Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Economics and Management

Bachelor Thesis

The State and Development of E-Commerce in the Arab Countries

Author: Hadeer Al Masoodi

Supervisor: Mansoor Maitah

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Hadeer Al Masoodi

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The State and Development of E-Commerce in the Arab Countries

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Objectives of thesis

The aim objective of this thesis study is to highlight the internet use and analyze the E-commerce use in the Arab countries, how is it different from the rest of the world, understand how the Arab countries are adopting E-commerce and the way it's developing, also finding where does the Arab world stand from E-commerce.

Methodology

In this thesis the main methods that are used are descriptive and comparative, the theoretical part will be explaining the definition and clarifying the concept of E-commerce, the descriptive approach will be presenting of details about the most important aspects of this study, using the library tools from academic publications, books, websites and online economic articles, Taking some information from the Internet.

The practical part will be finding the difference between two major E-shops, one is in the Arab world 'Souq.com', the other one is used by most of the world especially in the United States and Europe 'Amazon.com' by analyzing annual reports and other aspects.

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The Bachelor Thesis Supervisor

doc. Ing. Mansoor Maitah, Ph.D. et Ph.D.

Supervising department

Department of Economics

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prof. Ing. Miroslav Svatoš, CSc.

Head of department

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Ing. Martin Pelikán, Ph.D.

Dean

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "The State and Development of E-Commerce in the Arab Countries" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any their person.

In Prague on 14.3.2018 _____

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The State and Development of E-Commerce in the Arab Countries

Abstract

The evolution of the internet and the widespread of the network, many technologies started developing, e-commerce one of those technologies, which made it easy for individuals and corporations to do businesses, and made huge changes in world economy, with that change many countries started developing this technology, but how about the Arab countries? What is the current state and are they also developing in this field? This thesis will attempt to explore and provide an overview of current state and development process of E-commerce in the Arabic countries, the requirements of adopting e-commerce and the problems facing them in achieving full adoption of this technology mainly focused on the online shopping, process, differences between two similar E-commerce business and increasing traffic rate into the E-commerce based on internet source, article published, books and data collection from own kowledge.

Furthermore, the concept of e-commerce, definition, types of e-commerce, the system of payment, and the world status of using internet and e-commerce compared to the Arab world will be provided through theoretical part of the thesis as well as the requirements of adoption of e-commerce in that region. In this modern age, E-commerce is very likely to increase with the rise and easy access of the internet, because the goal of the E-commerce and other technologies such as e-government is to have better environment and relationship between General public and business or even government.

In the practical part, thesis begins with a comparison between two major platforms of e-commerce which are Amazon.com and Souq.com, both are major in their region. The thesis continues with an overview of two platforms and provide some statistical and graphical analysis such as visits of the website, total sales, revenues and countries that use these two platforms, to have a better understanding of how Arabs are using e-commerce differently from the rest of the world.

In the end, conclusion, that describes what's the overall thoughts of the study, and recommendation with suggested resolutions to issues discussed.

Abstrakt

Vývoj internetu a široké rozšíření této sítě, kterými se začalo rozvíjet mnoho technologií, elektronické obchodování je jednou z těch technologií, které usnadňují jednotlivcům a podnikům podnikání.

elektronické obchodování udělalo obrovské změny ve světové ekonomice, s tutou změnu začaly mnoho zemí rozvíjet tuto technologii, ale co se týká arabských zemích? Jaký je současný stav elektronického obchodování, a jestli v této oblasti se také rozvíjí?

Tato bakalářská práce se pokusí prozkoumat a poskytnout přehled současného stavu elektronického obchodování a procesu jeh vývoje v arabských zemích, požadavky na jeho přijetí a problémy, rozlišovat mezi dvěma podobnými obchody elektronického podnikání a zvyšovat provozu internetové komunikace, které jsou založené na internetovém zdroji , publikovaném článeku a knihách.

Dále koncept, definice elektronické obchodování, typy elektronického obchodování, platební systém a světový stav využívání internetu a elektronického obchodování ve srovnání s arabským světem dále se poskytne teoretickou část této práce, stejně jako požadavky přijetí elektronického obchodování v tomto regionu.

 V tomto moderním věku se elektronický obchodování velmi zvyšuje s nárůstem a snadným přístupem k internetu, protože cílem elektronického obchodování a dalších technologií, jako je e-government, je mít lepší prostředí a vztahy mezi širokou veřejností a podnikatelí nebo dokonce i mezi lidmi a vládou. V praktické části bakalářské práce vychází ze srovnání dvou hlavních platforem elektronického obchodování, které jsou Amazon.com a Souq.com, oba jsou ve své oblasti významné. práce pokračuje s přehledem dvou platforem a poskytuje některé statistické a grafické analýzy, jako jsou návštěvy webových stránek, celkové prodej, zisky a země, které používají tyto dva platformy, aby lépe porozuměly tomu, jak Arabové používají elektronický obchodování odlišně od zbytku světa. Závěr popisuje, jaké jsou celkové myšlenky studiu.

Klíčová slova: elektronické obchodování, E-shop, Internet, arabské země, arabský svět, technologie, online nákup, Amazon, Souq

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List of abbreviations

TCP	Transmission control protocol
IP	Internet protocol
ICT	Information and communication technology
NRI	network readiness index
GCC	Gulf cooperation council
ISP	Internet service provider
ARPANET	Advanced Research Projects Network

1 Introduction

In this era, human life is characterized by many activities related to information technology and communication, which is characterized by the speed and abundance of information. Among the results of this development is the emergence of new terms, which transcended the physical and geographical boundaries and abolished all restrictions that limit the freedom of person in the exercise of his labs.

Among these new terms is the term "e-commerce", which is now traded in the normal use of individuals.

For developing countries like Arab Countries, e-commerce can be noticed as a compelling strategy and a paramount opportunity for economic development. Each developing country which tends to be a part of the global capitalist economy has to be a part of international electronic networks.

The e-commerce boom dates back to three decades of the last century (Tian, 2007). This trade is based on an electronic information system, all of which are electronic, such as computers, Internet, telephone, fax, telex and other technologies that play an important role in trade activity. Trade is done electronically through electronic money transfers or shopping cards payment and credit cards.

E-commerce includes all commercial transactions, from the sale and purchase of goods and services, and has been considered by economic analysts as a new engine for economic development, as it is an effective and quick way to conclude transactions, products, services and promotion.

In the light of all the points contained in e-commerce, the goal is to clarify the concept of e-commerce and this is because the term is modern also finding the evolution and size, and the most important part of the research is the reality of electronic commerce in Arab World and what is located between the countries of the world and what is the future of the Arab World economy by adopting this kind of trade.

2 Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The aim objective of this thesis study is to highlight the internet use and analyze the E-commerce use in the Arab countries, how is it different from the rest of the world, understand how the Arab countries are adopting E-commerce and the way it's developing, also finding where does the Arab world stand from E-commerce.

1. Accurate knowledge of the term e-commerce its history and its impact on the economy
2. Highlighting the use of internet in the Arab countries with other selected countries
3. finding the difference between Arab countries and the rest of the world in using E-commerce
4. Attempts to identify the reality of electronic commerce in the Arab world.
5. collect information about Arab World Position in Electronic Commerce and its development.
7. To study the difference between "Souq.com" and "Amazon.com" which will give more understanding on how the Arab countries are using the E-commerce tools

2.2 Methodology

In this thesis the main methods that are used are descriptive and comparative, the theoretical part will be explaining the definition and clarifying the concept of E-commerce, the descriptive approach will be presenting of details about the most important aspects of this study, using the library tools from academic publications, books, websites and online economic articles, Taking some information from the Internet.

