

ORIGINAL

Market Assessment for an E-commerce Store of Importadora GV in Ecuador

Evaluación del mercado para una tienda de comercio electrónico de la Importadora GV en Ecuador

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: electronic commerce (EC) has transformed global business dynamics, offering new marketing opportunities through digital platforms. In Ecuador, its sustained growth has encouraged small businesses to consider this modality as a means to improve competitiveness and reach.

Objective: to evaluate the market for a potential e-commerce store of Importadora GV in Ecuador.

Method: a cross-sectional, observational, descriptive study was conducted in March 2025 using a structured survey applied to 69 clients of Importadora GV. Variables explored included sociodemographic data, internet usage, online shopping behavior, supply and demand factors, and projections regarding the company's e-commerce potential.

Results: daily internet use was reported by 94,2 % of respondents; 58 % frequently purchased clothing and accessories online, and 56,5 % used smartphones for shopping. The most valued factors were product variety (43,5 %), fast and reliable delivery (58 %), and secure payment options (56,5 %). A total of 72,5 % were familiar with the company, 42 % expressed willingness to shop online, and 37,7 % showed moderate willingness to make digital payments.

Conclusions: the analysis revealed a favorable environment for the implementation of a virtual store by Importadora GV, supported by intensive internet use, brand recognition, interest in its products, and positive consumer valuation of key e-commerce factors, confirming its viability as a strategy for market positioning and expansion in Ecuador.

Keywords: Electronic Commerce; Consumer Behavior; Digital Marketing; Ecuador; Online Store.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el comercio electrónico (CE) ha transformado la dinámica empresarial global, ofreciendo nuevas oportunidades de comercialización mediante plataformas digitales. En Ecuador, su crecimiento sostenido ha incentivado a las pequeñas empresas a considerar esta modalidad como una vía para mejorar su competitividad y alcance.

Objetivo: evaluar el mercado de una posible tienda de comercio electrónico de la Importadora GV, en Ecuador.

Método: se realizó un estudio observacional, descriptivo y transversal en marzo de 2025, mediante una encuesta estructurada aplicada a 69 clientes de la Importadora GV. Se exploraron variables sociodemográficas, uso de internet, comportamiento de compra en línea, factores de oferta y demanda, y proyecciones sobre el CE de la empresa.

Resultados: el 94,2 % de los encuestados usa internet diariamente, el 58 % compra ropa y accesorios en línea, y el 56,5 % utiliza smartphones para realizar sus compras. Los factores más valorados fueron la variedad de productos (43,5 %), entregas rápidas y confiables (58 %), y opciones de pago seguro (56,5 %). El 72,5 % conocía la empresa, el 42 % mostró disposición a comprar en una tienda en línea y el 37,7 % manifestó

disposición media para el pago digital.

Conclusiones: el análisis evidenció un entorno favorable para la implementación de una tienda virtual por parte de la Importadora GV, sustentado en el uso intensivo de internet, el reconocimiento de la marca, el interés por sus productos y la valoración positiva de factores clave del CE, lo que respalda su viabilidad como estrategia de posicionamiento y expansión en el mercado ecuatoriano.

Palabras clave: Comercio Electrónico; Comportamiento del Consumidor; Marketing Digital; Ecuador; Tienda Virtual.

INTRODUCTION

The advance of globalization and the rise of information and communication technologies have caused radical changes in the organizational management of companies.^(1,2) The advent of the internet has changed the way markets are managed, opening up new options to traditional forms of product marketing.

E-commerce (EC) is considered to be the commercial development of any product or service that uses only electronic money as a means of payment, specifically credit cards and electronic bank transfers.⁽³⁾ It includes all types of business, administrative transactions, or information exchanges that use any information and communication technology or, simply put, doing business electronically.⁽⁴⁾ The early years of e-commerce were a period of explosive growth and extraordinary innovation that began in 1995 with the use of the Web to promote products and services.⁽³⁾

E-commerce has its roots in the influence of two essential factors for the contemporary economy: the technological convergence of the fields of information technology and channels, as well as the universalization of markets, the transnationalization of capital, and the fall of trade barriers.⁽¹⁾

An e-commerce platform is software used to create an online store and sell products over the Internet.⁽⁵⁾ E-commerce encompasses everything from the delivery of a product or service online to measuring the satisfaction of subscribers and/or users who participate in the processes of the companies that market their products, thus enabling optimal local economic flow.⁽¹⁾

Since its inception and up to the present day, CE has become one of the preferred options for many users or customers who began using this type of platform, which has led to a significant transformation in product purchasing habits, as well as the offering of professional services online.⁽⁶⁾ The application of CE in a business is beneficial, as it improves multichannel capabilities and consumer confidence, making it possible to attract new customers and positioning the business or organization in a positive economic situation.⁽¹⁾

