

THE ROLE OF E-COMMERCE EDUCATION IN SHAPING UZBEKISTAN'S DIGITAL ECONOMY

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Annotation: This study introduces the E-Commerce Academy, an innovative, industry-driven learning platform designed to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical market needs in Uzbekistan. The academy provides flexible, interactive, and practice-oriented training in areas such as digital payments, logistics, marketing, and marketplace management, with programs tailored for beginners, intermediates, and advanced learners. It collaborates with universities, banks, and e-commerce platforms, offering certification systems that enhance professional credibility and entrepreneurial skills. A survey of 420 participants highlights strong demand for e-commerce education, particularly among young entrepreneurs, and reveals challenges such as limited knowledge, financial constraints, and digital literacy gaps. The results emphasize the socio-economic role of e-commerce education in fostering entrepreneurship, job creation, poverty reduction, and export growth. The E-Commerce Academy is positioned as a modern solution for Uzbekistan's digital transformation, combining theoretical instruction with practical experience and industry partnerships.

Keywords: E-Commerce Academy; digital skills; entrepreneurship; certification; online education; Uzbekistan; socio-economic development; digital literacy; marketplace management; innovation.

Introduction

In recent years, Uzbekistan has witnessed rapid growth in its digital economy, with e-commerce emerging as a key driver of entrepreneurship, innovation, and socio-economic development. However, gaps in digital literacy, practical training, and access to market-oriented knowledge continue to limit the sector's potential. To address these challenges, the E-Commerce Academy was established as a specialized learning platform that equips students, entrepreneurs, and professionals with essential skills and practical experience needed to thrive in the evolving digital landscape.

Therefore, we launched a project E-Commerce Academy, which is meant to be a useful, industry-driven learning centre bridging the gap between academic knowledge and market needs, therefore addressing these limitations. The school seeks to provide students with job-ready skills and entrepreneurial knowledge vital for Uzbekistan's

digital transformation by including real-world case studies, mentoring programs, and alliances with top e-commerce platforms. The E-Commerce Academy has been established to meet this demand, offering a modern, interactive, and practice-oriented learning system. Designed based on the Coursera¹ model, the academy stands out from other e-commerce education projects in Uzbekistan due to several key advantages. E-Commerce Academy provides an online learning platform that can be accessed from anywhere in the world, enabling students to study at their own convenience. Students can learn the courses at their own pace, deepen their theoretical knowledge and develop their practical skills. The Academy offers educational programs suitable for beginner, intermediate and advanced students, providing an individualized approach to anyone interested in e-commerce. One of the main strengths of the Academy is the curriculum designed and delivered by experienced e-commerce professionals, IT professionals and business experts. Through interactive training, webinars and master classes, students will receive practical knowledge from industry leaders and gain experience that they can apply in their businesses. Also, the academy cooperates with various organizations: universities, banks and marketplaces attract their experts and implements a separate certification system for each organization, which serves to further strengthen the future professional growth of students.²

The attention of the academy is not only focused on theoretical knowledge, but also on preparing students for the real business environment. Courses cover important areas such as marketplace management, drop shipping, digital payments, email marketing and creating online advertising campaigns. Students gain hands-on experience working on major e-commerce platforms, learn how to register products, manage sales, and run an efficient business. To enhance engagement and effectiveness, the academy incorporates gamification elements, allowing students to complete interactive tasks, track their progress, and earn incentives for achievements. The learning experience is designed to be dynamic, making the process enjoyable while ensuring measurable progress. Both free and premium learning opportunities are available. Basic courses are accessible at no cost, enabling newcomers to explore e-commerce fundamentals, while premium programs offer advanced content, mentorship, and deeper insights into specialized topics.³

The E-Commerce Academy collaborates with banks, financial institutions, and universities to develop specialized courses tailored to real market needs. This collaboration ensures that students acquire relevant skills aligned with industry demands and enhance their employability in the e-commerce sector. Unlike other e-