The practical part will be finding the difference between two major E-shops, one is in the Arab world 'Souq.com', the other one is used by most of the world especially in United States and Europe 'Amazon.com' by analyzing annual reports and other aspects.

2.3   Limitations of the study

Doing this research, it had limitation and scope, especially in finding information about the Arab world, even when that information is available the reliability of most the information found related to this topic are questioned.

The difficulties encountered this research:

1. Lack of accurate statistics on using e-commerce in most of the Arabic countries.
2. Lack of references that mention and explain Arab world's experience in e-commerce.

3 Literature Review

In this section of the thesis, a background research will be provided to track the current state of e-commerce and the development of it around the world including the Arab world

3.1.1 background

The history of the internet goes back to the 1960s and since then the internet has grown from few users and only experimenting it to what it is today. The Internet was created in the late 1960s with the creation of the Advanced Research Projects Network. It was financed by the U.S. Department of Defence, Advanced research projects network used packet switching which is a way to send data or message in parts, which made it possible for computers to communicate, it was invented by Paul Baran at the Rand

Corporation, this technology went into a stage of continuous growth, in the 1970s two scientists Robert Kahn and Vinton Cerf started developing a way to control the transmission rules and internet rules by creating the TCP/IP, a communications model that set principles for how information could be transmitted between numerous networks. The TCP/IP was adopted by ARPANET on January 1, 1983, and from there everyone who was working on that project began to add together the all the networks that became the modern Internet. The online world then took off form in 1990, when computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web. While it's regularly mistaken for the Web itself, the web is in reality simply the most widely recognized methods for getting to information online as sites and hyperlinks. The web helped the Internet to become well known among the public, and served as an extremely important step in developing the huge amount of information that most of us now access on a daily basis. (Abbate, 2000).

In the Arab world, it was hard for people to get used to the concept of internet and using it on daily basis because the whole concept of the internet was new and people did not understand it. The Arab lingered behind a large portion of the world in receiving the web by having the first use with the Web in the mid of 1990's. Tunisia was the to use internet in 1991, followed by Kuwait in 1992, then comes Egypt and the UAE in n 1993. Jordan, on the other hand, started using the internet in 1994; while Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq were the slowest states in the area to enable free to the Web with general access not getting to be accessible until the point by 1999 and 2000. In Syria for instance, even as late as 1997. Before at that point, numerous Syrians acquired Web get to through long separation telephone calls to Network Access Suppliers (ISP) in Lebanon and Jordan. These same

practices of long separation remote access to the Web (this time by means of Bahrain) were additionally regular in Saudi Arabia before the state made access to the Web accessible through privately authorized ISPs. When Web get to was made authoritatively accessible in the Kingdom, Saudi Arabia saw the biggest and speediest development in Web client populace than some other Middle Easterner nation. In this way when we think about the advancement and importance of the Web in the Bedouin world, we are taking a gander at a short, yet quickly changing history which shifts crosswise over national outskirts (Tan, 2007).

By the end of 2017, 164 million Arab had access to the web with a growth percentage of 4893% from 2000 to 2017[1]. All the indicators show that it will be in rapid growth, however there are so many factors that were and still making it hard to the Arab countries to access and use internet, one of those factors was the trouble of utilizing Arabic on the web and also personal computers, which had a tendency to strict the use to the individuals who could work and know English. Another factor was the high cost of the internet charges, frequently through an administration controlled by governments.

3.1.2 Electronic Commerce

The Internet has seen a tremendous increase in its usage, making the concept of e-commerce common and expanding, increasing the sales and. The prospects offered by e-commerce to businesses, institutions, and individuals does not stop at a certain point.

3.1.3 E-commerce history

E-commerce emerged three decades ago, in the early 1970s the internet was found and it was mainly used by academics along with the electronic data interchange EDI and companies started adopting it, the idea was to make paperless offices where business documents can be transmitted from one computer to another, but when the World Wide Web appeared in the 1990s people and companies started participating and interacting with it in a commercial way where they could add photos and text to the world wide web and that's when the term 'electronic - commerce' appeared, in the 1999 there were so many websites that offered e-commerce service, between 2000 and 2001 the dot-

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[1] https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

com appeared which revolutionized the use of e-commerce (Tian, 2007). it also developed to include e-government, e-learning, and m-commerce, on 2005 with creation of the social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter the e-commerce had a huge growth and success in emerging with internet usage (Turban, 2015).

3.1.4   Concept of e-commerce

The concept of E-commerce developed with the development of electronic devices, by developing the industry and means of communication, despite the far distance between different nations, it made it easier for them to discover all kind of products and modern inventions in all the countries of the world. The rapid developments in the field of e-commerce have resulted in the emergence of new and different definitions.

3.1.5   Definition

There are several definitions of e-commerce in the subject of e-commerce and the fact that there is no specific definition so far because of the multiplicity of entities that mentioned these definitions.

 It is a commercial activity that is carried out by advanced technological procedures related to the implementation of all related to the purchase and sale of goods, services and information, through data and information flowing by the networks of communication and other global commercial networks, including the Internet, which exceeded the borders of countries and transformed the paper pillars Which are used in commercial transactions such as invoices and contracts and the acquisition of the price to electronic substrates are all through the machine, which meets with the seller, the buyer, the producer and the consumer to achieve business transactions despite the distance and geographical differences, where some are expected to expand and become the absolute dominant mass, where all the exhibits are for sale in the whole world available to the buyer in any region of the world to check them and compares them with another , it has been spreading in the last few years in the countries of Europe and the United States of America through the World Wide Web, where growing growth in the volume of international electronic commerce and increased transaction rates, which has seen economic growth in these countries (Qin, 2010).

3.1.6 Payment systems and methods in electronic commerce

The emergence and spread of e-commerce requires the creation of a means of payment of goods and services. Therefore, new means of payment have been developed which are appropriate to the requirements of this trade:

3.1.6.1 Plastic money

It is the plastic cards and magnetic cards such as personal cards, which the holder can use to buy his needs and performance for his services without the need to carry large amounts of money.

This type of money is divided into two sections:

1. Debit cards: These cards are based on the actual balances of the customer in the bank in the form of current accounts to meet the expected withdrawals of the cardholder's client, its advantage that it saves time and effort of the customers and increases the revenues of the issuing bank[2].

2. Credit cards: Cards issued by banks within the limits of certain amounts set by the owner of the card, banks charge interest and it also saves time and effort for their employees and increase the revenues of the bank issued to them[3].

3.1.6.2 Modern banking methods of payment

The banks were required to establish a new structures of dealing with its customers to cope with development of e-commerce to trade.

1. Phone Banking: The customer can inquire about his phone balance without the need of going to the branch and waiting in long queues.

2. Online payments: where the customer can go to the bank website and do electronic payment also checking the balance of the account, also payments such as PayPal and Net bank (Yang, 2017).

3. Mobile banking: A customer can check all his banking details without the need to visit the bank itself, with the availability of option such as doing payments, sending international payment and such.