One of the largest e-commerce platforms in Latin America recorded a 63,5 % growth in sales in 2017, surpassing the brick-and-mortar industry, which declined by 0,9 %.⁽³⁾ Ecuador has seen steady growth in online commerce. It is currently estimated that more than 20 % of Ecuadorian businesses have online sales channels, which suggests that this is one of the most popular means of shopping for consumers. Guayaquil, Quito, and Cuenca use e-commerce as a key sales tool, accounting for 51 % of online purchases in the country.⁽⁶⁾

Small businesses must seek new alternatives that generate new income, such as an online presence through the use of e-commerce platforms. This allows them to be much more competitive and sustainable in the long term, taking into account the immediate need to reach new regional and national customers and ultimately achieve a stronger business position.⁽³⁾ The successful implementation of e-commerce depends on key factors such as staff training, the choice of appropriate platforms, and the integration of digital marketing strategies.^(7,8)

In view of the above, it was decided to carry out this research with the aim of evaluating the market for a possible e-commerce store for Importadora GV in Ecuador.

METHOD

An observational, descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted to evaluate the characteristics of a potential e-commerce store for Importadora GV in March 2025. The company is engaged in the import and distribution of products in the following categories: electrical appliances, household goods, and clothing. Its business model is based on the sale of imported products in all provinces of Ecuador, with a view to improving competitiveness in the Ecuadorian market.

The universe consisted of all of the entity's customers at the time of the research, from which a total of 69 people were intentionally selected. The inclusion criteria were: being a customer of the institution, being over 18 years of age, and agreeing to participate.

An instrument was designed to explore the problem at hand, which was validated through consultation with

experts on the subject. It was structured as follows:

Sociodemographic data: age, gender, occupation, monthly income, type of residence (urban or rural), place of residence.

Internet use and online shopping behavior: frequency of internet use, frequency of online shopping, products and services purchased, most commonly used devices.

Supply and demand behavior: determining factors for online shopping, characteristics and functionalities of an online marketplace, services of interest, willingness to access online stores and make online payments.

Projections regarding GV Importer's *e-commerce*: knowledge of GV Importer, products associated with the importer, interest in the company's products, factors that would motivate remote purchases from the importer.

The variables were explored using multiple-choice and single-answer questions (with the exception of two multiple-answer questions). After validating the instrument, it was laid out in a Google form, which began by requesting informed consent, followed by a brief explanation of the content and how to complete it. Customers were contacted remotely and sent a link to the form. Informed consent was requested, and the results collected do not allow any of the participants to be identified.

The data was downloaded in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format, which facilitated its processing. It was grouped into tables according to absolute and relative frequency for better interpretation.

RESULTS

68,1 % of participants were women, the most common age group was 36 to 45 years old ($n=33,3$ %), 36,2 % were employees, the monthly income range was \$200 to \$500 for 37,7 %, 89,9 % were from urban areas, and the most common location was Santo Domingo with 81,2 %. (table 1)

General data	Subclassification	No.	%
Gender	Male	22	31,9
	Female	47	68,1
Age	18 - 25	29	42
	26 - 35	5	7,2
	36 - 45	23	33,3
	46 - 55	8	11,6
	55 or older	4	5,8
Employment status	Student	12	17,4
	Employee	25	36,2
	Self-employed	23	33,3
	Unemployed	1	1,4
	Retired	8	11,6
Monthly income	Less than \$200	7	10,1
	\$200 - \$500	29	42
	\$500 - \$1000	26	37,7
	\$1000 - \$2000	7	10,1
	Over \$2000	0	0
Origin	Urban	62	89,9
	Rural	7	10,1
Place of residence	Santo Domingo	56	81,2
	Loja	3	4,3
	Orellana	5	7,2
	Guayas	2	2,9
	Los Ríos	1	1,4
	Quito	1	1,4
	Morona Santiago	1	1,4

Table 2 shows that 94,2 % of respondents indicated that they use the internet daily, with an online shopping frequency of once a year (30,4 %). The products indicated as "purchased most frequently" were clothing and accessories (58 %), and purchases were most frequently made via mobile phones (56,5 %).

Table 2. Internet use and online shopping behavior			
Variable	Subclassification	No.	%
Frequency of internet use	Every day	65	94,2
	Several times a week	3	4,3
	Once a week	1	1,4
Frequency of online purchases	Weekly	1	1,4
	Monthly	12	17,4
	Every 3-6 weeks	20	29
	Once a year	21	30,4
	Never	15	21,7
Products or services purchased	Electronics	16	23,2
	Clothing and accessories	40	58
	Home and decoration	16	23,2
	Food and beverages	18	26,1
	Travel and tourism	7	10,1
Most used devices	Desktop computer	7	10,1
	Laptop	14	20,3
	Smartphone	39	56,5
	Tablet	2	2,9

Table 3 shows that, for the factors determining online purchases in the sample studied, competitive pricing (n=34,8 %) and product variety (43,5 %) were very important. More than half placed great value on secure payment options. On the other hand, 50,7 % rated having a variety of payment options as very important, while the highest percentage was found in the importance of fast and reliable deliveries ("very important" n=58 %).

