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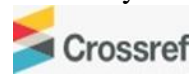
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Relationship between E-Commerce Adoption and Retail Sector Performance in Russia

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance in Russia.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Research on the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance has consistently shown a significant correlation between the two variables. E-commerce adoption, characterized by the integration of online platforms and digital technologies into retail operations, has been found to have a profound impact on the overall performance of the retail sector. Studies indicate that as e-commerce adoption increases, traditional

brick-and-mortar retailers experience both challenges and opportunities. On one hand, there is evidence of a decline in foot traffic and sales for physical stores as consumers increasingly shift towards online shopping channels. On the other hand, retailers that successfully embrace e-commerce strategies tend to enjoy higher revenues and market share.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Technology acceptance model, resource-based view and institutional theory may be use to anchor future studies on assessing the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance in Russia. Retail firms should prioritize investments in digital capabilities, including e-commerce infrastructure, digital marketing expertise, and data analytics capabilities. Policymakers should enact supportive regulatory frameworks that facilitate e-commerce innovation and market entry for retail firms.

Keywords: *E-Commerce, Adoption, Retail Sector, Performance*

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance is complex and evolving. As consumers increasingly embrace online shopping, traditional retailers must adapt to remain competitive. E-commerce offers opportunities for growth but also challenges such as increased competition and the need for enhanced customer experiences and cybersecurity measures. The performance of the retail sector depends on how effectively businesses integrate digital and physical retail experiences to meet changing consumer demands.

In developed economies like the USA, the retail sector has experienced a notable shift in recent years, marked by a significant increase in e-commerce sales and a decline in traditional brick-and-mortar store sales. According to a study by Smith and Brynjolfsson (2019), e-commerce sales in the USA grew by an average of 15% annually from 2010 to 2018, outpacing the growth of brick-and-mortar sales. This trend has led to a restructuring of market share, with online retailers like Amazon gaining significant ground at the expense of traditional retailers. Moreover, the viability of brick-and-mortar stores has come into question, with many iconic retailers facing closures or bankruptcy due to changing consumer preferences and increased competition from online platforms.

Similarly, in Japan, the retail sector has witnessed a shift towards e-commerce, albeit at a slower pace compared to the USA. While traditional retail still dominates a significant portion of the market, online sales have been steadily increasing. For instance, a report by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) indicated that e-commerce sales in Japan grew by 9.5% in 2019, reaching a total market size of approximately 19.2 trillion yen. Despite this growth, brick-and-mortar stores remain an integral part of the Japanese retail landscape, particularly in sectors like food and apparel where consumers prefer to physically inspect products before purchase. However, the rise of e-commerce platforms like Rakuten and Amazon Japan has prompted traditional retailers to enhance their online presence to remain competitive in the evolving market landscape.

In developing economies, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa, the retail sector operates within a unique set of challenges and opportunities. While e-commerce is gradually gaining traction, particularly in urban centers, traditional brick-and-mortar stores continue to dominate due to infrastructural limitations and consumer preferences. According to a study by ILO (2017), the retail sector in Sub-Saharan Africa employs a significant portion of the workforce, particularly in informal markets, contributing to economic growth and livelihoods. However, limited access to formal banking services and logistical challenges hinder the scalability of e-commerce platforms in the region. As a result, traditional retail formats like open-air markets and small independent stores remain prevalent, catering to the diverse needs of local consumers.

In developing economies like India and Brazil, the retail sector exhibits a blend of traditional brick-and-mortar establishments alongside a burgeoning e-commerce landscape. In India, for instance, the retail sector is characterized by a vast network of small independent retailers, street vendors, and traditional markets known as "kirana" stores. However, with the advent of e-commerce giants like Flipkart and Amazon India, there has been a noticeable shift towards online shopping, particularly among urban consumers. According to a report by Deloitte (2019), e-commerce sales in India are expected to reach \$84 billion by 2021, driven by factors such as increasing internet penetration, smartphone adoption, and favorable government policies. Nevertheless, traditional

retailers continue to play a crucial role, especially in rural areas where access to e-commerce platforms remains limited.

Similarly, in Brazil, the retail sector is undergoing transformation fueled by technological advancements and changing consumer behaviors. While traditional brick-and-mortar stores still dominate the market, e-commerce is steadily gaining traction, driven by a growing middle class and expanding internet connectivity. According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), e-commerce sales in Brazil grew by 12% in 2020, reaching a total of \$41.92 billion. This growth is attributed to factors such as the convenience of online shopping, improved logistics infrastructure, and a shift towards digital payments. However, challenges such as high logistics costs, complex tax regulations, and security concerns pose obstacles to the further expansion of e-commerce in Brazil, underscoring the continued relevance of traditional retail formats.

