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IMPACT OF E- COMMERCE: CHANGING TRENDS OF SMEs

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to Impact of E- Commerce - Changing trends of SMEs. Business managers of today are living in challenging times. Business targets had never been stiffer, work pressure and managing the complexities of competition is keeping them on their toes all the time. Today, success or failure of a business and the organisation is dependent wholly upon the organisation's ability to be flexible and to respond to the external changing environment. Only those who are able to adapt to the changes and those who are able to assimilate and learn from tomorrow's technology are able to run the race. Digit It identifies the e-commerce benefits realized by this business and investigates the relationship between the levels of e-commerce adoption and the changes thus realized. The study was motivated by the limited studies related to e-commerce and changing business trends. A survey of 50 business shows that the majority of them are still at an early stage in their adoption of e-commerce. The purpose of this study is to test the relationships between e-commerce impact and change business trends. Some factors consider as changing SMEs trends like market force, economic force and technological force as a moderator. The implications of the results of the study are discussed.

KEYWORDS

e-commerce, SMEs, economic force.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, individuals have the power of internet in their hands. If one wants to book an airline ticket, it is pretty easy to do so online and it takes only a few minutes to complete the entire transaction of looking at the options, selecting the best priced deal, making an online payment and printing the confirmed ticket. As compared to talking to a travel agent for an hour and several calls, online booking is definitely a better deal. Take the case of courier industry. One can book a consignment to any location in the world and you can use the track and trace feature on the web to track the status of your parcel at any time. This feature makes a huge impact to a business which is sending some important and time bound cargo or document to another location. Look at how easy it has become to configure a computer that you want and order it online in an instant.

From the above examples it is very clear that the businesses that have adapted and embraced E Business and E Commerce have managed to be successful and ahead in the industry. Migrating to an E Business environment is not easy and simple. It is not as simple as it looks that one can just buy an application and host it on the net and attract customers. Embracing e business calls for Organisations to change their business models, business strategies as well as integrate their business processes with technology.

Organisations were traditionally product oriented. With times and changing environment they grew to understand and appreciate the need to be Customer centric and Customer relationship management became a key focus area. Being customer centric meant orienting the entire organisation and all its functions and divisions to be responsive to the internal and external customers. With the advent of E Commerce, the Organisations have got to understand the Customers and their needs, preferences and buying behaviour in new light and from the perspective of electronic and digital media.

Understanding the why, how and what of E Commerce and orienting the entire Organisation to be customer centric in the new environment calls for re-inventing the business model where technology becomes the driver and the key differentiator. The entire Organisation needs to elevate itself and graduate to new web enabling platforms where speed, information, visibility and co-ordination of multiple transactions, seamless working of applications connecting different business processes form the components of the business chain.

Speed is the essence of E Business. Organisations have no time to learn all about the new technology, analyse, understand and then make their decision to embrace and grow into the E Business. Time and speed will either make or break the businesses today. Therefore, the Managers and Management have got to work and migrate their businesses to the E Business platform at the speed of thought and it has got to be done now.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no single definition of e-commerce with various definitions being offered by several authors. Turban (2010) defined e-commerce as "the process of buying, selling, transferring, or exchanging products, services, and/or information via computer networks, mostly Internet and intranets". While, Tagliavini et al. (2001) argued that any economic activity conducted via the internet can be called e-commerce. In more detail, Clarke (2005) elaborated the detailed elements of e-commerce as: "support services for trading... encompass(ing) inter-organizational email, directories, trading support systems for commodities, products, customized goods and services, management information, and statistical reporting systems". Even though the definitions vary in exact detail, it can be seen from the definitions above that the use of ICT, particularly internet technology, is a main component of e-commerce. Hence in this study the definition of e-commerce refers to the use of networked information and communication technologies (ICT), especially Internet technology, in any business activities.

According to Turban (2010), the transition of traditional commerce to electronic commerce depends on the level of digitisation of the products/services sold, the process, and the delivery methods. If the digital element is found in any one of those then it can be said that the e-commerce exists, but only partial e-commerce. Whilst if all of these elements are digital, then it is considered as pure e-commerce. Buying a mobile phone from <http://www.apple.com> is one example of partial e-commerce, because there are physical dimensions to this transaction which are product and the delivery method. However, buying software from <http://www.amazon.com> is the example of pure e-commerce, because all of dimensions are digital (product, process and delivery method).

