

# A Study on Critical Success Factors Affecting E-tailing

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## ABSTRACT

*Due to the advancement in technology, the use of Internet for buying things has become common. The sellers also have started using the web for selling their products. The online retailers try to maintain a good relationship with their supply partners and focus more on electronic supply chain management (E-SCM). This study investigates the various factors that are critical to the success of online sellers or retailers. The study also attempts to link the various factors with supply chain management. E-tailers can gain an advantage through managing their supply chain. The study is based on previous researches conducted in this field and opens the door for future researches. The findings of the study highlighted the factors that have an effect on the performance of e-tailers are price, website design, inventory, logistics, accessibility, usage, information technology, the speed of delivery, security, customer service, and satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** E-tailing, E-SCM, Factors, Performance,

## INTRODUCTION

Due to the rapid growth of e-commerce, there has been a shift in the marketing patterns i.e. how a firm markets its product online is totally different from the one they used to do in traditional business. E-commerce network helps the customer to get food, clothing, education, traveling services and much more (Li et al., 2017). E-commerce means doing trade over the internet. Li et al. (2017) define e-commerce as the set of business arrangements consisting of buying and selling of goods and services, marketing a product, consumer purchasing and various other models. With the improvement and advancements in technology, retailers have also started selling their merchandise on the internet and thus the concept of e-tailing comes into play.

With the emergence of e-commerce there has been a shift in buying pattern from brick and mortar to

online stores thereby transforming the traditional retailing to what is known as internet or online retailing (Chugh & Grandhi, 2012). E-tailing or online retailing is a way for retailers to sell the goods & services online over the web. Retailers by doing business online have been able to bypass the various intermediaries thereby shortening the channel of distribution (Barutcu & Tunca, 2012). In other words, e-tailing means conducting the retail business online or over the web. It is a subset of e-commerce as it allows the customers & sellers to come in contact over the web to execute a transaction. With the increase in the number of internet users, e-tailing is gaining more importance because more customers are buying over the internet as it takes less time to order online just by clicking rather than going to physical stores and then choosing a product to buy. The biggest issue an e-tailer face is to attract and retain the customers as there is less or no cost involved in going to different e-tailer site to buy a particular product (Ratnasingam, 2006; Jain et

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al.,2015).This can be done by providing them various benefits in terms of timely delivery, better after sales services, good return policy(Jain et al.,2015), full and better information about the product, ease of use, website enjoyment(Prasad & Aryasri, 2009; Schramm-Klein & Wagner,2014). E-tailing enables the seller to customize their business models by fluctuating the designs of the product, prices and marketing strategies. This is so because under internet retailing a seller can forecast the demands of the consumer depending upon the number of clicks they made at a particular product page.

E-tailing is not only limited to the just exchange of goods & services rather an exchange of information is also prominent nowadays (Prasad & Aryasri, 2009). Combination of electronic medium and business provides the companies to easily share the information any various supply chain partners, suppliers, their customers or other business partners (Li et al., 2017). Information technology helps the buyers, suppliers, distributors, manufacturers to meet online for trade. Information flow is an integral part of the e-tailing. e- Information system provides two-way information forward (information of the business required by customers) & backward (information of the customers needed by business firms) (Barutcu& Tunca, 2012). Customers now require more information about the product while buying online which helps them in deciding whether to buy a product through physical stores or through online mode. It also helps them to decide from which e-tailer they want to buy the product by making comparisons on the basis of various factors like reliability, price, timely delivery, customer services, etc.

E-tailing is the future of retail in India with many e-commerce giants entering the Indian markets. Further, many vendors are also going over the internet with their individual websites. Visser et al. (2014) highlighted that some e-tailers open the stores just to provide information about the product or provide them with the room to fit in. They indulge in an exchange of goods & service through online mode only and not offline mode. This is known as offline to online practice.

