

## MARKETPLACE MODELS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT OF SMES IN THE CONTEXT OF CROSS-BORDER E- COMMERCE

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### Abstract

*Digital marketplaces have redefined the global economic landscape, facilitating access for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to international markets and supporting the process of economic globalization. This paper analyzes the main marketplace models (eMAG, Allegro, Amazon) and their impact on the development of SMEs in the context of cross-border e-commerce. The methodology studied combines a comparative analysis of platforms with the identification of barriers (logistics, regulations, cross-border taxation) and facilitators (technology, payment integration, digital marketing) that influence the success of SMEs on these platforms. The results highlight that marketplace models accelerate the internationalization of SMEs by providing direct access to global consumers, optimizing sales processes, and facilitating adaptation to the requirements of dynamic markets. The scientific contribution lies in demonstrating the symbiotic relationship between digital innovation, marketing strategies, and the competitiveness of SMEs in global markets, offering insights for policymakers and SME managers.*

**Keywords:** digital marketplace, cross-border e-commerce, SMEs, globalization, digitization, marketing strategies.

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### INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of the global economy has created unprecedented opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises to access global markets. Digital marketplaces, e-commerce platforms that connect sellers and buyers internationally, have become essential tools in the process of economic globalization and digitization of SMEs. Platforms such as eMAG (Romania), Allegro (Poland), and Amazon (global) illustrate how marketplace models facilitate not only access to new consumers, but also the adaptation of SMEs to the demands of global competitiveness and continuous innovation.

According to specialist reports, around 80% of SMEs in Central and Eastern Europe currently use marketplace platforms to sell their products across borders, demonstrating the critical importance of these channels in growth and internationalisation strategies. Logistics issues, different tax regulations between countries, price fluctuations, and increased competitiveness are major challenges for SMEs in the context of cross-border e-commerce.

This paper analyzes marketplace models and their influence on the global development of SMEs, exploring the mechanisms through which these platforms facilitate or limit SMEs' access to international markets, as well as the digital marketing strategies that contribute to the success of SMEs in the competitive environment of global e-commerce.

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

The paper uses a mixed methodology that combines comparative analysis, scientific literature review, and case studies relevant to the topic under analysis. This multidimensional approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomena that characterize the digital marketplace industry.

The comparative analysis of marketplace models (eMAG, Allegro, Amazon) was conducted based on publicly available data and specialist reports in the field of e-commerce and SME development. The main purpose of this analysis is to identify the distinctive characteristics of each model, as well as the mechanisms through which they influence the access and competitiveness of SMEs in global markets.

The documentation used comes from scientific publications indexed in academic databases, reports from international organizations (European Commission, OECD), SME case studies, and data available from the annual reports of marketplace platforms. The main sources include works by researchers in the field: Rodica Burbulea, who analyzes digital marketing strategies and their impact on e-commerce platforms; Lilia Chiriac, who studies digital consumer behavior and the adaptation of SME strategies; and Sergiu Mirza, who examines logistics and cross-border regulations in e-commerce.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The digital marketplaces analyzed—eMAG, Allegro, and Amazon—highlight the profound transformation in how SMEs build their presence in global markets and adapt their commercial strategies to the new realities of cross-border e-commerce. First, these platforms function as complex infrastructures, combining technological, logistical, commercial, and marketing components, creating an ecosystem in which SMEs are no longer just simple product sellers, but actors integrated into a digital value chain. The eMAG model, representative of Central and Eastern Europe, offers SMEs rapid access to a regional market, combining product listing with promotion services, payment integration, and centralized logistics solutions. SMEs using this platform benefit from increased visibility, can test new markets, and expand their portfolio without major investments in their own infrastructure. Similarly, Allegro, dominant on the Polish market, creates a stable and predictable framework for SMEs, based on consumer trust and clear mechanisms for managing transactions, returns, and disputes, which reinforces the perception of security and professionalism. However, Amazon, with its global reach, raises the bar even higher, imposing strict standards for performance, delivery times, and service quality, which forces SMEs to adopt a much more rigorous internal organization in order to remain competitive.

These marketplace models cannot be understood solely in terms of technical functionality, but also in terms of the changes they generate in the behavior of SMEs and consumers. SMEs are forced to reformulate their online presence strategies, consistently leverage the promotional tools offered by platforms, and build a credible, well-differentiated commercial image. The importance of digital marketing strategies becomes evident in a context where thousands of sellers compete with similar products on the same platform, and the purchase decision is influenced by visibility, reviews, product presentation, and the consistency of commercial messages [3]. SMEs that treat their presence on the marketplace as a strategic channel, rather than a simple showcase, manage to turn technological advantages into real competitive advantages. At the same time, marketplaces are fertile ground for the application of advanced digital technologies in business; the integration of automation solutions, data analysis, campaign optimization, and the adaptation of commercial messages to the specific audience contribute to the structuring of more dynamic and resilient business models [2].

