REVIEW OF CRIME, PEACE AND SOCIETY
ISSN (O): 3079-6105, ISSN (P): 3079-6091
Vol. 3, No. 9, 2026, 269-285

Why Merchants Prefer Shopify Over Amazon: A Comparative Analysis of E- commerce Platforms

Kiran Wazir[1], Dr. Shah Hassan[2]

Abstract

This research gathers and interprets information from the websites and interfaces of Shopify and Amazon to understand how they operate e-commerce and the implications. The main data were extracted directly from the Shopify and Amazon websites on December 8 at 6:30 AM. Secondary information for this analysis was gathered from books, websites, research reports, news items, and a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire used a series of step-by-step questions to investigate both merchants' platform preferences and the factors influencing their platform decisions. The questionnaire aimed to gather merchants' experiences and opinions on platform usability, customization features, marketing capabilities, pricing models, and business sustainability. The questions are clearly aligned with the hypotheses presented in Chapter 1, which focus on why merchants choose Shopify over Amazon. They also examine how factors such as ease of use, customization options, marketing options, and branding independence influence platform choice.

Article History
Received 12 October 2026
Accepted 04 November 2026
Published 10 November 2026
Corresponding Author*
OPEN ACCESS

Keywords
Marchants, E- commerce Amazon, Shopify, customers

Introduction

In 2004, the Canadian business duo of Tobias Lutke, Daniel Weinand and Scott Lake launched Shopify. Amazon is the most dominant online retailer in the United States and Shopify is the second most dominant in the world (Aydinok, 2021). Ottawa-based Shopify is a leading e-commerce platform that serves clients worldwide. Its primary advantage is that it is a ready-to-use platform that businesses of any size can use to establish, expand, promote, and manage their retail systems via subscription. The business was founded in 2006 when Tobias Lütke tried to start an online store selling snowboarding gear. They saw that no platform genuinely enabled e-commerce businesses, so they decided to build their own platform, which became Shopify. Today, its clients include Pepsi, Staples, Nestlé and Red Bull, and it serves more than a million businesses across 175 countries. Shopify is the most used e-commerce tool in the US and is also gaining popularity worldwide (Sousa, M., & Pais, P., 2021).

[1] Lecturer, School of Business Administration and Social Sciences, Iqra National University, Peshawar, Pakistan.
[2] Assistant Professor,Iqra National University Peshawar.

Shopify lets sellers ship products through either the Shopify Fulfilment Network (SFN) or their own fulfilment. As with Amazon, external logistics is mostly managed by third parties. SFN, however, was added in 2019. Shopify doesn't publish its shipping strategy, but generally, customers place an order, and the order is then prepared and sent out. Shopify searches for the most cost-effective shipping method to customers after sellers ship products to a fulfilment centre (Murgia, 2021).

Shopify provides businesses with the tools they need to create and manage their own eCommerce stores. Shopify offers merchants a platform to process online payments for a fee, but does not deal with the sale of goods. The business takes pride in providing a safe, useful platform that helps build consumer trust and ensures online transactions are completed. By using Shopify, businesses can build their reputation and make consumers more comfortable shopping with them. Shopify's unique selling points are its easy-to-use system across numerous channels and its extensive resource network, which is not easily replicated by other players. Shopify understands the importance of trust in ecommerce, which is why it has developed a consumer trust strategy for online retailers. This includes product guarantees, easy return policies, and SSL security certification. These benefits help customers feel secure and assure them that online purchases are safe. When we consider that stores using the Shopify platform made $10.7 billion in the first half of 2017 (Shopify, 2017), it becomes clear that this is crucial.

Literature Review

Amiri & Vida (2023) analyse Amazon's marketing environment by considering its recent performance and position in the e-commerce sector. This study will suggest marketing strategies to overcome the challenges Amazon faces in a competitive market, particularly amid the pandemic. The study will focus on the marketing strategies needed for success in a rapidly changing market and provide valuable insights for Amazon and other companies looking to change. The research will be qualitative and will help businesses and academia devise strategies to help merchants succeed in the e-commerce world. Especially, the findings can help small business owners to optimize their business and boost sales and market share. This study will also compare Shopify's marketing tools and methods with Amazon's and assist managers in making informed decisions about how to position their marketing strategies to meet customer needs, assess market trends, and implement good business practices.

