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*Article*

# Economic Assessment of the Impact of E-Commerce Platforms on the Development of Trade Services

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**Abstract:** This study evaluates the impact of e-commerce platforms on the development of trade services in Uzbekistan. Based on official statistical data, the dynamics of e-commerce and trade services are analyzed using statistical, comparative, and economic methods. The findings show that the rapid expansion of e-commerce contributes to market expansion, reduction of transaction costs, development of digital payments and logistics, and improvement of trade-service efficiency. The study establishes that e-commerce platforms are becoming an important factor in the transformation of trade services and proposes an integrated approach to assessing their economic impact.

**Keywords:** e-commerce, e-commerce platforms, trade services, digital economy, transaction costs, marketplaces, economic efficiency, digital trade.

## 1. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed the structure, organization, and mechanisms of trade services. In recent years, e-commerce platforms have emerged as one of the most important components of the digital economy, creating new opportunities for interaction between sellers and consumers, expanding market access, reducing transaction costs, and improving the efficiency of commercial operations. Unlike traditional trade models, platform-based e-commerce enables businesses to operate beyond geographical boundaries and provides consumers with wider access to products, services, prices, and market information. Consequently, the expansion of e-commerce is increasingly influencing not only retail sales but also the broader development of trade services [1].

The global expansion of digital commerce has accelerated the transformation of service markets. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), digital trade is becoming an increasingly important component of international economic activity, encompassing transactions that are digitally ordered and/or digitally delivered . The development of digital platforms has strengthened the role of information technologies in connecting market participants, facilitating transactions, and creating new forms of value generation. At the same time, the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) emphasizes that online platforms have become important intermediaries within modern e-commerce ecosystems, connecting businesses and consumers while supporting digital payments, logistics, marketing, and other related services .

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The economic significance of e-commerce platforms is particularly relevant for developing economies . Digital platforms can reduce the barriers faced by small and medium-sized enterprises by providing access to broader consumer markets without requiring extensive physical retail infrastructure. They can also contribute to lower search and transaction costs, faster order processing, greater price transparency, improved customer interaction, and the development of complementary services such as digital payments, delivery, warehousing, and digital marketing [2]. Therefore, the impact of e-commerce platforms should be considered not merely in terms of online sales volumes but as a broader process of transformation of the trade-services ecosystem.

Uzbekistan has also experienced significant growth in e-commerce activity as part of the country's broader digital transformation. The expansion of internet access, digital payment systems, online marketplaces, logistics services, and digital consumer behavior has created favorable conditions for the development of electronic commerce. According to official statistics, the volume of e-commerce trade in Uzbekistan increased from 12.1 billion soums in 2017 to 15,211.5 billion soums in 2024. This rapid expansion indicates that e-commerce has moved from a relatively limited commercial channel toward an increasingly important component of the national trade system.

At the same time, the trade-services sector has demonstrated sustained growth. The volume of trade services increased from 67,600.2 billion soums in 2020 to 154,995.1 billion soums in 2024 and reached 186,957.3 billion soums in 2025. The simultaneous expansion of e-commerce and trade services suggests that digital platforms may be contributing to structural changes in the organization and delivery of trade services. However, the existence of parallel growth does not, by itself, establish a direct causal relationship. Trade-service development is also influenced by household incomes, consumer demand, demographic changes, investment, inflation, logistics infrastructure, digital connectivity, and other macroeconomic factors [3].

Previous research confirms that digital platforms can expand market opportunities, reduce transaction costs, improve information exchange, and help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) enter wider markets. López González and Jouanjean show that digitalization lowers trade costs and enables firms to reach consumers and suppliers beyond geographical boundaries, particularly through small-parcel trade, while López González and Sorescu find that digital connectivity and trade facilitation strongly support parcel-based commerce, although courier and logistics regulations may constrain it. UNCTAD reports a substantial expansion of business e-commerce sales through online platforms, a significant share of which takes place between businesses and notes that online marketplaces allow firms to reach larger customer bases at lower transaction costs . Early empirical evidence also points to lower online prices and lower menu costs, although branding and trust remain important.

Research on Uzbekistan has focused mainly on the development of the national e-commerce ecosystem. Jurayeva and Sodiqova link e-commerce growth to information and communication technologies, digital payments, data security, digital infrastructure, and government support, while Daminova shows that marketplaces, digital payments, fintech, and logistics develop as an interconnected process, with regulatory, anti-fraud, and infrastructure issues remaining challenges. Irnazarov et al. stress that platform effectiveness in transition economies also depends on institutions, consumer trust, fintech integration, and digital literacy, and Abdujabborova and Zufarova describe e-commerce as a catalyst for innovation, market integration, and economic modernization [4].

