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Geomarketing As an Entry Tool into International Markets for National Online Marketplaces

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Abstract

The paper studies the role of online marketplaces in the development of international export business and international economic relations. The online marketplaces have become the cornerstone of the modern digital economy due to the development of global processes in the world economy and digitalisation in all spheres of human life; all these have set new trends and features of international economic relations. The study of this topic will allow to better understanding the nature of online marketplaces, international processes related to selling goods and services with the help of online marketplaces, as well as tools for developing international trade and export business. This paper explores what online marketplaces are and what types of

online marketplaces exist in the world. The authors also present practical examples of Russian online marketplaces' successful cases in the context of economic development dynamics and trade digitalisation, as well as current trends and challenges in the field of electronic commerce; the opportunities and risks of further development of national online marketplaces and their role in international export business. Concluding the study, the authors examine options for using artificial intelligence in electronic commerce.

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Keywords

Trade digitalisation, electronic commerce, export business, online marketplaces, development prospects, economic effect, artificial intelligence.

Introduction

When we talk about the theoretical characteristics of online marketplaces functioning, it is necessary to say that the sphere of electronic commerce has appeared not so long ago, that is why the systematic study of online marketplaces and their impact on the economy requires a longer study. Moreover, in the context of the technologies' rapid development it is necessary to consider that the conceptual and categorical framework is constantly updated, and unfortunately neither in national regulatory documents nor in international ones, there is no definition of online marketplaces.

The main objective of the research is to assess the accumulated practical experience of Internet trading through online marketplaces in Russia and to identify the perspectives for the international trade development using electronic commerce.

Research objectives

- to estimate the sales volume through online marketplaces;
- to present the geography of Russia's trade and economic interactions in the world market;
- to define the perspectives for development of electronic commerce in Russia and partner countries.

Research methods and methodology

The research object is the development of electronic commerce and trade digitalisation, the subject is online marketplaces as an electronic trade tool.

The main hypothesis is the role of online marketplaces as an electronic commerce instrument and their influence on the global economy.

The methodological basis of the research is the method of content analysis for the activities of domestic and foreign online marketplaces' evaluation, system approach, method of data collection, comparative analysis and synthesis, statistical and economic method, grouping method and graphical method.

During the study, the publications of the following Russian authors were studied: Alferova A.A., Lukina O.V., Kurochkina A.A., Nazarov P.V., Nanieva L.V., Bekmurzaeva Z.H., Yurasov A.V., Kosnikov S. N., Korolev D. A., Chivvi E. N., Razumova D. Y., Maltseva Yu. A., Kotlyarevskaya I. V., Baginskaya V. A., Litvinov E. A., Savinov Yu. A., Taranovskaya E. V. [19], Popenkova D. K., Yuan

V., Kovalev M., Bilich A. O., Matkovskaya J. S. and others. The evidence base was provided by regulatory documents and electronic resources.

Research results and discussion

The analysis of the experience of online marketplaces' use has shown that electronic commerce, where marketplaces are one of the tools, has a global impact on international trade through the use of online trading platforms.

Russia's Economic Development Minister, Maxim Reshetnikov, said that export through online marketplaces ensures the realisation of two national goals – the development of non-resource non-energy exports and the development of medium and small-sized business.