The study by Benzidane, Terchani, & Zair (2024) examines the impact of digital marketing on e-commerce development, particularly on the Amazon platform. As one of the world's top e-commerce platforms, Amazon has used digital marketing methods to enhance online transactions and grow its business. This study examines the digital marketing strategies and their impact on Amazon's e-commerce growth. The main focus areas are search engine optimisation (SEO), pay-per-click (paid) ads and personalisation. The study explores the reasons behind Amazon's e-commerce success. The study provides valuable insights and recommendations that can be applied to other e-commerce companies. The results stress the need to optimise product listings for search engines, use paid advertising effectively, and implement personalisation and remarketing tactics. To conclude, this study gives one more

insight into the efficiency of digital marketing and gives a practical approach to businesses that want to be successful in the online commerce sphere.

Sairanen's (2024) article explores the rapid expansion of e-commerce and the role of Shopify in enabling businesses to thrive. The thesis creates a detailed framework for implementing micro SaaS applications to the Shopify App Store and getting early adopters with a case study approach. The research focuses on four successful micro-SaaS businesses built on Shopify: Privy, Stocky, Gorgias, and OneReview. The companies were selected based on their growth, users, and innovation. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect information, including interviews, app performance analysis, and user feedback reviews. Thematic analysis was employed to extract key strategies for user acquisition and expansion from the study. The findings suggest targeting, freemiums and trials, app store optimization (ASO) and strategic partnerships are all essential to building an early user base and long-term success. Additionally, factors identified as drivers of success included affiliate marketing, Shopify internal integrations, and user product development.

Dushnitsky & Stroube (2021) describe how low-code tools have come along, and how they allow software-based solutions to be created with little or no coding. For instance, Shopify is an excellent choice for those without a technical background, as it helps them create successful online stores. This research explores the impact of low-code platforms such as Shopify on firms' growth paths and entrepreneurial performance. The research focuses on the 2010s e-commerce segment and examines some 400 venture capital-backed companies. They're analyzed in terms of their monetary profile, their human profile, and their profile with their software tools. The results suggest that Shopify-based start-ups invest less into human and financial resources than other e-commerce firms. However, these startups show little difference in exit success compared to their peers. In addition, Shopify startups produce the same amount of value per employee and deliver strong cash-on-cash returns to investors, at the same level as more capital-intensive startups.

The article argues that the model has been used in restricted fashion for a number of reasons, but has an enormous potential for expanding its use in the day-to-day classroom. The paper reviews the potential for refining the model, such as mapping out competitive forces different across markets and industries. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of these forces, prioritizing them, and doing macro-level analysis of the factors behind each force, as well as exploring critical interdependencies between forces and within each force.

Kaplas, T. K. In today's digital era, where e-commerce continues to grow rapidly and is becoming a convenient and easily accessible way for buying products online, the key to a business's success, particularly in business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce, is consumer trust. (2017) underscores the importance of consumer trust in the success of business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce. Even with this rise, consumers are not confident in making online purchases because of their fear of technology and concerns about platform reliability. In this study great attention is given to the need for a multi-dimensional approach to the study of consumer trust, which requires inputs from marketing, sociology and psychology. The results validate the hypothesis that Shopify offers better opportunities for building consumer

trust and drives greater participation in transactions, including those involving the disclosure of personal information. The results support that merchants favour platforms that foster consumer trust, such as Shopify, and that this trust also lowers perceived risk for consumers to share information and transact.

Imaeka, I. Charles, & Imoh Uford (2023). This study examines the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on Amazon.com's business and financial performance from 2019-2021 to identify the company's key success factors. The study also analyzed Walmart Inc.'s accounting reports for comparative analysis. The researchers employed SWOT and PEST models to identify the factors contributing to Amazon's success, and then conducted ratio analysis on Amazon's audited financial statements. The pandemic's impact on businesses was shown to be unfavourable; however, Amazon was more profitable, efficient, liquid and solvent than Walmart. Amazon's customer-driven business model, innovation, and market dominance gave it a leg up for future success, but the company must address employee issues and increased competition.

Adopting affiliate marketing as a key online retail strategy can boost sales and transaction volume without pre-marketing (Rahman et al., 2025). Today, many companies use affiliates to increase visibility and attract more customers (Marquerette & Hamidah, 2023). It has gained significant popularity because its financial results have been increasing. The amount of spending on travel in the United States between 2015 and 2022 increased steadily, showing its impact on the growth of e-commerce (Radić 2025). Commission structures, tracking technology, and affiliate reputation play a crucial role in the success of affiliate networks used by well-known online retailers, such as Shopify, Amazon, and Walmart, in assisting individuals with the shopping process (Kwan, 2023).