Many times it happens that the managers and top executives face a situation where there is a difference

between the demand of customers and their company's goal. To overcome this situation they have to adopt certain strategies that help them in making all the stakeholders happy and one such strategy is SCM (Shamout & Emeagwali, 2016). Thus SCM helps the firm in bridging the gap between what customers want and what the organization wants. In order to maintain competitive advantage, the company needs to focus on SCM which has been an important tool to compete with the rival firms (Chugh & Grandhi, 2012; Marinagi et al., 2014). Linking SCM with IT is more prominent in today's world to get an advantage in the market (Barutcu& Tunca, 2012).SCM (supply chain management) means the management of the flow of goods & services and information among the supply chain managers who ultimately sell it to the consumers (Marinagi et al., 2014).SCM is the management of the flow of materials, goods, information, finance between supplier and consumers. It means satisfying the needs of consumers at the right time, place & price. It helps in achieving both the short-term economic benefits & long-term competitive advantage (Folinas et al., 2004).

Since many customers and business firms are found to use the internet more so the supply chain members try to reach them through the internet. Hence the concept of E-SCM evolves. Shamout & Emeagwali (2016) defines e-SCM as the integration of the internet with the portable device and give access to real-time communication. SCM, also known as electronic or internet based supply chain management is defined as the process of carrying out all the supply chain activities electronically from procurement to logistics. It enables the companies to get the benefit of lower inventory levels, quick responses, fast delivery, good customer services, etc. It has changed the way the industries compete especially e-tailing industries as e-tailers have easy access to a large number of suppliers over the internet thereby reducing the switching cost (Barutcu& Tunca, 2012, Shamout & Emeagwali, 2016). E-SCM involves the flow of information, goods, services, finance among the various supply chain members like manufacturer, logistic supplier, distributors, customers etc. E-tailing helps the retailers to gain a competitive advantage by capturing the large market share & reduction in supply chain costs (Chugh & Grandhi, 2012). The traditional supply chain does not provide the customized services but with the introduction of

electronic supply chain companies are able to overcome this limitation and hence personalized services can now be provided to the customers (Li et al., 2017).

Therefore, e-SCM is important for the successful conduct of the online business. It provides them with an opportunity to differentiate themselves from the competitors and helps them to survive in the long run.

## RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

E-tailing is a concept which covers all the players all over the world. It has enabled the consumers to access the goods and services, either for themselves or on behalf of the other, from the comforts of their place and at the time they prefer. Technology has led to an evolution in retail methods. This has allowed the customization of the product as per demand preferences and faster deliveries by creating an acute supply chain. Online retail has made way for easier access to everything. Quicker and convenient services are also some of the benefits of online retail.

According to a forecast, the Indian e-commerce industry is poised to become one of the largest e-commerce markets by 2034 (IBEF, 2018). This would become possible with more and more users getting access to the Internet even in rural areas. So as the number of users will rise definitely the volumes in e-commerce will rise. In fact, now that people from tier-2 and tier-3 cities have started buying online. But still, these customers are to be made more participative. The reasons behind this are low internet penetration, poor logistics, and delivery infrastructure and lack of regional language support (KPMG, 2018). As of April 2017, India's internet economy is pegged at US\$125 billion. Backed by e-commerce, it is poised to double in a few years (IBEF, 2018). The online retail market in India is projected to amplify by 60 percent to US\$ 28-30 billion in 2018.

India has a young demographic profile and this is a great enabler for the rise of e-commerce activities. Positive FDI policies, government initiatives like Start-up India and Digital India, have further acted as a catalyst for this. There are already more than one million transactions per day in e-commerce retailing. This has given a chance to e-retailers in India to capitalize on this boom. Online retailers now deliver to "12,500-15,000 pin codes" out of nearly

100,000 pin codes in the country (IBEF, 2018). E-retailers are devoting massive sums in their own logistics companies to increase capacity, expand facilities and reach (KPMG, 2018). Old business demands are making way for the new business demands and thus logistics requirements for the e-tail sector are getting remodeled. E-commerce focused logistics service providers (LSPs) are fast replacing traditional ones.