Most international studies, however, examine global or cross-country trends, whereas country-specific quantitative assessments of how e-commerce platforms affect trade-service development remain limited, and studies of Uzbekistan mostly describe the growth of e-commerce rather than its relationship with trade services. This study addresses this gap by relating e-commerce turnover to the volume of trade services in Uzbekistan and by proposing an integrated assessment framework.

In this context, the economic assessment of the impact of e-commerce platforms on trade services represents an important scientific and practical research problem. The key issue is to identify the mechanisms through which digital platforms influence the economic performance of trade services and to determine the indicators that can be used to measure this influence. Such an assessment should consider not only the growth of e-commerce turnover but also its contribution to value added, transaction efficiency, market accessibility, digital payment development, logistics performance, and service quality [5].

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a quantitative research approach to assess the economic impact of e-commerce platforms on the development of trade services in Uzbekistan. The methodological framework combines statistical, comparative, dynamic, correlation, and economic analysis methods. The research is based primarily on official statistical data characterizing the development of e-commerce and trade services in Uzbekistan.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The development of e-commerce platforms has become one of the most visible manifestations of the digital transformation of trade in Uzbekistan. The expansion of online marketplaces, electronic payment systems, digital advertising, delivery services, and mobile commerce has changed the traditional organization of commercial transactions and created new channels for interaction between sellers and consumers [6].

Official statistical data demonstrate a particularly rapid expansion of e-commerce in recent years. According to the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the volume of e-commerce trade increased from 6.0 billion soums in 2016 to 15,211.5 billion soums in 2024 [7]. The most significant acceleration occurred during 2020–2022, when the indicator increased from 1,002.5 billion soums to 10,886.8 billion soums. In 2023 and 2024, e-commerce continued to expand, reaching 13,263.8 and 15,211.5 billion soums, respectively:

**Table 1. Dynamics of e-commerce trade volume in Uzbekistan**

| Year | E-commerce trade volume, bln soums | Annual growth rate, % |
|---|---|---|
| 2016 | 6,0 | - |
| 2017 | 12,1 | 101,7 |
| 2018 | 40,9 | 238,0 |
| 2019 | 275,3 | 573,1 |
| 2020 | 1,002,5 | 264,1 |
| 2021 | 5,978,7 | 596,6 |
| 2022 | 10,886,8 | 82,1 |
| 2023 | 13,263,8 | 21,8 |
| 2024 | 15,211,5 | 14,7 |

The data show that e-commerce has passed through several stages of development. During 2016–2019, the market was characterized by a relatively low initial base and extremely high growth rates. The period 2020–2022 can be regarded as a phase of accelerated digital adoption, while 2023–2024 demonstrates a transition toward a more mature stage of market development [8].

The moderation of the growth rate after 2022 should not necessarily be interpreted as a decline in the importance of e-commerce. Rather, it indicates that the market is moving from an initial stage of rapid expansion toward a stage in which the quality of platforms, customer retention, logistics efficiency, digital payment integration, and service differentiation become increasingly important.

Thus, the economic significance of e-commerce platforms should be assessed not only through their growth rate but also through their contribution to the wider trade-services ecosystem [9].

The expansion of e-commerce has occurred against the background of sustained growth in Uzbekistan's trade-services sector. According to official statistics, the volume of trade services increased from 67,600.2 billion soums in 2020 to 154,995.1 billion soums in 2024 and reached 186,957.3 billion soums in 2025 [10].

**Table 2. Dynamics of trade services in Uzbekistan**

| Year | Trade services, bln soums | Growth compared with previous year, % |
|---|---|---|
| 2020 | 67,600,2 | - |
| 2021 | 85,762,3 | 126,9 |
| 2022 | 103,488,3 | 120,7 |
| 2023 | 128,781,8 | 124,4 |
| 2024 | 154,995,1 | 120,4 |
| 2025 | 186,957,3 | 120,6 |

During 2020–2025, the volume of trade services increased by approximately 2.8 times. The data therefore demonstrate that trade services have remained one of the major components of the service economy.

The 2024 structure is particularly important for evaluating the role of digital commerce. In January–December 2024, the volume of trade services reached 149,599.8 billion soums, with retail trade accounting for 54.3% of the total volume.

