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Recent prospects and challenges in E-Commerce

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Abstract

E-commerce has become a significant part of the global business landscape, with a particular focus on Asia in recent years. The growth of e-commerce has been fueled by a variety of factors, including increasing internet penetration, growing consumer demand for convenience and cost-effectiveness, and advancements in technology that have made online transactions easier and more secure. However, despite the many benefits of e-commerce, there are also a number of challenges and issues that businesses in this space must contend with. One of the biggest challenges is competition, as more and more businesses are entering the e-commerce market, making it increasingly difficult to stand out and differentiate oneself from the crowd. Despite these challenges, e-commerce continues to offer tremendous opportunities for businesses that are able to effectively navigate the market and provide high-quality products and services to customers. With continued investment in technology, logistics, and security, e-commerce is poised to remain a major force in the global business landscape for years to come.

Keywords: E-Commerce, issues, challenges

1. Introduction

E-commerce has had a significant impact on the Indian economy, transforming the way business is done and offering new opportunities for both buyers and sellers. The availability of a wide range of goods and services online has made e-commerce increasingly popular and convenient for consumers around the world.

India's economic reforms in the 1990s, which aimed to integrate the country's economy with the rest of the world, played a key role in paving the way for the growth of e-commerce in India. As the internet and web technologies became more widespread, e-commerce emerged as a major channel for inter-organizational commerce processes.

However, despite the tremendous potential of e-commerce in India, there are still a number of challenges and barriers to its widespread adoption. These include issues related to logistics and infrastructure, as well as concerns around security and privacy. Additionally, many consumers in India still prefer to shop in traditional brick-and-mortar stores, making it difficult for e-commerce businesses to reach a wider audience.

2. Meaning of E-Commerce

E-commerce refers to electronic commerce, which involves conducting business transactions through electronic platforms like the internet. E-commerce encompasses a variety of activities, including buying and selling goods and services, transmitting funds and data, and sharing business documents with other companies. E-commerce relies on a variety of technologies and tools, including email, online catalogs, search engine optimization, file transfer protocol, and web services. The benefits of e-commerce include increased availability of goods and services, 24/7 accessibility, speed of access, and global reach. Today, e-commerce transactions can take place between businesses and consumers, as well as between consumers themselves. E-commerce is often used interchangeably with the term e-business, which refers to the broader range of activities involved in conducting business online, including marketing, advertising, and customer service.

3. Objectives of the study

To fully comprehend the idea of e-commerce.

To demonstrate the current problems and difficulties the e-commerce industry is facing.

4. Review of Literature

Chanana & Geole (2012): The researcher's study of the future of e-commerce in India highlights several crucial aspects that will significantly contribute to the growth of the industry.

These include: Replacement guarantee, M-Commerce services, Place-based services, Numerous payment options, Right content, Delivery alternatives, Legal obligation to generate invoices, Immediate service, Clear and realistic terms and conditions, Same product feature, Availability of 24/7 customer care center.

Raghunath & Panga (2013): Researcher's paper focused on the problems and prospects of e-commerce, exploring both the positive and negative aspects of the latest technology and the need to address emerging ethical issues related to business. The paper emphasized the importance of identifying and alleviating sources of consumer confusion, apprehension, and risk to promote the expansion and adoption of e-commerce. However, the researcher also acknowledged the need for cautious application of e-commerce to ensure consumer security and called for the development of efficient IT security systems and necessary legal provisions to strengthen them continually.

Malhotra (2014): The paper examined the issues and challenges of e-business in the Indian context, highlighting some key observations. The study found that Indian customers tend to return a significant portion of the products they purchase online, Cash on Delivery is the preferred payment mode, Payment gateways have a high failure rate, Internet penetration is low, and Feature phones are still dominant.

Harjor and darjor kour (April 2015): This paper highlights the benefits of e-commerce for customers, retailers, producers, and distributors. The study identifies different segments of e-commerce that are poised for growth in the future, including travel and tourism, electronic appliances, hardware products, and apparel. E-commerce provides several advantages such as cost-effectiveness, easy and quick comparison shopping, improved customer service, after-sale service, information saving, and knowledge market development.

Abdul gaffer khan (2016): The paper discusses the benefits and challenges of e-commerce, which has revolutionized the way transactions are conducted and broken-down borders. It has had a strong impact on traditional commerce systems in Bangladesh, providing benefits to both customers and sellers. However, e-commerce also poses challenges to traditional businesses in terms of competitiveness. Developing countries face barriers that hinder successful e-commerce implementation, which are often in contrast to those encountered by developed countries.

Research Methodology

The methodology of present paper is theoretical. Methodology consist only secondary data like as publication research, journals and online sources This has been applied in present study the conceptual framework, definition, present trends and some of the challenges and opportunities of e-commerce in India.

5. Recent Opportunities

Omni channel Retail: With the rise of ecommerce, retailers can now reach customers through multiple channels, such as online marketplaces, social media, and brick-and-mortar

stores. By integrating these channels, retailers can create a seamless shopping experience for customers and increase sales.

1. **Personalization:** Ecommerce has made it easier to collect and analyze customer data, which can be used to personalize the shopping experience. By tailoring product recommendations, promotions, and communication to individual customers, ecommerce companies can improve customer loyalty and increase revenue.
2. **Mobile Commerce:** With the increasing use of smartphones and tablets, mobile commerce has become a major opportunity for ecommerce. By optimizing their websites and apps for mobile devices, ecommerce companies can reach customers anytime, anywhere.
3. **Global Expansion:** Ecommerce has made it easier for companies to expand their reach beyond their local markets. With the ability to sell products online and ship them globally, ecommerce companies can tap into new markets and grow their customer base.
4. **Subscription Services:** Ecommerce has made it possible for companies to offer subscription services, where customers pay a recurring fee for regular delivery of products or services. This model provides a predictable revenue stream and can improve customer retention.