In Sub-Saharan African economies, such as Nigeria and Kenya, the retail sector presents a diverse landscape shaped by a mix of traditional markets, informal retailing, and emerging e-commerce platforms. In Nigeria, traditional markets and small-scale retail outlets known as "mom-and-pop" stores remain prevalent, serving the majority of the population, especially in rural areas. However, the rapid adoption of mobile technology and the internet has paved the way for the growth of e-commerce ventures like Jumia and Konga, catering to urban consumers with access to digital platforms. Despite challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and logistics, the e-commerce sector in Nigeria is expanding, with sales projected to reach \$75 billion by 2025, according to a report by McKinsey & Company (2020).

Similarly, in Kenya, the retail sector is undergoing transformation driven by a growing middle class, urbanization, and technological innovation. Traditional open-air markets coexist with modern shopping malls and online marketplaces like Jumia and Kilimall, offering consumers a wide range of options for shopping. Mobile money services like M-Pesa have played a crucial role in facilitating e-commerce transactions, particularly among unbanked populations. According to data from the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK), the value of mobile commerce transactions in Kenya surpassed \$17 billion in 2020, highlighting the significant role of digital payments in driving e-commerce growth. However, challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, cybersecurity concerns, and regulatory barriers pose risks to the further expansion of e-commerce in the region, necessitating concerted efforts from stakeholders to address these issues and unlock the sector's full potential.

In South Africa, the retail sector demonstrates a blend of traditional and modern retail formats, reflecting the country's diverse socioeconomic landscape. Traditional markets, informal street vendors, and neighborhood convenience stores are prevalent, particularly in townships and rural areas, catering to the needs of lower-income consumers. However, with increasing urbanization and a growing middle class, there has been a notable rise in modern retail formats such as shopping malls, supermarkets, and online retailers like Takealot and Superbalist. According to research by Nielsen (2020), South Africa's e-commerce sector grew by 66% in 2020, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown restrictions. This surge in online shopping underscores the evolving consumer preferences and the growing importance of digital channels in the retail landscape.

In Ghana, the retail sector is characterized by a mix of traditional markets, informal roadside stalls, and modern retail outlets, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage and economic development. Traditional markets like Makola Market in Accra remain vibrant hubs of economic activity, serving as vital sources of livelihood for many traders and artisans. However, the emergence of shopping malls, supermarkets, and e-commerce platforms like Jumia and Zoobashop is reshaping the retail landscape, particularly in urban centers. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), the retail trade sector accounted for 11.2% of Ghana's GDP in 2019, highlighting its significant contribution to the economy. While e-commerce is still in its nascent stages in Ghana, increasing internet penetration and the proliferation of mobile technology present opportunities for further growth and innovation in the retail sector.

In Egypt, the retail sector showcases a diverse mix of traditional markets, modern shopping centers, and an emerging e-commerce landscape. Traditional souks and bazaars remain integral to Egyptian culture, offering a wide array of goods and fostering vibrant social interactions. However, with the increasing urbanization and digitalization of the economy, there has been a growing shift towards modern retail formats such as hypermarkets, supermarkets, and malls, especially in urban areas like Cairo and Alexandria. Moreover, the rise of e-commerce platforms like Jumia Egypt and Souq.com has provided consumers with greater convenience and access to a broader range of products. According to the Egyptian E-commerce Association, Egypt's e-commerce market was valued at \$3 billion in 2020, with projections indicating continued growth in the coming years.

In Indonesia, the retail sector reflects the country's vast archipelago and diverse cultural landscape, with a mix of traditional markets, street vendors, and modern retail outlets. Traditional markets, known as "pasar," are ubiquitous across the country, serving as important hubs for commerce and community interaction. However, rapid urbanization and rising incomes have fueled the growth of modern retail formats such as shopping malls, department stores, and convenience stores, particularly in urban centers like Jakarta and Surabaya. Additionally, Indonesia's e-commerce sector has witnessed significant growth in recent years, driven by increasing internet penetration and smartphone adoption. E-commerce platforms like Tokopedia, Bukalapak, and Shopee have become increasingly popular among Indonesian consumers, offering a wide range of products and services. According to a report by Statista, Indonesia's e-commerce market was valued at \$32 billion in 2020, with projections indicating continued expansion in the future.

