

Preface

INTRODUCTION

People are increasingly inclined to shop online when traditional shopping becomes tricky or scary. In the first quarter of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began to affect global markets, it became clear that it would test the resilience and performance of a rapidly growing e-commerce sector in every part of the globe. The entire world has witnessed the novel outburst of coronavirus and went into lockdown, forcing many businesses to shut down temporarily. Countries are gradually relaxing restrictions, but the future is still uncertain. Even companies reopening have rules enforcing social distancing, wearing masks, and limiting how many customers can enter a space at once. These limitations have forced the movements of world consumers and observed many difficulties in procuring all kinds of family requirements. These limitations, like government-imposed quarantines, social distancing, and fear of viruses, provide opportunities for the e-commerce business to thrive over the next few years. Consumers turn to digital options to bypass physical shopping environments, so the behavior change will undoubtedly influence longer-term buyer behavior. This book will help Small- and Medium-sized (SMEs) enterprises advance their e-commerce policies toward sustainability.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In Chapter 1, “Significance of Brand Image on Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) Survival in Digital Competition,” Esra Güven explains that the competition landscape is shifting because of the globalization of social media and the digitalization of society, and SMEs must adapt to this quick change. According to the author, SMEs can accomplish their objectives at a low cost if they use these digital platforms wisely and reflect their brand images. This chapter seeks to provide the necessary descriptions and explanations regarding the importance of a SME’s brand image as well as the steps to take to develop a brand image in a sequential manner from widely distributed material to digital environments. The notions of brand, image, and brand image have all been described in this chapter. The types of brand image have also been covered in detail in the relevant topic. The chapter goes into great length about social media, its impact on brand image, and what can be done to develop a brand image in digital environments. Additionally, there are several case studies of brand image development activities from globally prosperous SMEs.

In Chapter 2, “Digital Transformation of Small and Medium Businesses,” Aizhan Baimukhamedova and Malik Baimukhamedov discuss the purpose and significance of digital transformation in growing

small and medium-sized organizations. The authors state that digitalization reshapes companies using computer technology so that all decisions are based on data. The primary goals of SMEs' digital transformation are outlined in this chapter. According to the authors, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, big data, cloud computing, blockchain, etc., are some of the technologies fueling digital transformation. This chapter lists some of the tasks involved in managing an organization in the era of digitalization: adapting the business processes of the company to cutting-edge digital technologies; maintaining a high level of expertise among company management and experts in the field of contemporary technologies and maintaining a high level of readiness for changes and challenges in the external environment. The authors consider e-commerce and the digital transformation of SMEs in the commercial, agricultural, and industrial realms.

In Chapter 3, "How a Sustainability Strategy Can Leverage E-Commerce," Albérico Travassos Rosário states that building sustainable business models has emerged as a cutting-edge component of corporate strategy over the past few decades. The idea has been applied to several economic sectors to achieve their goals, with e-commerce emerging as one of the most successful business models during the past ten years. According to the author, the significance of sustainability in e-commerce in all its forms cannot be emphasized enough. The author further states that numerous studies have been done on the subject, spanning various application areas. In this chapter, a thorough review of the bibliometric literature was conducted using the keywords "sustainability" along with the keywords "e-commerce," "Electronic Commerce," "E-commerce," "B2C E-commerce," and "Business, Management and Accounting" over the previous ten years in the SCOPUS indexing database (2012-2022). This chapter tries to comprehend how a sustainability approach can utilize e-commerce.

In Chapter 4, "The Propensity of E-Commerce Acceptance Among Unorganized Retail Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs)," Karthik Ram and Selvabaskar state that after China, India has one of the largest SME populations in the world. This benefits the Indian economy by creating a wide range of employment opportunities, innovating new self-sufficient technologies, and assisting export growth, socioeconomic growth, and rural development that supports nation-building. The authors explain that consumers are utilizing the power of digital technologies and e-commerce; now is the moment to assess the unorganized retailers' inclination to adopt business-to-business e-commerce. The authors explain that prior studies have examined the effects of e-commerce on consumers, organized retailers, and disorganized retailers. Additionally, some other research focused on analyzing unorganized retail SMEs' performance, rivalry, problems, and challenges. However, the authors posit that studies assessing the acceptability of e-commerce by independent retailers are scarce. This chapter considers the subtleties of unorganized retailers' tendency towards business-to-business e-commerce.

