

Commercial viability of an online store for Importadora GV in Ecuador: a user experience– based assessment

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Viabilidad comercial de una tienda online para la Importadora GV en Ecuador: un análisis centrado en la experiencia de usuario

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: e-commerce is essential for business sustainability and competitiveness in the digital era. In Ecuador, 75,6 % of the population uses the internet, with e-commerce revenues projected to exceed USD 6,1 billion by 2025. Importers such as Importadora GV face the challenge of adapting to this trend to avoid market failure.

Objective: to determine the commercial viability of launching an online store for Importadora GV in 2024, from a user experience perspective.

Method: a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted using a structured survey administered to a sample of 69 individuals, 56 of whom reside in Santo Domingo and represent online shoppers.

Results: the majority of respondents use the internet daily (94,2 %). The most frequently purchased products online were clothing and accessories (58 %). Key purchase drivers rated as “Very important” included secure payment options (57 %), fast delivery (54 %), and customer service (48 %). While 72,5 % of respondents were aware of Importadora GV, 42 % stated they would definitely access its online store.

Conclusions: commercial viability is high; however, the success of Importadora GV’s digital platform hinges on delivering a robust user experience, prioritizing ease of use, transaction security, and logistical efficiency—particularly delivery speed.

Keywords: E-commerce; User Experience; Online Store; Commercial Viability; Ecuador.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el comercio electrónico (*e-commerce*) es crucial para la sostenibilidad y competitividad de los negocios en la era digital. En Ecuador, el 75,6 % de la población es usuaria de internet, proyectándose que los ingresos por *e-commerce* superen los \$6,1 mil millones de USD para el 2025. Las importadoras, como GV, enfrentan el desafío de adaptarse a esta tendencia para evitar el fracaso.

Objetivo: determinar la viabilidad comercial de la creación de una tienda online para la Importadora GV, 2024, desde la perspectiva de la experiencia de usuario.

Método: se adoptó un enfoque cuantitativo, de nivel descriptivo y corte transversal. Se utilizó una encuesta estructurada para la recolección de datos, aplicada a una muestra de 69 personas, 56 de ellas residentes en Santo Domingo, que representan a los clientes que compran en línea.

Resultados: la mayoría de los encuestados usa internet diariamente (94,2 %). Los productos más adquiridos son ropa y accesorios (58 %). Los factores determinantes de compra considerados “Muy importante” fueron las opciones de pago seguro (57 %), la rapidez en la entrega (54 %) y la atención al cliente (48 %). El 72,5 % conoce Importadora GV, y el 42 % de los encuestados manifestó que definitivamente accedería a su tienda online.

Conclusiones: la viabilidad comercial es alta, pero el éxito de la plataforma digital para Importadora GV depende de una sólida experiencia de usuario, priorizando la facilidad de uso, la seguridad en las transacciones y la eficiencia logística, como la rapidez en las entregas.

Palabras clave: Comercio Electrónico; Experiencia de Usuario; Tienda Online; Viabilidad Comercial; Ecuador.

INTRODUCTION

E-commerce is defined as any commercial transaction where the supplier and customer interact electronically, rather than through direct physical contact.⁽¹⁾ Originating in the 1970s with electronic funds transfers (EFT), e-commerce became established with the popularization of Internet access in the 1990s, drastically reducing search times and information processing costs.⁽²⁾ Since the COVID-19 pandemic, digital presence has become a requirement for survival; if a business does not have a presence on social media or online stores, it is at risk of failure.⁽³⁾

E-commerce offers significant benefits, including 24/7 availability, flexible payment methods, wide audience reach, and reduced operating costs (such as rent or utilities). However, it has disadvantages such as the need to invest in marketing campaigns to gain visibility and the challenges associated with developing logistics capabilities and guaranteeing the service offered.