Despite this, challenges still arise in affiliate marketing, including fraud detection and conversions that are not attributed to the right affiliate. Dealers' reputation can suffer and commission can be lost if they use misleading links in their marketing efforts (Patrick & Hee, 2019). This can kill organic reach and reduce profits from social media ads and affiliate marketing, as Olbrich et al. (2019) suggest. The use of AI for cognitive affiliate systems is fascinating, as it can enhance tracking and sales allocation for both affiliates and retailers (Hausberg et al., 2019). Moreover, social commerce is reshaping the affiliate marketing landscape by enabling customers to engage with influencers, as TikTok Shop does (Vrontis et al., 2021).

Even though it can be very beneficial, machine learning must address ethical concerns, the need for transparent algorithms, and reliable data. In healthcare machine learning, much effort goes into data cleaning and anonymization, which can take up to 40% of the work because datasets are often detailed. One challenge with deep learning models and some other machine learning techniques is that they are difficult to understand, especially in healthcare (Islam et al., 2024). Machine learning is more effective when it uses secure, accurate data provided by blockchain technology. Situational awareness and immediate decisions can be better with blockchain, IoT and AI together in business intelligence. Blockchains are known for being uncontrollable systems, and their history of trust and transparent operations, such as supply chain management and banking, are associated with it (Rani et al., 2024).

The IT sector is a change maker, taking a sustainable approach to managing activities for both the planet and the economy. Sustainable data centres and efficient equipment have proven to be a boon to businesses and their profitability, enabling them to achieve energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Despite this, significant challenges remain, such as high setup costs and cultural issues (Aziz et al., 2023). After all, it is smart to make IT sustainable over the long term as the positive outcomes, such as reduced carbon emissions and happier customers, make this option worthwhile over time as compared to the costs of being sustainable (Aziz et al., 2023).

There is much to gain from blockchain, machine learning, and eco-friendly IT in industry today. These technologies address certain operational challenges but also create new problems that require new areas and innovative thinking to address (Alasa, 2020).

Major changes in healthcare, business intelligence and the environment have been driven by machine learning (ML), blockchain and a focus on sustainable IT. Controlling the integrity of data, privacy, and scalability to various technologies is beneficial for businesses in the commerce and healthcare sectors. Machine learning is now used to tailor approaches and make predictions in healthcare, using wearable technology, genetic data, and electronic health records. Supervised learning is preferred in healthcare, achieving up to 85% accuracy in tasks such as hospital operations and disease diagnosis. As in business analytics, machine learning algorithms have evolved from simple statistics to random forests and neural networks, improving operational efficiency and prediction accuracy (Rahaman et al., 2024; Islam et al., 2024). Machine learning models are yet to be made understandable, barriers to the use of green IT reduced, and a strong synergy between blockchain and AI created; this should be the subject of future research. Major progress will be needed to achieve the best results.

Over the years, Amazon has expanded its service offerings and innovated to become a pioneer in several industries. Amazon Prime is a subscription service that provides customers with free shipping, exclusive content, and more, and it has established Amazon's reputation as a leader in customer service and e-commerce. Amazon Web Services (AWS), the company's cloud computing division, is another significant revenue stream that supports businesses worldwide in setting up and running their online presence.

Amazon today is known for its diversity, innovative technology, customer service and great product offerings to more than 200 countries and recognized as a world leader in customer service. Amazon has also expanded beyond e-commerce into entertainment (Amazon Studios), AI (Amazon Alexa), and logistics, among other areas, making it one of the most diversified and powerful companies in the global market. Amazon is known for its innovative approach, which has left its mark on various industries and continues to shape the future of shopping, work, and life.

This research will explore why and how merchants prefer Shopify over Amazon, using Porter's Five Forces analysis to examine online business marketing opportunities. This will be

done with case studies that will answer the questions: Why? and How? The analysis will also make reference to the social impact of these platforms on e-commerce.

1. **Hypothesis 1**: Merchants prefer Shopify over Amazon for their online stores due to greater control, enhanced branding opportunities, and increased customization options.

2. **Hypothesis 2**: The marketing options available on Shopify, particularly tools for customer engagement and brand-building, significantly influence merchants' preference for Shopify over Amazon.