In Chapter 5, "Implementing E-Marketing in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises for Enhanced Sustainability," Edna Mngusughun Denga points out that by switching from conventional to internet-based platforms, e-marketing has completely changed the way marketing is carried out. The author posits that e-marketing has dramatically changed how businesses communicate with clients. The chapter studied the organizational, technological, and environmental factors that may drive the adoption of e-marketing as well as models that can be used to enhance e-marketing to offer insights and direction for the growth and development of e-marketing among SMEs. A thorough examination of the literature in this chapter showed a significant positive correlation between sustainable marketing strategy and SME success, demonstrating that sustainability is greatly influenced by customer happiness, customer loyalty, and profitability.

Preface

In Chapter 6, “The Relevance of Supply Chain Preparedness on the Long-Term Sustainability of SMEs,” Sefa Asortse and Edna Mngusughun Denga emphasize that greater volatility is becoming the new standard for modern supply chains because of the wide range of hazards and how frequently they can interrupt a supply chain. As a result, the authors state that resilience has become a crucial element of supply chain management. To strengthen supply chains’ resilience, the authors advised that businesses boost their risk prevention and response measures. Through resilient supply chains, the authors encourage SMEs to foresee possible changes, respond to actual changes, and provide better value. Building supply chain resilience can help to decrease and overcome risk vulnerabilities by developing solutions that allow the supply chain to resume normal operations after an interruption. The chapter seeks to offer a thorough understanding of the effects of a critical aspect of supply chain resilience, supply chain readiness, which is intended to increase the sustainability of SMEs.

In Chapter 7, “Factors Hindering Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprise Business Growth in South Africa,” Muhammad Ehsanul Hoque and Sfiso Nxele emphasize that Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) play a significant role in the growth of the GDP and the creation of new job opportunities. According to the authors, SMMEs in South Africa are given money for long-term success and employment generation. However, the contemporary SMMEs’ contribution to the nation’s GDP and job generation has decreased over time. This chapter’s goal was to investigate the reasons preventing SMME business growth. The findings in this chapter identify some of the issues SMMEs, including a lack of funding, information, mentorship apart from incompetent management, inadequate assessment across numerous organizations, and access to funding. The authors recommend that the government and support organizations should provide significant attention to developing sector specific SMME assessment criteria instead of using a general approach to promote all business sectors.

In Chapter 8, “Trust in E-Commerce From the Cultural Perspective: A Systematic Literature Review,” Neslişah Özdemir examines the research on e-commerce trust from a cultural viewpoint. This chapter adds to the body of knowledge in this area by analyzing the procedure for building trust in e-commerce and investigating the causes and effects of online trust from a cultural standpoint. In this chapter, 52 peer-reviewed publications on trust in e-commerce published in the Scopus database were systematically reviewed. The results show that there has been an increase over time in publications that cover e-commerce trust in various cultural contexts. These studies have used a variety of approaches, and they have examined e-commerce trust across a range of industries. The articles on online trust from a cultural perspective are divided into three groups: the influence of culture on online trust, its antecedents, and its effects.

In Chapter 9, “Impact of Technology on Business Continuity During COVID-19,” Thirunesha Naidu and Muhammad Hoque list the numerous advancements in digital technology throughout the years that have transformed how we work, interact, and live. In business, such innovations have occurred predominantly at larger or newer organizations or e-commerce companies as resources are required to design, implement, and maintain bespoke digital technology solutions. Other commercially accessible alternatives have not been given preference over more conventional labor methods regarding integration into business processes. A business continuity strategy is created when a company needs to quickly recover to continue operating after a disruption like a pandemic. This chapter discusses potential business continuity planning initiatives that could take place during a pandemic, the kinds of digital technologies that firms utilize, and their effects on business continuity under such circumstances. Here are some suggestions for how businesses might survive and thrive in VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity).

