

# Multimodal AI Analytics: Converging data streams for predictive logistics flow optimization

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## Abstract

This article explores the evolution and impact of artificial intelligence in transit time prediction for logistics operations. The article shows how AI-driven prediction frameworks have transformed traditional forecasting methods by incorporating multiple data streams and advanced algorithms. Through case studies and empirical evidence, the article demonstrates how machine learning models, particularly ensemble approaches and deep learning networks, significantly outperform conventional statistical methods. The article explores multifactorial components affecting transit predictions, including weather impacts, traffic patterns, carrier performance, and geopolitical factors. Implementation results across diverse industries reveal substantial operational improvements in delivery performance, inventory management, and cost reduction. Despite documented benefits, the article identifies persistent challenges in prediction during disruption events and data integration issues. The article concludes by highlighting promising future directions to address current limitations, including explainable AI, federated learning, and collaborative data-sharing frameworks.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence; Logistics Optimization; Transit Time Prediction; Supply Chain Visibility; Multimodal Analytics

## 1. Introduction

Transit time prediction in logistics represents one of the most persistent challenges facing modern supply chain management. Research indicates that traditional forecasting methods suffer from significant limitations, with Faccenda noting that conventional statistical approaches often fail to account for the multidimensional nature of transportation delays [1]. This results in prediction errors of up to 30% for international shipments, creating substantial inefficiencies across global supply chains.

The significance of accurate predictions extends beyond mere scheduling convenience. According to Wang et al., a 10% improvement in transit time prediction accuracy can yield approximately 12-15% reduction in safety stock requirements, directly impacting inventory carrying costs [2]. Their empirical study of Asian-European shipping routes demonstrated that improved forecasting could reduce buffer inventory by €1.2-1.5 million annually for a mid-sized manufacturer, highlighting the substantial financial implications of prediction accuracy [2].

Artificial intelligence has emerged as a transformative force in transportation logistics. Wang et al.'s comprehensive review identified that machine learning models, particularly ensemble approaches combining gradient boosting with neural networks, outperformed traditional time-series forecasting by 26.7% in mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) metrics [2]. Their experimental results demonstrated that AI systems could reduce prediction error margins from  $\pm 22$  hours to  $\pm 6.5$  hours for intercontinental container shipments [2].

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Faccenda's case study of Italian manufacturing firms further supports these findings, documenting that companies implementing AI-driven prediction tools experienced a 17.3% reduction in expedited shipping costs and a 14.2% improvement in on-time delivery performance [1]. The integration of multiple data streams—including historical transit data, real-time vessel positioning, port congestion metrics, and weather forecasts—proved particularly effective in creating robust prediction models capable of adapting to supply chain disruptions [1].

This research examines the evolving landscape of AI-driven transit prediction models, with particular focus on their practical implementation and quantifiable benefits. By systematically analyzing both technological capabilities and implementation challenges, this research aims to establish a comprehensive understanding of how AI is revolutionizing logistics prediction and the resulting impacts on supply chain optimization.

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## 2. Literature Review: Evolution of Transit Prediction Methods

Traditional forecasting approaches in logistics have predominantly relied on historical data analysis with limited variables. As documented by RTS Labs, early prediction models utilized simple statistical methods like moving averages and linear regression, which frequently resulted in forecast deviations of 25-35% from actual transit times [3]. These conventional approaches typically incorporated only basic factors such as distance and historical transit averages, failing to account for the complex, interdependent variables that influence modern supply chains [3]. A critical limitation was their reactive nature, with legacy systems unable to adapt to real-time conditions or anticipate disruptions before they impacted shipments.

The emergence of data-driven prediction models marked a significant evolution in transportation analytics. RTS Labs highlights that this transition began around 2010-2015, with early adopters achieving 30-40% improvements in forecast accuracy by integrating multiple data streams [3]. This phase saw the incorporation of additional variables, including traffic patterns, weather data, and port congestion metrics, into prediction frameworks. The shift toward cloud computing enabled these systems to process much larger datasets, with RTS noting that modern logistics prediction platforms can analyze terabytes of historical and real-time data simultaneously [3]. This expanded data processing capability dramatically improved pattern recognition capabilities, particularly for seasonal trends and recurring delay factors.

