

The Role of e-Commerce Creativity and Innovation in Enhancing the Success of High Street Businesses: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract:

With the growing digitalization of the global economy, the survival of high street businesses (HSBs) largely depends on their ability to creatively and innovatively adopt e-commerce solutions. This study explores the impacts of creativity and innovation on the e-commerce activities of HSBs. Through a systematic literature review and thematic analysis, the study examines potential barriers to e-commerce adoption in these businesses. Conversely, the study focuses on strategies to enhance creativity and the successful adoption of e-commerce in high street businesses. The findings highlight the significance of creativity and innovation in fostering e-commerce acceptance among HSB entrepreneurs, emphasizing the potential for improved business positioning. The study offers practical implications for HSB entrepreneurs, stressing the increasing need to embrace innovative practices for business sustainability. Additionally, it provides insights for policymakers on how to develop supportive frameworks to promote innovation in SMEs. By underscoring the role of innovation and creativity in SME operations, the study offers new directions for future research and policy development in advancing entrepreneurship in the high-street sector.

Keywords: High-Street Businesses, Creativity, E-commerce, Innovation, Entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction

Despite the recognition of e-commerce as a transformative tool in the retail sector, significant gaps emerge in understanding how innovation and creativity contribute to success of e-commerce in high street businesses (HSBs). Extant literature has extensively explored the general challenges related to e-commerce adoption in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), such as the regulatory barriers, financial constraints, market competition and technological limitations (Fatokun, 2023; Hassen et al., 2020). However, limited research focuses on the role of innovation and creativity in addressing such challenges, and how e-commerce can be integrated in high street retail movements (Hassen et al., 2020). Instead, most e-commerce literature focuses on large firms and multinationals, or the generic SMEs, overlooking the unique dynamics of HSBs.

HSBs, often characterised by reliance on personalized customer care and strong community ties, tend to experience obstacles in transition to digital platforms (Priambodo et al., 2022). Moreover, most HSB entrepreneurs tend to be hesitant to adopt e-commerce due to the fear of losing contact with their physical customer bases, and limited understanding on how creative business strategies can complement conventional business operations (Witek-Hajduk et al., 2021). Although creativity and innovation are considered as critical factors in any business growth, there is limited understanding as to how these elements can be integrated to mitigate the limiting complexities of the HSBs.

Another significant gap lies in the disparity of adopting e-commerce in developed versus developing economic contexts (Yun et al., 2020). Notably, SMEs contribute significantly to GDPs of many economies; however, their engagements with e-commerce remain low, especially with markets that are contextualised in complex regulatory environments, with limited digital infrastructure (Priambodo et al., 2022, Al Turais, 2020). Literature thus lacks extensive focus on how HSBs in diverse economic contexts can leverage on innovative solutions to overcome such barriers. Further, the research is yet to sufficiently address long-term sustainability of e-commerce integration with the HSBs, particularly in the developing country contexts.

While e-commerce provides an opportunity for HSBs to broaden their market reach, increase consumer interaction, and improve operational efficiency, many of these companies fail to properly incorporate digital solutions. A fundamental difficulty is the lack of a clear framework for leveraging creativity and innovation to accelerate e-commerce adoption in HSBs. Unlike large firms, which have the financial and technological means to implement digital initiatives, HSBs sometimes operate on tight budgets, lack technical competence, and encounter opposition to change (Hendricks & Mwapwele, 2024). These problems lead to the delayed adoption of e-commerce solutions, which limits HSBs' growth potential in an increasingly digital economy. Moreover, many HSB owners and managers see e-commerce as an unneeded or hazardous venture because of their reliance on in-person consumer interactions. This thinking stops them from pursuing novel digital strategies that could improve their business operations. Accordingly, SMEs' innovation cultures remain weak, compounding their unwillingness to adopt e-commerce solutions (Fatokun, 2023).

Without enough originality and new thinking, HSBs risk losing their competitive advantage to larger online merchants and more digitally adept rivals.

In addition to internal shortcomings, external factors such as insufficient regulatory backing, limited access to financial resources, and digital infrastructure limits all impede HSBs' successful implementation of e-commerce. Many small merchants struggle to comply with complex e-commerce legislation and taxation procedures, posing additional challenges to digital transformation. Furthermore, the lack of specific training programs and support systems for HSBs in adopting innovative e-commerce solutions exacerbates the challenge, leaving many businesses unprepared to capitalise on digital prospects efficiently (Hassen et al., 2020).