It cannot be denied that the e-commerce technology was originally developed to meet the needs of large enterprises in developed countries. However, the application of e-commerce is still suitable for SMEs in developing countries. E-mail, websites, internet, intranet, extranet, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) and barcode are some of basic e-commerce technologies that are most likely relevant for the SME (Kurnia et al. 2015; Morteza et al. 2011; Mustaffa and Beaumont 2004; Abell and Lim 1996).

The use of these technologies by SMEs is variable. Abell and Lim (1996) found that SMEs in New Zealand used the internet in order to communicate with internal and external parties, get information from suppliers, provide information, conduct R&D activities, to be seen at the forefront of technology, to do market and product research, place orders to suppliers, and take orders from customers. Drew (2003) found also that e-mail and intranet applications were used by SMEs for internal communication; whilst web sites were used to advertise, promote, recruit, and for procurement. In addition, Daniel and Wilson (2002) mentioned that e-commerce technologies assist SMEs in a wide range of activities, which are: providing information about the company, providing information about goods and services offered, taking and placing orders, receiving payment, delivering goods and services, after sales service or contact, identifying suppliers, purchasing inventory and non-inventory, communicating with internal and external parties, exchanging document and design with customers or suppliers, searching the information, advertising and recruitment activities. The breadth of e-commerce use in business activities reflects the level of e-commerce adoption where the wider

the use of e-commerce the higher level of e-commerce adoption. The wider the scope of e-commerce use in businesses, the more likely the realization of even greater commerce benefits (Zhu and Kraemer 2005).

In order to explain the level of e-commerce adoption, the concept of "stage of growth" or growth models are often used in previous studies. This concept recognized that information system(s), including e-commerce, in an organization are not fixed but experience several levels of development. Information System literature recorded several growth models developed by previous researchers. The first growth model was developed by Richard L. Nolan during the 1970s, which is well known as "Nolan's stages of growth model". In this model, there are six stages faced by the firm in respect of information system usage, namely: initiation, contagion, control, integration, data administration and maturity. Each stage has different features, and all of them will exist together.

Business success refers to firm to survive, reach its goals and their ability to generate net profit in SMEs business (DeLone and McLean, 2004). Prior studies suggest that the financial performance only is a very narrow scope to measure business success (Quaddus and Achjari, 2005). According to Kaplan and Norton (1992) argue that business performance must be measured from four different perspectives: financial, customer, innovation and learning perspective. DeLone and McLean (2004) propose the strategic perspectives such as goal attainment is considered to be measuring. Therefore, in this study, financial perspective, customer perspective, and strategic perspective are suitable for combining to measure business success (Jantaratjaturapath and Usahawanitchakit, 2009).

3. DRIVING FORCES OF E-COMMERCE

E-Commerce is becoming popular, it is worthwhile to examine today's business environment so let us understand the pressures it creates on organizations and the responses used by organizations.

Environmental factors that create Business Pressures:

Market, economical, societal and technological factors are creating a highly competitive business environment in which consumers are the focal point. These factors change quickly, sometimes in an unpredictable manner and therefore companies need to react frequently not only in the traditional actions such as lowering cost and closing unprofitable facilities but also innovative activities such as customizing products, creating new products or providing superb customer service.

1. ECONOMIC FORCES

Economic Forces One of the most evident benefits of e-commerce is economic efficiency resulting from the reduction in communications costs, low-cost technological infra structure, speedier and more economic electronic transactions with suppliers, lower global information sharing and advertising costs, and cheaper customer service alternatives.

Categories of Economic Forces

Lower marketing costs: marketing on the Internet maybe cheaper and can reach a wider crowd than the normal marketing medium.

Lower sales costs: increase in the customer volume do not need an increase in staff as the sales function is housed in the computer and has virtually unlimited accessibility

Lower ordering processing cost: online ordering can be automated with checks to ensure that orders are correct before accepting, thus reducing errors and the cost of correcting them.