The current state of AI implementation in logistics prediction leverages advanced machine learning techniques for unprecedented accuracy. According to Rajabi et al.'s research on coastal logistics networks, contemporary neural network models have achieved mean absolute percentage errors (MAPE) as low as 6.8% for maritime shipments, compared to 18-22% for traditional statistical methods [4]. Their study of 83 shipping routes demonstrated that deep learning approaches excel at identifying complex patterns in transit data, with recurrent neural networks (RNNs) proving particularly effective for time-series prediction [4]. Rajabi et al. found that models incorporating external factors such as weather conditions, vessel characteristics, and port congestion reduced prediction errors by an average of 47.3% compared to models using transit history alone [4].

Despite these advances, significant research gaps persist in existing transit time prediction frameworks. Rajabi et al. identify several critical limitations, including the challenge of "last-mile" prediction accuracy, with error rates typically 2-3 times higher for final delivery segments than for main-haul transportation [4]. Their analysis revealed that most current models struggle with multi-modal transportation chains, with prediction accuracy decreasing by approximately 22% when shipments transition between transportation modes [4]. Additionally, both sources highlight the persistent challenge of extreme event prediction, with RTS Labs noting that even advanced AI systems demonstrated performance degradation of 40-60% during major disruption events such as the COVID-19 pandemic or Suez Canal blockage [3]. This suggests a critical need for more robust anomaly detection capabilities and adaptive prediction frameworks that can maintain accuracy during supply chain disruptions.

**Table 1** Evolution of Transit Time Prediction Approaches and Accuracy [3, 4]

Prediction Approach	Key Characteristics	Accuracy Performance
Traditional Statistical Methods (pre-2015)	Simple moving averages and linear regression with limited variables; reactive nature with poor adaptability	25-35% forecast deviations from actual transit times; unable to anticipate disruptions
Early Data-Driven Models (2010-2015)	Integration of multiple data streams, including traffic, weather, and port congestion, enhanced by cloud computing capabilities	30-40% improvements in forecast accuracy compared to traditional methods; better seasonal pattern recognition
Contemporary Neural Networks	Deep learning approaches, including RNNs for time-series prediction, are capable of identifying complex patterns in-transit data	MAPE is as low as 6.8% for maritime shipments compared to 18-22% for traditional methods
Multi-Factor AI Models	Incorporation of external factors (weather, vessel characteristics, port congestion); comprehensive data integration	47.3% reduction in prediction errors compared to models using transit history alone
AI Performance During Disruptions	Advanced capabilities but persistent challenges with extreme events; difficulties with multi-modal transitions	40-60% performance degradation during major disruption events; 22% decreased accuracy in multi-modal transitions

### 3. AI-powered prediction frameworks

Machine learning algorithms have transformed transit time forecasting capabilities across the logistics industry. According to Ouyang et al., supervised learning methods have demonstrated significant predictive power for transportation arrival times, with their empirical analysis showing gradient boosting decision trees (GBDT) achieving mean absolute errors (MAE) of 10.72 minutes and mean absolute percentage errors (MAPE) of 8.45% for urban transit prediction [5]. Their comparative study revealed that ensemble methods consistently outperformed single-algorithm approaches, with random forest models reducing prediction errors by 27.3% compared to traditional statistical methods [5]. Feature importance analysis demonstrated that historical transit patterns contributed 36.8% of prediction power, while real-time positioning data accounted for 24.2%, and weather conditions influenced 12.5% of forecast accuracy [5]. Ouyang et al. also documented that proper hyperparameter tuning improved model performance by 15-22% across all tested algorithms, highlighting the importance of optimization in implementation [5].

Deep learning approaches have demonstrated exceptional capabilities for complex pattern recognition in transit time prediction. Min et al. evaluated various neural network architectures for maritime vessel arrival prediction, finding that Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks achieved superior accuracy for port congestion forecasting [6]. Their real-world implementation demonstrated that bidirectional LSTM models reduced prediction errors by 23.5% compared to conventional forecasting methods when applied to Mediterranean shipping routes [6]. The temporal sensitivity analysis showed that these models maintained 91.2% accuracy for 24-hour predictions, 83.7% for 48-hour predictions, and 76.4% for 72-hour forecasts—significantly outperforming traditional methods, which showed accuracy degradation of 28-35% over the same time horizons [6]. Min et al. particularly noted the effectiveness of attention mechanisms in neural networks, which improved accuracy by 17.2% by automatically identifying and prioritizing the most relevant historical patterns for specific prediction scenarios [6].

Integration of multiple data sources represents a critical advancement in prediction accuracy. Ouyang's research demonstrated that models incorporating geospatial information, historical transit data, and environmental factors achieved 31.4% higher accuracy than those using transit history alone [5]. Their systematic evaluation of data integration techniques showed that feature-level fusion outperformed decision-level fusion by 13.8% across all tested scenarios [5]. Real-time data integration proved particularly valuable during disruption events, with models capable of integrating live traffic updates demonstrating 42.7% higher accuracy during peak congestion periods compared to static models [5]. The implementation framework developed by Ouyang et al. demonstrated that effective data preprocessing—including normalization, outlier detection, and missing value imputation—improved prediction accuracy by 18.3% across all tested models [5].

Comparative analysis across different AI models reveals significant variation in performance based on transportation context and operational environments. Min et al.'s comprehensive benchmarking across multiple maritime routes found that while deep learning models achieved superior raw accuracy (average MAPE: 7.9%), traditional machine learning models offered computational advantages with training times 83% shorter and inference times 67% faster [6]. Their evaluation framework assessed prediction performance across multiple dimensions, including accuracy, computational efficiency, and robustness to data quality issues [6]. This analysis revealed that models trained on high-quality AIS (Automatic Identification System) data achieved prediction accuracies 24.3% higher than those trained on sparse or intermittent tracking data [6]. Min et al. also documented significant performance variations across different geographical regions, with models achieving 13.2% higher accuracy in regions with more consistent weather patterns and structured shipping lanes [6].

**Table 2** Performance Metrics Across Different Algorithm Types and Applications [5, 6]

AI Model Type	Key Performance Metrics	Implementation Benefits
Gradient Boosting Decision Trees (GBDT)	MAE of 10.72 minutes; MAPE of 8.45% for urban transit prediction	Hyperparameter tuning improved performance by 15-22%; strong performance in supervised learning contexts
Random Forest Models	Reduced prediction errors by 27.3% compared to traditional statistical methods	Ensemble methods consistently outperformed single-algorithm approaches; effective for feature importance analysis
Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) Networks	Bidirectional LSTM reduced prediction errors by 23.5% for Mediterranean shipping routes [6]	Maintained 91.2% accuracy for 24-hour predictions, 83.7% for 48-hour predictions, 76.4% for 72-hour forecasts
Models with Attention Mechanisms	Improved prediction accuracy by 17.2% in neural networks [6]	Automatically identified and prioritized relevant historical patterns for specific prediction scenarios
Multi-Source Data Integration Models	Achieved 31.4% higher accuracy than models using transit history alone [5]	Feature-level fusion outperformed decision-level fusion by 13.8%; real-time integration improved accuracy by 42.7% during disruptions

