

THE CHALLENGES OF E-COMMERCE AND ONLINE MARKETING TOWARDS LOGISTICS SERVICE IN MYANMAR

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SUBMITTED AS A PARTIAL FULFILLMENT REQUIRED FOR THE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, SIAM UNIVERSITY, BANGKOK, THAILAND



Title of Research: The Challenges of E-commerce and Online Marketing

Towards Logistics Service in Myanmar

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Marketing Management

Degree:

Master of Business Administration (International Program)

Academic

2022

This independent study report has been approved to be a partial fulfillment in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program.

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22 / July / 2023

ABSTRACT

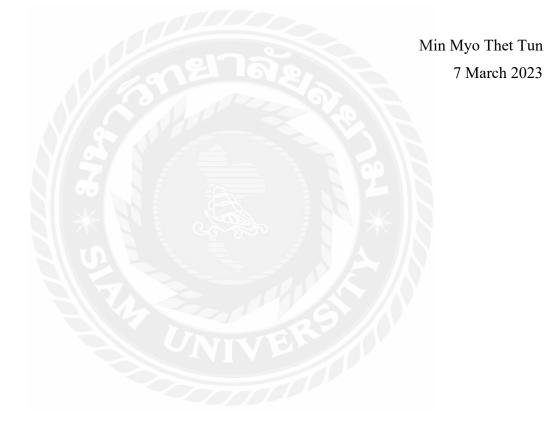
This research paper sought to determine the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on e-commerce and online marketing in Myanmar, with regard to logistics service. The majority of Myanmar's logistics companies are situated in Yangon and Mandalay. The development of Myanmar's socioeconomic community has been altered by the logistical obstacles posed by the country's economic circumstances and investors. As a result of COVID-19, the socioeconomic sectors of Myanmar's logistics companies have been severely damaged to the point of indefinite closure. The research demonstrated that the effects of COVID-19 led to massive shutdowns, generating economic loss and societal discontent. The insights also contributed to a plan for increased recovery, which will enable the Myanmar logistics system to operate more effectively. Recovery implementation will also certainly assist the recommendation for long-term sustainable development. Together, Myanmar's logistics businesses during COVID-19 epidemic, has been driven by government confidence and protocols that closely monitor the current pandemic waves. The remainder of the study was devoted to a review of previous research on the issues of logistics service concerns in Myanmar, e-commerce and online marketing, and COVID-19's influence.

Keywords: e-comemrce, online marketing, logistic service

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In this section, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Tanakorn Limsarun advisor and Dr. Jompong Mongkolvanit Dean, Graduate School of Business, Siam University, Bangkok, Thailand for them thoughtful and caring supervision by means of his educational excellence. I am most grateful to them especially for them deep understanding of the Independent Study and his good communication skills.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The e-commerce industry has revolutionized the way businesses operate globally, thanks to the rapid advancement of technology. In 2021, retail e-commerce sales generated an impressive 4.9 trillion U.S. dollars worldwide, with China forecasted to lead the retail e-commerce market globally in 2020, according to Chevalier (Chevalier, 2022). A business survey by Kasikorn bank of Thailand revealed that Myanmar's e-commerce market size was roughly 6 million U.S. dollars in 2018, and it is expected to grow significantly within the next five years (E-commerce in Myanmar: A Rising Tide, 2018).

For any e-commerce startup business, efficient logistics coordination is essential for success. Customers expect fast delivery, affordable shipping costs, and reliable tracking services (Syverson, 2021). Myanmar currently has nine logistics delivery service companies, operating mainly in prominent cities such as Yangon, Mandalay, Naypyitaw, and Mawlamyine (Gupta, 2019). The country's express logistics market is expected to grow by 30% between 2018 and 2023.

According to Mcknight (2020), 85% of all internet traffic is on Facebook, and most e-commerce transactions in Myanmar are conducted on social media platforms. This is because social media platforms make communication and interaction between parties easier and more reliable. As a result, many online shops and customers choose to buy and sell on Facebook and use bus transportation for cross-border delivery (Phisitthanadun, 2020). The e-commerce industry has disrupted global supply chains and transformed industrial transportation networks as customers increasingly demand same-day delivery of goods to their doorsteps (Sergant, 2020). As noted by Allen et al. (2017), e-commerce relies heavily on the trucking industry, with long-haul transport, regional and urban transfers, and "the last mile" completed with vans and app-based delivery services. Better transportation infrastructure is crucial in reducing shipping costs and delivering goods faster. Myanmar needs to improve and modernize its transportation infrastructure by constructing more highways, railways, and roads in both urban and rural areas (Schmidt, 2020).