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[2] https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/debitcard.asp
[3] https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/creditcard.asp

3.1.6.3   E-cash and instruments E-check Include:

1. E-cash: When the customer buys electronic currency from the issuing bank, these currencies are loaded on the buyer's account and are in the form of small currency units and each currency has a special serial number or a special mark from the issuing bank this gives the privacy to the buyer just like he is using real cash in a store (Qin, 2010) Bitcoin is one of modern ways in online payments that is made for the purpose of anonymity.

2. E-check is used to pay transactions in electronic commerce and is equivalent to traditional paper checks where you can send payment between bank accounts Which is an authenticated electronic document sent by the source of the check and performs its mission as a document of payment undertaking with a digital signature that can be verified (Qin, 2010).

3.1.7   The characteristics and types of electronic commerce

3.1.7.1   E-commerce characteristics

Internet-based e-commerce has several characteristics:
1. The dealing between the two sides of the trade is remote, where there is a lack of direct meeting between them because it is done through a network of communications.
2. Dependence on electronic substrates in the implementation of transactions, as all transactions are carried out between the parties of the transaction electronically, without any paper documents exchanged between the parts of transactions.
3. Large number of users can meet simultaneously on one site and send one person the same message, advertisement or request, or vice versa.
4. The possibility of implementing all components of the business process, including the delivery of non-physical goods.
5. Companies can use the so-called electronic data exchange and documentation, which achieve the flow of data and information between the parties involved in the business process without human intervention and the lowest cost[4].

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[4] https://www.edibasics.com/what-is-edi/

3.1.7.2 Types of electronic commerce

1. Business to Business: This type of e-commerce uses business enterprises with each other, the business is conducting communications to make orders to their suppliers using the communications network and information technologies and can receive invoices and make payments through this network using these technologies, this form of trade is the most Are currently common both locally and globally (Qin, 2010).

2. Business to Customers with the advent of online shopping or so-called online shopping centers, the consumer has the ability to purchase and pay for the value of the goods available through credit cards, electronic banks, or by money when the item is received (Qin, 2010).

3. Business to employees This type of e-commerce includes the business organization dealing with its employees by providing a service to them through a network (Turban, 2015)

4. Governmental organization to business in this type the government deal with the commercial companies and enterprises and it provides them with all the details need which is related to business (Nemat, 2011).

5. Governmental Organization to citizen: This form of electronic commerce is between the government and the people it deals with, it organizes many activities, including the payment of taxes electronically (Nemat, 2011).

6. Consumer to consumer this form of e-commerce is for individual's person to person, either trying to buy or sell things such as computers, mobile phone, and any other property or service and it introduced a powerful future which is auction which gave the buyer the opportunity to decide the price of a certain item (Quin, 2010). there are many examples for this form such as Dubbilze, Aukro, and eBay.

3.1.8 The motives of e-commerce

There are many factors common to enterprises and sectors that drive them to e-commerce. This is due to the fact that e-commerce has gradually emerged and developed

according to the needs of the different sectors of activities that created those motives for entering into e-commerce.

1. Conducting business transactions: The electronic commerce allows to perform a large part of the various operations that fall within the normal commercial transactions between the seller and the buyer. Checks allow for reduction of time spent and distance barriers, reducing the negative effects of time and distance on the economy. The e-commerce also includes physical and non-physical transactions, allowing to reduce the costs related to all types of transactions.

2. Commercial effectiveness: one of the most important drivers of e-commerce do to reach the highest levels of production and distribution since the adoption of information and communication technologies in the framework of support and development allows organizations to face the challenges ahead in the global trading environment.

3. Companies and governmental administrations can produce information about their transactions and retain that information in ways that speeds up processing and distribution. This information can be also used to evaluate the performance which will give those intuitions and companies a better understanding in future planning and optimization.

4. the development of new markets: The urge to develop new markets, made many institutions go with creating new markets where they will be the dominant party in that market taking the opportunity in making huge amount of profit.

3.1.9 Advantages and disadvantages of e-commerce

E-commerce has a lot of advantages which could make peoples life's easier those advantages are the ease of making a business by online communication without the need to meet in person, the possibility to compare prices, the availability of the products most of the times and the possibility of purchase at any time, but it also has its disadvantages such as security issues where the people don't trust in giving their personal information since there are many cyberattacks that targeted big companies before and buying products online without close inspection could be a big problem specially if the product price is high and it arrive in not promised quality (Yang, 2017).

3.2 Trend of the Arab world towards the e-commerce

3.2.1 Use of the Internet in the Arab World

Most of the studies that analyzed the reasons for the delayed e-commerce use in the Arab world, concluded that this delay is linked to delays in the use of the Internet (AlGhamdi, 2012), and low rates of the internet users to the population size unlike developed countries, because it's hard to measure the use Internet by Arab countries without comparing it with the countries of the world.

3.2.2 Internet subscription in the Arab world and the world.

1. Internet subscription in some selected countries:

Table No. 1: The growth in Internet subscriber's in selected countries of the world

Country	Internet subscribers in (2000)	Internet subscribers in (2016)
United States	7,069,874	106,327,000
China	22,660	322,597,000
Italy	115,000	15,563,279
Spain	76,358	14,112,657
France	196,601	27,664,000
Germany	265,000	32,000,000
Czech Republic	2,500	3,069,970
United Kingdom	52,890	25,189,648
Canada	1,410,932	13,387,425
Sweden	249,000	3,679,768
The Whole World	37,086,644[5]	976,996,070

Source: Author based on information available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspxThrough

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[5] 2001 Available on: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.BBND?view=chart

By observing this table, the United States had the most subscribers in 2000 which is normal because of the origin of the internet, but China got to the lead of in the number of Internet subscribers in 2016, in 2015 the UK has reached an online sale of 157 Billion[6], on the hand the Czech Republic had the highest growth rate between the period of 2000 and 2016, most of those countries have steady growth but they are in continues development. The subscriber's growth made a tremendous increase by 2016, making it 26 times more than what it was in 2000.

2. Internet subscription in Arab countries:

Table No. 2: The growth of the number of Internet subscribers in the Arab countries

Country	Internet subscribers in the (2000s)	Internet subscribers in (2016)
United Arab Emirates	16'632	1,297,585
Syria	600	1,009,614
Egypt	50,937	4,469,164
Saudi Arabia	14,000	3,287,663
Kuwait	5,000	101,390
Jordan	409	456,610
Oman	97	284,647
Morocco	2,000	1,255,428
Bahrain	1,176	232,210
Qatar	228	253,718
Libya	46,242	168,920
Algeria	18,000	2,859,567

Source: Author based on information available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspxThrough

The table shows the growth in the number of fixed broadband Internet subscribers in some Arab countries between 2000 and 2016, Egypt had the most subscribers in all the Arab countries by the year of 2016 followed by the Algeria. The United Arab Emirates is one of the most advanced Arab countries in many fields and sectors but in this case, the low

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[6] https://ecommercenews.eu/ecommerce-per-country/ecommerce-the-united-kingdom

population compared to Egypt, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia gave it the forth place on this list. Oman, on the other hand, had lower subscribers than Libya in 2000, but in 2016 that changed, Oman kept on a steady growth but Libya had political instability. even though Oman is still relatively low on the number of subscribers due to the low population, the same goes for Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Saudi Arabia has largest growth rate and the participation and its continuing to grow under the expansion of Internet service (AlGhamdi, 2014).