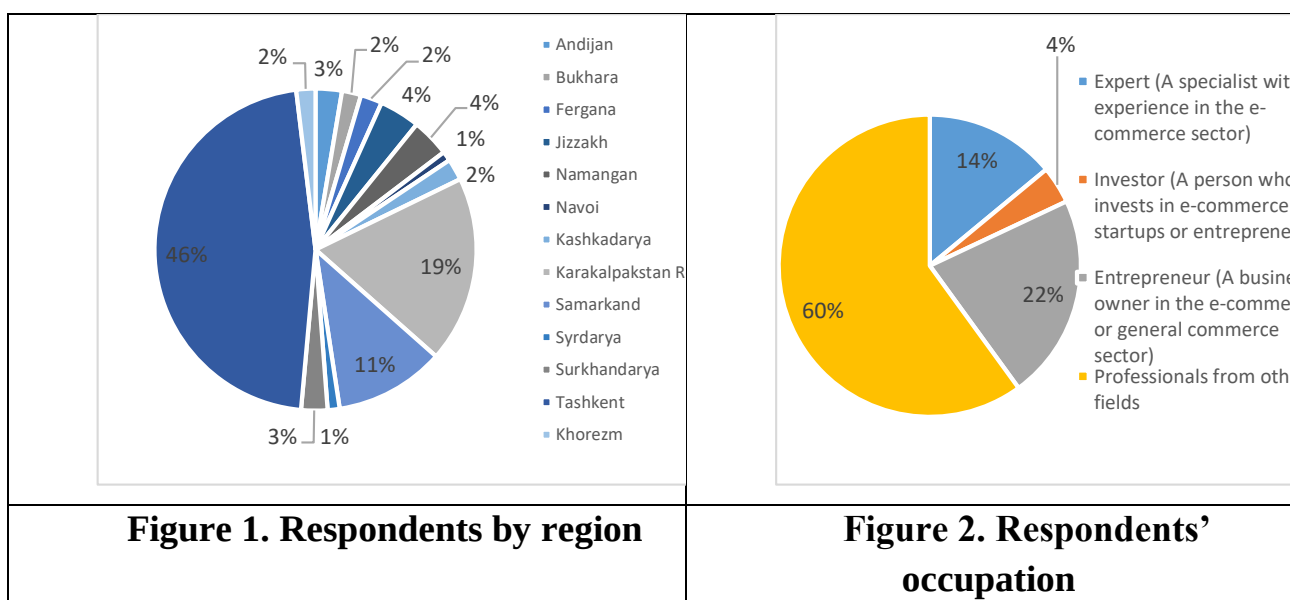
¹ Coursera. (n.d.). CourseRA | Degrees, Certificates, & free online courses. <https://www.coursera.org/>

² Jain, V., Malviya, B. I. N. D. O. O., & Arya, S. A. T. Y. E. N. D. R. A. (2021). An overview of electronic commerce (e-Commerce). *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27(3), 666.