Given these limitations, there is an urgent need for research into how creativity and innovation may boost e-commerce adoption among high-street retailers. This study explores the elements that influence the effective integration of e-commerce in HSBs and provide strategic solutions that encourage digital innovation while conserving these firms' conventional strengths. By addressing this essential topic, the study potentially provides actionable recommendations for HSB owners, policy makers, and industry stakeholders looking to support digital transformation in the high street retail sector.

2. Historical Development of HSBs

HSB, a phrase that typifies the definition of businesses in the UK and other Commonwealth nations, is a retail center that serves the commercial requirements of a local community (White et al., 2023). High street ventures include initiatives that supply items beyond the essentials to more complete components, such as leisure, entertainment, and public services (Nanda et al., 2021). Today, high street ventures continue to have the proper mix of companies, making them appealing and popular for a variety of economic growth (White et al., 2023). As adopted in this research, HSBs is the retail sector in towns and cities that houses the bulk of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and draws a large number of customers. As such, the rise of e-commerce has opened up new chances for HSB owners to restructure and reconsider their plans for success. A mix of entrepreneurship and innovation is therefore critical for the retail sector's start-up and long-term viability (Zhang et al. 2021). Furthermore, the retail industry's fierce competition necessitates the development of e-entrepreneurship and e-innovation abilities to maximize efficiency and gain a competitive edge.

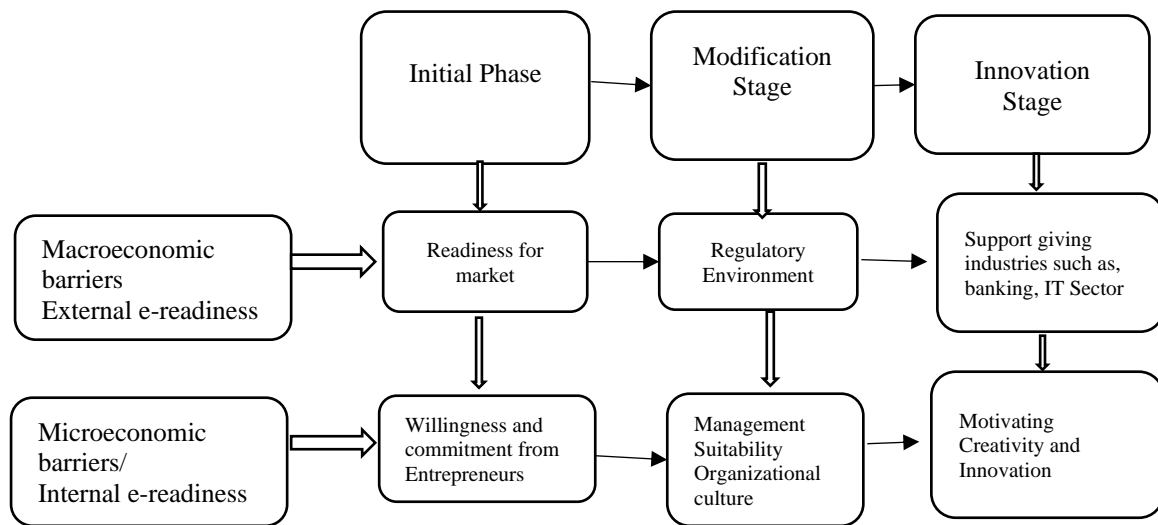
Through the centuries, HSBs have played a crucial role in the development of global retail environment. Historically, markets were the key retail hubs until the 17th century, when permanent shops began to grow, resulting in the establishment of high streets as central commercial zones (Demko-Rihter & Ter Halle, 2015). HSBs thrived during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, serving as community and economic hubs. However, since the latter part of the twentieth century, the prosperity of high streets has declined due to the expansion of out-of-town shopping malls and, more recently, the rise of online retailing. This transition has resulted in several shop closures and sparked campaigns to revitalise and protect high streets (Demko-Rihter & Ter Halle, 2015). In

the United Kingdom, for example, online sales have consistently increased throughout the 1990s, reaching a fluctuating market share of 18% to 19% in 2018-19 (Stobart, 2017). This rise in online purchasing has aided the downfall of traditional HSBs, with many shops having to adapt to shifting consumer behaviour. The COVID-19 epidemic has intensified this tendency, resulting in a large number of store closures and bankruptcies in the retail industry.