3.2.3   Internet users in the Arab countries and the rest of the world

1.   Internet users in some European countries:

Table No. 3: Internet users in Europe and their percentage to the population

Country	Internet users in (2017)	Population	Users in % to the population
Italy	51,836,798	59,797,978	86.70%
Spain	40,148,353	46,070,146	87.10%
France	56,367,330	64,938,716	86.80%
Germany	72,290,285	80,636,124	89.60%
Czech Republic	9,323,428	10,555,130	88.30%
United Kingdom	62,091,419	65,511,098	94.80%
Sweden	9,216,226	9,920,624	92.90%

Source: Author based on information available at https://www.internetworldstats.com

Most of the European countries are making their best efforts to provide a good internet in terms of speed and cost and accessibility, with that there is a huge role for those countries in developing e-commerce in different aspects, almost all the European countries have an internet usage over 85% to their population.

2. The number of Internet users some Arab countries:

Table No. 4: Internet users in the Arab countries and their percentage to the population

Country	Internet users in (2000)	Internet users in (2017)	Population (2017)	Users in % to the population
United Arab Emirates	735,000	8,515,420	9,541,615	89.20%
Lebanon	300,000	4,596,494	6,093,509	75.40%
Egypt	450,000	49,231,493	99,375,741	49.50%
Saudi Arabia	200,000	24,147,715	33,554,343	72.00%
Kuwait	150,000	3,214,347	4,197,128	76.60%
Jordan	127,300	6,640,287	9,903,802	63.60%
Oman	90,000	3,310,260	4,829,946	94.80%
Morocco	100,000	22,567,154	36,191,805	62.40%
Bahrain	40,000	1,535,653	1,566,993	98.00%
Qatar	30,000	2,204,580	2,694,849	81.80%
Libya	10,000	3,800,000	6,470,956	58.70%
Algeria	50,000	18,580,000	42,008,054	44.20%
Iraq	12,500	14,000,000	39,339,753	35.6 %

Source: Author based on information available at https://www.internetworldstats.com

The Internet users in the Arab world varies from country to country, mainly because on the unstable situation in the area, some countries have of 98% and other 28% so it's not stable. Egypt has 99 million users of internet users but even with that amount of users half of the population does not have internet access, while most of the GCC countries have high percentages of usage because the economic and political aspects are better the most of the Arab countries. Iraq has the lowest percentage of internet users, the contentious wars and internal conflict makes it hard to focus on any sector. (Overall the average penetration rate was 37% which is below the global average for the whole Arab world[7]).

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[7] http://unctad.org/meetings/en/Presentation/ecn162016p05_Idlebi-ESCWA_en.pdf

Table No. 5: Total internet users in the Arab countries and the growth rate

Countries	Population (2018)	Internet Users (2018)	Internet Users Growth (2000 - 2018)
Arab countries	435,636,462	219,041,264	8,616.0 %
Developed countries	94,943,848	84,700,419	207.8 %

Source: Author based on information available at https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm

Almost half of the population in the Arab countries is using the internet by 2018, with the growth rate of 8,616% between the period of 2000 and 2018, which shows that there are improvements that are being implemented to get the full advantage of this field, compared to the developed countries with 207.8% growth rate.

3. The number of Internet users in some countries of the world:

Table No. 6: Internet users in selected countries and their percentage to the population

Country	Internet users in (2017)	Population (2017)	Users in % to the population
China	772,000,000	1,415,045,928	54.6 %
United States	286,942,362	326,474,013	87.9 %
Canada	33,000,381	36,626,083	90.1 %
Russia	109,552,842	143,375,006	76.4 %
Brazil	149,057,635	210,867,954	70.7 %

Source: Author based on information available at https://www.internetworldstats.com/

Countries are making their best efforts to make the internet efficient and accessible, both Canada and united states

3.2.4 E-commerce volume in the United States, Europe, and the Arab world

Just like the internet, e-commerce did not play a big role in people daily life's, but with the continuous development of countries and the understanding of how much this kind of commerce is important and beneficial for the country economy, interest increased in this field and it is in rapid growth.

1. E-commerce in the size of the United States of America

Table No. 7: The volume of e-commerce sales in the United States

	2016	2017	2018
E-commerce in the United States of America (million US dollar)	360	409	461

Source:https://www.statista.com/statistics/272391/us-retail-e-commerce-sales-forecast/

The United States has managed to possess the largest share of e-commerce volume at the global level, the united states know the importance of this kind of trade, the yearly increments of the e-commerce volume show the constant development and improvement in this field, by making it easier for people to use and understand this kind of trade.

2. E-commerce in Europe

Almost all the European countries are developed countries, that means they are developed in most of the fields and sectors the same thing goes for e-commerce, by 2015 Europe had more than 200 e-commerce platform and they represented 31% of the total use of e-commerce with United Kingdom, Germany, and France taking the lead, which made big companies such as Amazon establish more domains for those countries such as Amazon.fr and Amazon.uk (Yang, 2017).

3. E-commerce in the Arab world trade:

Finding specified information about e-commerce volume in the Arab world precisely consist of difficulties and that's due the fact that the e-commerce is partly practiced and the use of the Internet is limited to search and communications most of the time, most of the transactions of buying and selling are being done traditionally, and therefore we will resort to the estimates by experts. (The Arab world is only 2% to the rest of the world in using online shopping and this state will be in slow grow till 2021[8]).

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[8] https://www.ipc.be/en/knowledge-centre/e-commerce/articles/global-ecommerce-figures-2017

3.2.5   The behavior of the Arab communities regarding e–commerce

The idea of having a computer and using it at home was unappealing Arabs countries did not feel that they needed that in the 2000s, many of Arabs were depended on internet cafes they were mainly using it to communicate with their families and friends abroad, the majority were also used on the traditional way of trading, such as shops and supermarkets. Arab countries kept developing from 2005 till these day which is making e-commerce more acceptable, for instance in Gulf countries there was acceptance and the idea of paying by a credit card and online payments were appealing and comfortable, but on the other side countries such as Libya, Iraq, and Yemen have political instability, that results in difficulties with participating in e-commerce (Zeglat, 2012).

3.2.6   The position of the Arab companies from using the e-commerce.

There are many huge companies in the Arab world that could take advantage of e-commerce, the commercial companies have an issue of trust with most of its users, since more information is needed to make a purchase such as credit card number and so on, many people have visited those websites decided to buy something then changed their mind because of security reasons, which makes most of the companies avoid this kind of trade (Zeglat, 2012) This is not the case with all Arabic countries since the GCC are attracting more companies in the field of e-commerce gaining $2.5 billion dollars just by Visa cards payments in 2016[9].

3.2.7   The reality of e-commerce in Arab World.

The development of e-commerce is linked with what the government provides to institutions, whether those of the public sector or the private sector, providing the infrastructure related to communications, laws and regulations of e-commerce to create the best environment for these institutions, from the previous tables that it was clear that the Arab world is in development and it's in much better state than the state it was in before but that does not mean that the issues stop there. The Arab governments must improve and

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[9] https://www.thenational.ae/business/uae-and-saudi-arabian-millennials-to-drive-e-commerce-growth-in-region-1.146881

develop its own products and services, taking the advantage of e-commerce as technological innovation that will improve their economy.

The level of internet usage, making transactions, the availability and easy access of information, and the breadth of e-commerce activities through the Internet even the implementation of the banking and financial transactions electronically determines the extent of the gap between developed countries and developing countries, and those gaps keep expanding because of the gap that already exists between these two groups of countries economically, culturally, socially and technologically, which puts more challenges on developing countries to develop this kind of traded.