New concepts employed by e-tail sector are transforming the playing field altogether. Some of these new initiatives are like- having one's own logistics and SCM firm (E-kart), providing valued added services like videos on subscription (Amazon Prime), e-commerce websites creating their own e-Wallet services (Amazon Pay), creating their own e-commerce websites (Paytm Mall), provision of personalized experience (Flipkart First) and last mile delivery (Uber Eats).

An interesting concept like social commerce has evolved and it is going to change the decision making of the customer to a large extent. Social commerce is a platform that facilitates transacting on the basis of social interactions and user experiences (KPMG, 2018). Another emerging concept is the one of crowdsourcing, which is a web-based application to leverage groups of geographically dispersed people to match demand with supply digitally (KPMG, 2018). Using the concepts of crowdsourcing, an innovative solution was proposed to collect the e-commerce returned goods from final consumption points back to retailers (Chen et al. 2017). New business models such as omnichannel retailing and delivery through local retailers will gain prominence in the future (KPMG, 2018). However, there are challenges faced in shifting to an omnichannel strategy. Transforming it directly from a multi-channel requires many transitions and is difficult (Picot-Coupey et al., 2016).

Some of the interesting statistics (Statista Dossier, 2018), that is pertinent to mention here is as follows:

1. Online retail sales in India have risen from 3.8 in 2009 to 38 in 2016 (in billion U.S. dollars).
2. Retail e-commerce sales in India is forecasted to rise from 16,073 in 2016 to 52,301 in 2022 (in million U.S. dollars).
3. E-commerce share of total retail sales in India which was less than 1% in 2014 is expected to go

- up to 5% to 2019.
4. E-commerce share of total retail sales in the Asia Pacific which was less than 8% in 2014 is expected to go up to 20% to 2019.
  5. Mobile share of online retail sales in India which was 11% in 2014 was 60% in 2015.
  6. Average retail e-commerce revenue per user in India was less than 107.58 in 2016 is expected to go up to 154.57 in 2022 (in U.S. dollars).
  7. Digital buyer penetration in India was 30.3% in 2014 is expected to go up to 70.7% in 2020.

The topic of review thus becomes an important topic as when comparing the growth of E-commerce share of total retail sales in the Asia Pacific, India is bound to be catching these targets in the near future. There is ample scope of bringing in innovative approaches to the e-retail sector in India. Study of critical success factors for effective, data-driven and intelligent supply chains that cater to the e-retail sector is thus an interesting topic.

## FACTORS AFFECTING E-TAILING

E-tailing helps the retailers to gain a competitive advantage by capturing the large market share & reduction in supply chain costs. It is considered to be a rapidly growing segment where retailers have to find out the way to sell their merchandise online to capture the maximum market share (Chugh & Grandhi, 2012).

Bertsch et al. (2002) state that e-tailers gain a competitive advantage over others with the help of the marketing management techniques that affect the success of e-tailing.

Integration of supply chain with the internet to capture the market share and to gain a competitive advantage is known as E-SCM. It allows the sharing of information, objective among the various supply chain managers (Tan & Trang, 2017). Previous researches show that the customers' buying online gets affected by one or two factors. The present literature review focuses on the various factors affecting online retailers while selling their products online.

There are multiple online retailers operating all across the world. However, the success of e-tailers depends upon certain factors which have been

identified in the literature by different researchers in their study.

**1. Access:** Tan & Trang (2017) highlights the fact that implementing the E-SCM helps the firm to have easy & faster access to the information & customer service and thereby improving the management quality. In other words, it improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the firm by reducing the cost of managing the inventory & transaction costs. The e-tailers must provide easy access to websites so that consumer can easily buy their products. Web designing & its functions vary from one e-tailer to another (Bertsch et al., 2002). Therefore, access is an important factor which impacts the information, customer services and quality of management in both e-SCM and e-tailing.