This structure is important because retail trade represents one of the areas most directly affected by e-commerce platforms. Online marketplaces, digital catalogues, electronic payments, delivery systems, and customer-review mechanisms directly modify the way retail transactions are organized [11].

The simultaneous expansion of e-commerce and trade services provides an important basis for evaluating their economic relationship.

During 2020–2024, e-commerce trade volume increased from 1,002.5 billion soums to 15,211.5 billion soums, while trade services increased from 67,600.2 billion soums to 154,995.1 billion soums.

This can be represented conceptually as:

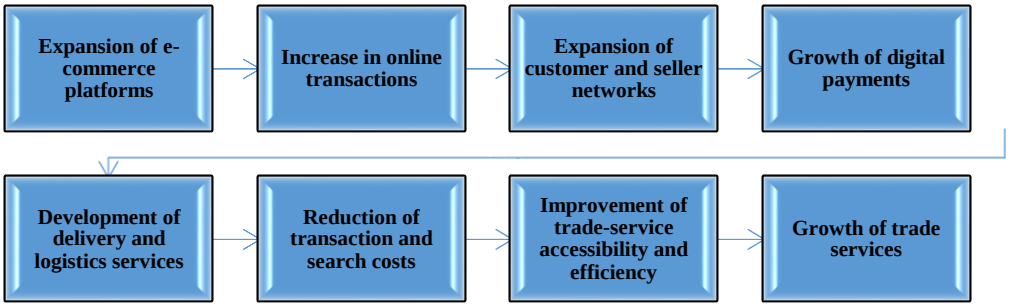



**Figure 1. Economic mechanism for the ttransformation of trade services under the Influence of E-Commerce Platforms**

The relationship is therefore not limited to the direct value of online sales. E-commerce platforms generate indirect effects through the development of related economic activities.

For example, an increase in online orders creates additional demand for payment processing, courier services, warehouses, packaging, digital advertising, customer support, information technology, and data-processing services. Consequently, the economic impact of e-commerce should be interpreted as a multiplier effect within the trade-services ecosystem [12].

Traditional retail businesses are constrained by their physical location and geographical customer base. E-commerce platforms significantly reduce these geographical limitations. A seller can present products to consumers from different regions without establishing a physical store in every market.

This mechanism is particularly important for small businesses. Official statistics show that small business entities provided 49,291.2 billion soums worth of trade services in January–June 2024, representing a 10.5% increase compared with the same period of 2023.

The integration of such enterprises into e-commerce platforms can therefore provide additional opportunities for market expansion and customer acquisition.

E-commerce platforms reduce several categories of transaction costs including:

- consumer search costs;
- seller information costs;
- communication costs;
- order-processing costs;
- payment-processing costs;
- marketing costs.

Digital catalogues and search functions reduce the time required to identify products, while integrated payment systems simplify the completion of transactions. Consequently, the same economic transaction can be completed with fewer resources than under some traditional trade models.

Digital payment systems are an essential component of platform-based commerce. The ability to pay electronically allows transactions to be completed without direct physical interaction between consumers and sellers [13].

The integration of e-commerce platforms with digital payment services therefore increases transaction speed and transparency and contributes to the formalization of commercial activities.

E-commerce cannot develop sustainably without an efficient logistics system. Growth in online orders increases demand for:

- warehouses;
- order fulfillment;
- courier services;
- parcel delivery;
- inventory management;
- packaging;
- route optimization.

Consequently, the development of e-commerce platforms stimulates complementary trade and transport services.

This relationship is particularly important because trade services and transportation services represent major components of Uzbekistan's market-service structure. In January-August 2024, trade services accounted for 22.2% of market services, while transport services accounted for 22.0%.

E-commerce platforms make it easier for consumers to compare products, prices, delivery conditions, and customer reviews. Increased transparency can strengthen competition between sellers.

From the perspective of economic efficiency, stronger competition can encourage businesses to improve:

- product quality;

- ❖ service speed;
- ❖ delivery conditions;
- ❖ pricing strategies;
- ❖ after-sales service.

Therefore, platform development can influence not only the volume of trade services but also their qualitative characteristics.

To assess the relationship between e-commerce and trade services, the growth indicators of both variables can be compared.

Between 2020 and 2024, e-commerce trade increased approximately 15.2 times, from 1,002.5 billion soums to 15,211.5 billion soums. During the same period, trade services increased approximately 2.3 times, from 67,600.2 billion soums to 154,995.1 billion soums.