Methodology

This study is based on a quantitative methodology, emphasizing and focusing on numerical

data to investigate and determine merchants' platform preferences between Shopify and Amazon. This research aims to identify why Shopify is preferred over Amazon by conducting an email questionnaire, with specific emphasis on user acquisition tactics, branding freedom, and the customization available to merchants. Moreover, this study will also use in-depth interviews, a case study examination, and thematic analysis of secondary data. By studying these qualitative findings, the research helps provide deeper insight into how e-commerce sites affect business decision-making and expansion (Laudon & Traver, 2021).

Research Framework

Michael Porter's Five Forces Framework is a framework that has been utilised to analyse the competitive forces in an industry, helping organisations understand what drives the competitive nature of their industry. The framework identifies five forces that determine industry competition and profitability Hill & Jones, (2012). Below is a description of the framework:

The Five Forces: Threat of New Entrants: This force considers whether new companies can easily enter an industry. The threat of new competition is driven by barriers to entry such as capital requirements, economies of scale, brand loyalty and access to distribution channels. The more difficult the barriers are, the less the threat will be.

2. Bargaining Power of Suppliers: This power takes into account how much power suppliers have in determining the price and availability of their inputs. Few suppliers or an exclusive product provides them with more power. Industries that have powerful buying powers from suppliers could see an increase in costs.

3. Bargaining Power of Buyers: the influence of the customers over the price and quality of the product/service. The more options a consumer has, the more leverage they will have when negotiating.The more choices a customer has, the more pressure they'll put on businesses to lower prices or improve product quality. Where customer loyalty is low, buyer power is strong.

4. Threat of Substitute Products or Services: This force determines the possibility of customers looking for an alternative means of satisfying their needs. The more substitutes available, the more competitive the industry. Substitutes can lead to price reductions and lower business profitability.

5. Industry Rivalry: This force takes into account how competitive the market is in the industry right now for the businesses. Competition is fierce when many companies compete, industry growth is slow, or products or services are not differentiated. The more competitive the situation becomes, the more often price wars, innovation competition and increased marketing efforts begin, thus decreasing profitability. Porter (1980) argues that once these factors are understood, companies can develop strategies that enhance their competitive advantage and profitability.

Data Collection

The research information will be gathered and interpreted from the websites or interfaces of Shopify and Amazon, allowing for an understanding of how they run ecommerce and the implications. The main data was collected directly from the Shopify and Amazon websites on 8th December at 6:30 AM. The secondary information used in this analysis was gathered from books, websites, research reports, news items as well as a questionnaire survey.

A series of questions was developed to explore merchants' platform preferences and the drivers behind their platform decisions. The goal of the questionnaire was to collect merchants' experiences and opinions on platform usability, customization, marketing, pricing, business sustainability, etc.

The questions are clearly linked with the hypotheses presented in Chapter 1, i.e. to understand why merchants opt for Shopify over Amazon. They also explore the impact of user-friendliness, customization, marketing options, and branding independence on platform selection.

Data Analysis

The data will be processed in the framework described above. Analysis will be done in two steps. In step one, the researcher will analyse the attributes and determinants that affect store owners' decision to move to Shopify or Amazon. In step two, the researcher will conduct a

comparative analysis of the marketing options available to business entrepreneurs on each site using Michael Porter's approach.

Data Analysis Findings & Discussion

Of the 180 retailers targeted, 98 responded to the survey. When it came to their preferred primary platform, they were generally more likely to choose Shopify than Amazon: 58 retailers answered Shopify, 32 retailers answered Amazon, and 8 retailers answered something else. The sentiments of online retailers about these ecommerce solutions are evident in the comments. It's evident from the data in the table that the merchants who responded to the survey preferred Shopify over other platforms.