If we talk about the first goal, it is true that there is the problem of Russia's dependence on raw materials that lasts for decades, and energy resources represent more than half, and in some sectors the majority of Russian exports. According to Veronika Nikishina, Director General of the Russian Export Center, in a couple of decades the strategic sector for the Russian economy development will be Russia's positions in the markets of non-resource non-energy goods. That can be explained by the rapid transformation of the fuel sector and the transition to «green protectionism» by the EU and USA by the beginning of 2030 that will lead to a fundamental restructuring of world trade. Western countries are expected to restrict the use of fossil fuels, and to impose tariffs and fees on goods made using nonenvironmental technologies – with this trend, risks are also increasing and that cannot be ignored, as even the largest buyers of raw materials - India and China -export Russian oil to the EU and US markets. Thus, the share of non-resource non-energy goods in the structure of total exports is gradually increasing from 32%, according to 2022, to 35%, according to the results of the three quarters of 2023 (Nikishina, 2024). It is interesting to note that the diversification course was marked in 2018, when the meeting of the Presidium of the Presidential Council for Strategic Development and National Projects approved the passport of the national project «International cooperation and export», one of the key objectives of which was to increase exports of non-energy goods [Passport of the national project «International Cooperation and Export» (in Russian), www], as we can see, serious progress has been made during its implementation. In addition, V.V. Putin instructed the Russian Government together with the Russian Export Center to continue supporting non-resource exports after 2024 as part of the development of the Strategy for the Development of Foreign Economic Activity of the Russian Federation until 2030, where it was proposed to think over the improvement of measures and tools to support non-resource non-energy exports. Russian Export Center initiatives include the platform «My export» mentioned above and the program «Made in Russia», which is now actively promoted by Wildberries and Ozon according to statistics, sales of domestic goods within the framework of the action soared by 132%. Thus, the most popular categories of Russian goods, demanded in the markets, were products for gardening (+278), electronics and household appliances (+247), sports shoes (239%), jewelry (215%), products for newborns (199%).

When we review the export activities of *Wildberries*, it is clear that they are very important. For example, within the framework of the national project «International cooperation and export» there was a competition «Exporter of the year», where *Wildberries* won the nomination «Trader of the year» among large business enterprises, and the company owner, Tatiana Bakalchuk, won the first place as the best woman exporter [Moscow companies won in four nominations of the prize 'Exporter of the Year', www... (in Russian)]. In addition, the online marketplace is the largest online retailer in the Eurasian Economic Union, contributing to the growth of member states' sales – it showed an increase of 4.5 times in the first quarter of 2022, compared to last year. Unfortunately, the company does not

publish export trends to open sources, so we will look at the latest tadvicer.ru data, they report that in 2020 sales of *Wildberries* sellers increased by 95% year on year and exceeded 23 billion rubles and for January-October 2021, a 43% growth was recorded to 24.7 billion rubles. The high revenue growth in 2020 is due to the pandemic restrictions, which stopped the work of offline shops and moved traffic to online sites, but despite this, the ruble indicators continue to grow in 2021, when some of the restrictions are lifted. For example, in Table 1, let's analyse the volume of revenues and commercial expenses for 2019-2022 to assess the possible growth of exports.

Table 1 -	 Revenue and 	l business e	expenses for	2019-2022

Data	2019	2020	2021	2022	Growth Rate, %
Revenue (million rubles)	116 946	169 773	224 940	317 212	2,7
Commercial Expenses (rubles)	34 929	56 479	91 442	158 699	4,5

Considering these data, we can say that both the company's revenue and the commercial expenses grew annually, with a special growth spurt in both indicators in 2022. The growth of the latter indicates that the company has increased expenses on the marketing component, production and logistics, which may indicate an increase in sales volume, expansion of sales markets, including abroad. In general, if a company sees an increase in revenue and a simultaneous increase in commercial expenses, it may indicate that it is successfully developing and expanding its activities.

According to 2020 data, Wildberries exported to 14 countries around the world, some of which are shown in Figure 1.

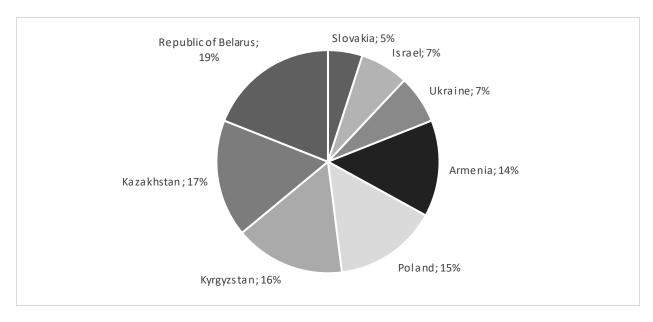


Figure 1 – Wildberries product exports by countries for 2020 (%).

According to the data in Figure 1, it can be said that *Wildberries* exported goods mainly to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and relatively small exports to other countries including Germany, France, Spain and Italy, are due to the fact that the company has entered their market recently. In general, the company continues to develop and seek new markets for its products, but there are methods that would stimulate the development of the company, respectively increase the share of exports through these channels.