This comparison demonstrates that the growth rate of e-commerce substantially exceeded the growth rate of the overall trade-services sector.

The economic efficiency of e-commerce platforms can be evaluated through several indicators.

**Table 3. Main indicators for assessing the economic efficiency of e-commerce platforms**

| Indicator | Economic meaning | Expected effect |
|---|---|---|
| E-commerce turnover | Scale of online commercial activity | Increase |
| Number of active sellers | Platform business participation | Increase |
| Number of online customers | Market coverage | Increase |
| Average transaction cost | Cost of completing a transaction | Decrease |
| Average delivery time | Logistics efficiency | Decrease |
| Digital payment share | Level of payment digitalization | Increase |
| Repeat-purchase rate | Customer loyalty | Increase |
| Trade-service volume | Sector development | Increase |
| Gross value added | Economic contribution | Increase |

The use of these indicators allows the assessment of e-commerce to move beyond a simple comparison of turnover figures.

The economic effects of digital platforms are also associated with regional differences in trade-service activity. Official data show substantial differences between regions.

In 2024, trade services amounted to 53,421.7 billion soums in Tashkent city, 14,439.3 billion soums in Tashkent region, 11,091.7 billion soums in Fergana region, and 10,590.6 billion soums in Samarkand region.

Such differences indicate that the economic potential of e-commerce platforms is not uniform across the country. Regions with larger populations, higher incomes, better digital infrastructure, and stronger logistics networks are likely to generate greater platform activity.

At the same time, digital platforms can help reduce geographical disparities by connecting enterprises in less-developed regions with consumers in larger markets.

Therefore, regional e-commerce development should be regarded not only as a commercial objective but also as a potential instrument of territorial economic integration [14].

Despite the rapid development of e-commerce, several factors can restrict its economic contribution to trade services.

First, unequal digital infrastructure can create differences in access to online commerce between regions .

Second, insufficient digital skills among entrepreneurs may prevent small businesses from effectively using online marketplaces.

Third, logistics costs and delivery delays can reduce the competitiveness of online sellers.

Fourth, cybersecurity and consumer-protection risks can reduce trust in online transactions.

Fifth, excessive concentration of market activity on a limited number of large platforms may create competition-related risks.

Consequently, the economic effect of e-commerce platforms depends not only on their number and turnover but also on the institutional and infrastructural environment in which they operate.

The empirical evidence indicates a strong simultaneous expansion of e-commerce and trade services in Uzbekistan. E-commerce trade increased from 1,002.5 billion soums in 2020 to 15,211.5 billion soums in 2024, whereas trade services increased from 67,600.2 billion to 154,995.1 billion soums over the same period [15].

The significantly faster expansion of e-commerce suggests that digital platforms are becoming an increasingly important component of the trade-services ecosystem. Nevertheless, the economic effect should not be interpreted as a one-to-one relationship between e-commerce turnover and trade-service growth.

Rather, the impact operates through a set of interconnected channels: increased market access, reduced transaction costs, digital payments, logistics development, competition, and improved customer service.

Thus, the central economic conclusion is that e-commerce platforms should be viewed as an infrastructure of trade-service transformation rather than merely an alternative sales channel. Their development creates direct effects through online transactions and indirect effects through payment, logistics, information, marketing, and technology services.

The findings also suggest that future policy should focus on increasing the efficiency of the entire e-commerce ecosystem rather than simply increasing online sales volumes. In particular, greater integration between marketplaces, payment providers, logistics companies, and small businesses can strengthen the contribution of e-commerce to the national trade-services sector.

## 4. Conclusion

The study shows that e-commerce platforms are becoming an important factor in the transformation of trade services in Uzbekistan. E-commerce turnover grew from 1,002.5 billion soums in 2020 to 15,211.5 billion soums in 2024, much faster than trade services, which rose from 67,600.2 to 154,995.1 billion soums. Platforms influence trade services through market expansion, lower transaction costs, digital payments, logistics development, stronger competition, and better customer service, and thereby generate additional demand for payment, logistics, and information services. Their effectiveness, however, depends on digital infrastructure, digital skills, payment interoperability, cybersecurity, and regulation. Uzbekistan should therefore expand digital and logistics infrastructure in the regions, support the integration of SMEs into marketplaces, and strengthen consumer protection. Future research should use regional panel data and econometric methods to estimate the causal effect of platform development on trade-service performance.

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