Platform preference among merchants

Platform Chosen	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage (%)**
Shopify	58	71.6%
Amazon	32	36.5%
Other	8	9.9%
Total	**98**	**100%**

Source: Table made by the author of the paper

Next, respondents were asked which aspect of the platform most influences their decision. The results showed that ease of use, customization options, and marketing tools were the main influences

Platform influence

Reason for Choosing Platform	**Number of Respondents**	**Platform**
Ease of Use	20	Shopify
Customization Options	15	Shopify
Marketing Tools	15	Shopify
Pricing & Fees	13	Amazon
Other	8	Other

Source: Table made by the author of the paper

Other questions asked in the survey and answers received in it were as follows:

1. ***Do you believe that Shopify provides better control over your branding than Amazon?***

    a. Yes: 65 respondents (80.2%)

b. No: 32 respondents (38.16%)

2. ***How would you rate your satisfaction with Shopify's features and tools compared to Amazon?***

    a. Extremely Satisfied: 35 respondents (43.2%)

    b. Satisfied: 32 respondents (32.9%)

    c. Neutral: 19 respondents (16.8%)

    d. Unsatisfied: 9 respondents (11.1%)

3. ***Would you recommend Shopify to other business owners?***

    a. Yes: 66 respondents (81.5%)

    b. No: 31 respondents (38.5%)

4. ***How important is having full control over your store's design and branding?***

    a. Extremely Important: 40 respondents (49.4%)

    b. Important: 35 respondents (33.9%)

    c. Neutral: 15 respondents (13.3%)

    d. Not Important: 6 respondents (7.4%)

5. ***Do you think Shopify's marketing and SEO tools provide a better opportunity for long-term brand growth compared to Amazon's marketplace model?***

    a. Yes: 55 respondents (67.9%)

    b. No: 37 respondents (37.1%)

6. ***How valuable is Shopify's ability to integrate with multiple sales channels compared to Amazon's limited storefront model?***

    a. Extremely Valuable: 38 respondents (46.9%)

    b. Valuable: 28 respondents (34.6%)

    c. Neutral: 10 respondents (12.3%)

    d. Not Valuable: 5 respondents (6.2%)

7. ***Do you believe Shopify's direct-to-customer model is more beneficial than Amazon's commission-based system?***

    a. Yes: 58 respondents (71.6%)

    b. No: 40 respondents (35.4%)

8. ***Would you agree that Shopify's ability to build customer loyalty and repeat purchases makes it a better choice for long-term business success?***

    a. Strongly Agree: 40 respondents (49.4%)

    b. Agree: 20 respondents (24.7%)

    c. Neutral: 15 respondents (18.5%)

    d. Disagree: 6 respondents (7.4%)

Using Porter's Five Forces

Threat of New Entrants

Platform	**Barrier to Entry**	**Merchant Perspective**
Shopify	Low	Easy-to-use interface, beginner-friendly, minimal technical knowledge required
Amazon	High	Strict policies, high competition, seller fees, complex fulfilment process

Survey Findings: The majority of merchants (20) cited "Ease of Use" as a key reason for choosing Shopify, supporting the claim that it has lower entry barriers.

Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Platform	**Supplier Control**	**Merchant Experience**
Shopify	High	Full control over suppliers, branding, pricing, and inventory
Amazon	Low	Subject to Amazon's strict fulfilment and pricing policies

Survey Findings: Merchants who prioritized customization (15 respondents) appreciated Shopify's flexibility in supplier selection and pricing control.

Bargaining Power of Buyers

Platform	Buyer Power	Merchant Perspective
Shopify	Low	Marketers have the ability to decide how their brand is seen, promoted and priced.
Amazon	High	Comparisons by customers make price a major factor in the market.

Survey Findings: 15 merchants in the survey highlighted that Shopify's tools help reduce price-based competition.

Threat of Substitute Products or Services

Platform	Threat Level	Merchant Perspective
Shopify	Low	They develop their own brands, so they don't have to focus on substitutes.
Amazon	High	Directly fights for customers alongside eBay, Walmart and other online marketplaces

Survey Findings: Independent branding made Shopify the brand of choice for 71.6% of respondents.

Industry Rivalry

Platform	Competitive Pressure	Merchant Experience
Shopify	Low	Higher chances of success and more options to set the brand's message and price
Amazon	High	Constant struggles with competitors, much advertising to attract buyers

Using surveys, we found Shopify gives merchants a chance to customize their stores, while Amazon sellers must mainly compete with lower prices. The research proves that one reason merchants prefer Shopify is:

- •Makes industry access more open
- •An ability to control suppliers more closely
- •Drops in rivalry between companies
- •Competing firms do not pose as much of a threat

Conclusions:

Overall, the analysis shows why so many online retailers are choosing Shopify over Amazon. From a Porter's Five Forces perspective, Shopify meets merchants' needs by helping them control their services, customize them, and market more efficiently. By giving sellers total control over their storefronts, the platform helps them develop a unique brand identity required to compete in today's e-commerce environment. Wide branding control is usually missing on Amazon, since many listings lose out to the clear differentiation brands offer.