Globally, e-commerce is a major business strategy, generating revenues of US\$4,2 trillion in 2020.⁽⁴⁾ In Latin America, biannual growth of 98,8 % has been observed.⁽⁵⁾ Specifically in Ecuador, out of a population of approximately 18 million, around 13,6 million are active internet users (75,6 %). E-commerce revenue is projected to continue growing at a rate of between 16 % and 17 % annually, exceeding \$6,1 billion USD in 2025.⁽⁶⁾ The millennial population represents 56 % of Ecuadoreans with full-time employment and is the most willing to make online purchases.⁽⁷⁾

In this digital context, Importadora GV is at a disadvantage because it does not have an online sales platform, which makes it difficult to collect valuable customer information (preferences and needs) and reduces its profitability compared to the competition. The creation of an online store is a proposal to improve the company's recognition and positioning, increasing its competitiveness by expanding its market reach. However, there are no studies that evaluate the commercial viability of online stores in Ecuadorian importers from the perspective of user experience. The objective of this research is to determine the commercial viability of creating an online store for Importadora GV from the perspective of user experience.

METHOD

The study used a quantitative approach for data collection and analysis. The level of research was descriptive, seeking to characterize a problematic situation and, associate variables in a population group. The design was non-experimental, as data were collected without attempting to induce changes, and cross-sectional, gathering data at a single point in time for the purpose of describing specific variables and interrelationships.

The population of interest (or universe) for the research was the users of Importadora GV, defined as the potential and current customers of Importadora GV who carry out online commercial transactions in Ecuador. This population was governed by the established selection criteria.

The inclusion criteria allow us to define the participants who will form part of the study population. These ensure that the sample is appropriate for the research objective, which is to determine the viability of the online store from the user's perspective. Exclusion criteria, on the other hand, specify the conditions or characteristics for which a participant could be eliminated, either for practical or ethical reasons. These criteria focus on the quality of participation and avoiding bias.

Inclusion criteria:

- Be a resident of the province of Santo Domingo.
- Be an active internet user.
- Have previous experience in online shopping.

Exclusion criteria:

- Not having provided informed consent.
- Presenting inconsistencies or incomplete data in the questionnaire (following the data processing and cleansing plan).

The sample size was 69 people. Non-probability convenience sampling was used, selecting participants who met the inclusion criteria and were accessible during the collection period. This approach is common in exploratory or commercial feasibility studies aimed at internal strategic decisions, where the main objective is not to generalize to the entire Ecuadorian population, but to obtain contextualized and timely information for decision-making within the company.

The data collection technique was a survey of 69 users. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire, authored by Gabriela Guerrero, consisted of questions (or items) designed to determine the commercial viability of creating an online store for Importadora GV. The instrument covered five dimensions: internet use, online shopping behavior, benchmarking, perception and preferences regarding Importadora GV, and evaluation of the online store proposal. The Likert scale was used for the evaluation questions. The response scale ranged from 1 to 5, with the equivalent on a qualitative scale varying according to the dimension explored. The questionnaire was submitted for content validation by an expert in the field (Julissa Miranda, Eng.), ensuring the relevance and clarity of the items. The information obtained through this instrument was used to perform exploratory analyses, understand the relationship between variables (such as online purchase frequency and perception of GV), and draw conclusions to formulate strategies for improving the user experience.

The surveys were collected using a printed questionnaire. Subsequently, the responses were downloaded into a spreadsheet and reviewed to discard those that were not completed in full. Data tabulation was performed in Excel. The results were presented in tables for effective and intuitive data management and analysis. Percentage frequencies were calculated. In addition to the descriptive analysis, a chi-square test of independence was performed to assess whether prior knowledge of the Importadora GV brand is associated with the intention to use its online store. A critical value of $\alpha = 0,05$ was set, and $p < 0,05$ was taken as a statistically significant relationship. Excel was chosen for its accessibility and ease of data management.