**2. Website design:** The basic motive of e-tailing is the involvement of customers in the website (Shobeiri et al., 2015). Boyer et al. (2002) highlight that from the company's perspective it is important to design the website which provides ease of use & other basic functions to improve performance. Increase in online buying led the e-tailers to develop a website different from its competitors (Shobeiri et al., 2015). With the increasing use of the internet, e-tailers have adopted new ways to create a website that attracts most of the customers. Website design comprises of navigating tools (Wang et al., 2002), the speed of loading the page, price accuracy, promotional tools, bill, and payment methods, and checkout page. Bertsch et al. (2002) have also validated the same in his research. Customers prefer those websites which are easy to use and provide the required information about the product. The good navigation over e-commerce portals enables the consumer to find what they are looking for (Colla & Lapoule, 2011). Good web design ensures trust among its users (Chugh & Grandhi, 2012).

Website acts a communication tool between the buyers and sellers which makes the environment much more interactive and helps the e-tailers in taking the advantage of reduction in cost, personalization, regular interaction with the customers (Wang et al., 2002) but as no direct interaction or assistance is available with the customer in online business so online retailers must provide a website which can easily be handled by the customer (Jain et al., 2015).

Therefore, it is important for an e-tailer to make sure that the websites provide a good user interface as these websites are the point of interaction between the seller and the buyer in e-SCM.

Designing the website is not only sufficient but managing and operating is effectively afterward is also prominent (Folinas et al., 2004). A recurring experience is more preferable by the customers. A great design results in less time in shopping which is a convenient factor for customers to choose the site over the competitors.

**3. Price:** For consumers, the price is one of the most relevant factors that must be considered while doing business online. Online prices must be less than or equal to the prices for the same products in physical stores (Colla & Lapoule, 2011). E-tailers should focus on providing goods at competitive prices. Greater discounts shouldn't be given as it just attracts customers who purchase only because of price discounts. Huge discounts lead to a reduction in revenue. Moreover, they are of not much use to the loyal and regular customers. Less percentage of discounts can be given or occasional discounts like a grand opening, festival season, etc. is a good option (Bertsch et al., 2002). But according to Jain et al. (2015) e-tailers tries to attract the customers by giving them a large variety of products at various price discounts.

The price war between the competing e-tailers can lead to less revenue for all of them. Thus, instead of indulging in a price war, they should focus on creating unique values in their product. In order to retain their customers, e-tailers these days have started rolling out various schemes like bundle pricing and cash back offers.

**4. Customer services:** Customer services play an important role in any business either offline or online. The services which a customer receives in physical stores are on the basis of face to face interaction and hence totally different from what a virtual store provides. Though online retailers are trying their best to provide good services, it is very difficult to provide the same services as of in physical stores. Interaction with the customers sometimes change the perception of the consumers and there are more chances of them to likely come (Prasad & Aryasri, 2009). Therefore, e-tailers must

try to bridge the gap between themselves and the customers and overcome the limitation of not interacting directly with a customer through various means like a telephonic conversation, using webcams.

**5. Inventory:** Sellers going online tries to maintain low or no inventory with themselves and outsource it to the outsiders so that they can focus on their important areas. Sometimes, the wholesalers themselves maintain the whole stock (known as risk pooling) and sell it at higher prices to the retailers or customers for the risk incurred from holding stock (Synder & Rell, 2009, Cao & Zhao, 2004). Thus, e-tailers try to maintain the lower levels of inventory thereby reducing their cost of holding the stock.

Leonard & Cronan (2003) have mentioned that the relationship with a distributor is of utmost importance as they have a direct impact on the business. It helps in accomplishing the selling of goods by the retailers to the customers i.e. the focus must be on the order cycle. Order cycle and inventory level affect retail-distributor link while the inventory level and availability of product affect the retailer-customer link.

**6. Logistics:** Logistics affects the flow of materials or goods from producer to consumers. Nowadays in the era of competition logistics has become the competition factor for the companies going online. Although the product ordered in small quantity involves complex logistics performance (Yu et. al, 2016). Therefore, companies are trying to make their logistics function their key area in order to differentiate themselves from others. They try to make the whole process effective starting from receiving of order till its final delivery so fast so that customers get maximum satisfaction.