New sales opportunities: The website is accessible all the time and reaches the global audience which is not possible with traditional store front.

Economic integration is either external or internal. External integration refers to the electronic networking of corporations, suppliers, customers/clients, and independent contractors into one community communicating in a virtual environment (with the Internet as medium). Internal integration, on the other hand, is the networking of the various departments within a corporation, and of business operations and processes. This allows critical business information to be stored in a digital form that can be retrieved instantly and transmitted electronically. Internal integration is best exemplified by corporate intranets.

2. MARKET FORCES

Corporations are encouraged to use e-commerce in marketing and promotion to capture international markets, both big and small. The Internet is likewise used as a medium for enhanced customer service and support. It is a lot easier for companies to provide their target consumers with more detailed product and service information using the Internet. Strong competition between organizations, extremely low labor cost in some countries, frequent and significant changes in markets and increased power of consumers are the reasons to create market forces.

3. TECHNOLOGY FORCES

The development of information and communications technology (ICT) is a key factor in the growth of ecommerce. For instance, technological advances in digitizing content, compression and the promotion of open systems technology have paved the way for the convergence of communication services into one single platform. This in turn has made communication more efficient, faster, easier, and more economical as the need to set up separate networks for telephone services, television broadcast, cable television, and Internet access is eliminated. From the standpoint of firms/ businesses and consumers, having only one information provider means lower communications costs.

Moreover, the principle of universal access can be made more achievable with convergence. At present the high costs of installing landlines in sparsely populated rural areas is incentive to telecommunications companies to install telephones in these areas. Installing landlines in rural areas can become more attractive to the private sector if revenues from these landlines are not limited to local and long distance telephone charges, but also include cable TV and Internet charges. This development will ensure affordable access to information even by those in rural areas and will spare the government the trouble and cost of installing expensive landlines

4. SOCIETAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES

To understand the role of E-commerce in today's organizations, it becomes necessary to review the factors that create societal and environmental forces.

Changing nature of work force Government deregulations Shrinking government subsidies increased importance of ethical and legal issues Increased social responsibility of organizations Rapid political changes

Critical response activities by Organizations

A response can be a reaction to a pressure already in existence, or it can be an initiative that will defend an organization against future pressures. It can also be an activity that exploits an opportunity created by changing conditions.

Organizations' major responses are divided into five categories: strategic systems for competitive advantage, continuous improvement efforts, business process reengineering (BPR), business alliances and EC. These several responses can be interrelated and Ecommerce can also facilitate the other categories. The Three categories are described below.

1. STRATEGIC SYSTEMS

Strategic systems provide organizations with strategic advantages, thus enabling them to increase their market share, better negotiate with their suppliers, or prevent competitors from entering into their territory. There is a variety of EC supported strategic systems. An example is FedEx's overnight delivery system and the company's ability to track the status of every individual package anywhere in the system. Most of FedEx's competitors have already mimicked the system. So FedEx moved the system to the Internet. However, the competitors quickly followed and now FedEx is introducing new activities.

2. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

In order to improve the company's productivity and quality, many companies continuously conduct innovative programs. The efforts taken by companies for continuous improvement are

Improved productivity Improved decision making Managing Information Change in management Customer Service Innovation and Creativity.

For example, Dell Computer takes its orders electronically and improved moves them via Enterprise Resources Planning software (from SAP Corp.) into the just-in-time assembly operation. Intel is taking its products' consumption in 11 of its largest customers, using its extranets, almost in real time, and determining production schedules and deliveries accordingly.

3. BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING (BPR)

Business Process Reengineering refers to a major innovation in the organization's structure and the way it conducts business. Information technology and especially EC play a major role in BPR. Electronic Commerce provides flexibility in manufacturing, permits faster delivery to customers and supports rapid and paperless transactions among suppliers, manufacturers and retailers.