Table No. 8: The NRI value and global ranking of selected Arab countries

Country	NRI value (2015)	Global Ranking (143 countries)
United Arab emirates	5.3	25
Qatar	5.2	27
Egypt	3.7	94
Morocco	3.9	89
Algeria	3.2	99
Lebanon	3.8	126

Source: Author based on information from (DUTTA, 2016).

This table shows the NRI value of these selected Arab countries what this table measures is the taking of opportunities that is given by the ICT, as it shows that there is a variety between Arab countries and they are not at the same level, United Arab Emirates comes at the top of the list with a global ranking of 25, which makes it close to other developed countries such as Germany (DUTTA, 2016). That does not apply for the most of Arab countries, for example, Lebanon came at the bottom of list for many reasons such as the political environment and the business environment, with both of those environments facing difficulties since Lebanon economy is not supported by oil like the United Arab Emirates.

The reality is there big potential for huge markets and great opportunities for e-commerce in many Arab countries but the inefficiency and focus on a certain field such as oil leads to slow development in that field and area, which can be destructive to any country's

economy, while for other countries that do not depend on oil they are missing a lot of infrastructure and technologies which is preventing them from participating and developing e-commerce (Lawrence, 2010).

3.3 The requirements for the adoption of e-commerce in Arab World.

The Global level of using the internet networks and e-commerce has reached a high state[10], but according to most of the statistics and tables previously provided that the relative share of the Arab world in general, is more below the standard level either in numbers or levels of growth rates except for few some GCC countries.

And to identify the relative status of the Arab countries it is enough to check the availability of basic information and communication network environment and the quality of the human element qualified to deal with modern technology.

Table No. 9: Percentage of users in the Arab world to the world total participation

Statement	Percentage of users to world total
Arab world	5.3 %

Source: Author based on information available at https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm

The spread of e-commerce is linked largely to the extent using the Internet, although the number of Internet users in Arab World and the growth rate is high as stated in table number five, the relative participation rate is still low and therefore, e-commerce development requires the achievement of the general requirements:

3.3.1 Technological requirements

Adoption of advanced systems and networks in the wired and wireless telecommunications sector to give it the capability of providing a modern communication with high speeds and efficiency. Openness in the exchange of information between the parties involved in trade and e-commerce related services. Sufficient source of electrical power sources is important to guarantee a smooth work of internet, web and its related services, Iraq, for example, have an average of 10 hours of electricity daily (Author) which is a bad environment to

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[10] https://www.internetworldstats.com

conduct and online activities. Upgrade and development of supply capacities, transportation, and distribution.

3.3.2 Social requirements

Preparing the society and raising the awareness to accept the idea of e-commerce as a way to complete the modern commercial transactions, and this can be accomplished by doing educational campaigns, programs, and advertising through the media and telecommunication (AlGhamdi, 2014). Adoption of efficient human skills or people with experience in this field, even importing specialist that could increase the level of development (AlGhamdi, 2014).

3.3.3 Financial requirements

Raising the rate of expenditure on research and development and financing projects that are related to this field to keep pace with technological progress and reduce the gap between Arab World and the rest of the world especially the developed countries. Support of small and medium-sized enterprises to be able to support the use of new technologies.

3.3.4 Legislative requirements

The legislative requirements are the most important element of e-commerce requirements as it provides the legal framework.

To Gain consumer confidence and a sense of protection in dealing with e-commerce and the provision of legislative requirements, most of these need to be updated the laws related documentation of electronic transactions on the web, renovate banking laws and the services related to it such as online payments, establish markets Laws, stock, tax and customs laws, in addition there is a high need for developing special legislation to protect consumers in the field of e-commerce, and deter crimes related to fraud, scam, and online piracy.

3.3.5 Protection requirements.

Since the consumer is the most important party in commercial transactions and the trust is the basis of these transactions, we must think of the laws that protect Arab World consumers to avoid the feeling of insecurity in dealing with e-commerce.

Protecting the consumer can strengthen the spread of e-commerce in Arab World (Zeglat, 2012).

3.3.6 The problems facing e-commerce adoption in the Arab world

The Arab countries are yet confronting problems in participating into the field of e-commerce, even though most of the developed countries found solutions to these problems but they are not implanted in the most of the Arab countries systems:

Language and the limitation of Arabic websites: This one of the main reasons if not the main, with low of education and the absence of knowledge in English language which is an obstacle that is preventing people from using the internet in general and e-commerce specifically (Lawrence, 2010). Low awareness of the importance of the trade that is electronically as they save time and include all markets and potential consumers in the world (AlGhamdi, 2014). Low skill level: with some of the Arab countries that are mainly depending on oil which results in decreasing interest in developing other fields of economic development (Nour, 2013). The anonymity and safety issues and the lack of trust with other parties participating in e-commerce, this is due the absence of control by Arab countries in the use of ICT and internet (Lawrence, 2010). The slow internet and high cost: This slowness It hinders users and which wastes their time and interest and cost is high compared to the salaries (El-fitouri, 2015) for example in Iraq the average prices of Fixed broadband internet is 192 dollars for an internet speed of 256 Kbit/s[11]. The inefficiency of laws and regulations: The absence of laws and regulations or its presence with the lack of efficiency decrease the trust among people in the use of the internet for the purpose of e-commerce (Aladwani, 2003).

3.4 The Future of the Arab World economy after the adoption of e-commerce

During this research, it was clear that the Arab countries development is an ongoing process even with all the difficulties that it facing the growth is still continuous, governments began to understand how e-commerce could affect countries economy in better ways, people started to feeling the need of using it and participating in it with the creation of the social media which took the full advantage of e-commerce methods, more

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[11] https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/misr2015/MISR2015-w5.pdf

work is being done online by the governmental systems, The United Arab Emirates is a great example of that, most of the government services can be made online, from applying for visa and creating or renewing identity card to transportation and health care services[12]. There is a general growth in the e-commerce rates with the exception of some Arab countries, Egypt had an e-commerce growth of 22% by 2017[13].

3.4.1 The benefits of the Arab world economy after adopting the e-commerce

The most important advantages of Arab World economy after the adoption of e-commerce the following are:

Makes wide horizons for the Arab world economic institutions, especially those that complain about the difficulty of entering into the global markets because of its small structure and limited resource. Utilization of the services and products of the foreign goods and advanced technologies, by that it will help the Arab economy avoiding a potential of failure, it was also raise the competition level which is good for the consumer. The development of exporting of different commodities in different fields other than fuels and gas, those always find demand in the global market, but the lack of international publicity makes the Arab goods unknown to the world. Development of the Arab World banking systems, by making it more compatible with e-commerce requirements of the different electronic payment different methods.

1. Ease the delivery of information to the consumer and access to it, both at the global or local level.
2. It's a great way to get a constant income from the internet by doing a freelance jobs eliminating the element of finding a job the old-fashioned ways (El-fitouri, 2017).

3.4.2 The barriers that hinder the spread and adoption of e-commerce in Arab World

The future of embracing and adopting e-commerce has big importance to the Arab world economy, and the benefits of the e-commerce were mentioned previously if adopted widely, however, this trade have not adopted in all its aspects to this day by many Arab countries, due to those reasons:

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[12] https://government.ae/en/information-and-services
[13] https://www.ecommercewiki.org/Global_Ecommerce_Figures/Africa/Egypt

1. Widespread of illiteracy in Arab world, where the illiteracy rate is high and therefore, most people do not even understand the meaning of this exercise of trade on the Internet and this is an obstacle preventing the spread of e-commerce.