In recent years, Saudi Arabia's retail sector has grown and transformed significantly. The Saudi retail market was estimated to be worth SAR 581.3 billion (USD 155 billion) in 2022, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of more than 4% expected between 2022 and 2027 (Alharbi, 2023). Saudi Arabia's organised retail is centred in shopping malls, unlike European capitals where high streets or commercial districts account for approximately 90% of the retail supply (Alharbi, 2023). This mall-centric retail culture has contributed to the growth and dispersion of HSBs in the country. KSA's Vision 2030 project has accelerated the retail sector's evolution by seeking to diversify the economy and lessen reliance on oil income. Economic reforms and shifting customer tastes have resulted in the development of retail infrastructure, drawing both domestic and foreign companies. In the first quarter of 2024, there were 104,000 business registrations (business licenses), a 59% increase over Q1 2023 and bringing the overall number of registrations in the KSA to over 1.45 million (Asiri et al., 2024). Despite these developments, HSBs in Saudi Arabia face ongoing challenges. The popularity of shopping malls, combined with the global expansion of e-commerce, creates tremendous competition for conventional high street stores. To ensure HSBs' long-term viability and success in the changing retail market, they must adapt to these changes through innovation and strategic planning.

3. Conceptual Framework

The study is conceptualized on the longitudinal transitional process viewpoint (Yang and Li, 2008). The framework alludes to the balanced attention and institutional theory to the internal and external e-readiness. As per the framework, e-commerce creativity and innovation should exemplify a trait of proportional exploitation of the company's own capacity (microeconomic) as well as external resources (macroeconomic). Such characteristics are aided by radical and gradual improvements with a dynamic focus at each stage of execution. The framework is conceptualized as given in figure 1.

Figure 1: Framework for longitudinal transitional process.

Source: Yang and Li, 2008.

The approach includes three steps to integrate e-commerce innovation and creativity: the start phase, the modification phase, and the innovation phase. External and internal e-readiness, as well as marketplace macro/micro economics, influence these three phases. The methodology demonstrates that combining innovation and creativity with contextual factors has an impact on e-commerce acceptance success.

The framework offers a formal way to analysing the incremental and dynamic integration of e-commerce within HSBs. High street businesses have traditionally relied on physical contacts, and their transfer to digital platforms is neither immediate nor universal. Yang and Li's (2008) framework emphasises the importance of balancing internal capabilities (microeconomic factors) such as technological readiness, managerial skills, and financial capacity against external influences (macroeconomic factors) such as market trends, regulatory policies, and digital infrastructure. By emphasising the proportionate exploitation of these aspects, the framework ensures that HSBs do more than just adopt e-commerce; they strategically innovate and creatively integrate digital solutions in ways that maintain their competitive edge while capitalising on accessible external opportunities.

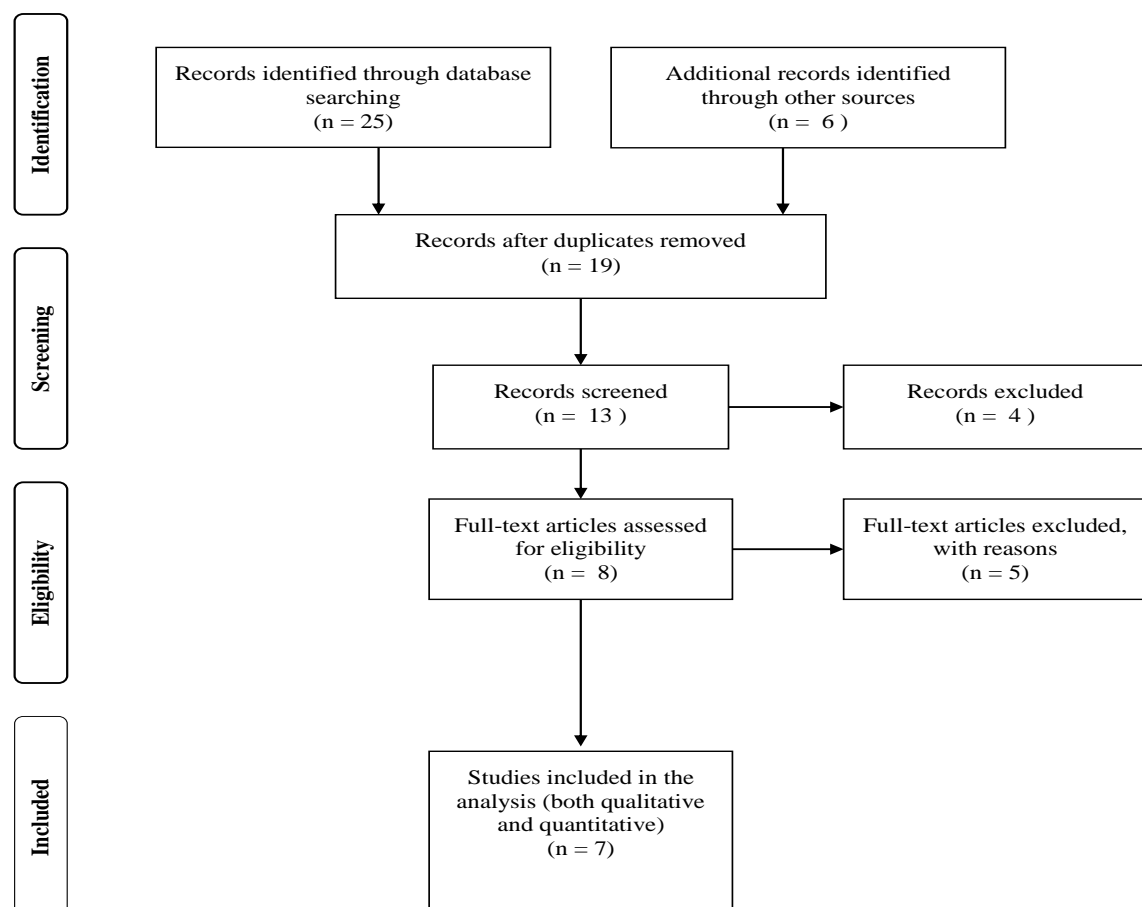
Moreover, the longitudinal transitional process framework is consistent with the evolutionary nature of e-commerce adoption, which is frequently marked by both radical innovations (such as the implementation of AI-driven personalisation and augmented reality shopping) and gradual improvements (the enhancement of digital marketing strategies). This dynamic approach recognises that HSBs confront unique problems at each step of e-commerce integration and must constantly adjust to changing market conditions. As a result, the framework offers guidance on how HSBs can incrementally innovate while preserving a balance of traditional business strengths and digital change. Its significance to the current study is from its capacity to provide a