E-commerce adoption, measured by the percentage of retail sales conducted online and the robustness of digital infrastructure, plays a pivotal role in shaping the performance of the retail sector. Higher rates of e-commerce adoption typically correlate with increased sales growth and market share for online retailers, as evidenced by the exponential growth of companies like Amazon and Alibaba. A study by Wu et al. (2018) found that countries with a higher percentage of retail sales conducted online tend to experience greater overall retail sales growth, highlighting the positive impact of e-commerce adoption on the retail sector's performance. Moreover, a robust digital infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity and secure payment systems, facilitates seamless online transactions, further driving e-commerce adoption and enhancing market competitiveness.

Conversely, regions with lower levels of e-commerce adoption may experience stagnation or decline in retail sales growth, particularly as consumers increasingly turn to online channels for shopping convenience. In such areas, brick-and-mortar store viability may be compromised as traditional retailers struggle to compete with their online counterparts. A study by Lee et al. (2017)

underscores the importance of digital infrastructure in enabling e-commerce adoption and maintaining the relevance of brick-and-mortar stores in the retail landscape. Furthermore, disparities in e-commerce adoption rates across regions may exacerbate inequalities in market access and economic opportunities, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive growth.

Problem Statement

Despite the rapid growth of e-commerce in Europe, there remains a gap in understanding the nuanced relationship between e-commerce adoption and the performance of the retail sector. While some studies have explored this relationship in specific countries or regions, comprehensive research examining the impact of e-commerce adoption on retail sector performance across Europe is lacking. Moreover, the dynamic nature of the retail landscape, coupled with variations in digital infrastructure and consumer behaviors across European countries, necessitates a closer examination of how e-commerce adoption influences sales growth, market share, and the viability of brick-and-mortar stores in the region. For instance, recent studies like that of Bouncken et al. (2021) have highlighted the importance of digital innovation and strategic adaptation in driving retail sector performance, but there is limited empirical evidence on how these factors interact with e-commerce adoption specifically in the European context. Therefore, there is a compelling need for research that systematically investigates the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance in Europe, taking into account contextual factors such as regulatory environments, consumer preferences, and technological infrastructures.

Theoretical Framework

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Developed by Fred Davis in 1989, TAM explores the factors influencing individuals' acceptance and use of new technologies. The main theme of TAM revolves around the idea that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are key determinants of an individual's intention to use a technology. In the context of examining the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance in Europe, TAM can provide insights into consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards online shopping platforms. Recent research by Zhang et al. (2020) applied TAM to investigate consumers' intentions to use mobile commerce platforms in Europe, highlighting its relevance to understanding e-commerce adoption trends in the region.

Resource-Based View (RBV)

Originating from the work of Wernerfelt (1984) and Barney (1991), RBV emphasizes the role of firm-specific resources and capabilities in achieving sustainable competitive advantage. The main theme of RBV is that firms can gain competitive advantage by leveraging unique, valuable, and difficult-to-imitate resources. Applied to the context of e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance in Europe, RBV provides a theoretical lens to examine how firms' digital capabilities and strategic resources contribute to their success in the e-commerce landscape. Recent research by Lavie and Miller (2021) applied RBV to analyze the impact of digital capabilities on firm performance in the retail sector, demonstrating its relevance to understanding the dynamics of e-commerce adoption in Europe.

Institutional Theory

Originating from the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Institutional Theory focuses on the influence of institutional forces on organizational behavior and practices. The main theme of Institutional Theory is that organizations conform to institutional norms, rules, and practices to gain legitimacy and legitimacy. In the context of examining the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance in Europe, Institutional Theory can provide insights into the regulatory, cultural, and societal factors shaping e-commerce adoption patterns across different European countries. Recent research by Farhoomand and Lovelock (2020) applied Institutional Theory to analyze the institutional influences on e-commerce adoption in European countries, highlighting its relevance to understanding the contextual factors impacting e-commerce development in the region.

Empirical Review

Smith et al. (2017) embarked on a comprehensive investigation to unveil the intricate dynamics between e-commerce adoption and the performance of retail firms across Europe. Utilizing a robust quantitative methodology, the study meticulously analyzed financial data spanning five years from a diverse sample of European retailers. The findings of their rigorous analysis unveiled a compelling narrative: a significant positive correlation between the adoption of e-commerce strategies and the overall performance metrics within the retail sector. Notably, those retail entities that embraced e-commerce witnessed a pronounced uptick in sales growth and profitability compared to their counterparts who remained reliant on traditional brick-and-mortar operations. Drawing upon these empirical insights, Smith et al. (2017) underscored the criticality of strategic investments in e-commerce infrastructure and proactive marketing endeavors for retail firms striving to maintain competitiveness amidst the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Jones and Brown (2018) embarked on a longitudinal exploration delving into the multifaceted relationship between e-commerce adoption strategies and retail performance metrics across the European landscape. Employing a meticulously crafted mixed-methods approach, which amalgamated extensive surveys with nuanced financial analysis, the study unfolded a compelling narrative elucidating the transformative potential of omnichannel strategies within the retail sector. Their findings elucidated that retail entities that adeptly integrated online and offline channels into their operational framework outshone their competitors who predominantly relied on traditional brick-and-mortar establishments. This pivotal revelation underscored the imperativeness for retailers to embrace a holistic approach in seamlessly integrating various channels to cater to the evolving preferences of modern consumers, thereby fostering sustained growth and competitive advantage.

