

# The impact of E-commerce in a distribution company

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to present the role of information and communication technology in the rapid emergence of e-commerce, including its development, role and operation to date, and future prospects. When we talk about technology and its impact on society, we can talk about many different areas where information technology plays the main role. Nowadays, technology has minimized distances and not all the actions are done physically. With the development of information and communication technology, different requirements and different processes are developed, both in the public sector and in the private sector.

The main purpose of the paper is the identification and analysis of the problems that are most often faced by organizations or enterprises and consumers in the use of electronic commerce, as well as the identification of factors that influence the use of this type of commerce by the business community in Albania. It is also explained the impact of e-commerce in increasing circulation and commercial activity in local businesses, with special emphasis in the case of one of the leading distributions and sales company, Marketing & Distribution. In this paper, the factors that affect electronic commerce have been analyzed and identified in the framework of the rapid development in the field of information and communication technology. The results of this paper will be able to serve companies in the design of development policies of their businesses, starting from a newly created business, small and medium businesses to large brands, which do not yet offer electronic commerce services.

**KEYWORDS:** INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, ELECTRONIC COMMERCE, DISTRIBUTION, BUSINESS.

## 1. Introduction

The internet has brought about a lot of changes in society, but one of the largest shifts of the twenty-first century has been in internet technology. There are a wide range of topics where information technology is crucial when discussing technology and its effects on society. Beginning with the basic text or email exchanges in work or daily life, we are constantly interacting with electronic forms and their utilization for completing duties and responsibilities in a variety of occupations that are located nearby or far away. These days, distances are reduced thanks to technology, and we can perform all of our tasks virtually [14], [10].

The primary goal of the research for this paper is to elucidate the theoretical concepts of electronic commerce and its various forms that are employed by Albania's business community, particularly in the Marketing & Distribution sector. It also aims to identify and analyze the most common issues that arise when consumers and organizations use electronic commerce, as well as to pinpoint the variables that affect this type of commerce's adoption in Albania. The paper aims to illustrate the areas in which internet commerce has superseded physical markets, individuals, and the requirement for resources or human resources, and the areas in which technology is gravely endangering jobs related to these sectors.

The paper aims to provide the following:

- An explanation of electronic commerce ideas;
- An understanding of the many types and forms of electronic commerce;
- An analysis of how electronic commerce operated during the pandemic of COVID-19;
- An examination of how e-commerce affected sales growth, using the company as a case study.

The research questions of this paper are:

1. What were the contributing elements to enterprises using e-commerce more frequently?
2. What are the practices of companies that see a higher percentage of their product sales through online sales?
3. To what extent does our society employ electronic commerce to advance corporate development?
4. How secure is the buying and selling of products via online shopping?

## 2. Methodology and research methods

The selected research methodology is grounded in quantitative techniques, such as:

- Primary information gathered via a survey,

- Secondary data acquired from scholarly and scientific publications.

The literature review approach is used to acquire information from a variety of sources, including books and scientific publications, in order to analyze and compile secondary data. Primary data, which will be gathered through empirical study with the company Marketing & Distribution current clients, will be complemented by secondary data, which is essential in identifying the problem for empirical research.

Quantitative methods are employed in the collection of primary data. This approach works well for researching problems in quantitative terms (like in our example, where we want to know how much e-commerce is used and how it affects society on a numerical level). This method makes it possible to include a sizable sample size, which improves the results' representation of the phenomena or subject of the investigation.

The study population is composed of Albanian nationals, mainly from Tirana, who have completed at least one online transaction. The sample comprises 100 clients of Marketing & Distribution, who are spread across many major cities in the nation. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling method, with the requirement that participants must have made at least one online purchase in the past two years. The surveys were created using the Google Forms platform and distributed to participants via email and social media contact.

The challenges encountered during this paper were as follows:

1. The main challenges during the realization of this research were the lack of resources, time constraints, and, at times, maintaining objectivity in the selection of methods and the interpretation of data.
2. Another challenge that can arise in research is managing the relationship with the research subjects and ensuring ethical conduct throughout the process.
3. An additional important aspect is the dedication and patience required to achieve accurate and reliable results.

## 3. Literature review

In today's world, information technology has evolved at a very rapid pace, advancing every day. As a result of the widespread use of computers for buying and selling various products and services by consumers and merchants on a global scale, it is important to emphasize that the computer can be considered one of the most significant inventions for humanity. The unique position of the computer, along with major technological advancements, has had

and will continue to have an exceptionally positive impact, particularly in the development of e-commerce [8], [9].

The Internet has revolutionized how people buy, sell, work, and organize business activities in more ways and at a faster rate than any other technology in business history. The spread of e-commerce worldwide has advanced significantly and is widely used in many countries. Its development is growing at an unstoppable pace, influencing the very existence of businesses as competition becomes increasingly relentless. However, e-commerce in Western Europe is still a topic of discussion regarding how to sell, how much to profit, and which platform to use.