In online business freight transport use is limited to some extent, the small lot orders are attached with the big parcels for delivery and transport purpose in order to reduce the cost of delivering the small lots or a single product. Most of the e-tailers outsource their logistics function to the carriers who combines the delivery of various retailers to make it cost effective. Some online stores promote the use of pick up points as it will reduce the cost of delivery fees charged from the customers and thereby reducing the logistics cost (Visser et al., 2014). In order to retain their customer's e-tailers have started their

distribution centers, their own transport carriers so that the customers don't have to wait for a long period of time to get their products delivered.

Reverse logistics is also an important integral part of the logistic function as it involves the return policy of the company. It helps the company in getting their product back and sometimes the companies sell the returned product in the market at cheaper prices so as to earn certain value from it (Shamout & Emeagwali, 2016). Reverse logistics should be handled properly as it leads to the increased cost of integrating the returned goods with the existing stock (Jain et al., 2015). So, a proper system must be maintained in order to handle both the logistics so that customers find it easy not only to buy the product but to return it if it is not as per expectations or due to any other reason.

**7. Delivery speed:** In the world of competition it becomes very difficult to gain competitive advantage only on the basis of management practices, making improvements in quality or by reducing the cost. But increasing the speed of the supply chain helps to provide such an advantage thereby making a company more efficient (Synder & Rell, 2009). Today every customer wants his product to be delivered as fast as possible i.e. on or before the due date of delivery (Jain et al., 2015). Online retailers find it difficult to retain its customers if the delivery is constantly below the expectations of the customers (Cao & Zhao, 2004) i.e. not delivered on time.

This will create a bad image of the company in the minds of the customers hence; the speed of delivering the good attracts the customer to a particular e-tailer website. The more quickly a good will be delivered the more will be the chance a customer will come back to buy from that site.

According to Leonard & Cronan (2003), it is beneficial for the online retailers to set up their own distribution centers rather than depending upon the outsider's distribution centers. Therefore, to deliver the goods to the customers on time many e-tailers have opened their distribution centers to the nearby places where there are a large number of customers.

**8. Information Technology:** In future, only those companies will be successful who will integrate their

internal information with the supply chain for information exchange (Wang et al., 2002) like demand forecasts, inventory levels, etc. This requires compatibility between the companies' IT techniques and methods with that of the supply chain partners. Information technology is one of the most important factors affecting the supply chain. It helps the companies to gain a competitive advantage over the other firms. Companies use IT to maintain a good relationship among suppliers, customers and itself. IT reduces the transaction cost and helps to differentiate the traditional supply chain from the information based supply chain (Marinagi et al., 2014). IT has a positive impact on the diffusion of e-SCM. The use of IT helps the organization to improve its performance.

To gain the advantage of using e-SCM the organizations must have a matured infrastructure to implement IT to take this benefit (Lin, 2016). The success of an e-commerce company is based on good IT infrastructure (Jinghua et al., 2007). Information technology is the backbone of both e-tailing and e-SCM. Both of these are based on a good IT infrastructure which provides them the advantage over the traditional supply chain in a manner which reduces the time and physical efforts. IT infrastructure of an e-tailer is also important strategic planning which gives him an edge over its competitors.

**9. Ease of use:**

Ease of use refers to the convenience a consumer has while shopping online. Internet shopping enables the user to shop from anywhere and anytime. Customers have the option to shop twenty-four-seven. The cost of acquiring the information is also less in e-tailing (Prasad & Aryasri, 2009). Old people find it easy and convenient to shop online (Visser et al., 2014) as they don't have to go from here and there in search of goods. Online retailer enables a consumer to shop from the comforts of their home which saves time and effort. With the advancement in the technology user interface has become easier. Products can be delivered at home and easy returns are the additional benefits to the consumers.

**10. Customer Satisfaction:** Satisfying the customers is a little difficult in the case of e-tailers as there is no physical interaction with the consumers. In the world of virtual shopping where trust plays an

important role, e-tailers adopt various methods for assuring their customers about the product quality, after-sales services and shipping, and return policy. A customer buying online wants the services to be provided within a stipulated period of time. They want the services to be speedy. There are numerous ways to satisfy the customers such as timely delivery of services, properly managing their order and through proper management of their supply chain (Synder & Rell, 2009). According to Jain et al. (2015) and Cao & Zhao (2004) giving regular intimation to the customers about their order status provides more satisfaction to the consumers. The customers feel relaxed after getting the notice that their product is packed or is in transit.