Three primary processes are enhanced in e-business:

1. Production processes, which include procurement, ordering and replenishment of stocks; processing of payments; electronic links with suppliers; and production control processes, among others;
2. Customer-focused processes, which include promotional and marketing efforts, selling over the Internet, processing of customers' purchase orders and payments, and customer support, among others; and
3. Internal management processes, which include employee services, training, internal information-sharing, videoconferencing, and recruiting. Electronic applications enhance information flow between production and sales forces to improve sales force productivity. Workgroup communications and electronic publishing of internal business information are likewise made more efficient. The Internet economy pertains to all economic activities using electronic networks as a medium for commerce or those activities involved in both building the networks linked to the Internet and the purchase of application services such as the provision of enabling hardware and software and network equipment for Web-based/online retail and shopping malls (or "e-malls").

4. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To identify levels of e-commerce adoption in SMEs
2. To analysis factors pressures in adoption-commerce in SMEs
3. To analysis impact of E-commerce changing trends in SMEs

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of E-commerce changing present trends of SMEs. In order to answer the research questions and fulfill the study objective and the survey questionnaire was designed on the basis of a related previous studies to collect the required data.

6. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of the data collected for this research work. The data were presented and analyzed with regards to response to the research questions. All the data were presented in tables

7. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected are presented and analyzed below so as to have a better understanding of the impacts E-commerce changing present trends in SMEs. In this study, an online questionnaire survey method was applied. The online questionnaire was chosen because this method is considered to have several advantages, which are that it is cheaper, better (in term of response rate), faster and easier than conventional methods (Fricker and Schonlau 2002).

8. SAMPLING METHOD

The respondents in this study are the business owner or manager. There were 50 questionnaires sent to respondents through e-mail.

1. The profiles of the business and respondents who participated in this study are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF THE SMEs AND RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	%	
Industry type			
Agriculture	6	12	
Manufacture	10	20	
Electronic, gas and water supply	1	2	
Construction	5	10	
Trade, hotel and restaurant	18	36	
Transport and communication	3	6	
Finance, rent and service	5	10	
Others	2	4	
Total	50	100	
Firm size			#VALUE!
Micro	7	14	
Small	20	40	
Medium	23	46	
Total	50	100	
Respondent's gender			#VALUE!
Male	31	62	
Female	19	38	
Total	50	100	
Respondent's age			#VALUE!
Under 25 years old	5	10	
25–34 years old	10	20	
35–44 years old	15	30	
45–55 years old	18	36	
Above 55 years old	2	4	
Total	50	100	
Respondent's education			#VALUE!
Junior high school	6	12	
Senior high school	12	24	
Diploma	10	20	
Undergraduate	5	10	
Master	17	34	
Total	50	100	

2. The current stage of e-commerce adoption by these SMEs in more detail.

TABLE 2: THE LEVEL OF E-COMMERCE ADOPTION IN SMEs

	Frequency	%
Non adopters	10	7.2
E-mail	20	21.9
Static website	5	32.5
Interactive website	6	25.0
E-commerce	3	13.0
Internal integration	5	0.3
Total	50	100.0

This table shows that majority of owners adopted only static website (32.5%), 25% of owners are adopted in interactive website, 21.9 % of owners are adopted E-mail, 7.2% of owners are Non adopters. So this study saws that majority of the business owner is not willing to adopted E-commerce services. But present condition pressure to adopted E-commerce services.

3. It shows the technology force changing SMEs trends.

TABLE 3: THE PRESSURE OF E-COMMERCE IN TECHNOLOGIES BY SMEs

Activities	Number of SMEs	%
Logistics and distribution activities	15	30
Financial activities	10	20
Purchasing and procurement activities	7	14
Operational and Processing activities	6	12
Marketing activities	9	18
After sales services activities	3	6

This table exhibited that major pressure of factors in Technology for Logistics and distribution (30%), secondly Financial activities (20%), then marketing activity (18%) and so on.

4. The pressure of e-commerce in market by SMEs

TABLE 4: PRESSURE OF E-COMMERCE IN MARKET BY SMEs

Activities	Number of SMEs	%
Strong competition	21	42
Regional trade agreements	7	14
Increase power of consumer	9	18
Frequent and significant changes in market	13	26

This table exhibited that major pressure of factors in marketing strong competition (42%), Frequent and significant changes in market (26%), Increase power of consumer (18%), Regional trade agreements (14%).