1.2 Research Problem

This research paper focuses on improving the logistics service of e-commerce in Myanmar, which is a crucial topic. Myanmar's strategic geographical location in Southeast Asia, acting as a gateway between India and the ASEAN Countries, has led to steady increases in trade volumes with neighboring countries since the opening of its economy in 2011 (Florento, H. & Corpuz, M., 2014). However, the Covid-19 pandemic and the military coup in 2021 have resulted in a meager 1% growth in the economy in 2022, which has created an uncertain future for the supply chain and logistics sector in Myanmar (Whelan, 2022). Additionally, the shortage of fuel supply in the country has impacted the supply chain sector, resulting in high shipping costs (The Irrawaddy News, 2022). The lack of transportation infrastructure is the primary issue in the logistics service in Myanmar, and this weakness is a significant challenge and effect backbone to the logistics sector in Myanmar. The logistic service plays a vital role in the e-commerce business operation as customer behavior has changed, and consumers now want their goods delivered to their doorstep quickly, conveniently, and reliably, with low shipping fees (Lopienski, 2020). According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2018), e-commerce can catalyze private sector development, increase trading opportunities, and development gains. However, the poor logistics industry remains a barrier to the growth of cross-border e-commerce of physical goods in many developing countries, including Myanmar. Therefore, in order to support the growing trade demand, the freight transport and logistics services industry in Myanmar needs to be improved, as reported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2016), as most of the road networks are in bad condition, and around 20 million people in rural areas still lack access to roads in all seasons. Furthermore, the use of tractors or animal power in small cities or rural areas has resulted in high freight transport costs of USD 2 to 10 per ton kilometer, as highlighted by the Asia Development Bank (ADB, 2020).

1.3 Objective of the study:

The objective of this paper aims to overview factors that challenge e-commerce and internet marketing toward logistics service in Myanmar. To examine the major challenges that faced in Myanmar logistic service. This can lead to the reader understanding the main points that are important and major factors to be improved and to be the better logistics service in Myanmar.

1.4 Scope of the study:

The major factors that are caused in logistics service in Myanmar, which needed to find more information to understand the concept and improvement in that area and to examine the major challenges that faced in Myanmar logistic service. The scope of the study was carried out to find the study from secondary data existing research papers and documents related to research the problem.

1.5 Research significance

- To provide more information that can increases brand awareness and customers satisfaction.
- To identify the factor influence of e-commerce in Myanmar.
- To explore factors affecting consumer's purchase decision towards e-commerce.
- To review the current operation of the Myanmar logistics sector and to highlight the situation of the domestic transport infrastructure.

2. Literature Review

2.1 E-commerce

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) has a rich history dating back to the 1970s, when Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and teleshopping emerged as precursors to modern-day e-commerce stores (Bhalla, 2018). The development of e-commerce is intricately linked with the evolution of the internet, and it is defined as the buying and selling of goods and services using the internet (Bloomenthal, 2022). E-commerce has

expanded to encompass various forms of online transactions, including business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) interactions, and has become a crucial component of business strategy for global organizations seeking to expand their product range and customer base (McFerrin, 2021).

The benefits of e-commerce are manifold, including increased accessibility to a wider audience, lower operational costs, and more extensive customer analytics. In addition, the growth of e-commerce has been facilitated by government support, which has sought to protect intellectual property, ensure legal recognition of e-commerce activities, and guarantee consumer rights and privacy (Wells, 2017). The role of governments in supporting e-commerce growth is pivotal, and involves the provision of infrastructure, secure online payment options, educational programs, and reliable postal services (Kabango & Asa, 2015).

Despite the reopening of physical stores after the COVID-19 pandemic, the e-commerce market continues to expand as consumer expectations increase, compelling retailers to adapt to changing customer preferences and behaviors (Westley, 2021). This trend is observed in Myanmar, where e-commerce has experienced exponential growth due to increased internet access and social media communication, which have transformed online shopping into a popular activity (Ferrie, 2013). Myanmar's growing purchasing power and employment opportunities make it an attractive market for foreign investors, including Thai entrepreneurs (Rungwattanapaiboon, 2020).

In this context, e-commerce logistics plays a vital role in streamlining the flow of goods and information, reducing storage, scheduling, and transportation costs, and enhancing the competitiveness of businesses in the market (Lafrenz, 2017). E-commerce logistics operations systems provide managers and decision-makers with critical data and feedback to optimize the logistics process and improve the quality of logistics services through innovation in logistics management.