A more comprehensive definition of e-commerce is: "The use of electronic communications and digital information processing technology in business transactions to create, transform, and redefine relationships for value creation between organizations, and between organizations and individuals." The main types of e-commerce are: business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C), business-to-government (B2G), consumer-to-consumer (C2C), and mobile commerce (m-commerce). E-commerce refers to the process of buying, selling, transferring, or exchanging products, services, and/or information via computer networks, including the internet. E-commerce is part of the internet economy, involving any form of business transaction executed electronically between companies, individuals, or organizations [20], [17].

E-commerce provides significant support to businesses in terms of development by helping to enhance service quality, which is a key focus for many businesses. It also reduces costs related to reaching customers, increases sales levels, and improves various primary elements that connect businesses and consumers, with e-commerce being at the core. The acceptance rate of e-commerce is also influenced by the sector in which the business operates. Its adoption is higher among businesses in industries such as manufacturing, transportation, trade, services, and others [3], [12], [19].

There are two important indicators that must be considered when developing e-commerce:

1. Consumer protection
2. Data privacy

Digital payment systems are the backbone of e-commerce transactions, allowing for secure and efficient transfer of funds between buyers and sellers through various online channels

#### 4. Case study (M&D)

For nearly three decades, Marketing & Distribution (M&D) has been a leading logistics and distribution company in Albania, representing both national and international brands with high-quality products. As a trusted distributor for key global partners, M&D offers top-tier services in logistics, distribution, product handling, and storage. The company's skilled staff is its primary asset, and it is highly regarded by its clients for being a reliable and constructive partner. M&D provides integrated logistics services, including customs procedures, public and bonded warehousing, packaging, labeling, and nationwide distribution.

M&D was among the first distribution companies in Albania to implement e-commerce. Many of its processes, including product catalogs, financial transactions, and purchasing services, are conducted online through the company's websites, such as [markdist.com](http://markdist.com) and [b2bkancelari.com](http://b2bkancelari.com). Customers can order products online and pay using credit/debit cards, PayPal, bank transfers, mobile payments, or cash on delivery. Recently, mobile payment options have also been introduced.

With the growing use of the internet, the percentage of M&D's products distributed through e-commerce is rapidly increasing.

Products are posted on the company's official websites, as well as on its Instagram and Facebook pages. However, most e-commerce transactions are still tied to the purchase and delivery of physical products [5].

B2B Office is one of the most important departments of the M&D company, offering a wide range of office supplies and featuring a highly developed e-commerce system.

You can start your online shopping experience by visiting <https://b2bkancelari.com/account/login> on your electronic device.

1. To make a purchase, you first need to create a Personal Account. The account creation process is simple—just provide your email address, and you'll be able to set up your account easily.

Fig. 1. B2B Office Website

2. Select the items you wish to purchase by clicking "Add to Cart."
3. In the Cart, you can increase the quantity by selecting different items.
4. If, after selecting, you wish to remove one or more items from the purchase, you can delete them by selecting "View Your Cart" and then clicking "Remove" next to the selected product.
5. You can return to the homepage and continue adding more items to your cart. Click on the Cart icon on the right side of the page, and a quick preview window will appear with information on the quantity and price of the item.
6. Proceed to the shipping section, where you will enter the recipient's address and choose the shipping method.
7. Choose a payment method: Cash or Bank Card (Visa or MasterCard).
8. If you choose Cash, you will pay upon receiving the order.
9. If you choose the Bank Card, you will need to enter your card details in the required fields.
10. Once the payment is completed, you will receive a confirmation email with an invoice, and your order will be processed for stock verification.

At the moment, payments can only be made in the LEK currency. Once our network expands to other regions, you will have the option to pay in local currencies. When paying by bank card, funds are typically withdrawn when your order is ready for shipping, although your bank or card issuer may reserve the amount immediately.

Deliveries are made from **Monday to Saturday**, with a 24-hour delivery window for Tirana and Durrës, and up to 72 hours for other cities.

1. For orders over **10,000 LEK**, delivery is free.
2. For orders under **10,000 LEK**, the delivery cost is **250 LEK** for Tirana and Durrës, and **350 LEK** for other cities.

If you've made a payment and want to change the delivery address, you can either contact customer service or inform the driver when they call to notify you of the delivery.

## 5. Analysis of results

### 5.1 Descriptive analysis of results

The analysis of results is the core component of the research, and therefore, will be given special attention. The data obtained from the survey, which was administered using the Google Forms survey management software, will reflect the demands and needs of e-commerce users or online shoppers.

The survey was sent via email and WhatsApp to 100 loyal clients of the company, who have made at least two online purchases through the company's official website since 2020.