comprehensive view of how creativity and innovation in e-commerce may be systematically promoted, resulting in a lasting transformation that improves economic success.

4. Methodology

The study methodology aligns to systematic literature review as suggested by Mohamed et al., (2021). The review was based on gathering and analysis of recent literature that is centred on gaining a deeper understanding of creativity and innovation in e-commerce in SMEs and HSBs. Multiple literature and secondary materials were used, including public records, federal government data on e-commerce, journals, and publications. Search for relevant literature was conducted on e-commerce databases, notably Web of Science and or Scopus databases. The searches were limited to publications in the English language. Using the Boolean operators 'OR' and 'AND', search phrases HSBs, e-commerce, creativity, innovation SMEs, and US retail industry were combined and launched in the databases. The process discovered twenty-five articles from the initial database search. Further refining as shown in figure 2 narrowed the eligible literature to seven, which were pertinent and specific to creativity and innovation in e-commerce industry.

Figure 2: PRISMA for inclusion and exclusion.



Source: Mohamed et al., 2021.

Thematic analysis was conducted on the identified literature. Thematic analysis entailed identifying and organizing thematic patterns from the systematic review process, while providing context and insight into their connection to the research objective (Hamel et al., 2021). The current study's use of thematic analysis enabled the researcher to extract meaning from secondary data. It facilitated the discovery of similarities among the evaluated data in order to generate themes. The researcher conducted thematic analysis by categorizing the retrieved data into themes and subthemes, which were then utilized for interpretations and triangulation with the evaluated literature and research purpose as per table 1 below.

Table 1: Details of Studies included for the analysis.

Authors	Research Title	Methodology and Sample characteristics	Key findings
Albshaier, L., Almarri, S., & Hafizur Rahman, M. (2024).	A review of blockchain's role in E-Commerce transactions: Open challenges, and future research directions.	Systematic review of literature	The study highlights how blockchain technology can enhance e-commerce security by providing a decentralized, transparent, and immutable ledger to track transactions, prevent fraud, and address challenges related to data breaches, trust, and cybersecurity threats.
Al-Tit, A.A., 2020.	E-commerce drivers and barriers and their impact on e-customer loyalty in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMES).	Two samples were used for the study, the first of which comprised 163 managers of SMEs while the second consisted of 213 customers.	The study identifies key drivers and barriers to e-commerce adoption in SMEs and highlights those factors such as e-commerce ethics, information quality, and customer trust significantly influence e-customer loyalty.
Ariansyah, K., Sirait, E.	Drivers and barriers to e-	The study employed a quantitative	The study finds that various underlying