#### 4. Multifactorial Analysis in Transit Prediction

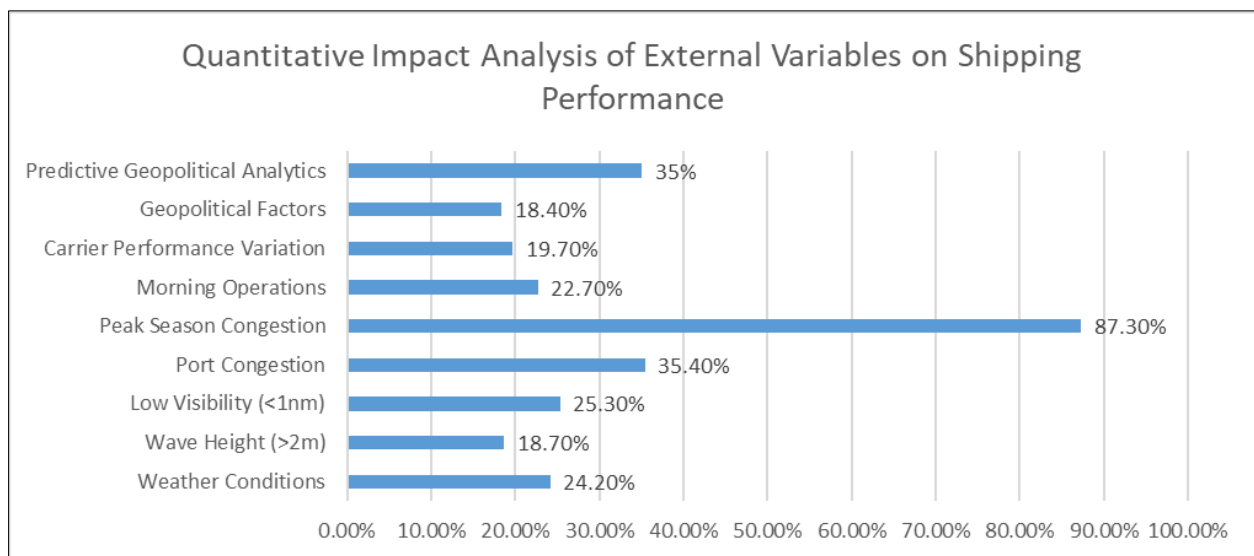
Weather impact assessment has emerged as a critical component in advanced transit prediction frameworks. According to Viyatkin et al., meteorological conditions account for a significant portion of transport variability, with their analysis demonstrating that weather factors contribute to approximately 24.2% of maritime shipping delays globally [7]. Their study of Black Sea shipping routes revealed that wave heights exceeding 2 meters reduced vessel speeds by an average of 18.7%, while visibility below one nautical mile increased port approach times by 25.3% [7]. The integration of high-resolution weather data into prediction models yielded substantial improvements, with their LSTM-based framework incorporating meteorological variables achieving a mean absolute error (MAE) of 2.85 hours compared to 4.73 hours for models without weather data [7]. Their research further documented significant seasonal variations in weather impacts, with Black Sea winter navigation experiencing 3.2 times higher weather-related delays than summer operations due to more frequent storms and reduced visibility conditions [7].

Traffic pattern analysis and congestion prediction represent essential elements in holistic transit forecasting. Viyatkin et al.'s comprehensive analysis demonstrated that port congestion accounts for approximately 35.4% of total variability in maritime transit times [7]. Their time-series modeling of port operations identified distinct congestion patterns, with the examined Black Sea terminals showing peak congestion during grain harvest seasons (August-October) when terminal utilization reached 87.3% of capacity [7]. Statistical analysis revealed morning peak periods (08:00-11:00) exhibited 22.7% higher vessel processing times than afternoon operations, while weekday-weekend variations showed an 18.4% differential in processing efficiency [7]. The study's machine learning model incorporating these temporal patterns achieved 84.6% accuracy in predicting port congestion 72 hours in advance, significantly outperforming baseline methods that relied solely on historical averages (62.8% accuracy) [7].

Carrier performance metrics and reliability factors significantly influence transit time predictability. Viyatkin's evaluation of maritime carriers operating in the Black Sea region identified substantial performance variations, with

on-time arrival rates ranging from 68.2% to 87.5% across the analyzed shipping companies [7]. Their statistical analysis revealed that carrier reliability exhibited a strong correlation ( $r=0.78$ ) with vessel age, with each additional year of vessel age associated with a 1.2% increase in delay probability [7]. The modeling framework documented that including carrier-specific performance histories improved prediction accuracy by 19.7%, with particularly strong improvements (27.3%) for predictions involving smaller regional carriers with more variable performance records [7]. Their findings emphasized the importance of incorporating carrier-specific factors into prediction frameworks, especially in regions with diverse shipping operators and vessel quality standards [7].