The main point of growth for any retailer is the use of the most recent technologies, including

digital advertising. According to *Retail TouchPoints* survey, professionals say that technology had become the top area in which retailers are investing, with 61 per cent of respondents increasing their budgets for new technology and 52 per cent increasing their budgets for mobile technology. Whereas retail IT directors were once tasked with minimising costs, the amount of money invested in technology is now responsible for business results. And the leader in growth of spending is software, where analytics, digital marketing, mobile apps, AI and electronic commerce platforms are prioritized.

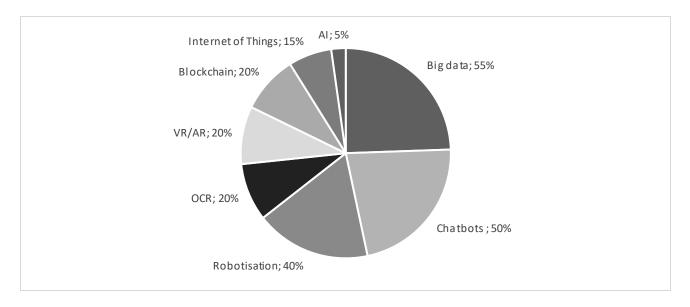


Figure 2 – Percentage of respondents who have adopted technology in the retail sector

According to the data in Figure 2, retailers use big data analytics the most to personalise customer communication, with chatbots and robotisation the next most popular, indicating a desire to automate their activities. Nowadays, the role of AI artificial intelligence in company automation is growing – it is a fairly new and fast-growing tool that online marketplaces are implementing to perform routine tasks: efficiently processing a huge layer of information about users, products, creating cards and infographics, responding to customer feedback, and much more. It is predicted that AI artificial intelligence will become an indispensable tool for sellers in the near future.

Ksenia Mogileva, an electronic commerce expert, notes that national online marketplaces do not use advertising tools effectively enough, as evidenced by statistics: Amazon's share of advertising revenue in 2021 was 7 per cent, while Ozon's was 2 per cent; online advertising spending in the same year did not exceed \$4.3 billion, which is 50 times less than the market leaders – the US and China. In order to start using advertising tools productively, it is necessary to engage as many audience interaction channels as possible. Opinion leaders and bloggers with significantly large audiences can be involved here, fuelling the move to the marketplace and incentivising to make a purchase. Nanieva L.V. and Bekmurzaeva Z.Kh. recognise such an advertising tool as effective [Nanieva, Bekmurzaeva, 2020]. In addition, omnichannel marketing has become a new form of evolution in marketing activities and SME (Small and medium-sized enterprises) development. So, the analysis of the European and American market B2C showed the growth of efficiency of trade organisations in 200-400 percent in comparison with the use of other types of marketing [Lukina, Kurochkina, Nazarov, 2021], which will increase economic performance and increase the recognition of marketplaces abroad. For example, Wildberries is present on YouTube, has its official pages in social networks VK, Odnoklassniki, where it places favourable offers.

The next measure that will increase the economic impact of online marketplaces is logistics. Dmitry Khrushchalev, Deputy Director for Development of *Delovye Linii* Group of Companies, notes that delivery to online marketplaces is the most promising market niche, as it is being actively expanded in order to minimise the delivery time to the final recipient. Compared to the previous year, the volume of traffic increased by 150 percent due to the expansion of the transport geography. However, delivery to other countries is considerably more difficult due to customs procedures, which takes a little more time, but it is still carried out in the shortest possible time through partner carriers. A.A. Alferova believes that the economic effect of reducing delivery times may entail:

- GDP growth and strengthening of foreign economic activity;
- growth of tax revenues to the budget resulting from accelerated turnover of funds;
- improvement of competitiveness of the country's transport system, realisation of its transit potential [Alferova, 2016].

Therefore, speeding up the delivery of goods to the customer contributes not only to increasing the number of customers, but also to economic growth in general.

In addition to logistics, a critical factor in the competition of online marketplaces is the proximity of giveaway outlets to the customer. In this regard, geomarketing is a strategic tool for the development of outlet networks. Various geomarketing metrics and techniques allow us to approach the issue of building a competent distribution network on a scientific basis, to reduce the risks of opening unprofitable outlets, to take into account many factors when analysing potential locations for giveaway outlets, including: demographics, competition data, mobility indicators, delivery infrastructure, forecasting the demand for national goods in foreign markets, and much more. For example, according to Table 2, geomarketing addresses the following objectives.