Table 3. Distribution of participants according to the importance they attach to certain factors that influence their purchasing decisions

Factors that determine online purchases	Not important		Somewhat important		Almost important		Important		Very important		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Competitive price	4	5,8	17	24,6	7	10,1	17	24,6	24	34,8	69	100
Product variety	3	4,3	12	17,4	6	8,7	18	26,1	30	43,5	69	100
Ease of use of the platform	4	5,8	12	17,4	4	5,8	21	30,4	28	40,6	69	100
Speed of delivery	3	4,3	10	14,5	6	8,7	13	18,8	37	53,6	69	100
Secure payment options	3	4,3	9	13	8	11,6	10	14,5	39	56,5	69	100
Customer service	3	4,3	13	18,8	3	4,3	17	24,6	33	47,8	69	100
Features and functionalities												
Extensive and up-to-date catalog	4	5,8	10	14,5	9	13	17	24,6	29	42	69	100
Quick and easy purchasing process	4	5,8	11	15,9	4	5,8	20	29	30	43,5	69	100
Various payment options	4	5,8	9	13	5	7,2	16	23,2	35	50,7	69	100
Fast and reliable deliveries	2	2,9	11	15,9	5	7,2	11	15,9	40	58	69	100
Customer service and support	4	5,8	10	14,5	6	8,7	17	24,6	32	46,4	69	100
Advanced search and filters	3	4,3	11	15,9	5	7,2	22	31,9	28	40,6	69	100

Table 4 shows that home delivery was among the services of interest (n=72,5 %), while only 1,4 % were interested in installation and assembly services. Forty-two percent of respondents expressed a willingness to access an online store, and 37,7 % indicated a moderate willingness to pay online.

Table 4. Participants considering other factors that influence their purchase

Variable	Subclassification	No.	%
Services of interest	Home delivery	50	72,5
	Pickup at physical store	5	7,2
	Financing options	5	7,2
	Installation or assembly service	1	1,4
	Loyalty program	8	11,6
Willingness to access an online store	Yes	29	42
	Maybe	35	50,7
	No	5	7,2
Willingness to pay online	Very little	6	8,7
	Little	5	7,2
	Medium	26	37,7
	High	20	29
	Very high	12	17,4

It was found that 72,5 % of respondents were aware of the importer's operations, followed by household items (n=58 %) and electronic equipment (n=36,2 %), which were the products most associated with the importer by customers. 34,8 % were interested in the company's products, and 33,3 % would be motivated to buy online if there were a variety of products available. (table 5)

Table 5. Projections for the *e-commerce* of the GV import company

Variable	Subclassification	No.	%
Knowledge of how the importer operates	Yes	50	72,5
	No	19	27,5
Products you associate with the importer	Household goods	40	58
	Electronic equipment	25	36,2
	Clothing	22	31,9
	Beauty products	23	33,3
Interest in the company's products	Not interested at all	1	1,4
	Not interested	1	1,4
	Somewhat interested	15	21,7
	Interested	24	34,8
	Very interested	28	40,6
Factors that would motivate you to buy from an online store	Lower prices	8	11,6
	Greater variety of products	23	33,3
	Better shopping experience	4	5,8
	Additional services and guarantees	7	10,1
	All of the above	27	39,1

DISCUSSION

Technology is currently undergoing rapid change, and CE is one of the sectors that generates the most money and, in turn, drives the global economy. As a result, it is speculated that there will be exponential growth in the coming years due to the implementation of CE technology.⁽⁶⁾ The technological transformation that organizations continue to experience internationally will have an impact on business performance and results. It will also benefit customers, as many of them are content creators and seek to influence the purchasing decisions of their peers.⁽¹⁾

Platforms such as Amazon, Alibaba, and Shopify have democratized commerce, allowing even small businesses to compete on equal terms with large corporations.^(9,10) One of the most unique features of this model is that it puts small businesses on an equal footing with large transnational corporations when it comes to offering a

particular product or service.