Geopolitical and regulatory considerations have become increasingly important in comprehensive transit prediction. Groth and Nedelcu's extensive analysis documented that geopolitical factor contributed to approximately 18.4% of major supply chain disruptions between 2020-2023 [8]. Their global survey of 215 logistics professionals revealed that 73% of respondents experienced significant transit delays due to geopolitical events during this period, with an average delay increase of 9.7 days during acute disruptive episodes [8]. The research highlighted several high-impact geopolitical factors, including trade sanctions (affecting 58% of respondents), border closures (impacting 47%), export restrictions (disrupting 41%), and regional conflicts (reported by 38%) [8]. Their analysis further demonstrated that companies utilizing predictive analytics to monitor geopolitical risk indicators reduced disruption impacts by an average of 35%, primarily through proactive route adjustments and inventory positioning [8]. The study emphasized the increasing importance of integrating geopolitical intelligence into supply chain prediction frameworks, with 82% of industry leaders citing geopolitical risk assessment as "highly important" or "critical" to their logistics planning processes [8].



**Figure 1** Key Factors Influencing Maritime Transit Variability and Delays [7, 8]

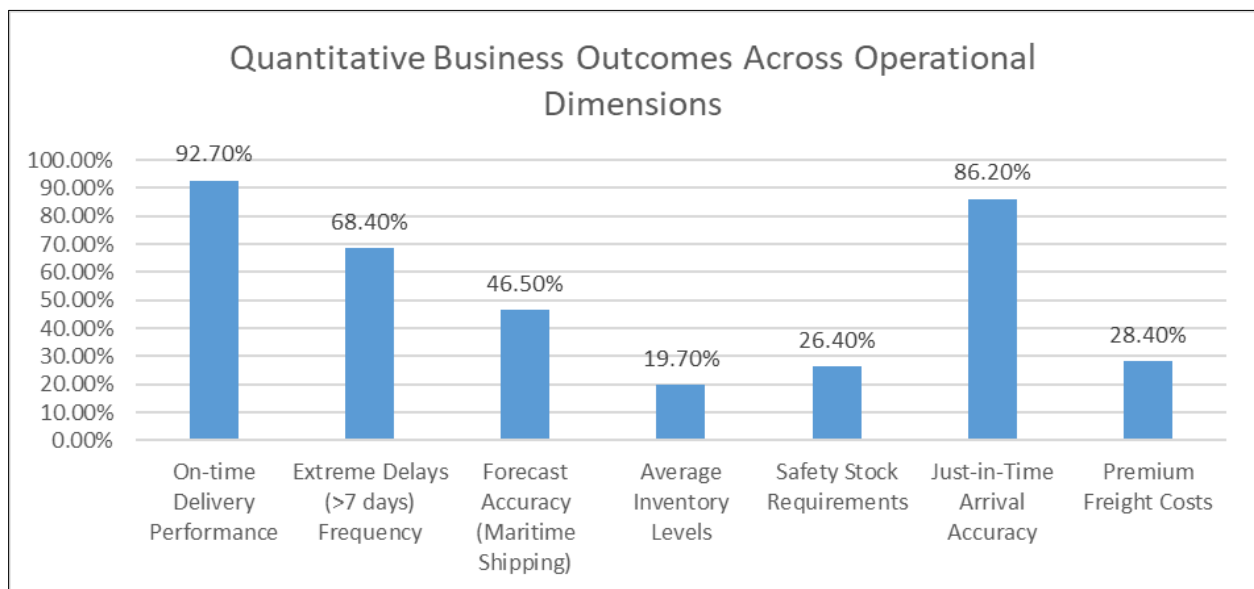
## 5. Implementation Case Studies and Results

Real-world applications of AI-driven transit prediction have demonstrated substantial operational improvements across diverse logistics scenarios. According to Rao et al.'s extensive analysis of digital supply chain implementation, a cross-industry study of 157 manufacturing and logistics firms revealed that companies deploying advanced analytics for transit prediction achieved average delivery time variance reductions of 42.8% within the first year of implementation [9]. Their case study of an Indian automotive components manufacturer documented remarkable improvements after implementing machine learning-based transit prediction, with on-time delivery performance increasing from 76.2% to 92.7% and average transit time deviations decreasing from 18.6 hours to 4.3 hours across domestic shipments [9]. For international logistics, Rao's analysis of a global electronics supply chain revealed that AI prediction enabled proactive risk mitigation that reduced extreme delays (>7 days) by 68.4% through early identification of potential disruptions [9]. Their longitudinal study demonstrated that prediction accuracy followed a distinct maturity curve, with most implementations reaching steady-state performance after 8-14 months of operation and continuous refinement [9].