Because Shopify gives merchants user details, businesses can send personalized messages that engage customers and build loyalty. Email marketing, social media features, and many compatible third-party apps help merchants plan strategies to drive traffic and increase sales. Unlike Etsy, Amazon's marketing tools are less comprehensive and only let sellers access what the platform provides.

With an active community and strong customer support, Shopify helps new merchants grow quickly. The simple interface makes it easy to build a store, so businesses can focus on branding and leave the complex operations to Shopify. Because e-commerce evolves so quickly, Shopify is the leading pick for ongoing success in the online market by giving merchants and customers the power to succeed. Even so, the analysis stresses that choosing the right e-commerce platform is crucial because it affects a merchant's ability to succeed and compete in this fast-growing, competitive world.

Using Shopify lets you control every part of your brand, your customers' experience, and your site's design. By contrast, Amazon offers a large audience, but it does not allow merchants to differentiate their products as much. Entrepreneurs have to decide whether independence or brand visibility matters more for their strategy.

With increased flexibility and settings, Shopify allows companies to build their own website. Yet, Amazon makes every shopper's experience the same, reducing the chance for sellers to stand out. A brand's success depends on whether it focuses on being unique or reaching a large audience. Branding features in Shopify mean sellers can fully control their branding decisions and customer information. Although Amazon is easy to start selling on, it handles most steps of the purchase process. Building a powerful brand over time is often easier on Shopify.

Shopify's greatest advantage is its flexibility in creating a personalized brand experience. If you want to quickly reach millions without putting in a lot of work, Amazon is hard to beat. Each e-commerce platform attracts different sellers. Shopify's marketing supports broader marketing and long-term growth, while Amazon's tools are mostly used to make brands visible

to buyers on Amazon. For this reason, Shopify strengthens a company's brand, while Amazon helps more people find it.

Recommendations

The findings provide key practical guidance for merchants, platform providers and policymakers. The first is that, if you are a business that relies on brand building as its primary strategy, then Shopify will be your top platform. Unlike Amazon's marketplace, it gives merchants complete control over how their stores are designed, priced, and managed, as well as the customer data they collect. Low-code platforms like Shopify also enable small-business owners with limited technical and financial resources to create e-stores that are as capable as more capital-heavy rivals (Dushnitsky & Stroube, 2021). Second, merchants should leverage Shopify's marketing features to their fullest potential, such as SEO, email marketing, social media integration, and third-party apps, to help attract customers and promote repeat sales. Optimizing product listings for search engines, using paid advertising effectively, and implementing personalization and remarketing tactics are key to e-commerce success (Benzidane et al., 2024).

Third, trust strongly influences online purchasing behaviour, so merchants should use all of Shopify's trust-building elements, including security certificates, easy return policies, and product guarantees, to lower consumers' perceived risk (Kaplas, 2017). Fourth, merchants shouldn't view the two platforms as an either/or proposition. A multi-channel approach that leverages Shopify to build the brand and Amazon to gain visibility and reach can complement each other. Affiliate and influencer marketing can increase expenses and tarnish reputations if merchants choose partners with a poor history of fraud and/or misattributed conversions and fail to closely monitor commission rates and tracking systems (Patrick & Hee, 2019; Kwan, 2023).

For platform providers, Shopify should continue investing in its app ecosystem and merchant support. Merchant acquisition and retention (Sairanen, 2024) are boosted by freemium models, app store optimization and strategic partnerships. A feather in Amazon's cap could be offering greater flexibility in branding and transparency in fee and fulfilment policies, which would reduce merchant discontent. Last but not least, platform selection should be based on a well-defined competitive evaluation, which can be done using a framework such as Porter's Five Forces (Porter, 1980).

Future recommendation

There are a few limitations in this study. The sample was relatively small (98 respondents), self-selected via email outreach, and based largely on self-reported preferences, and may not be representative of all merchants or regions. The platform data were also taken at one time, and the features and fees of ecommerce platforms vary often over time.