Table 2 – Geomarketing analysis of the territory and objectives to be addressed

Tasks to be performed	Implementation tools			
Selection of states and	Analytical data gathering			
cities for further				
expansion				
Planning of wholesale and	Geodata development: collection and processing of demographic data,			
retail trade via	competitor analysis, legislative barriers;			
marketplaces	Geodata modelling, creation of spatial models;			
	Global analysis of region attractiveness factors.			
Analysis of the core	Analysis of demand for the range of products in the area of interest;			
market and search for	Analysis of advertising campaigns;			
partners	Forecast of attendance, revenue, break-even point;			
	Adaptation of the assortment to the preferences of the population of the region			
	(country).			
Analysis of the legal and	Requirements for product standardisation and certification;			
regulatory framework of	Availability of national quality standards;			
the region (country)	Customs regulation;			
	Non-tariff methods of national market regulation;			
	Transport infrastructure and logistics;			
	Examination of the legislation of neighbouring states in the transit of goods.			

^{*}Source: developed by the authors

Based on the data in Table 2, it can be concluded that geomarketing significantly solves the whole range of problems that arise when an online marketplace enters the international market.

In this way, electronic commerce is not just growing but is setting new trends in trade relations through its competitive advantages over traditional trade. We have come to the conclusion that online

marketplaces to some extent solve the problem of Russia's raw material dependence, being a reliable channel for the export of non-resource non-energy goods, which today represents a priority direction of the strategy for the development of foreign economic activity. Moreover, the example of *Wildberries* proves the significant role of online trading platform in export activities. It is revealed that there is a significant economic effect on the operation and expansion of online marketplaces' sales markets by using the latest technology in online marketplace activities.

Conclusion

In general, tracing the evolution of online marketplaces as we see them nowadays, we can ascertain that they kept pace with the development of electronic commerce. At the same time, there is a trend where, with each new stage of development, online platforms have taken on more and more functionality and obligations to interact with consumers and sellers, which, in principle, increases their value for the subjects of such relations. This success of online marketplaces cannot have a seamless impact on the economic space.

Firstly, online marketplaces are involved in labour market changes related to job creation, they offer low commissions for sellers, which entails a flow of small and medium-sized enterprises to these platforms. In turn, the emergence of new players in the market results in the development of new business models, as low costs allow entrepreneurs to test their ideas and create innovations.

Secondly, online marketplaces are peculiar engines of economic globalisation: sellers, thanks to online marketing platforms, are able to export their products without excessive costs, and buyers can independently order goods from other countries, which contributes to the development of international business.

Thirdly, the scale of online marketplaces' activities necessitates the development of regulatory and legal acts governing cross-border activities of online platforms and activities within a given country.

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Геомаркетинг как инструмент выхода отечественных маркетплейсов на международный рынок

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Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена исследованию роли маркетплейсов в развитии международной деятельности и международных экономических отношений. Развитие глобализационных процессов в мировой экономике и цифровизация всех сфер человеческой жизнедеятельности задали новые тенденции и черты международных экономических отношений, где маркетплейсы стали краеугольным камнем современной цифровой экономики. Исследование данной проблематики позволит лучше понять сущность маркетплейсов, международные процессы, связанные с продажей товаров и услуг через маркетплейсы, а также инструменты развития международной торговли и экспортного бизнеса. В данной статье авторы рассмотрели, что такое маркетплейсы и какие виды маркеплейсов существуют на мировом пространстве. Кроме того, авторы представили практические примеры успешных кейсов российских маркетплейсов в контексте динамики экономического развития и цифровизации торговли, а также текущие тренды и вызовы в сфере электронной коммерции; возможности и риски дальнейшего развития отечественных маркетплейсов и их роль в международной экспортной деятельности. В завершении исследования авторы рассмотрели варианты использования искусственного интеллекта в электронной торговле.

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Цифровизация торговли, электронная коммерция, экспортная деятельность, маркетплейсы, перспективы развития, экономический эффект, искусственный интеллект.

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