2.2 Online Marketing

Online marketing takes advantage of digital networks and electronic devices to promote a product or service, it literally means "marketing on an online platform" (Kovalenko, 2022). Nowadays, online marketing is important to every business industry in which it makes the customer aware of your products or services, engages the customer, and helps them make the buying decision through an internet platform. Furthermore, online marketing can create endless possibilities for engagement and revenue opportunities to your business (Leonard, 2022).

For the logistics company in Myanmar to do online marketing, all of the companies aim to bring people to the website and turn them into consumers. Some of them entail the use of paid advertisements, while others are about harnessing organic traffic. There are several effective online marketing strategies such as Search engine optimization (SEO), Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, social media marketing, web design and development, content and email marketing. Search engine optimization or SEO is a technique that entails improving a website's content to appear higher in Google search results (Alexander, 2022). The objective is for consumers to be able to see the company page in search results when they look for something similar to what the company has on their website and visit it. That entails focusing on relevant keywords in the content first and foremost. The website should be easy to navigate and use keywords that are focused on unique offerings. Furthermore, updating the website often with new content in order to maintain the company at the top of searches by using social media (Coleman, 2021). One of the factors which will help trigger SEO to become more effective is by producing top-notch content, the company may make Google and other search engines see the website as a trustworthy resource, engaging blog posts on a regular basis assists keep your website higher in search engine results, writing blog content helps site's keywords grow while maintaining its quality and consistency (Mousinho, 2022).

Nowadays, social media has become a very useful platform for business and made advancements in business through online platforms. Social media is a huge platform that plays a vital role in the modern world, therefore, it promotes interaction, understands the interests of the target market, tells stories, collects audience data, and increases website traffic (Kenan, 2022).

2.3 Logistic Services

In Myanmar, the logistics industry faces numerous challenges, including labor and shipping shortages, increasing freight costs, complex systems management, and meeting customer expectations (Whelan, 2015). In particular, shipping shortages are causing delays in the turnaround time for shipping containers due to a lack of skilled labor, leading to increased storage costs, reduced income, and longer lead times (Htun, 2021; Ng, Tyagi, & Ng, 2021). Myanmar's logistics environment is also hindered by inadequate port infrastructure, limited railways, poor-quality roads, and a lack of air traffic, which raise costs and lengthen lead times for companies involved in importing and exporting goods (Myanmar transportation, infrastructure weakest in Southeast Asia, 2016). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated supply chain disruptions, particularly given Myanmar's constrained air transportation networks (Gong, 2022).

To address these challenges, Myanmar's logistics service needs to focus on improving trade procedures and governance, such as benchmarking trading efficiency, analyzing trade bureaucracy's impact on lead times, costs, and access to global trade routes (OECD, 2020). Additionally, the market's growth prospects need to be evaluated, and the strain this growth will put on the nation's supply chains needs to be analyzed. Furthermore, the capacity to handle cold storage, hazardous goods storage, and competitive ground handling services are crucial components of airfreight hubs, which pose significant challenges for logistics in Myanmar (Banomyong, 2010). Despite these obstacles, Myanmar's freight and logistics market is expected to grow at a rate of over 7% in the forecast period, with significant foreign players entering the market (Myanmar Freight And Logistics Market - Growth, Trends, Covid-19 Impact, And Forecasts (2022 - 2027), 2021).

The country's strategic geographical location, connecting South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, and linking China and India, is an attractive proposition for investors (Myanmar transportation, infrastructure weakest in Southeast Asia, 2016). However, the

industry is highly fragmented, with small and medium-sized businesses dominating the logistics sector, except for Myanmar Rail and Inland Waterway Transport Company (IWT) (Myanmar Freight And Logistics Market - Growth, Trends, Covid-19 Impact, And Forecasts (2022 - 2027), 2021). In addition, despite the presence of notable market participants, such as Yusen Logistics, DB Schenker, DHL, CEA Project Logistics, and EFR Group, there are no dominant competitors in the industry. The expansion of trade activities is driving the transformation of Myanmar's logistics sector, which is in a phase of expansion.

2.4 Past Research

The trend of logistic research difficulties has persistently centered on e-commerce, online marketing, and logistics service in Myanmar. From its inception to the present day, numerous researchers have sought to centralize the methodology of logistic research. With the assistance of a plethora of individual case studies and literature evaluation, there has been a rise in the quantity of study pertaining to problems.

Countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, particularly ASEAN nations, provide Myanmar's logistic service with a wide variety of obstacles. Service Specifically, the study such as (Dutt, 2022) that studies the elements influencing the impediments and difficulties with logistic in Myanmar. According to the investigation's findings, the success of e-commerce logistics depends on good management and organization, the development of innovative forms of flow control presentation to attract more customers, and appropriate pricing for the services. Nonetheless, studies of behavior in Myanmar prior to the COVID-19 outbreak that are indistinguishable from studies completely focused on COVID-19 might be combined and integrated to investigate new gaps.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the logistics stage in Myanmar has transitioned to recovery efforts for an established economy. In addition to, an analysis of the importance factors of challenging change and the resilience of local communities, these research topics are covered in articles such as (Kyaw, 2020), (Zaw, 2019), (Yamaguchi, at el, 2021) which

investigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on logistics services in Myanmar (including Freight Transport, Freight Forwarding, Warehousing, and Value-Added Services and Others) and End User. Due to the lockdown measures and coup d'état, investors and clients were scarce. There was a decrease of income for households providing logistic services. In addition, the pandemic crisis interrupted employment stability and exacerbated communal misery. The rehabilitation phase of Yangon and Mandalay necessitates little government intervention, therefore, the community can achieve long-term sustainability by transitioning from a foreigners-focused sector to alternative sources of long-term income.

According to (World Bank, 2022), a speedy recovery requires targeted resistance efforts and resilient operations. In other words, the logistical operations in Myanmar must comprehend the new market, diversify products and services, secure government backing for confidence and accessibility, and incorporate technological developments. This research will enable the transformation of Myanmar's logistical system. The study contains details on both obstacles and recovery. During the study's recovery stages, logistic companies in Yangon and Mandalay faced difficulties serving the expectations of domestic consumers or tourists. The significant increase in domestic consumers made it difficult for firms to keep up and the nervousness of logistic firm owners increased, as did the frequency of offer disputes. Resulting in conclusions of ineffective sustainability despite the recovery being on the rise.

For Myanmar logistics market overview, according to (Mordor Intelligence, 2022), during the forecast period, the Burmese freight and logistics market is anticipated to register a CAGR of greater than 7%. In 2020, the market was estimated at \$4.32 billion USD. Increasing trade activity, improved connectivity, and the entrance of significant multinational firms are transforming the logistics industry in the country. However, there are little records of the logistical issues in Myanmar. As a result of the global disruption of supply chains, the manufacturing, logistics, and retail sectors have experienced a significant amount of disruption. For many years, the absence of adequate transport infrastructure has impeded the growth of the logistics industry in the country. However,

the country's continued development presents several prospects for logistics players. Important in luring investors is the country's strategic geographical location. The country's location in the Asia-Pacific region is significant, as it connects the two largest economies in the region, China and India. The country connects South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia like a continental bridge.

Conceptual Framework Model

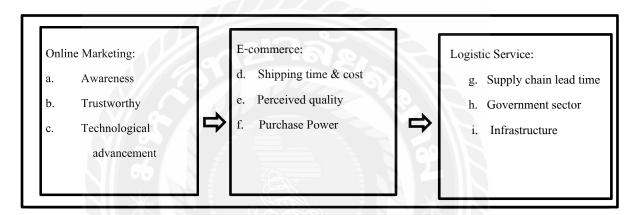


Figure 1: The challenges of E-commerce and online marketing towards in Myanmar

Elements of Figure 1 are as follows: Online marketing: (Leonard, 2022), (Alexander, 2022), (Mousinho, 2022) E-commerce: (Ferrie, 2013), (Westley, 2021), (Lafrenz, 2017). Logistics Service: (Htun, 2021), (OECD, 2020), (Myanmar transportation, infrastructure weakest in Southeast Asia, 2016)

3. Methodology

The researcher uses secondary data in Google Scholar, EBSCO, and other websites. From August to December 2022, for collecting data. This research had shown the factors that affect and improvement of online marketing and e-commerce for the logistics service in Myanmar to be more sustainable.

4. Finding and Conclusion

The consolidation of existing research findings to support the proposed conceptual framework implies that Myanmar e-commerce are dependent on online marketing, and logistics service-related factors — the difficulties of this study and the COVID-19 effect. In addition, there is no direct correlation between the logistical difficulties in Myanmar and the COVID-19 impact or vice versa. Multiple researchers have studied the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses, and the majority of these reports a drop in survival and high rates of business failure.