**11. Web enjoyment:** Web enjoyment refers to the pleasure of consumer experiences while engaging him in online shopping. While buying from physical stores consumers had an opportunity to see and touch the products and inquire about the products from the store staff. E-tailing has been supported by advanced technology which enables the development of interactive and engaging product pages (Prasad & Aryasri, 2009). This is made possible for the users to have the same experience as in case of physical mode.

Schramm-Klein & Wagner (2014) states that enjoyment is linked with the amount of fun an individual has while shopping online. Nowadays, e-

tailing sites have adopted various ways of engaging their customers. Prasad & Aryasri (2009) has suggested enjoyment techniques such as the inclusion of product videos and games like treasure hunts, quizzes, and bidding games.

**12. Safety:** Safety of customer's personal information is a major concern influencing the online business. The consumer's anxiety increases because of cyber crimes like hacking, frauds or misuse of their private data. The customer wants that the e-tailer from which they are buying provides them the assurance of the safety of their personal information either it could be related to their credit card or debit card, their contact details that are what they want the transaction security (Prasad & Aryasri, 2009; Wang et al., 2002). Chugh & Grandhi (2012) and Almajali et al. (2016) has highlighted the factor of trust between the e-tailers and their users. There is a growing demand for internet security which an e-tailer needs to focus on in order to achieve an edge over the competitors. E-businesses don't share its customer database with others except for the purpose of delivery, online payments and internal marketing research (Ratnasingam, 2006). Consumer prefers those e-tailers who can ensure them with the safety of their personal information. E-tailers should work on developing trust among their consumers that their infrastructure is secure enough to handle any breach of security.

This can be summarized in the table given below:

**Table: Overview of factors affecting e-tailing**

S no.	Factors	Overview	Supported literature
1.	Access	The ability of the firm to have easy & faster access to the information & customer service and thereby improving the management quality.	Tan & Trang (2017); Bertsch et al. (2002)
2.	Website design	Website design comprises of navigating tools, the speed of loading the page, price accuracy, promotional tools, bill, and payment methods, and checkout page.	Boyer et al. (2002); Bertsch et al. (2002); Colla & Lapoule (2011); Chugh & Grandhi (2012); Shobeiri et al. (2015); Wang et al. (2002); Jain et al. (2015); Folinas et al. (2004)
3.	Price	The price war between the competing e-tailers can lead to less revenue for all of them	Colla & Lapoule (2011); Jain et al. (2015); Bertsch et al. (2002)
4.	Customer services	The services which a customer receives while buying a particular product.	Prasad & Aryasri (2009)
5.	Inventory	Online retailers try to maintain low or no inventory with themselves and outsource it to the outsiders so that they can focus on their important areas.	Synder & Rell (2009); Cao & Zhao (2004); Leonard & Cronan (2003)
6.	Logistics	It includes the processing of orders, transport services, delivery services, and proper maintenance of stocks in warehouses.	Yu et al. (2016); Visser et al. (2014); Shamout & Emeagwali (2016); Jain et al. (2015)
7.	Delivery speed	Every customer wants his product to be delivered as fast as possible i.e. on or before the due date of delivery.	Synder & Rell (2009); Cao & Zhao (2004); Leonard & Cronan (2003); Jain et al. (2015)
8.	Information technology	Only those companies will be successful who will integrate their internal information with the supply chain for information exchange like demand forecasts, inventory levels.	Marinagi et al. (2014); Lin (2016); Jinghua et al. (2007); Wang et al. (2002)
9.	Ease of use	The convenience a consumer has while shopping online. Internet shopping enables the user to shop from anywhere and anytime.	Prasad & Aryasri (2009); Visser et al. (2014)
10	Customer satisfaction	There are numerous ways to satisfy the customers such as timely delivery of services, properly	Synder & Rell (2009);