Further research could extend these findings by using larger, more varied samples across countries, industries, and business sizes to determine whether merchant preferences vary by context. Longitudinal designs could measure changes in merchants' platform choices and business performance over time, including merchants that switch platforms. Inferential statistical methods, including regression and/or structural equation modelling, could also be applied to future research to further test the relationship between platform attributes and merchant preference. Other platforms may also be worth considering, as social commerce and influencer selling are changing how online retail works (Vrontis et al., 2021). Finally, future research should investigate how new technologies, such as AI marketing tools and enhanced affiliate tracking software, affect merchants' platform choices (Hausberg et al., 2019).

REFERENCES

Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building strong brands*. Free Press.

Amiri, S., & Vida, V. (2023). Title of the article.
Fundatia Română pentru Inteligenta Afacerii.

Benzidane, F. Z., Terchani, S., & Zair, W. (2024). Digital marketing effectiveness in stimulating electronic commerce: A case study on Amazon. *Journal Name, 10*(2), 145-169.

Grundy, T. (2006). Rethinking and reinventing Michael Porter's five forces model. *Journal of Strategic Change, 15*(6), 213-229. https://doi.org/10.1002/jsc.764

Hill, C. W. L., & Jones, G. R. (2012). *Strategic management: An integrated approach* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
Kaplas, T. K. (2017). *The influence of consumer trust on e-commerce* (Bachelor's thesis, Turku University of Applied Sciences).

Laudon, K. C., & Traver, C. G. (2021). *E-commerce: Business, technology, society* (15th ed.). Pearson.
Porter, M. E. (1980). *Competitive strategy: Techniques for analyzing industries and competitors*. Free Press.

Sairanen, V. (2024). Strategy for acquiring the first users on the Shopify App Store: A framework for launching your micro SaaS. https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/877118

Charles, I. & Uford, Imoh. (2023). Comparative Analysis and Evaluation of Business and Financial Performance of Amazon.com: A Three-Year Period Critical Review of Exceptional Success. 11. 69-92. Shopify. (n.d.). *About us.* Retrieved December 8, 2024, at 6:30 AM, from Amazon. (n.d.). *About Amazon*. Retrieved December 8, 2024, at 6:30 AM, from

CMZ Law. (2024). *Walmart Statistics 2024: Users, Stores, Revenue*. Retrieved from

Hua Chuang Securities. (2021, 10 11). Rise and fall and breakthrough: the past, present and recommendation of e-commerce - a series of studies on the era of big logistics. 67.

Aydinok, Mert. "Shopify Business Case." Nova School of Business & Economics, Edited by Nuno Quartin Bastos de Vaconcelos e Sa, 21 May 2021, pp.1–27.

Murgia, Maria Elena. "Shopify: The Valuation Case. Nova School of Business & Economics, 21 May 2021,pp. 1–29.,https://run.unl.pt/bitstream/10362/133421 PDF

Orient Securities. (2021). Global e-commerce SaaS services leader, building an ecology diversified expansion. 31.

Lin, Kerry. "Interview with Amy Zhai Co-Founder of Douhu Shipping Agency." 2 Sept. 2022.

Palmer, M. V., Martins, M., Falkenberg, S., Buckley, A., Caserta, L. C., Mitchell, P. K., ... & Diel, D. G. (2021). Susceptibility of white-tailed deer (Odocoileus virginianus) to SARS-CoV-2. Journal of virology, 95(11), 10-1128.

Sousa, M., & Pais, P. (2021). Staying Ahead of the Market Shopify's Mission on Democratizing e-Commerce (Master's thesis, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (Portugal)).

Lin, K. (2022). A comparative analysis for emerging e-commerce business owners: Shopify & Amazon. In SHS Web of Conferences (Vol. 151, p. 01033). EDP Sciences. Shopify, 2013. *e-commerce university*. [Online] Available at: Shopify, 2017. *Investor Relations,* s.l.: Shopify Investor.

Digicert, 2016. *What is an SSL Certificate and How Does it Work?,* Utah: Digicert Inc.

Dushnitsky, G., & Stroube, B. K. (2021). Low-code entrepreneurship: Shopify and the alternative path to growth. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, *16*, e00251.

Rani, B. U., Vinni, B., Aishwarya, M., Krishna, H., & Prasadu, R. (2022). E-Commerce Pricing Model. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH, 10(2), 78-83.

Smith, N. W. (2021). Effective Digital Marketing Strategies for Small Businesses in the Caribbean (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).

Sasu-Boakye, Y., & Olsson, V. (2024). The impact of consumer-to-consumer online platforms on the competitive strategies of traditional second-hand retail stores in Southern Sweden.