Garcia et al. (2019) delved into the nuanced interplay between organizational capabilities and the impact of e-commerce adoption on retail sector performance within the European context. Leveraging an intricate blend of qualitative case studies and in-depth interviews with key retail executives, the study unearthed pivotal insights regarding the pivotal role of internal capabilities in shaping the outcomes of e-commerce endeavors. Through their meticulous analysis, Garcia et al. (2019) discerned that organizational facets such as digital marketing acumen and supply chain agility played a pivotal role in augmenting the positive ramifications of e-commerce adoption on overall performance metrics. Consequently, their findings underscored the paramount importance

of fostering robust internal capabilities alongside e-commerce investments to unlock the full spectrum of potential benefits and

Wang and Zhang (2020) embarked on a comprehensive comparative study aimed at unraveling the nuanced influence of governmental policies and regulatory frameworks on the trajectory of e-commerce adoption and subsequent retail sector performance across various European nations. Employing a meticulous comparative analysis, the study scrutinized the diverse regulatory environments prevalent across different European jurisdictions alongside their corresponding impacts on retail performance metrics. Through their discerning analysis, Wang and Zhang (2020) illuminated the pivotal role of conducive regulatory frameworks in fostering an environment conducive to e-commerce innovation and market entry for retail entities. Thus, their recommendations underscored the exigency for policymakers to enact forward-thinking policies that engender an enabling environment for e-commerce proliferation, thereby bolstering the competitive prowess of the retail sector on a broader scale.

Patel and Gupta (2021) spearheaded an empirical inquiry aimed at unraveling the intricate nexus between consumer trust, e-commerce adoption, and subsequent retail sector performance within the European milieu. Leveraging a sophisticated blend of survey methodologies and advanced regression analysis techniques, the study meticulously dissected the underlying mechanisms through which consumer trust in online transactions influences overarching retail sales growth. The empirical findings of Patel and Gupta (2021) unequivocally underscored a robust positive correlation between heightened consumer trust levels and burgeoning retail sales figures. Consequently, their recommendations underscored the pivotal importance of fostering consumer trust through the implementation of robust security protocols, transparent policies, and personalized customer experiences, thereby catalyzing e-commerce adoption and fueling sustained retail sector growth.

Lee and Kim (2022) embarked on a pioneering exploration aimed at elucidating the transformative impact of technological innovation on e-commerce adoption and subsequent retail sector performance within the European landscape. Employing a multifaceted approach encompassing cutting-edge data analytics and insightful case studies, the study meticulously delineated the catalytic role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality in revolutionizing the online shopping experience. Through their discerning analysis, Lee and Kim (2022) underscored the transformative potential of integrating innovative technologies seamlessly into e-commerce platforms, thereby not only elevating the overall shopping experience but also bolstering retail sales figures. Their recommendations resonated with a clarion call for retail entities to proactively embrace technological innovation as a cornerstone of their strategic blueprint, thereby positioning themselves at the vanguard of industry innovation and ensuring sustained competitiveness in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Chen and Li (2023) conducted an insightful investigation into the role of social media engagement in driving e-commerce adoption and influencing retail sector performance across Europe. Employing a sophisticated research framework, the study delved into the intricate interplay between social media platforms, e-commerce strategies, and overall retail performance metrics. Through their meticulous analysis, Chen and Li (2023) unearthed compelling evidence suggesting a robust positive correlation between heightened social media engagement levels and increased e-commerce adoption rates among European retailers. Furthermore, their findings underscored the transformative potential of leveraging social media platforms as potent tools for fostering brand

awareness, driving customer engagement, and ultimately bolstering retail sales figures. The recommendations put forth by Chen and Li (2023) resonated with a clarion call for retail entities to proactively harness the power of social media platforms as integral components of their overarching e-commerce strategies, thereby fostering sustained growth and competitiveness within the dynamic European retail landscape.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Research Gap: While the studies discussed shed light on various aspects of e-commerce adoption and its impact on retail sector performance in Europe, there seems to be a lack of focus on the specific mechanisms through which e-commerce strategies translate into improved performance metrics. Although studies highlight positive correlations, there is a gap in understanding the underlying processes or mechanisms driving these relationships. Future research could delve deeper into the specific strategies, tactics, and mechanisms through which e-commerce adoption influences various performance indicators within the retail sector.