R. E., Nugroho, B. A., & Suryanegara, M. (2021).	commerce adoption in Indonesia: Individuals' perspectives and the implications.	research methodology using a nationwide survey conducted in 2019 across all 34 Indonesian provinces to collect primary data on individuals' online purchasing decisions.	factors, including infrastructure availability and individual net gain considerations, significantly influence Indonesians' decisions to make online purchases.
Fatokun, B. O. (2023).	Customers' Affective Responses Towards the Key Factors Influencing E-Commerce Adoption: Extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Approach.	The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating a survey of 312 adult internet users analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with qualitative semi-structured interviews of eight online shoppers analyzed using NVivo, to examine the role of emotional responses in e-commerce adoption in Nigeria.	The study finds that customers' emotional responses significantly influence their online purchase intentions and e-commerce adoption in Nigeria, highlighting the importance of affective factors alongside traditional technology acceptance models in developing countries.
Hategan, C. D., Pitorac, R. I., Hategan, V. P., & Imbrescu, C. M. (2021).	Opportunities and challenges of companies from the Romanian e-commerce market for sustainable competitiveness.	The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, where company-specific characteristics are examined, and key variables are integrated into econometric models to assess the financial performance and competitiveness of Romanian e-	The study finds that recognized e-commerce companies in Romania tend to have lower financial performance, but improving branding, customer relations, transparency, and sustainability efforts can enhance their competitiveness.

		commerce companies.	
Susanty, A., Handoko, A. and Puspitasari, N.B., 2020.	Push-pull-mooring framework for e-commerce adoption in small and medium enterprises.	The study uses a quantitative approach based on the Push-Pull-Mooring (PPM) framework, collecting survey data from 100 batik SME owners and analyzing it using Partial Least Squares (PLS) with SmartPLS to examine factors influencing their switch to e-commerce.	The study finds that the primary drivers of batik SMEs switching from traditional marketing to e-commerce are the need to support customers' information search behavior and the perceived value of e-commerce, while factors such as the attractiveness of e-commerce and computer self-efficacy do not significantly influence their decision.
Mahmudova, L. (2023).	Digitalization Trends and Their Possible Implications to SME Performance: Comparative Study Between Hungary and Azerbaijan.	The study employs a comparative research methodology using secondary data analysis from international reports and databases covering the years 2018-2022, assessing digitalization levels in Hungary and Azerbaijan based on four subcategories defined by the European Commission.	The study finds similarities and differences in the digitalization levels of Hungary and Azerbaijan, highlighting key trends in SME digitalization based on European Commission-defined indicators from 2018-2022.

5. Results

The literature analyzed in this study yielded four primary themes namely, the trends of e-Commerce adoption by the HSBs, levels of innovation and creativity in HSBs,

impacts of adopting e-Commerce by HSBs, and impediments to adopting e-Commerce in HSBs.

5.1.Trends of e-Commerce Adoption by HSBs

While the research highlighted the critical role of e-commerce in growing SMEs, small companies' adoption of e-commerce was restricted in comparison to bigger organizations. The study's findings attributed the slower adoption rate to small businesses' inherent limitations in adopting e-commerce (Ariansyah et al., 2024). Ariansyah et al. (2024) emphasized two critical issues: inadequate financial resources and ineffective goal setting. Particularly, Ariansyah et al. (2024) notes that 'internal company considerations, such as the availability of resources to invest in e-commerce, and the appropriate culture, all have an effect on the three critical e-commerce variables; culture, security, and privacy' (Ariansyah et al., 2024). This perspective demonstrates that some small businesses lack the financial resources necessary to implement e-commerce. Due to a lack of funds, such businesses are unable to recruit a pool of creative personnel with the necessary culture to aid in e-commerce innovation.

It significantly emerged from the review that small businesses often pick short-term goals that preclude efficient e-commerce deployment due to a lack of resources (Susanty et al., 2020). Businesses on the high street, in particular, set their aims based on the limited variety of markets they serve. For example, Susanty et al. (2020) notes that small firms are not very adept at creating goals. Depending on their region, the majority of small firms lack defined strategic objectives to drive them, and when they have, they are short-term in nature. Further, the majority of small firms rely on the traditional styles of marketing, which is based entirely on face-to-face interactions. As a result, many firms lack e-commerce plans and objectives that would assist their adoption of e-commerce.

Priority setting constraints impede company concentration, as more organizations prioritize internal operations above the external world. As seen in the preceding sections, the fact that small businesses operate at the most fundamental level, surrounded by an obstructive cultural backdrop, reduces their incentive to pursue ambitious goals and focus on externalities (Mahmudova, 2023). Eventually, small firms lack the incentive to align their operations with external market demands that align with e-commerce requirements. According to one aspect of the review, e-commerce usage is not necessarily associated with small company success and profitability (Mahmudova, 2023). This is because many small businesses focused only on the fundamentals of e-commerce, rather than innovating and growing. Others have stopped as a result of obstructing cultural and environmental elements impacting their operations, such as clients' resistance to e-commerce (Mahmudova, 2023) and their location's remoteness. Additionally, the majority of street enterprises supply immediate household items and services to the local populace. As a result, rather than embracing e-commerce, entrepreneurs and customers maintain a cash-based attitude.