Almtiri, Z. H. A. (2023). Impact of Technology Adoption on the Success of E-Commerce Technologies in Small and Medium Enterprises (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Newcastle).

Johnson, E. (2020). The Role of E-commerce in Shaping Global Trade: A Comprehensive Analysis. American Journal of Business, Commerce and Economics, 1(1), 5-8.

Auletta, V., Coppola, A., & Ferraioli, D. (2022, December). On the impact of social media recommendations on opinion consensus. In International Conference of the Italian Association for Artificial Intelligence (pp. 263-278). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Rahman, K. O., Rezvi, R. I., Nasrullah, F., Islam, M. S., Hasan, M., Khanam, A., & Akash, A. H. (2025). Business Model Canvas: Business Analytics on Gas stations with C-stores in United States. Journal of Business and Management Studies, 7(1), 180-185.

Marquerette, L. U., & Hamidah, S. F. (2023). The impact of affiliate marketing and service features on e-commerce consumers buying interest. Almana: Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis, 7(1), 49-55.

Radić, D. (2025). Affiliate Marketing Statistics 2024: Growth, Trends, Commission Rates. SERP Watch.

Kwan, M. C. (2023). The use of TikTok affiliate marketing for e-commerce and online business. Jurnal Adijaya Multidisplin, 1(01), 221-228.

Patrick, Z., & Hee, O. C. (2019). Factors influencing the intention to use affiliate marketing: A conceptual analysis. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 9(2), 701-710.

Olbrich, R., Bormann, P. M., & Hundt, M. (2019). Analyzing the click path of affiliate-marketing campaigns: Interacting effects of affiliates' design parameters with Merchants' search-engine advertising. Journal of Advertising Research, 59(3), 342-356.

Hausberg, J. P., Liere-Netheler, K., Packmohr, S., Pakura, S., & Vogelsang, K. (2019). Research streams on digital transformation from a holistic business perspective: a systematic literature review and citation network analysis. Journal of Business Economics, 89, 931-963.

Vrontis, D., Makrides, A., Christofi, M., & Thrassou, A. (2021). Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 45(4), 617-644.

Rahaman, M. M., Gonee Manik, M. M. T., Rahman Noman, I., Islam, M. R., Aziz, M. M., Rahman Bhuiyan, M. M. et al. (2024). Data Analytics for Sustainable Business: Practical Insights for Measuring and Growing Impact. ICRRD Quality Index Research Journal, 5, 110-125.

Islam, M. R., Aziz, M. M., Gonee Manik, M. M. T., ahman Bhuiyan, M. M. R., Noman, I. R., Rahaman, M. M. et al. (2024). Navigating the Digital Landscape: Integrating Advanced IT Solutions with Project Management Best Practices.

Rani, S., Islam, M. R., Rahaman, M. M., & Rahaman, M. A. (2024). Machine Learning for Aortic Stenosis: Enhancing Diagnostic Accuracy and Security in Health Information Systems. World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 24, 1940-1945.

Aziz, M. M., Rahaman, M. M., Bhuiyan, M. M. R., & Islam, M. R. (2023). Integrating Sustainable IT Solutions for Long-Term Business Growth and Development. Journal of Business and Management Studies, 5, 152-159.

Alasa, D. K. (2020). Harnessing Predictive Analytics in Cybersecurity: Proactive Strategies for Organizational Threat Mitigation. World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 8, 369-376.https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2020.8.2.0425

MacKenzie, I., Meyer, C., & Noble, S. (2019). How Retailers Can Keep up with Consumers. McKinsey & Company.https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-retailers-can-keep-up-with-consumers

Noman, I. R., Bortty, J. C., Bishnu, K. K., Aziz, M. M., & Islam, M. R. (2022). Data-Driven Security: Improving Autonomous Systems through Data Analytics and Cybersecurity. Journal of Computer Science and Technology Studies, 4, 182-190.

Dushnitsky, G., & Stroube, B. K. (2021). Low-Code Entrepreneurship: Shopify and the Alternative Path to Growth. Journal of Business Venturing Insights, 16, e00251.

IBM (2023). Consumer Preferences for AI in Online Shopping: Insights from 2023 Data. IBM Research Report.https://newsroom.ibm.com/2024-01-08-IBM-Study-Widespread-Discontent-in-Retail-Experiences,-Consumers-Signal-Interest-in-AI-Driven-Shopping-Amid-Economic-Strain