2. Diffusion of not proficient in the use of computer, even intellectuals and educated, and therefore this for the use of Internet commerce.

3. The lack of competition between ISP's which leads to the high cost of an internet subscription even for the lower speeds and that could prevent the decrease in the future (El-fitouri, 2017).

4. The insecurities people have in putting their credit cards details and being afraid that it might get stolen and the trust issues with the e-shops the use.

5. Lack of attention to the economic institutions in the Arab countries and the lack of awareness of what modern technology can do, and how trade through the Internet works, that will open them to a wider economic prospects, some countries don't have this barrier such as Qatar, Saudi and United Arab Emirates but the majority does.

6. The failure of the Arab world banking in terms of means and modern payment techniques.

7. The unavailability of the option of inspecting the item before purchasing it (El-fitouri, 2017).

4 Practical part

In this part, a comparison will be done between those two e-commerce websites they are both huge in their field and their region, by doing that there will be more understanding of how people are using e-commerce tools and the online shopping. Souq is a big online store that is well known in the Arab and Amazon is widely known the biggest online retail shop.

4.1.1 The Aim of the comparison

The objective is to know how developed and developing countries like the Arab countries are engaging with online shopping, is it increasing or decreasing what are the preferred methods of payments, what are the most Arab countries are using online shops.

4.1.2 Graphs and tables of the comparison

1. Overview

Table No. 10: overview of Amazon and Souq

Website	Amazon.com	Souq.com
Year Founded	1996	2005
Estimated Revenue	177 Billion dollars (2017)	From 200 Million to 1 Billion dollars
Estimated Employees	More than 10000 employees	From 1000 to 5000 employees
Headquarters	Seattle, WA, United States	Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Source: Author based on information from www.similarweb.com

By observing this table, the foundation of Amazon goes way back to the 90s but Souq did not start until the 2005 as its mentioned in this research that the delay of internet and the slow development made this delay in the e-commerce field, and the revenues show the amount of people engaging this kind of with kind of trading Amazon has 1 billion and most of those revenues are coming from the united states only, while Souq has much lower revenue.

2. Strategies attracting costumers

Table No. 11: Strategies in attracting customers by Amazon and Souq

Amazon.com	Souq.com
"Be earth's most customer-centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online." Features: ■ Added new categories like homewares, clothes, toys, and electronics. ■ Responsive to customer's feedback. ■ Embrace customer protection rights. ■ Added more payment options. ■ Aiming to provide a real-life shopping experience.	"Be the largest e-commerce website in the Arab world and expand in new markets" Features: ■ Added deals. ■ New product categories: toys, clothes, etc. ■ Safe Pay. ■ New website enhances customer shopping experience. ■ In just 7 years, they have expanded to 5 different countries, with many sellers and companies on board.

Source: Author based on information from amazon.com & souq.com

This table sums up the topic of developed and developing countries, as shown in the table, Amazon is concentrating on improving and adding more features to its already developed platform, while Souq on the other side is adding new products, methods of payment, improvement on the website and expanding to new countries that proves that the user base is growing and the expanding of e-commerce is happening in most of the Arab world.

3. Traffic overview

Graph No. 1: Traffic Overview (3 months)

Total Visits

|	September, 2017	October, 2017	November, 2017
Amazon	2367000000	2585000000	2910000000
Souq	62300000	62700000	99600000

Source: Author based on information from www.similarweb.com

There is a huge gap between Amazon and Souq visitors, with over 2 billion visitors in 3 months' time period, Souq is also gaining a lot more attention than it was, in only 3 months' visitors went up from 62 Million to 99 million which is impressive, this indicates that spreading of e-commerce and the participation of the Arab world in online shopping more than ever before, even though this traffic could mainly be from few Arab countries it is still a sign of development in that country.

4. Traffic main sources

Graph No. 2: Traffic Source
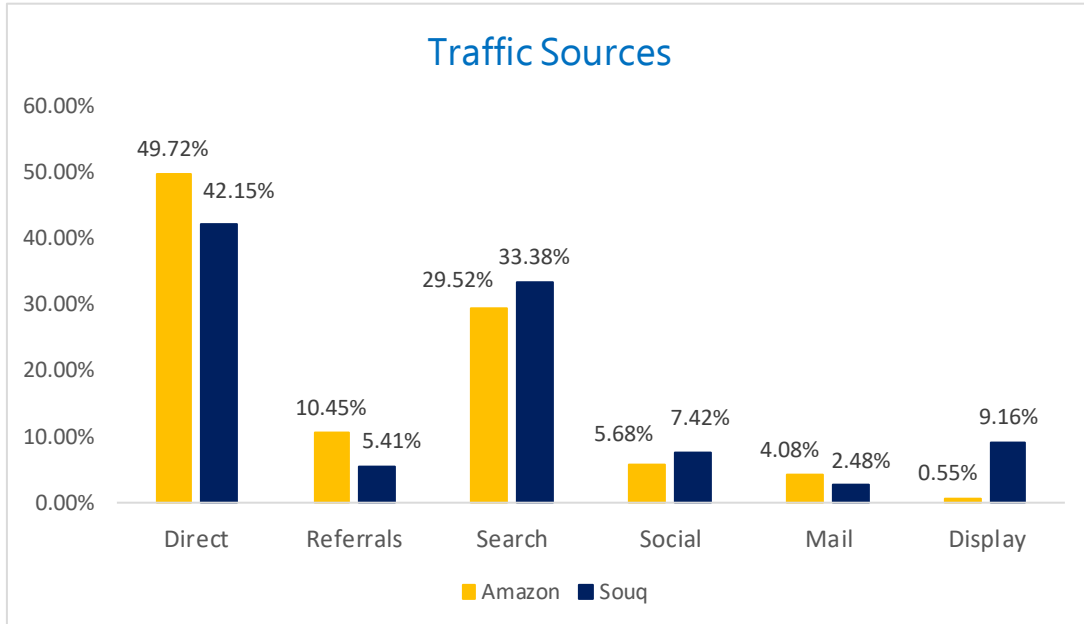
Source: Author based on information from www.similarweb.com

The graph shows similar attitude of most users of both platforms, the majority of traffic is coming through direct search, Amazon is already a well-known website and its normal to see these kind of stats regarding it, but for Souq it is a great sign of the improvement that is happening to it, people are searching directly for the website, not by referrals email or social media.