In Ecuador, computer systems are increasingly being used, prompting business managers to take steps to manage them effectively and reduce errors and time.⁽¹¹⁾ The Ecuadorian government has implemented several policies and regulations to promote e-commerce and facilitate the internationalization of companies. One of the main initiatives is the Law on Electronic Commerce, Electronic Signatures, and Data Messages, which establishes a legal framework to regulate electronic transactions, protect consumer rights, and ensure security and trust in online commerce.⁽⁹⁾

The implementation of an *e-commerce* strategy benefits from the low cost of mass advertising, such as *mailings*, pop-ups, or the use of social networks that allow for tracking and establishing *feedback* with the customer, which guides or facilitates the marketing of products.^(3,12) Martín, argues that digital advertising is about proper planning and use of interactive electronic formats to negotiate with the target audience. Considering the large proportion of people who use the internet daily, as reported in the literature,⁽¹⁾ which coincides with the findings of this research, this makes this method an almost guaranteed success.

The study of consumer behavior presents a challenge, as understanding their purchasing process facilitates understanding the factors that influence their decisions when selecting a product.⁽¹¹⁾ When adopting this type of commerce, the characteristics of the target market must be analyzed so that the structure and orientation of the future store guarantee, among other things, qualities such as being attractive, popular, and viable.

Canchingre⁽⁹⁾ indicates that e-commerce has revolutionized the way companies operate and interact with their customers. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that certain factors, such as the variety of products offered, ensure the acceptance of an e-commerce store. This is reflected in various studies analyzed^(3,11) and coincides with the findings of this research. The store environment and the availability of customer support are also factors that affect the rest of the customer experience.⁽¹⁾

Even if a particular company specializes in a specific type of product, the authors believe that variety in the product range, i.e., the number of products and prices, should be guaranteed so that it can cover most of the economic spectrum of potential customers.

Users construct visual barriers, which they want to satisfy in an innovative way, and this is where digital advertising plays a fundamental role, allowing for an increase in sales, as well as contributing to the success of marketing campaigns and measuring their level of effectiveness.⁽¹⁾ The EC goes hand in hand with the evolution of electronic marketing and the spread and popularity of social networks as a key element in boosting sales of products or services through the web.⁽⁶⁾ The use of networked media can help not only to position the company or product, but also to increase its market segment, both in terms of corporate image and product line positioning.⁽³⁾

Studies report that women are more likely to be influenced by advertising in their decision to continue shopping online, with 48 % of them doing so, compared to 46 % of men.⁽¹³⁾

Villa Herrera agrees with Barrientos that ⁽⁴⁾ the combination of marketing and the internet can boost the business world by improving cost productivity, bringing the product closer to users by being able to showcase it with greater impact through different platforms, thus generating greater profits.

Flórez Díaz,⁽³⁾ asserts that the process of adapting to the CE poses challenges such as sales through virtual marketing channels, improving the customer experience, and understanding customer needs as a fundamental pillar in an increasingly competitive environment in which generating lasting relationships represents an opportunity for the company Servicios Automotrices MFD SAS to position itself in the market.

In general, the challenge is to understand how the market works, to generate demand, that is, to bring people to the site, through mobile or social networks, wherever the businesses are located.⁽¹⁴⁾ Marketing is an important part of *e-commerce*, so not only the company's presence on social media, but also sales, purchase offers with benefits such as home delivery and free assembly are some of the valid strategies for positioning a company in the market. This study found that a large proportion of respondents expected home delivery options and a variety of prices, among other things.

It is worth noting that consumer behavior is changing, making it essential to have new electronic systems in place and to change the type of commercial strategy, which should have solid potential and, therefore, favor business growth.⁽¹⁾ Álvarez⁽⁷⁾ points out that companies must overcome barriers to entry, optimize their operations, and improve the customer experience to ensure sustainable growth. Dynamism should characterize the policy of a company that uses CE, thus ensuring the sustainability of the business and its permanence over time.

Customer satisfaction, the goal of a successful exchange, is generated through the comparison between expectations and experiences; it emerges as a key driver of long-term loyalty, repeat purchases, and preference for specific products and brands.⁽¹³⁾ Ensuring buyer satisfaction is an important indicator of a company's success, increasing its popularity among potential customers and improving purchase intent.

The successful adoption of this form of commerce by small and medium-sized Ecuadorian companies faces significant challenges, such as limited technological infrastructure, lack of access to digital financial services,

absence of a solid regulatory framework, and the digital divide.⁽⁹⁾

Among the main limitations of this research are its observational nature, the fact that no variables were modified, and that no e-commerce proposal was made based on its findings.

CONCLUSIONS

There was evidence of high daily internet usage among customers, with a predominance of interest in household and electronic products, as well as a marked preference for mobile devices for making purchases. The factors most valued by consumers were product variety, speed of delivery, and payment security, all of which constitute a favorable environment for the implementation of a virtual store. Most participants expressed a willingness to access an online store and make digital payments, which, together with prior brand recognition and interest in its products, suggests that e-commerce represents a viable alternative for strengthening the company's positioning and competitiveness in the domestic market.

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