The likelihood of complete recovery from the effects of COVID-19 is minimal. If all local community opportunities were to be stopped indefinitely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental sustainability would decline as a result of less management. The Myanmar logistics will continue to face a challenging economic climate, and the hurdles in e-commerce and online marketing are increasing rapidly. Even if there is a desire to transition to domestic service, there is evidence that attracting new customers or investors will be difficult. The results of the systematic literature review indicate that COVID-19 has caused significant logistical disruptions in Myanmar. The enterprises have attracted a greater number of investors and domestic clients; nevertheless, because of the recent COVID-19 outbreak, many businesses are facing unprecedented obstacles. In order to comply with COVID-19, it will be necessary to modify the specific methods of addressing logistical issues in Myanmar. The recovery stages have only begun as a result of looser travel restrictions and vaccine certification. Recovery is attainable if recovery plans are initiated as soon as possible.

The process of research became difficult to find income-based achievement of Myanmar logistic; however, through the analysis of the literature review the broader research in each separate key word can generalize the outcome of some companies. There are some Myanmar logistic companies that have struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic. Investigating the impact and highlighting success and strategies will allow business to stand a chance. Socioeconomic gain will improve after the hold of COVID-19, and overall livelihood of the communities will again increase – if recovery is implemented

properly. It is comprehensible that the impact of COVID-19 on Myanmar logistics was immediate and detrimental. Myanmar logistic operations are important because they provide opportunities for the community to create significant jobs and have a huge effect on the GDP countries. The local community acquires more wealth when money is spent in Myanmar logistics.

Recognizing the difficulty of e-commerce towards logistics service in Myanmar and the impact of COVID-19 through a literature review might be arduous. The background of Myanmar logistics requires a limited level of care. There are only a few literature reviews highlighting the problems in Myanmar logistical studies. Additionally, COVID-19 is a relatively modern virus. There are few investments in the stages of influence that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Myanmar's logistical operations. The separation of each scope is definite.

5. Recommendation

Providers must be incorporated into the logistics system in order to develop the logistics sector of the country. For the sustainable growth of Myanmar's logistics industry, the following factors should be considered: reducing and rationalizing the transportation costs, logistics expenses, and lead time for cargo transit (Finn, 2020). Moreover, costs should be minimized and rationalized for all forms of international trade and cross-border activities, also increasing competitiveness by utilizing cross-border and value-added economic services based on activities with added value by providing suitable modern feeder road networks and truck terminals throughout Myanmar to improve the hub and spoke freight transport functions. In addition to strengthen urban-rural cohesion by linking urban-industrial regions with rural regions through efficient freight transportation and rural road connections and support rural development in order to reduce poverty such as doing online marketing in order to raise the awareness, becoming more trustworthy and technology advancement. Ultimately, increasing wages and employment opportunities by establishing high-quality jobs in multiple areas including logistics.

Currently, the infrastructure development plans for each transport sector, including roads, trains, airports, ports, truck terminals, and cross-border facilities, are coordinated and produced by separate and autonomous ministries and organizations. Improving the connectivity between various means of transportation is essential to the plan to lower transportation costs and lead times, which is a crucial aspect of logistics development planning. Therefore, an effective supply chain lead time is also essential for the growth of the logistics sector of Myanmar.

In addition, collaboration between industry academia in learning and research and development should be strongly promoted in impediments to the development of the Myanmar's logistics sector. It is necessary to ensure the development of professional standards and logistics personnel in accordance with international quality standards and to plan the management of logistics personnel in accordance with the requirements of the logistics sector by emphasizing specialized vocational training and supporting cooperation with the private sector in operational level training (McKinnon, A., at el, 2017). Moreover, with a strong collaborative distinction have a higher percentage of operating success and a coherent recovery strategy, especially with greater government oversight and more stringent policies and procedures to continue commercial operations. After the ravages of the pandemic, the welfare of a community is a crucial aspect in attaining logistical success.

If transportation networks can be utilized efficiently, the nation's manufacturing sector will reap enormous benefits. Thus, transportation infrastructure can increase a nation's output while lowering the cost of commercial transportation. Modernizing ports and improving roads and railways, for instance, can cut the cost of shipping raw materials and facilitate the distribution of goods between markets and ports (Mathur, at el, 2020). Additionally, efficient transportation is essential to the growth of the country's logistics industry.

In conclusion, Myanmar is undertaking significant reforms in all areas, and the government, logistics specialists, and relevant authorities must work together to enhance the logistics industry. In this manner, the transport and logistics sectors adapt to international standards, and Myanmar's LPI ranking will rise over the next few years.

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