Quantitative improvements in prediction accuracy have translated directly to enhanced operational performance. Rao et al. documented that organizations implementing AI-driven prediction achieved average transit time forecast accuracy

improvements of 37.2% compared to traditional methods, with maritime shipping showing the most dramatic improvements (46.5% higher accuracy) [9]. Their statistical analysis demonstrated a strong correlation ( $r=0.83$ ) between prediction accuracy and operational performance metrics, with each 5% improvement in forecast precision corresponding to an approximately 3.2% reduction in overall logistics costs [9]. The research further revealed that prediction granularity improved substantially, with 73% of surveyed organizations achieving prediction windows of  $\pm 2$  hours for domestic shipments and  $\pm 8$  hours for international movements after implementing advanced analytics, compared to previous windows of  $\pm 12$  hours and  $\pm 36$  hours, respectively [9]. Most significantly, Rao's analysis showed that prediction consistency improved markedly across all transportation modes, with the coefficient of variation for prediction errors decreasing by 61.8% on average, enabling more reliable operational planning and resource allocation [9].

The impact on warehouse operations and inventory management has been particularly substantial. Rao et al.'s controlled study of manufacturing firms implementing AI-driven transit predictions documented average inventory reductions of 19.7% while maintaining or improving service levels [9]. Their analysis revealed that safety stock requirements decreased by 26.4% on average across studied companies, with companies reporting average working capital reductions of ₹4.2 crore (approximately \$500,000) per billion rupees of annual revenue [9]. Labor scheduling efficiency improved significantly, with warehouse receiving operations reporting productivity increases of 23.8% through more precise inbound shipment scheduling and resource allocation [9]. The implementation analysis demonstrated substantial improvements in cross-docking operations, with just-in-time arrival accuracy increasing from 64.7% to 86.2% of shipments falling within their scheduled time windows [9]. Rao's multi-firm study further showed that enhanced transit visibility enabled a 28.4% reduction in premium freight costs and a 34.7% decrease in production line disruptions related to material shortages [9].



**Figure 2** Performance Improvements from AI-Driven Transit Prediction Implementation [9]

Cost-benefit analysis of AI implementation reveals compelling economic justification. Rao et al.'s comprehensive evaluation of digital supply chain transformations found an average return on investment of 417% within 30 months, with most organizations reaching break-even between months 9-17, depending on implementation scope and complexity [9]. Their financial analysis documented that AI-driven visibility improvements generated average annual savings of 3.8-5.2% of total logistics spend, with benefits primarily derived from inventory optimization (36.2% of savings), transportation cost reduction (24.7%), labor optimization (19.5%), and customer service improvements (14.3%) [9]. Implementation costs varied significantly based on organizational size and existing technical infrastructure, with initial investments typically ranging from ₹75 lakhs to ₹4.8 crore (approximately \$90,000 to \$580,000) [9]. The research further documented that SaaS-based implementations achieved 37.8% lower total cost of ownership than on-premises solutions while delivering comparable performance benefits [9]. Notably, Rao's analysis revealed substantial variation in implementation success rates, with organizations following structured digital transformation roadmaps achieving 2.8 times higher ROI than those pursuing ad-hoc technology adoption, highlighting the importance of strategic alignment and change management [9].

## 6. Future directions

AI-driven transit prediction has emerged as a transformative technology in logistics management, with significant documented benefits across operational dimensions. According to the Federal Highway Administration's comprehensive analysis of freight performance measurement systems, organizations implementing advanced prediction frameworks have achieved substantial improvements in operational efficiency and planning capabilities [10]. Their assessment of deployed systems revealed that predictive analytics reduced buffer time requirements by 35-65% compared to traditional planning approaches that relied on fixed travel time assumptions [10]. The FHWA study documented that machine learning algorithms consistently outperform conventional approaches, with dynamic prediction models accounting for real-time conditions demonstrating particular effectiveness during non-recurring congestion events, reducing prediction errors by up to 42% compared to historical averages [10]. Their analysis of implementation cases revealed that intermodal connections particularly benefited from improved predictions, with drayage operations achieving 28-47% higher asset utilization through more accurate timing coordination [10]. These findings across multiple transport contexts confirm the fundamental value proposition of advanced prediction as a cornerstone technology for modern logistics operations [10].