Contextual Research Gap: The studies primarily focus on the European context, but they may not fully capture the nuances of e-commerce adoption and its impact on retail performance across different European regions or countries. There is a need for research that examines how contextual factors such as cultural differences, economic conditions, and market structures influence the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail performance. Additionally, studies could explore how industry-specific factors or market dynamics shape the outcomes observed in different retail sectors within Europe.

Geographical Research Gap: While the studies provide valuable insights into e-commerce adoption and retail performance within Europe, there is a lack of comparative analysis with other regions or global perspectives. Comparative studies across regions could help identify unique factors or trends specific to Europe and provide insights into how European retail firms compare to their counterparts in other regions. Moreover, research could explore the transferability of findings from Europe to other regions or vice versa, considering the global nature of e-commerce and retail operations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail sector performance in Europe reveals a complex and multifaceted interplay between technological innovation, organizational capabilities, consumer behavior, and regulatory frameworks. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a significant positive correlation between the adoption of e-commerce strategies and various performance metrics within the retail sector, including sales growth, profitability, and market competitiveness. Retail entities that embrace e-commerce

technologies and omnichannel strategies tend to outperform their counterparts reliant solely on traditional brick-and-mortar operations.

Furthermore, research underscores the critical importance of strategic investments in e-commerce infrastructure, digital marketing capabilities, supply chain agility, and consumer trust-building initiatives. These factors not only facilitate successful e-commerce adoption but also contribute to enhanced overall retail performance in Europe. Additionally, studies emphasize the role of supportive regulatory environments in fostering e-commerce innovation and market entry for retail firms, highlighting the need for policymakers to enact forward-thinking policies conducive to digital transformation within the retail sector. However, despite significant advancements in understanding the dynamics of e-commerce adoption and retail performance in Europe, several research gaps persist. These include the need for deeper insights into the specific mechanisms driving the relationship between e-commerce adoption and performance, contextual factors shaping outcomes across different European regions, and comparative analyses with global perspectives. Addressing these gaps through further research efforts will be crucial in refining our understanding and providing actionable recommendations for retailers, policymakers, and stakeholders aiming to navigate the evolving landscape of e-commerce and retail in Europe.

Recommendation

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Longitudinal studies tracking the e-commerce adoption journey of retail firms over time would provide deeper insights into the causal mechanisms underlying the relationship between e-commerce adoption and performance metrics. Such studies would contribute to refining existing theoretical frameworks and advancing our understanding of how e-commerce strategies evolve and impact retail performance in the long term. Investigate the role of moderating variables such as industry-specific factors, organizational characteristics, and market dynamics in shaping the relationship between e-commerce adoption and retail performance. By examining these moderating factors, researchers can develop more nuanced theoretical models that account for the contextual nuances influencing e-commerce outcomes in the European retail sector.

Practice

Retail firms should prioritize investments in digital capabilities, including e-commerce infrastructure, digital marketing expertise, and data analytics capabilities. By developing these digital competencies, firms can effectively leverage e-commerce platforms to enhance customer engagement, drive sales growth, and improve overall performance in the highly competitive European retail landscape. Retailers should adopt omnichannel strategies that seamlessly integrate online and offline channels to create cohesive customer experiences. By offering consumers multiple touchpoints for interaction and purchase, retailers can cater to diverse consumer preferences and enhance customer satisfaction, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes.

Policy

Policymakers should enact supportive regulatory frameworks that facilitate e-commerce innovation and market entry for retail firms. This includes policies that promote consumer trust and data protection, facilitate cross-border e-commerce transactions, and incentivize investment

in digital infrastructure. By creating an enabling regulatory environment, policymakers can stimulate e-commerce adoption and drive overall growth and competitiveness within the European retail sector. Policymakers should prioritize initiatives aimed at promoting digital literacy and skills development among retailers and consumers. By equipping retailers with the necessary digital skills and knowledge, policymakers can empower them to effectively leverage e-commerce technologies and capitalize on the opportunities presented by the digital economy. Similarly, initiatives to enhance consumer digital literacy can help foster trust in online transactions and drive e-commerce adoption among European consumers.

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