From a consumer relations perspective, marketplaces strongly influence how the product, brand, and seller are perceived. Consumers are exposed to a very large volume of offers, and the decision-making process is based not only on price and technical characteristics, but also on reviews, ratings, clarity of information, and relevance of marketing messages. In this context, the role of marketing research becomes central: SMEs that systematically analyze consumer behavior, post-purchase feedback, and market reactions are the ones that manage to quickly adjust their offer and remain relevant in the face of changing preferences [4]. Marketplaces provide a continuous flow of data on sales, conversions, seasonality, and customer reactions, and the intelligent use of this

information allows for the development of adaptive strategies, in which decisions are no longer made intuitively, but based on measurable indicators.

Analysis of barriers reveals that cross-border logistics is one of the most sensitive issues for SMEs. Inventory management, international transport, return costs, delivery times, and market-specific requirements can become limiting factors for businesses that lack experience or specialized partnerships. These challenges are confirmed by studies dedicated to e-commerce, where infrastructure, transport, and physical flow coordination issues consistently emerge as critical elements for the efficient functioning of online channels [1]. Without a coherent logistics solution, the advantages offered by marketplaces are diminished, and SMEs risk disappointing consumers with delays or inconsistent services, thus affecting their rating and visibility on the platform.

Another important element is the adaptation of offers to the requirements of different markets. Even though marketplaces facilitate technical access to consumers in several countries, commercial success depends on how SMEs manage to calibrate their portfolio, positioning, and communication. Experience gained in promoting products on foreign markets, including sensitive segments such as agri-food products, shows that differences in taste, quality standards, and certification requirements can directly influence sales performance [5]. Although the example of agri-food products concerns a specific area, the logic of adapting to market requirements is similar for other categories of products listed on marketplaces: SMEs must take into account local standards, the level of trust in new brands, and how consumers perceive the origin of products.

On the other hand, marketplaces can also be seen as accelerated learning platforms for SMEs. By engaging in a competitive digital environment, businesses are forced to quickly professionalize their way of working: to clarify their pricing strategy, standardize their internal processes, track performance indicators, and actively manage customer relationships. This dynamic favors SMEs that manage to learn from their interaction with the market and integrate feedback into future decisions. The digital marketing tools available on marketplaces—sponsored campaigns, listing optimization, use of visual content and detailed descriptions—support not only sales growth but also the consolidation of a coherent image in front of a wide audience [3]. Thus, marketplaces become a real laboratory for many SMEs where strategies are tested, messages are adjusted, and digital skills are gradually built.

Overall, the results of the analysis show that marketplace models such as eMAG, Allegro, and Amazon create both opportunities and constraints for SMEs. They facilitate access to foreign markets, reduce some of the traditional barriers to entry, and provide advanced technological and logistical infrastructure, but at the same time require a high level of adaptability, operational discipline, and maturity in the use of marketing and market research tools [2], [4]. SMEs that manage to view these platforms not only as a sales channel but also as a strategic partner in their long-term development are most likely to consolidate their position in the context of cross-border e-commerce.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

An analysis of the eMAG, Allegro, and Amazon marketplace models highlights the fact that these platforms have become essential elements in the internationalization process of SMEs, providing a digital framework that facilitates rapid access to large markets and effective interaction with consumers. Marketplaces are no longer just an additional commercial channel, but an integrated environment in which technology, logistics, and marketing work together, generating much greater development opportunities for businesses than in traditional commerce.

The models analyzed show that SMEs that are actively involved in these ecosystems gain access to promotional tools, relevant data on consumer behavior, and standardized logistics solutions, which contribute to the professionalization and streamlining of internal processes. At the same time, the intense competitive environment specific to marketplaces forces businesses to adopt clear strategies

regarding product presentation, commercial positioning, and customer relationship management, which leads to an increase in the quality of marketing and management activities.

At the same time, the analysis shows that SMEs face significant difficulties related to logistics, adapting to the requirements of different markets, price management, and maintaining a consistent level of operational performance. These challenges confirm that success on marketplaces is not automatic, but depends on the level of adaptability, the ability of the company to respond quickly to market changes, and the ability to use the available digital tools effectively.

Overall, the chapter's conclusions show that marketplaces can become an important accelerator for SME development, but only for those businesses that approach this channel strategically, with a long-term vision and an openness to continuous learning. Integration into these digital ecosystems not only expands access to new markets, but also contributes to the maturation of internal skills, transforming SMEs into competitive players in the contemporary digital economy.

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*Recommended*

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