Challenges and Opportunities for E-commerce Adoption by SMEs in Egypt: An Ethnographic Study

Ahmed El-Khayatt[1], Randa Suleiman Hamed[1,2]

[1] Agricultural Research Center (ARC), Giza

[2] Department of Advanced Studies, Helwan University

Author notes

Ahmed El-Khayatt is affiliated with Agricultural Research Center (ARC), Giza and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Randa Suleiman Hamed is affiliated with Agricultural Research Center (ARC), Giza and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Abstract

Egypt represents a significant emerging market for e-commerce, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The country's economy is characterized by high levels of informality and limited access to traditional banking services. The research employs an ethnographic approach, involving participant observation, semi-structured interviews with 30 SME owners and in-depth discussions with key informants from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Data collection was conducted over a period of six months through fieldwork in Cairo and Alexandria. SMEs in Egypt face significant challenges related to infrastructure limitations (65% reported unreliable internet connectivity), regulatory hurdles (30% cited issues with e-commerce regulations), and lack of digital literacy among employees (40%). However, they also perceive opportunities such as increased market access (70%) and cost savings (25%). Despite prevalent challenges, Egyptian SMEs demonstrate considerable willingness to adopt e-commerce. This study provides valuable insights into the specific barriers and facilitators of e-commerce adoption in a developing economy. Government policies should focus on improving internet infrastructure and simplifying regulatory requirements for e-commerce. Additionally, targeted training programmes could enhance digital literacy among SME employees. Egyptian SMEs, E-commerce Adoption, Ethnographic Study

Keywords: *Egyptian, SMEs, Anthropology, Informality, Cultural Barriers, Digital Divide, Grounded Theory*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

✉ REQUEST FULL PAPER

Email: info@parj.africa

Request your copy of the full paper today!

SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH

Are you a researcher in Africa? We welcome your submissions!

Join our community of African scholars and share your groundbreaking work.

Submit at: app.parj.africa

Scan to visit app.parj.africa

Open Access Scholarship from PARJ

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge