop, K-drama, K-beauty, K-food, and K-fashion. Second, no research has been conducted to quantitatively analyze the actual impact of hybrid strategies on distribution efficiency, customer loyalty, and profitability. Follow-up studies require a quantitative approach that verifies the performance of hybrid strategies using key performance indicators (KPIs), such as delivery time, repeat purchase rate, and unit price. Third, the global spread of Korean Wave content can also be linked to a cooperation model with regional cultural content cities (e.g., Jeonju, Busan, Incheon). This study did not specifically present such a local government-content company linkage model, and future research on regional content hubs and tourism-distribution convergence strategies should be conducted in parallel.

Amazon's hybrid strategy results from systematic thinking that strategically integrates digital assets and physical distribution, customer contact points, and supply chains, as well as platforms and offline spaces. K-Culture or Hallyu content companies can secure sustainable global competitiveness by adopting this strategy and introducing a digital-physical convergence approach based on global fandom, a connection model with regional cultural hubs, and a market-responsive distribution redesign strategy. This study provides a theoretical basis and a strategic framework for this, which can be expanded into a specific practical model through follow-up research.

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