5. Payment methods

Graph No. 3 Most used payment methods

Source: Author based on information from https://www.slideshare.net/waelHainy/souqcom-presentation-standardahfinal3
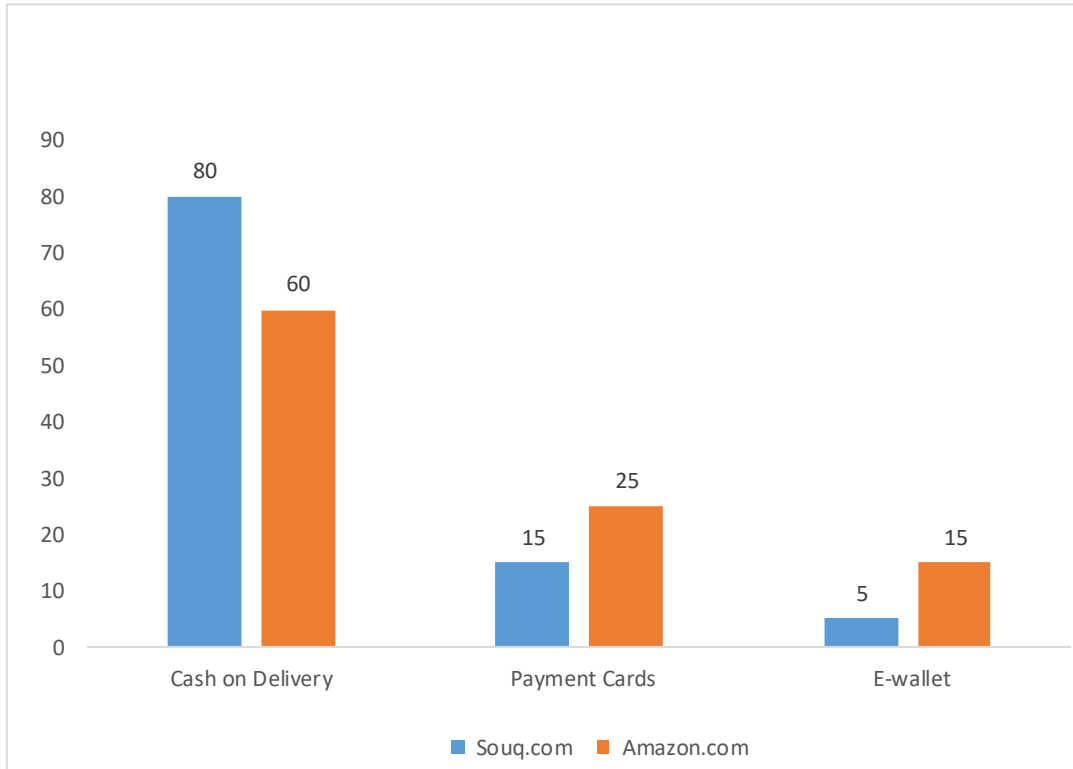
Most people prefer cash on delivery according to this graph, whether by Amazon customers or Souq, and that is mainly because of the trust and anonymity issues online by doing, most people don't prefer to give their credit cards credentials. Having cash on delivery method of payment is great way for any e-commerce platform to get more costumers.

6. Top 5 visiting countries

Graph No. 4: Top countries using Amazon
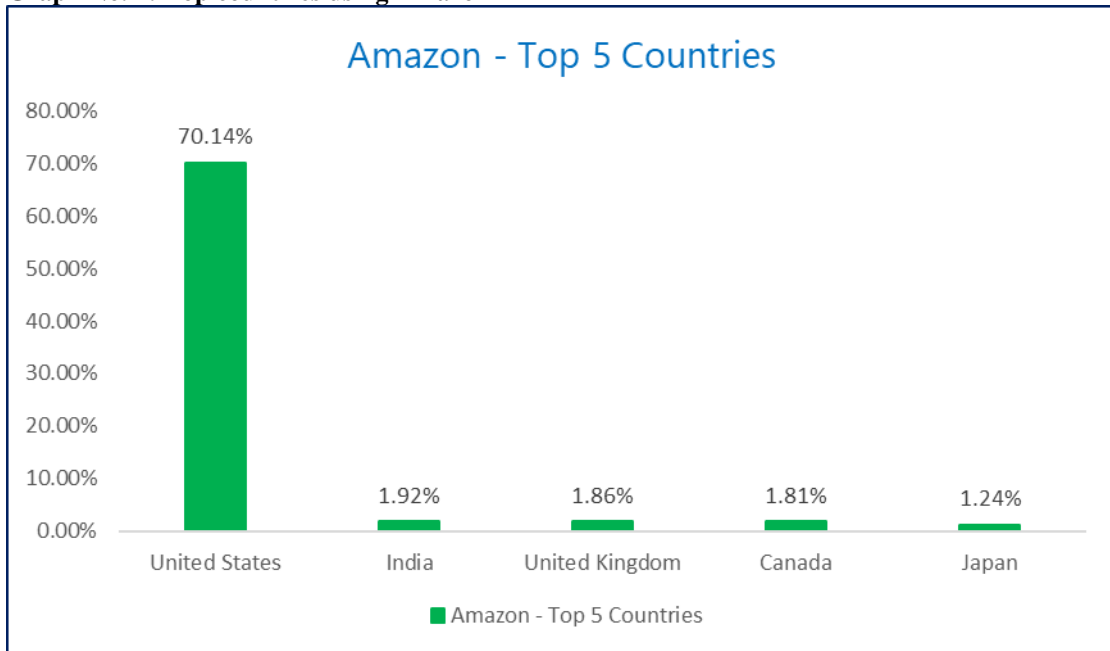
Source: Author based on information available on: wwwsimilarweb.com

Most of Amazon costumers are mainly located in the United States, basically because most of the shop stores are located their which means free shipping and the fast delivery of the purchased product, Amazon also have other costumer from different parts of the world because it has the availability of international shipping and price depends on the location of shipment.
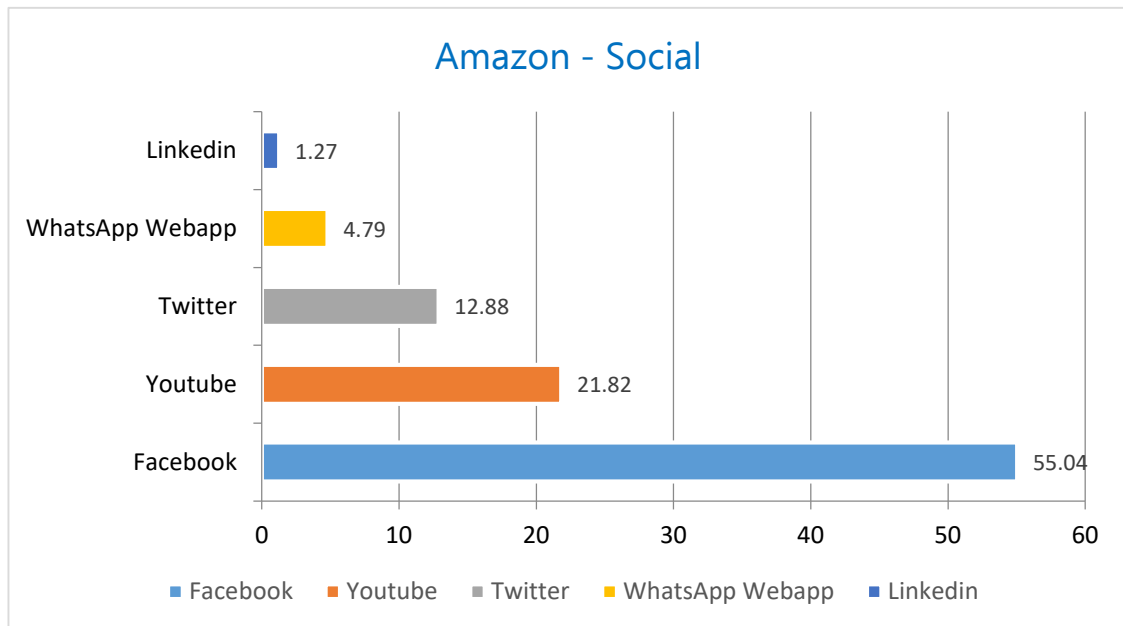
Graph No. 5: Top 5 countries using Souq
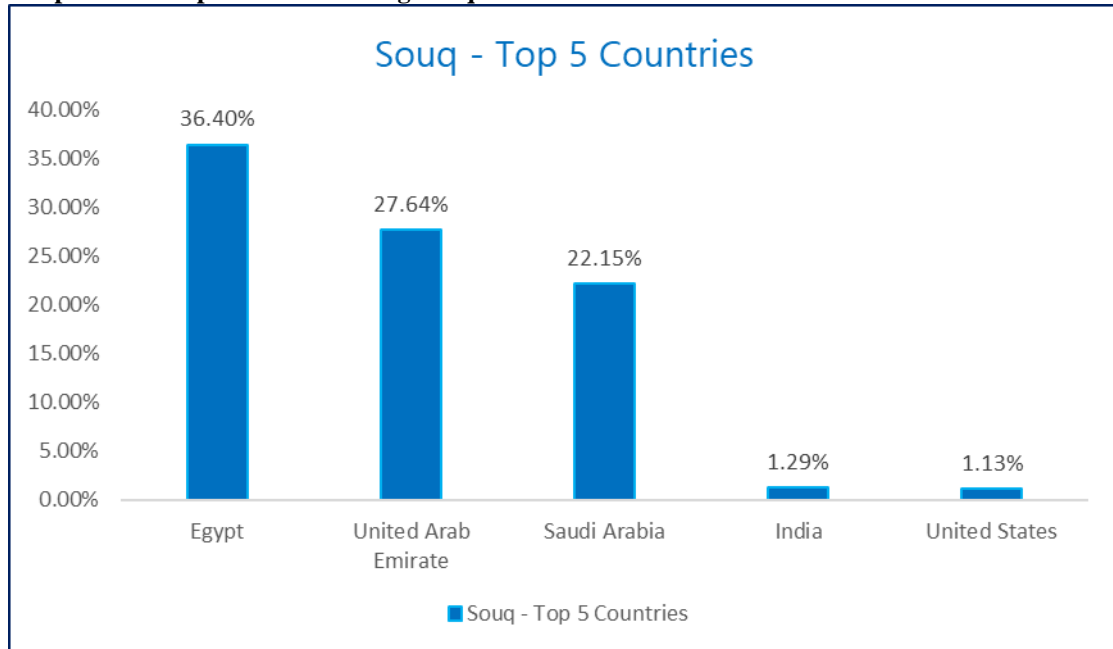
Source: Author based on information available on: www.similarweb.com