6. Recent Challenges

1. Cyber security threats and attacks

Cyber security threats and attacks are a major challenge faced by the e-commerce industry. As more and more transactions are conducted online, the risk of cyber-attacks and data breaches increases. Some of the common types of cyber threats faced by e-commerce websites include: Phishing Attacks, Malware Attacks, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) Attacks, SQL Injection Attacks, Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attacks etc.

2. Competition from traditional brick-and-mortar retailers in ecommerce

Despite the growth of e-commerce, physical stores still hold a significant share of the retail market. Many traditional retailers have also adopted e-commerce, creating a tough competition for pure-play e-commerce retailers. Traditional retailers have the advantage of physical presence, which allows customers to see, touch, and try products before making a purchase. They can also provide immediate gratification by allowing customers to purchase and take the product home the same day. Moreover, many traditional retailers have implemented omni channel strategies, where they offer a seamless shopping experience across different channels, such as in-store, online, and mobile. This allows them to cater to different customer preferences and maximize sales.

3. Logistics and supply chain management

Logistics and supply chain management are critical components of ecommerce operations. The success of an ecommerce business depends on its ability to manage its supply chain efficiently and effectively. Some of the common challenges faced by ecommerce businesses in logistics and supply chain management include Inventory management, Order fulfilment, Shipping and delivery, Returns management, Last-mile delivery, Global logistics,

Integration with suppliers and partners, Reverse logistics, Seasonal demand, Cost management, Data management, Technology integration.

4. Payment and fraud prevention

Payment and fraud prevention is one of the major challenges faced by ecommerce. Due to the remote nature of ecommerce transactions, there is a higher risk of fraudulent activity, making it crucial for ecommerce businesses to have effective payment and fraud prevention mechanisms in place. Payment fraud can occur in various forms, such as credit card fraud, identity theft, and chargeback fraud, among others.

5. Customer service and support

As ecommerce transactions occur online, it can be challenging to provide personalized customer service and support. Ecommerce companies must invest in effective customer service systems that can address customer queries, concerns, and questions in a timely and efficient manner. This can include 24/7 customer support, online chat bots, FAQ sections, and easy return and refund policies, among others. Failing to provide adequate customer service and support can lead to dissatisfied customers, negative reviews, and ultimately, lost business.

6. Regulation and compliance

Ecommerce businesses must comply with various regulations, such as data protection laws, consumer protection laws, and taxation requirements, across multiple jurisdictions. This can create complexities and legal challenges, as ecommerce companies must ensure that their operations comply with the relevant regulations and laws in the countries where they operate. Failure to comply can result in legal penalties and damage to the company's reputation. Additionally, the constantly evolving nature of ecommerce means that regulations and compliance requirements can change rapidly, making it important for businesses to stay up-to-date and agile in their compliance efforts.

7. Scalability

Scalability is a significant challenge for ecommerce businesses as they must ensure that their technology and infrastructure can handle an increasing volume of transactions and customer demands. This requires significant investment in technology, such as servers, bandwidth, and software, to ensure that the website can handle increased traffic and transactions without crashing or slowing down. Additionally, ecommerce businesses must be able to scale their operations quickly and efficiently, including managing inventory, order processing, and shipping, to meet the demands of a growing customer base. Failure to address scalability challenges can result in lost revenue and dissatisfied customers.

8. Localization

Localization is a significant challenge for ecommerce businesses. It involves adapting the ecommerce platform and marketing strategy to the cultural and linguistic norms of the target region. This can include language translation, currency conversion, and adapting product offerings to local tastes and preferences. Failure to adequately localize can lead to a lack of trust from customers and lost sales

opportunities.

9. Returns and refunds

Ecommerce businesses need to have clear policies and processes in place for handling returns and refunds. This can be complicated by several factors such as the cost of shipping, regulatory requirements, and the need to balance customer satisfaction with the financial implications of returns and refunds. Effective management of returns and refunds is essential to maintain customer trust and loyalty.

10. Mobile optimization

With the increasing use of mobile devices for online shopping, ecommerce businesses must optimize their websites and apps for mobile users to ensure a seamless experience. As mobile devices become more prevalent for online shopping, it's crucial for ecommerce businesses to ensure their websites and apps are optimized for mobile users. This includes mobile-friendly design, easy navigation, and fast loading times to provide a seamless user experience. Failing to do so can result in lower conversion rates and customer dissatisfaction.

11. Environmental sustainability

Ecommerce businesses face the challenge of ensuring environmental sustainability, including reducing their carbon footprint and minimizing waste in their operations. This can involve using sustainable materials for packaging and shipping, promoting energy efficiency in warehouses and distribution centers, and exploring eco-friendly delivery options. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their purchases, and ecommerce businesses that prioritize sustainability may have a competitive advantage.

7. Conclusion

Present paper discusses about various issues and opportunities in E-commerce business. E-commerce has brought about numerous opportunities for businesses, including increased reach, cost-effectiveness, improved customer service, and data-driven insights. However, there are also several challenges that must be addressed, such as cybersecurity threats, competition from traditional retailers, logistics and supply chain management, payment and fraud prevention, customer service and support, regulation and compliance, scalability, localization, returns and refunds, mobile optimization, and environmental sustainability.

To stay competitive and successful in the ecommerce space, businesses must address these challenges by investing in robust security systems, adopting innovative technologies, prioritizing customer satisfaction and retention, complying with regulations and laws, optimizing their supply chain, and adopting environmentally sustainable practices. By effectively addressing these challenges and leveraging the opportunities provided by ecommerce, businesses can reap the benefits of this rapidly growing industry and continue to grow and thrive in the digital economy.

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