5.2.Levels of Innovation and Creativity in HSBs

Based on the systematic review, creativity and innovation are critical for the survival and success of e-commerce in HSBs (Fatokun, 2023). Conversely, many small firms

utilize e-commerce without considering the creative and innovative components. If their customers' preferences shift away from electronic payments, small firms who only take payments through e-commerce may experience difficulties (Ariansyah et al., 2024). On the other hand, small firms that include creativity and innovation into their planning and marketing strategies have a greater chance of success. Customers appreciate ingenuity and innovation in e-commerce transactions, which results in greater sales and repeat purchases.

Firms benefit from growth and repeat sales (Al-Tit, 2020), with some businesses growing from the SME category to the bigger business category as a consequence of e-commerce technology. Consequently, e-commerce enables a larger consumer base outside of the high street neighborhood, more income, and eventual development (Al-Tit, 2020 p. 148). Similarly, they demonstrate creativity by designing unique websites, participating in innovative and integrated marketing messages, connecting their payment methods with external links, and providing a welcome atmosphere.

5.3.Impediments to Adoption E-Commerce by HSB

On this theme, the literature subjected that external factors were preventing the acceptance and sustainability of e-commerce (Hategan et al., 2021). One of the main obstacles to small businesses implementing e-commerce was identified as high investment expenses (Hategan et al., 2021). Due to a lack of resources, many small businesses are unable to build and manage e-commerce platforms. Additionally, small enterprises lack an innovation culture, as indicated by their refusal to adopt e-commerce (Hategan et al., 2021). E-commerce is also impeded by the possibility of insecure online transactions, as well as frequently onerous regulatory requirements (Albshaier et al., 2024). For firms that are still in their infancy, it might be challenging to incorporate safeguards against e-commerce concerns, hence hindering their adoption (Albshaier et al., 2024). Due to their localized operations, HSBs make little steps to collaborate with external service providers such as banks and information technology corporations to ensure their operations are secure. This contributes to their market unpreparedness.

5.4.Impacts of adopting e-Commerce on HSBs

From the review data, one of the primary benefits of small companies embracing e-commerce is the capacity to attract more customers (Al-Tit, 2020). As the number of consumers increases, organizations experience greater internal efficiency and decreased operational costs (Al-Tit, 2020). This is because e-commerce enables firms to abandon traditional marketing approaches that need a high level of engagement, hence reducing expenses and increasing efficiency. Small company owners will be more inclined to innovate in order to obtain a competitive edge, not just in their local community, but also in the global market as a whole, as a result of the benefits.

6. Discussion

The systematic review findings show a number of barriers to HSB success (Hategan et al., 2021; Albshaier et al., 2024), as well as numerous potential benefits and favourable trends (Susanty et al., 2020; Fatokun, 2023). However, both the academic and empirical

data indicate that HSBs struggle to sustain e-commerce due to a lack of a creative culture and limited resources (Fatokun, 2023; Albshaier et al., 2024). Small businesses have less market advantages than larger organisations, which reduces their desire to develop and innovate. The lack of inventiveness limits HSBs' ability to capitalise on market opportunities by successfully detecting risks and advantages (Fatokun, 2023). Concisely, lack of a creative culture, compounded by short-term goals and hefty prices, stymies HSBs' adoption and sustainability of e-commerce.

The study's topic categorisation emphasises creativity and innovation as essential components of e-commerce in HSBs (Mahmudova, 2023; Al-Tit, 2020). These perspectives are consistent with previous research findings that show that creativity increases small business performance and efficiency, as indicated by larger customer bases and higher revenues (Yun et al., 2020). Small businesses become more efficient as a result of inventive problem-solving and improvements to their e-commerce operations, resulting in decreased operating costs. As the data show, creativity is an essential component of information and idea interchange, which maintains small businesses connected to external market forces that promote creative e-commerce techniques (Fatokun, 2023). The recent analysis suggests that integrating creativity and innovation with e-commerce is crucial to HSB's profitability and sustainability.