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the literature cited, it can be observed that various factors driving the success of the e-tailers include logistics, customer services, delivery speed, customer satisfaction, safety, web enjoyment and so on. Access is one of the factors that affect the e-tailing as it helps the customers in getting the required amount of information. Since customers can buy the products online through the website of the e-tailers, so it must be designed in a way which helps the customers to have easy access to the e-

tailer's website. The website should be such that it creates an interactive environment, whereby buyers and sellers can communicate easily i.e. good user interface must be there. Price is one of the most relevant factors while going online as there is less or no switching cost involved in it. Customers can easily switch from highly priced site to a site which offers low-cost products. Customer services are important not only in physical stores but in virtual stores as well but in the virtual store, it is difficult as there is no direct interaction between the buyer and seller. Interaction with buyers can change their



perception. Meeting out the needs of the customers on time is important in the era of competition. It depends upon the availability of the stock with the company. Some e-tailers tend to maintain no or less inventory with them rather outsource it to the third party. But outsourcing has both advantages and disadvantages as it helps the company to focus on key areas but at the same time, there is risk associated with it like not getting the stock on time.

With the boom in competition, logistic has gathered more attention. It has come out to be one of the competing factors for online companies. E-tailers try their best to make the whole process, starting from receiving of order till its final delivery, much effective that it provides maximum satisfaction to the customers. Proper handling of reverse logistics is also very important. Every customer wants his product to get delivered on time hence the delivery speed matters a lot. Increasing the speed of supply chain, opening up of their own distribution centers are some of the ways e-tailers may opt for the speedy delivery of goods. With the advancement in technology, the IT sector has gained more importance nowadays. IT infrastructure affects the customer base of the e-tailer. The success of an e-commerce industry depends upon good IT infrastructure.

Consumers find it convenient to shop online from anywhere and at any time, as the internet provides ease of access to products. The customer can get the desired product in order to maximize his satisfaction. Satisfying customers is also a tedious task. Speedy delivery, order tracking status helps the e-tailers to satisfy the customers. While buying from physical stores consumers had an opportunity to see and touch the products and inquire about the products from the store staff. Nowadays, e-tailing sites have adopted various ways of engaging their customers through various enjoyment techniques such as the inclusion of product videos and games like treasure hunts, quizzes. Safety is always a matter of concern in the minds of the customers. The consumer's anxiety increases because of cyber crimes like hacking, frauds or misuse of their private data. The customer wants that the e-tailer from which they are buying, provides them the assurance

of the safety of their personal information. E-tail sector will be witnessing a boom in India in the near future as it has to catch up with the Asia Pacific. Thus, these factors need to be addressed by the e-tailers in order to compete in the market.

## FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study indicates the various factors which have an impact on the performance of online retailers which indirectly affects the supply chain. The study is based on the existing literature. The researchers in the future can adopt a quantitative method to analyze the extent to which these factors influence the process of e-tailing. Further, the effect of these factors on each other can also be analyzed. Another area of future research can be to accommodate the perception of various stakeholders involved in e-tailing. Different sectors or industries follow different supply chain strategies and thus may have different approaches towards e-tailing. This opens an arena to different factors which may pertain to a particular sector or industry. There could be many other factors from the list in this review that impact e-tail vis-à-vis new concepts employed by e-tail sector.

There are various e-commerce players currently functioning in the market. These e-commerce players vary in sizes and operations ranging from large scale e-commerce giants such as Amazon to single vendors which are very small in size. Another area for future research can be the comparison between the strategies adopted by different e-tailers. Factors associated with risk and value flow in the supply chain are still untouched which can be studied in the future. The cycle of e-tailing depends upon the perception of the consumers; therefore, this can also be a future research direction. Consumer behavior is largely affected by cultural and geographical boundaries. This can be viewed as an area that can be looked upon. Future researchers can perform a comparative analysis amongst the different e-tailers functioning in different countries. Also, a comparative analysis can be performed among the strategies adopted by global e-tailers across different geographical markets.

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