In relation to ethical aspects, informed consent was obtained from participants, guaranteeing the anonymity of the survey in order to obtain information for the internal improvement of the company. This was done in accordance with the principle of consent and confidentiality stipulated in the Organic Law on Data Protection.

RESULTS

The survey was structured around several questions based on five dimensions: internet use, purchasing behavior, benchmarking, perception and preferences, and evaluation of the

proposal. Each dimension contained multiple items.

Internet Use and Online Purchasing Behavior

The first dimension focused on characterizing the habits of respondents with regard to internet use and the frequency of their online commercial transactions.

Almost all respondents (94,2 %) use the internet every day. Only 4,3 % use it several times a week, and 1,4 % once a week. On the other hand, online shopping behavior is mostly sporadic: 30,4 % of respondents make purchases once a year and 29 % every 3-6 months. It is important to note that 21,7 % indicated that they never shop online (table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of internet use and online shopping by users		
Frequency of internet use	n	%
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 months	20	29,0
Once a year	21	30,4
Never	15	21,7

The product most frequently purchased online by the surveyed population is clothing and accessories (58,0 %). In second place are “other” products (30,4 %), followed by food and beverages (26,10 %), and electronics and home and decoration (both with 23,2 %) (table 2).

The most commonly used platform or device for online shopping is the smartphone (72,5 %), which highlights the need for responsive design for online stores. Laptops and desktop computers are used less frequently (14,5 % and 8,7 %,

respectively) (table 3).

Table 2. Products or services purchased online

Products or services	n	%
Electronics	16	23,2
Clothing and accessories	40	58,0
Home and decoration	16	23,2
Food and beverages	18	26,1
Travel and tourism	7	10,1
Other	21	30,4

Table 3. Device used for online shopping

Frequency of internet use	n	%
Desktop computer	6	8,7
Laptop	10	14,5
Smartphone	50	72,5

Determining factors for purchasing and online store features

This section evaluated the factors that users consider most important when making online purchasing decisions, using a scale of importance from 1 to 5.

The most decisive factors in purchasing, classified as “Very important,” are secure payment options (57 %) and fast delivery (54 %). Customer service is also a crucial factor (48 % “Very important”), followed by product variety (43 % “Very important”) and ease of use of the platform (41 % “Very important”) (table 4).

When examining specific features, the one rated as “Very important” is Fast and reliable delivery (58 %), which reinforces the previous finding on the importance of logistics. Other key features include various payment options (51 % “Very important”) and a fast and easy purchasing process (43 % “Very important”) (table 5).

Table 4. Determining factors in online purchasing

Factor	Not important		Somewhat important		Almost important		Important		Very important	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Competitive price	4	6	17	25	7	10	17	25	24	35
Product variety	3	4	12	17	6	9	18	26	30	43
Ease of use of the platform	4	6	12	17	4	6	21	30	28	41
Fast delivery	3	4	10	14	6	9	13	19	37	54
Secure payment options	3	4	9	13	8	12	10	14	39	57
Customer service and support	3	4	13	19	3	4	17	25	33	48

Table 5. Necessary features and functionalities

Features and functionalities	Not important		Somewhat important		Almost important		Important		Very important	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Extensive and up-to-date catalog	4	6	10	14	9	13	17	25	29	42
Quick and easy purchasing process	4	6	11	16	4	6	20	29	30	43
Various payment options	4	6	9	13	5	7	16	23	35	51
Fast and reliable deliveries	2	3	11	16	5	7	11	16	40	58
Customer service and support	4	6	10	14	6	9	17	25	32	46
Advanced search and filters	3	4	11	16	5	7	22	32	28	41

Perception and feasibility of the proposal (online store for Importadora GV)

The awareness of the Importadora GV brand and customers' willingness to use its online platform were evaluated.

Most users (72,5 %) are aware of the existence of Importadora GV. Meanwhile, willingness to access GV's online store is high, with 42,0 % responding "Yes, definitely" and 50,7 % indicating "Maybe." This suggests that 92,7 % of respondents represent a potential market for the digital platform. The results indicated a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 4,75$, $p < 0,05$), suggesting that brand recognition is a key factor driving willingness to adopt the digital channel (table 6).