Furthermore, research shows that the digital economy and creative industries are inextricably linked, with successful small businesses employing new techniques to distinguish themselves from competition (White et al., 2023). Creativity allows HSBs to dynamically adjust their e-commerce services to fit client expectations, giving them a competitive advantage. Adopting artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics, for example, can help small businesses personalise consumer experiences, anticipate market trends, and optimise their digital platforms for improved interaction.

The study focusses on some of the ways in which HSBs might enhance their distinctiveness and creativity in e-commerce. While generating new and original e-commerce strategies is the first step towards success (White et al., 2023), the current study's findings identified specific techniques. E-commerce success in small enterprises depends on creativity in marketing messages, store ambience, and persistence in connecting payment methods to accessible platforms (Ariansyah et al., 2024). This is because unique marketing strategies appeal to both new and existing customers, increasing a company's popularity and engagement. Integrated e-commerce and store ambience have the potential to alter retail technology, especially when combined with digital storytelling and branding techniques that foster immersive shopping experiences. The study's findings highlight the relevance of integrating technology into physical retail environments. The literature suggests that adding artificial intelligence, smart sensors, and augmented reality can improve customer interactions on digital platforms, blurring the border between online and offline business (White et al., 2023). Such linkages enable firms to establish an omnichannel retail environment, offering customers smooth shopping experiences whether they shop online or in-store. This is especially important for high-street businesses looking to maintain their physical presence while harnessing digital advantages.

Furthermore, mobile commerce (m-commerce) represents another option for innovation in HSBs. With the increased usage of smartphones for online purchasing, HSBs must guarantee that their e-commerce platforms are mobile-friendly. Research has shown that mobile-optimized platforms not only improve user experience but also contribute to higher conversion rates (Susanty et al., 2020). Mobile apps, chatbot help, and social media commerce are three new trends that small businesses could use to increase consumer engagement and brand loyalty.

Despite the benefits offered by e-commerce, HSBs continue to face substantial hurdles that prevent widespread adoption and sustainability. One important concern is the financial load that comes with maintaining digital platforms and investing in developing technology. Unlike major firms with dedicated funds for digital transformation, small businesses frequently face financial constraints that limit their capacity to implement modern e-commerce solutions (Fatokun, 2023). A lack of digital literacy and technological abilities among small business owners and staff is another significant hurdle. Many small businesses struggle to manage e-commerce platforms, digital marketing techniques, and cybersecurity issues. To solve this, capacity-building measures such as government-sponsored digital training programs, partnerships with technology companies, and free access to digital technologies could help bridge the knowledge gap (Albshaier et al., 2024). Customer trust and security concerns remain significant barriers. According to studies, many consumers are hesitant to shop online because to concerns about data privacy, fraud, and untrustworthy payment gateways (Hategan et al., 2021). HSBs must invest in secure payment systems, straightforward return policies, and customer-centric engagement to establish credibility and promote trust among online shoppers.

7. Conclusion

This research indicates that small firms may successfully incorporate e-commerce into their operations through innovation and ingenuity. However, the survey identifies barriers to e-commerce adoption among HSBs, indicating a growing divide between large and small businesses in terms of acceptance. In comparison to larger organizations that have attained a high level of sophistication and access to resources, small businesses are hampered by factors such as a lack of sufficient funding, ineffective goal setting, a lack of culture, and a lack of strategies to facilitate effective e-commerce operationalization. Additionally, the delayed adoption of e-commerce by HSBs is a result of their localized operations, difficulty to recruit necessary human resources to assist with the implementation of innovative e-commerce, and business owners' insufficient expertise. Due to a lack of innovation culture among HSBs, they have a limited knowledge of e-commerce and consequently limited success. Additionally, the study emphasizes the rising use of e-commerce by enterprises; yet, increased adoption does not always correlate with success, sustainability, and profitability. Priority setting constraints also impede corporate concentration, since more organizations prefer to prioritize internal operations over the external environment. The fact that small enterprises function on a fundamental level, obscured by an obstructive cultural context, also inhibits their motivation to pursue more expansive aims and concentrate on

externalities. Eventually, small firms lack the incentive to align themselves with external market demands that align with e-commerce requirements. Concisely, this study identifies challenges to e-commerce adoption that are unique to small enterprises, including restricted access to capital for implementation, a lack of economies of scale, and a lack of strategy.

The findings also underline the perceived benefits of e-commerce adoption for small firms. The prospect of increased operating efficiency, lower operational expenses, and increased sales is prominently emphasized in the findings and research. The research cites information interchange as another critical factor that provides adopting firms with a competitive edge over enterprises that have not yet adopted e-commerce. Through information interchange via e-commerce, small firms, in particular, may expand their consumer bases and attract new customers. The present study reveals that small firms are embracing innovative methods of client acquisition, which results in cheaper marketing expenses. As a result, this study demonstrates the enormous benefits of e-commerce adoption by HSBs. With the benefits, small company owners are more inclined to innovate in order to gain competitive advantages, not just in their local high street community, but in the broader worldwide market.