The top Arab countries which are using Souq are Egypt, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, and the rest are not even Arab countries, this is an indicator of how the participation of most Arab countries is really low, and the which shows the delay of the participating of most Arab countries, due to different issues and difficulties regarding economic and political situation.
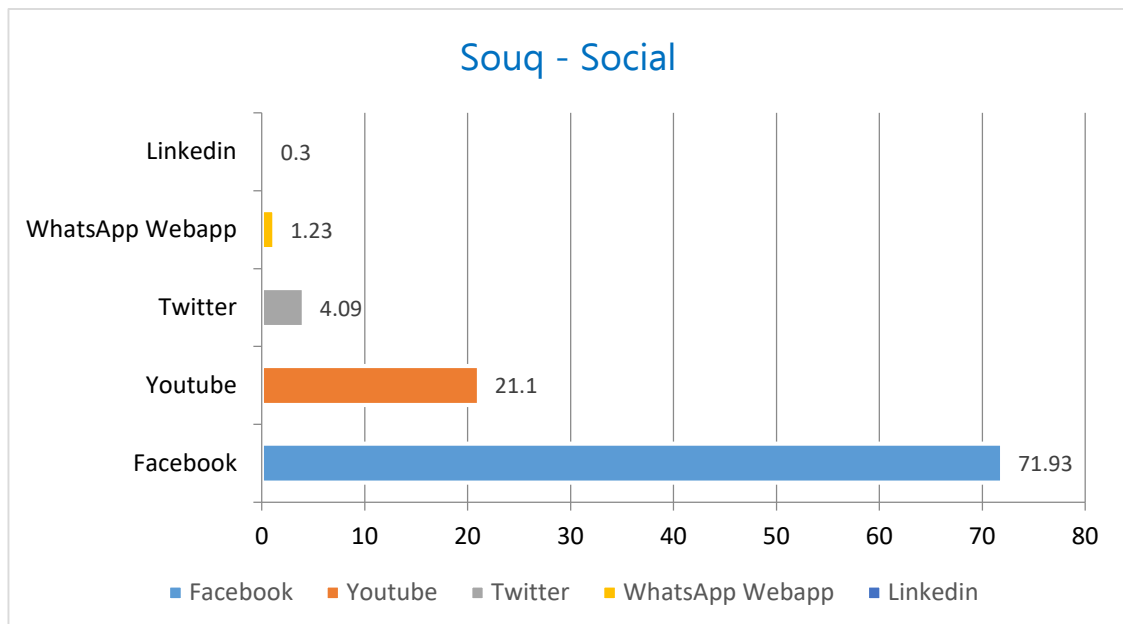
7. Amazon & Souq social media referrals

Graph No. 6: Amazon use of Social Media

Amazon - Social

Platform	Value
Linkedin	1.27
WhatsApp Webapp	4.79
Twitter	12.88
Youtube	21.82
Facebook	55.04

Legend: Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, WhatsApp Webapp, Linkedin

Source: Author based on information from www.similarweb.com

Graph No. 7: Souq use of Social Media in advertisement

Souq - Social

Platform	Value
Linkedin	0.3
WhatsApp Webapp	1.23
Twitter	4.09
Youtube	21.1
Facebook	71.93

Legend: Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, WhatsApp Webapp, Linkedin

Source: Author based on information from www.similarweb.com

The use of social media in advertising for any kind of product or item is great way in attracting more existent or new costumes and Facebook one of the most used social networks in the Arab world, which makes sense that Souq getting 71% of social media referrals from Facebook only followed by YouTube. Amazon, on the other hand, is more spread in most of the social media but still uses Facebook as the main source of targeting new customers.

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5 Conclusion & recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

E-commerce became a must-have technology for every country in the world, it is playing a huge role in worlds economy and in people's daily life's, and the e-commerce is in a rapid growth. Overall there is development in most of the Arab countries except for few that either have political issue or internal instability, the country that will take initiative in participating and developing this field will drag the rest of the countries and will force them to use this technology just like the United Arab did which made more gulf countries involve. it's not enough for countries to depend on one recourse as national income and the opportunity and potential in e-commerce is great to relay on. There so many missing aspects from the Arab world that will prevent them from achieving full adoption of the e-commerce, with this slow development and not taking the initiative to make some changes it might take 10 or even 20 years to get to that state. Thesis study focused on e-commerce in the Arab world using the online source of data sets. This thesis might be helpful for the people who use e-business or e-commerce and those who wants to involve to the e-commerce. Users can get good amount of information form this thesis and it might give good understanding to them on how to interact with the E-commerce business around the Arabic countries. User can take a benefit form thesis easily which means they do not need advance knowledge of e-commerce or statistic. Everything is provided in this thesis through graphical view and statistical analysis.

Furthermore, concept about E-commerce, how they can be useful in different point of views was explained through theory and practical.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendation for the State and development of e-commerce in the Aran countries are increase the awareness of the importance of e-commerce by making educational campaigns and educational programs. Importing new technologies in this field for the development process such as machines, tools, and the use of skilled people in this field by sharing their skills and knowledge. Governments must set new laws and legislation that cope with e-commerce and finance development and start-up small companies in this field.

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