Table 6. Awareness of the existence of Importadora GV

Awareness of the existence	n	%
Yes	50	72,5
No	19	27,5
Willingness to visit the store		
Yes, definitely	29	42,0
Maybe	35	50,7
No, I'm not interested	5	7,2
$\chi^2 = 4,75$, $p < 0,05$		

The results show strong interest in Importadora GV's offerings: 40,6 % are "very interested" in learning about its products, and 34,8 % are "interested." (table 7).

Table 7. Interest in learning about the products offered by Importadora GV and willingness to access the online store

Interest	n	%
Not interested	1	1,4
Not interested	1	1,4
Somewhat interested	15	21,7
Interested	24	34,8
Very interested	28	40,6

The main motivating factor for purchasing is comprehensive, with 39,1 % selecting "All of the above" (including prices, variety, better shopping experience, and additional services/guarantees). Individually, "Greater variety of products" is the most motivating factor (33,3 %) (table 8).

Table 8. Factors that would motivate you to shop online at Importadora GV

Aspect	n	%
Lower prices	8	11,6
Wider variety of products	23	33,3
Best shopping experience	4	5,8
Additional services and guarantees	7	10,1
All of the above	27	39,1

DISCUSSION

The research confirms the commercial viability of creating an online store for Importadora GV. This finding is supported by the growth of e-commerce in Ecuador, where the high rate of daily internet use (94,2 %) and the size of the potential market, even in the province of Santo Domingo (the ninth most populous in Ecuador), suggest that digitization is a necessary strategy for competitiveness.

The results on consumer behavior are fundamental to the online store's strategy. Given that 58 % of purchases are made

via smartphone, the emphasis on responsive design and ease of use (41 % consider it "very important") are crucial for a satisfactory user experience. The role of UX professionals is precisely to make technology "friendly, satisfying, easy to use, and therefore truly useful".⁽⁸⁾

The most decisive purchasing factors focus on trust and logistics. Security in payment options (57 % "Very important") and speed/reliability in delivery (54 % and 58 % respectively) are clear indicators that the store must guarantee secure and efficient processes, especially considering that 72,50 % prefer home delivery. The digital transformation in logistics has improved transparency and order tracking in Ecuador, increasing confidence in online commerce.⁽⁹⁾

In the Microenvironment analysis, Importadora GV stands out by managing three lines of business (clothing, electronics, and home appliances). The online store will allow GV to manage the threat of new competitors and rivalry by offering added value such as superior customer service and unique products. It can also mitigate customer bargaining power through incentives, gifts, and advice, fostering loyalty.⁽¹⁰⁾

The high level of interest and willingness to access the online store (42 % definitely, 50,7 % maybe), coupled with brand awareness (72,5 %), positions Importadora GV favorably for the digital transition. However, the main purchase motivation focuses on the comprehensive range of factors, suggesting that the store's positioning should be cross-cutting, linking marketing with all areas of the company to achieve consistency.⁽¹¹⁾

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates high commercial viability for the launch of an online store by Importadora GV in Ecuador, supported both by the growth of e-commerce in the country and the favorable predisposition of the consumers surveyed. The findings indicate that the success of the platform will depend critically on a strategy focused on the user experience, with an emphasis on three pillars: (1) transaction security (57 % consider it "very important"), (2) logistical efficiency, especially fast and reliable deliveries (58 % "very important"), and (3) responsive design, given that 72,5 % of online purchases are made from smartphones. In addition, a significant association was found between brand awareness and intention to use the online store, underscoring the importance of capitalizing on existing recognition through digital communication campaigns.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Guerrero Vidal Gabriela Jamileth, Miranda Cansing Susgein Julissa, Chávez-Arizala Jenrry Fredy.

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