To overcome present constraints and promote efficient e-commerce adoption, the current study identified effective e-commerce implementation methods. The combination of e-commerce with creativity and innovation is critical to this. This is because when e-commerce is done imaginatively, it expands customer reach (outside the high street community), results in increased sales, and eventually expansion. Additionally, small companies may demonstrate creativity by developing novel websites, participating in creative and integrated marketing communications, effectively connecting their payment methods with external links, and establishing an inviting environment.

The study acknowledges the significance of e-commerce in boosting the performance and productivity of traditional brick-and-mortar businesses. Effective e-commerce deployment results in increased revenues, decreased operating costs, increased competitiveness, and increased efficiency. However, the findings indicate that HSBs have unique features, such as limited resources, a lack of innovative cultures, and shorter-term objectives, that hinder their capacity to adapt to and sustain e-commerce in their operations. Even with limited resources, HSBs may enhance their e-commerce capabilities by using integrated marketing communications and innovative e-payment solutions that resonate with customers. To overcome the stated hurdles, small companies must be educated about the need of utilizing creative and new e-commerce platforms to attract clients. Thus, HSBs must cultivate an innovation culture through periodic risk-benefit analyses in order to stay abreast of market developments. Additionally, HSBs should seek external help via linkages and by establishing longer-term goals that include e-commerce characteristics into their operations.

8. Future Research and Implications of the Study

The findings of this study guides entrepreneurs and management of HSBs into creativity and innovation to enhance sustenance of such businesses. Moreover, the study findings can guide policy makers into adopting and implementing policies that facilitate innovation and creativity among SME owners. The study thus deepens an understanding of innovation and creativity within SMEs and, specifically among HSBs. With the SMEs experiencing greater need for entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovative skills, this study provides a foundation for understanding how this demand can be met through effective policy implementation.

To stand out in a competitive market, small firms must first prioritise creativity and innovation in their digital strategy. This entails using new technologies like artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and data analytics to personalise customer experiences and improve digital engagement. Businesses should also focus on creating mobile-friendly platforms and harnessing social media commerce to improve accessibility and engagement. Furthermore, governments and industry partners must assist small firms by providing financial incentives, digital literacy programs, and enhanced infrastructure to bridge the technology gap. Ensuring strong cybersecurity measures and open customer policies is also essential for fostering consumer trust and boosting online buying. By implementing these strategic steps, HSBs can overcome obstacles, strengthen their digital presence, and achieve long-term success in the changing e-commerce industry.

Policy implications include that governments and industry stakeholders should offer incentives for digital transformation, such as tax breaks for e-commerce investments, funding programs for small enterprises that use digital technologies, and enhanced internet infrastructure in underserved areas. Fostering cooperation between small businesses and technology providers may also speed up digital adoption, ensuring that HSBs remain competitive in an ever-changing economy.

The outcomes of this study suggest various topics for future research and policy development. Further research might look into cross-sector comparisons of e-commerce adoption in small firms, including differences in digital strategies across industries like fashion, food retail, and artisanal crafts. Furthermore, future research should take a cross-cultural approach, investigating how regional differences affect small business digitalisation initiatives.

9. Limitations of the Study

While this study sheds light on the impact of creativity and innovation in HSBs e-commerce adoption, it is important to highlight numerous limitations. First, the study is mostly based on existing literature and secondary data sources, which may limit the breadth of personal insights into small business owners' real-world issues and decision-making processes. Future study that uses primary data gathering methods, such as in-depth interviews or surveys, may provide more thorough insights on HSBs' digital transformation activities.

Second, the study's concentration on small enterprises in certain areas may limit its findings' applicability across industries. Different retail segments have distinct operational structures, consumer behaviours, and rates of technological adoption, all of which may have an impact on e-commerce performance. A deeper cross-sectoral analysis would assist assess whether the highlighted tactics and constraints apply to small company categories other than High Street retail. Moreover, this study does not completely account for regional differences in digital infrastructure, government legislation, and consumer preferences, which have a considerable impact on e-commerce adoption. While some small firms benefit from strong digital ecosystems and supporting regulations, others operate in areas with inadequate internet access, financial limits, and regulatory barriers. Future research should include comparative analysis across different geographic locations to further understand how local factors influence e-commerce uptake in HSBs.

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