5. The pressure of e-commerce in Societal and environmental by SMEs

TABLE 5: PRESSURE OF E-COMMERCE IN SOCIETAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BY SMEs

Activities	Number of SMEs	%
Changing nature of work force	7	14
Ethical legal issues	13	26
Governmental deregulation	21	42
Increase societal responsible of business	9	18

This table exhibited that major pressure of factors in Societal and environmental;

Governmental deregulation (42%), Ethical legal issues (26%), Increase societal responsible of business (18%), Changing nature of work force (14%).

6. The pressure of e-commerce in economic SMEs

TABLE NO. 6: THE PRESSURE OF E-COMMERCE IN ECONOMIC SMEs

Activities	Number of SMEs	%
Marketing cost	25	50
sales cost	14	28
Order process cost	11	22

This table exhibited that major pressure of factors in economics for marketing cost (50%), sales cost (28%), order process cost (22%).

9. RESEARCH MODEL

HYPOTHESIS

One of the most important motives of this study is to evaluate the critical exams the e-commerce pressure changing present trends of SMEs.

1. *H0*: There is no significant relationship between technology force and the adoption of e-Commerce

Since the computed value of (23.45) is greater than the tabulated value of (12.59), *H0* (null) hypothesis shall be rejected This shows that technology force is changing SMEs trends like Logistic and distribution activities, Financial activities, Purchasing and procurement activities, Operational and Processing activities, etc.

2. *H0*: There is no significant relationship between market force and the adoption of e-Commerce

Since the computed value of (17.12) is greater than the tabulated value of (9.49), *H0* (null) hypothesis shall be rejected This shows that technology force is changing SMEs trends.

3. *H0*: There is no significant relationship between economic force and the adoption of e-Commerce

Since the computed value of (19.21) is greater than the tabulated value of (9.49), *H0* (null) hypothesis shall be rejected This shows that technology force is changing SMEs trends. Economic Forces One of the most evident benefits of e-commerce is economic efficiency resulting from the reduction in communications costs, low-cost technological infra structure, speedier.

4. *H0*: There is no significant relationship between Societal and environmental force and the adoption of e-Commerce

Since the computed value of (18.4) is greater than the tabulated value of (7.82), *H0* (null) hypothesis shall be rejected This shows that technology force is changing SMEs trends. Changing nature of work force Government deregulations shrinking government subsidies increased importance of ethical and legal issues increased social responsibility of organizations Rapid political changes

10. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This study has provided an overview of the adoption of e-commerce by SMEs in developing countries. By using India SMEs as a sample, the results of this study show that the majority of SMEs are still at the lower level of e-commerce adoption. It can be seen that most of them adopt only simple websites, such as a static website or interactive website; and, even more, some of them only have e-mail. Comparing with the SMEs in developed countries, this condition is certainly still far behind.

Even though e-commerce technology was introduced in India in 1996, this technology has only been widely known about in recent years. This explains why adoption appears to a relatively recent phenomenon. According to the International Communication Union (2007), in 2007 the average values of some indicators of ICT development in India were still far behind the average values of Asia and the world. However, this position has changed significantly since 2010. At that time, the India government through the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology issued a policy regarding the provision of affordable internet access for rural communities by relying on satellite connections (Donny 2014).

11. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the adoption of e-commerce by SMEs in a developing country, especially in India, is still at a low level. Most of them are e-mail and website adopters (both static and interactive website). Comparing to SMEs in developed countries, the level of e-commerce adoption by the India SMEs lags far behind. This condition certainly has implications for the government to further increase their efforts through promoting effective programmes and initiatives to encourage the level of e-commerce adoption by India SMEs.

This study also provides empirical support that the e-commerce provides many benefits for SMEs. The top six benefits reported by India SMEs are extending their market reach, increased sales, improvements external communication, company image, speed of data processing, and employee productivity. This result could enrich the understanding of SME owners about the potential benefits of e-commerce. A greater understanding about this will increase their probability to allocate some resources towards adopting e-commerce.

In addition, this study also shows that the benefits realized by SMEs tend to be increased by the increase in the level of e-commerce adoption. This condition certainly can be a consideration for SME owners in adopting e-commerce and this also will be useful for SME owner in deciding whether to move forward to the next stage or not.

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