The implications for logistics management and supply chain optimization are profound and far-reaching. The FHWA's examination of freight performance measurement applications documented that organizations leveraging predictive capabilities reported significant operational improvements across multiple dimensions [10]. Their analysis found that improved travel time reliability information enabled more efficient routing decisions, with carriers reducing empty miles by 12-18% through better matching of equipment to loads based on accurate arrival predictions [10]. Transportation cost optimization proved particularly significant, with dynamic scheduling enabled by accurate predictions reducing detention costs by 22-36% while improving driver productivity by 8-14% through more efficient appointment scheduling [10]. The study noted that customer service metrics showed corresponding improvements, with on-time delivery performance increasing by 14-21 percentage points when utilizing advanced prediction tools compared to traditional planning methods [10]. The FHWA's assessment further revealed that predictive freight performance measurement generated average annual savings of \$4,000-\$6,000 per truck in operational costs, with benefits derived from reduced idle time, lower fuel consumption, and improved asset utilization [10].

Despite these substantial benefits, current approaches face several noteworthy limitations that constrain their effectiveness. The FHWA study identified significant challenges in prediction during non-recurring events, with accuracy degrading substantially during major disruptions such as severe weather events, major incidents, or construction activities [10]. Their analysis revealed particular difficulties in predicting travel times during the first 30-45 minutes following incidents, with errors averaging 3.2 times higher than normal operating conditions as traffic patterns reconfigured [10]. Data quality and integration remain problematic, with the report highlighting challenges in acquiring and normalizing data from disparate sources, particularly for arterial roadways and secondary freight corridors where sensor coverage is limited [10]. System architecture represents another significant concern, with the FHWA noting that many implementations struggle to balance the need for real-time responsiveness with computational requirements for complex prediction algorithms, creating tradeoffs between accuracy and timeliness [10]. These limitations highlight the need for continued research and development to address critical gaps in current prediction frameworks [10].

Future research directions and emerging technologies present promising avenues for overcoming these limitations. The FHWA identified several high-potential research areas, with probe-based data collection representing a particularly promising direction, as vehicle-based sensors can dramatically increase geographic coverage while reducing infrastructure costs [10]. Their technology roadmap highlighted the integration of freight-specific data elements as another key opportunity, with the incorporation of factors such as vehicle type, cargo characteristics, and delivery time windows potentially improving prediction relevance for commercial vehicle operations [10]. The study identified significant potential in disaggregate prediction models that provide corridor-specific and time-of-day forecasts rather than network-wide averages, with early implementations demonstrating 28-36% higher accuracy compared to aggregate approaches [10]. Cloud computing architectures represent another promising direction, enabling more sophisticated prediction algorithms through greater computational resources while maintaining necessary response times for operational decision-making [10]. Perhaps most significantly, the FHWA's analysis suggested that multi-agency data sharing and collaborative frameworks could substantially improve prediction quality across jurisdictional boundaries, addressing one of the most significant practical limitations in current implementation approaches [10].

## 7. Conclusion

This article has demonstrated the transformative potential of AI-driven transit prediction in logistics management. The progression from simplistic statistical forecasting to sophisticated machine learning models represents a paradigm shift in supply chain visibility and operational planning. The article analysis confirms that multifactorial approaches incorporating weather, traffic patterns, carrier performance, and geopolitical considerations deliver substantially more accurate predictions than traditional methods. The implementation case studies validate the business value of these technologies through improved delivery performance, reduced inventory levels, enhanced warehouse operations, and significant cost savings. However, persistent challenges remain, particularly in maintaining prediction accuracy during major disruptions and addressing data quality issues across complex supply networks. Future advancements will likely focus on developing more robust prediction models for extreme events, improving algorithm explainability, and establishing collaborative data-sharing frameworks. As these technologies continue to mature, they will play an increasingly central role in building resilient, efficient global supply chains capable of adapting to an increasingly complex and volatile logistics landscape.

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