In Chapter 10, “Electronic Government,” Aizhan Baimukhamedova and Malik Baimukhamedov emphasize that electronic document management systems, state management automation systems, and other information and communication technologies are the foundation of e-government. Four types of “government models” are discussed in this chapter: the Russian model, the Asian model, the Continental European model, and the Anglo-American model. In this chapter, the authors describe the decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated November 10, 2004, No 1471, “On state program of construction of e-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2005-2007,” that served as the foundation for the creation of the e-government portal. According to the authors, the following objectives are supported by government: fostering new modes of communication between agencies, enhancing the delivery of public services to individuals and businesses, fostering, and expanding citizen self-service capabilities, raising the level of technological literacy and competence among citizens, and enhancing the level of participation of all voters in national governance and management processes.

In Chapter 11, “Digital Marketing and the Sustainable Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises,” Edna Mngusughun Denga and Sandip Rakshit explain that regardless of where SMEs operate, today’s marketing innovation includes digital platforms, and they must deal with extremely unstable, competitive, and dynamic market conditions. According to the authors, companies cannot grow to be successful and competitive without using effective digital marketing methods. By leveraging digital tools, SMEs may successfully locate, engage, market, and sustain customer connections. In this chapter, the authors conduct a systematic review of the literature to determine the numerous digital marketing tactics SMEs can use, the advantages they stand to gain, and the potential direct and indirect consequences on SMEs’ performance.

In Chapter 12, “Trends in E-Commerce During COVID-19: A Case of UAE,” Rajasekhara Mouly Potluri and Sophia Johnson Thomas emphasize how effective e-commerce is as a tool in the current corporate environment. Various transactions, including as buying and selling goods and services on e-commerce platforms, increased significantly during the COVID pandemic. At the same time, it presented difficulties for companies to satisfy rising consumer demands and expectations. The authors state that consumers in the UAE are taking advantage of the newest e-commerce technologies, including augmented reality (AR), voice search, on-site personalization, chatbots, mobile shopping, numerous payment choices, and API-driven e-commerce. The tactics to succeed in the online market are examined in this book chapter, together with the trends and e-commerce issues COVID in the UAE has presented.

In Chapter 13, “Customer Segmentation of a Shopping Mall Users Using K-Means Clustering,” Amit Kumar explains that the businesses that know their clients well and can foresee their demands are the most successful. The authors emphasize that with accurate consumer profiles at their fingertips, firms can focus feature launches and optimize product roadmaps and marketing campaigns. In this chapter, client segmentation was carried out utilizing k-means clustering and exploratory data analysis on the shopping mall data. Based on annual income vs. spending score and age vs. spending score, two separate clustering were performed. Using the elbow graph approach, four optimal clusters for age and expenditure scores were found, and five optimal clusters for yearly income and spending scores. First off, people in higher age groups had lower spending scores when grouped by age and expenditure score. Second, groups based on yearly income and spending scores had very low spending scores and high annual income scores. As per the findings in this chapter, the mall can provide these cluster customers with incentives to draw them in and boost its revenue.

In the book’s final chapter, “Impact of COVID-19: Role of Digitalization on Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Kurunegala District in Sri Lanka,” Hasini Mekhala Rathnayake and Pratheesh

Preface

Pratheebha present the impact of digitalization on SMEs in the context of the pandemic in a case study in Sri Lanka. The authors state that the most recent global catastrophe impacting all economic sectors is the coronavirus pandemic. Lockdowns, incarceration, limited movement orders and social seclusion are a few of the proactive measures the government has taken to protect public health. The authors argue that there are some unrecognized effects of the COVID-19 mobility block and the influence of digitalization on small and medium firms in Kurunegala District while acknowledging the significance of the national order in avoiding the massive spread of the virus. In this chapter, five themes are used to group the effects of the COVID-19 Movement block on SMEs. Additionally, the authors employed three pre-existing themes to examine the role of digitalization. The authors recommend future research projects, business development organizations, and business owners in this chapter.

This book offers many benefits to academia spread in the world. Remarkably, the academia involved in research and teaching will receive confident inputs about the e-commerce situation during the pandemic and beyond. Furthermore, the book will highlight the proposed topic's influence of COVID-19 on consumer behavior in different parts of the world. The digital impact on sales of various products and services based on the changing trends of behavioral tendencies of consumers throughout the globe is emphasized in this book.

Rajasekhara Mouly Potluri
Al Ghurair University, UAE

Narasimha Rao Vajjhala
University of New York Tirana, Albania