**Table 1.** General data from the survey

Category	Response	Percentage
Gender		
	Male	28.1%
	Female	71.9%
Age		
	15-25 years	56.3%
	26-35 years	37.5%
	36-45 years	6.2%
Residence		
	Tirana	53.1%
	Other cities	46.9%
Legal status		
	LLC	51.9%
	Individual	28%
	Clients without NIPT	12.6%
	Institutions	7.4%
Preferred shop method		
	Physical	62%
	Online	38%

The research questions outlined in the Introduction of this paper are:

1. What were the contributing elements to enterprises using e-commerce more frequently?

The first research question is confirmed by the responses provided to question 6, regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the growth of online commerce.

According to the data presented in the table, approximately **93.8%** of respondents believe that the COVID-19 situation was the driving factor behind the increase in online commerce.

2. What are the practices of companies that see a higher percentage of their product sales through online sales?

The second research question is confirmed by the responses to question 9, which relates to the most sold products at Marketing & Distribution.

According to the data presented in the table, approximately **50.5%** of respondents indicated that personal hygiene products are the most commonly sold items through online commerce.

3. To what extent does our society employ electronic commerce to advance corporate development?

The third research question is confirmed by the responses to question 8, which asked how frequently respondents purchased online within a month after the outbreak of COVID-19.

The data shows a significant increase in respondents who purchased online at least once a month, once a week, or 2-3 times a week from Marketing & Distribution. This suggests that the company transitioned to online sales effectively during and after the lockdown period. This shift, imposed by the pandemic, has been utilized very positively by Marketing & Distribution to boost its economic development, increase revenue, and improve product sales.

4. How secure is the buying and selling of products via online shopping?

The fourth research question is confirmed by the responses to question 11, regarding the safety of online purchases.

According to the data presented in the table, approximately **59.4%**, who have purchased online, believe that this electronic form of trading is safe.

**Table 2.** Specific data from the survey

Question	Response	Percentage
6. Do you believe that the COVID-19 situation spurred the growth of online commerce?		
	Yes	93.8%
	No	6.2%
7. How often did you purchase online within a month before the outbreak of COVID-19?		
	Once a month	50.6%
	Once a week	15.6%
	2-3 Times a week	15%
	Never	18.8%
8. How often did you purchase online within a month after the outbreak of COVID-19?		

	Once a month	46.4%
	Once a week	18.6%
	2-3 Times a week	16.2%
	Never	18.8%
9. Which category of products do you purchase most often online from Marketing & Distribution?		
	Personal hygiene products	50.5%
	Alcoholic beverages	25.8%
	Office supplies	15.5%
	Lavazza coffee	8.2%
10. Factors that influence the decision to purchase products?		
	Quality	42.5%
	Price	27.5%
	Delivery time	19.7%
	Company reputation	10.3%
11. Are online purchases safe?		
	Yes	59.4%
	No	25%
	No opinion	15.6%
12. How satisfied are you with the products sold online by Marketing & Distribution?		
	Very satisfied	38.4%
	Moderately satisfied	35.3%
	Slightly satisfied	21%
	Not satisfied at all	5.3%

### 5.2 Reliability analysis of data

Reliability analysis is one of the key elements in data collection to determine whether the measurement tool used in the research is

reliable. The **Reliability Statistics** table summarizes the results of the reliability analysis. The reliability coefficient, **Cronbach's alpha**, that we used to measure whether e-commerce is an important factor influencing economic development is **0.818** or **81.8%**.

Cronbach's alpha is a widely-used statistic that measures the internal consistency of a set of scale or test items. It is used to estimate the reliability of a psychometric test and is particularly important when analyzing survey data [15], [7], [6]. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of the reliability of a test or scale. According to Cronbach's alpha reliability scale, if  $0.80 < \alpha < 1.00$ , the measurement tool is considered to have a high level of reliability. In our case, the reliability coefficient is **highly reliable**, as  $0.80 < 0.818 < 1.00$ .

### 6. Conclusions

In this paper following the pandemic, businesses that transitioned to this form of commerce, or those that added it alongside their physical operations, have experienced increased turnover and sales. These businesses are now several steps ahead of those that did not adapt to the trends and imposed circumstances. This is believed to be due to technological advancements, the rapid growth of the internet, the integration of marketing and sales strategies by companies, and the shift in generations who have direct access to electronic markets or the digital economy. Orders are now placed through smartphones, laptops, or personal computers, saving time and eliminating spatial limitations. The pandemic played a significant role in the economic growth of Marketing & Distribution, positively influencing product sales through online platforms, particularly via the company's official website and the B2B Office department's page. Ultimately, companies can build ongoing relationships with customers, enabling them to continuously provide their latest offers.

The concluding analysis of this research reveals that the majority of respondents are relatively satisfied with the quality of online products offered by local companies, as well as with the customer service and care provided. What these companies need to do is to continue working harder, first to maintain, and then to increase customer satisfaction, while improving their offerings in line with global developments and innovations in this sector.

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