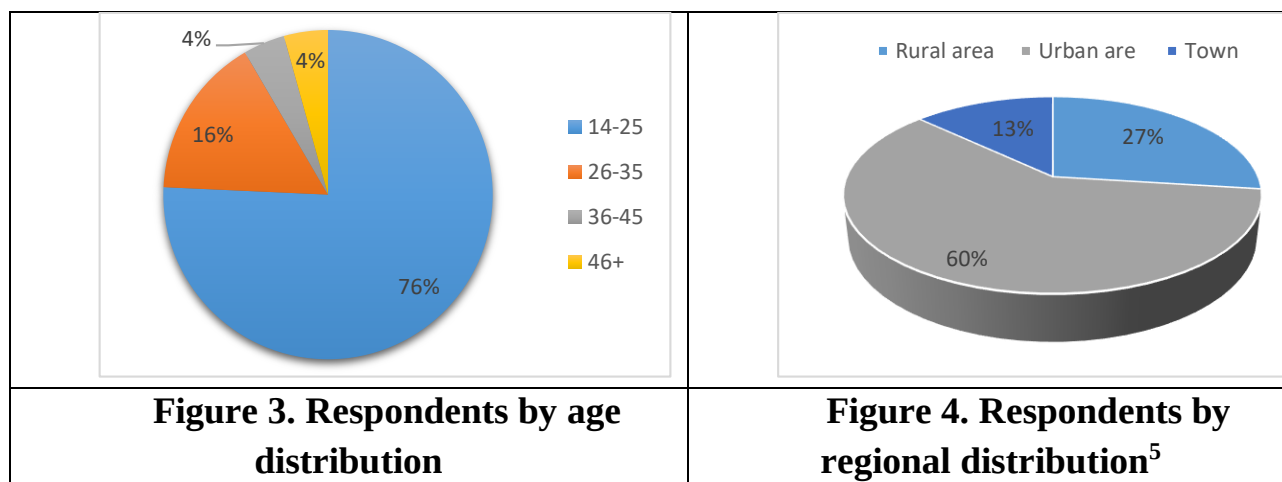
³ Sodikov, M. (2023). Key Features of Digital Advertising Development in Tourism in Uzbekistan. *YASHIL IQTISODIYOT VA TARAQQIYOT*, 1(maxsus son).

commerce education projects in Uzbekistan, which are often either too specialized or primarily theoretical, the E-Commerce Academy integrates a flexible and comprehensive learning model. The platform provides real-world applications, industry-expert-led courses, interactive learning, and diverse course options that accommodate different needs. As a modern and interactive learning platform, the E-Commerce Academy offers an effective solution for anyone seeking in-depth knowledge of e-commerce in Uzbekistan. It goes beyond theoretical education, equipping students with the necessary skills to operate in real business environments, develop independent e-commerce ventures, and adapt to the evolving digital economy.⁴

Survey. This survey was conducted to assess the impact of e-commerce knowledge and skills on business development, employment opportunities, and socio-economic growth. A total of 420 participants participated in the study, including entrepreneurs, small business owners, freelancers and individuals interested in the field of e-commerce. Most of the participants are young entrepreneurs and people aiming to start their own business, and it was observed that their interest in e-commerce is high. The survey covered aspects such as the role of certifications in business, the socioeconomic benefits of e-commerce education, the most in-demand courses, and the main challenges in starting or growing an online business. The results revealed key challenges facing the industry and highlighted the importance of e-commerce in generating revenue, creating jobs and achieving business success.



⁴ Sodiqova, D. (2023). Ways and problems of using the experience of developing countries in the development of electronic commerce. *Iqtisodiy taraqqiyot va tahlil*, 1(3), 49-53.



The analysis shows that the majority of respondents (46%) are from Tashkent, indicating a high level of interest and engagement in e-commerce within the capital. Following Tashkent, Samarkand (19%) and Fergana (11%) also demonstrate significant involvement, suggesting a growing demand for digital economy and online business opportunities in these regions. Other areas, such as Khorezm, Kashkadarya, Navoi, and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, have a lower share of respondents, highlighting the need to expand e-commerce opportunities and awareness in these regions. Therefore, when establishing the E-Commerce Academy, it is crucial to consider regional needs and focus on enhancing knowledge and skills, particularly outside Tashkent. The academy should offer both online and offline training programs tailored to entrepreneurs and young professionals across all regions, fostering broader participation in the digital economy. (Figure 1)

The largest portion (60%) consists of professionals from other fields, indicating that interest in e-commerce is not limited to industry experts but extends to a wider professional audience. Entrepreneurs make up 22% of respondents, showcasing a significant number of business owners actively engaged in or considering e-commerce ventures. Experts with experience in the e-commerce sector account for 14%, while investors who finance e-commerce startups or entrepreneurs represent only 4%. This distribution highlights the need for targeted educational programs within the E-Commerce Academy. The academy should focus on equipping professionals from various fields with the necessary knowledge and skills to transition into e-commerce, while also fostering greater engagement from investors and industry specialists to support business growth in the digital economy. (Figure 2)

The age distribution of e-commerce survey respondents, with 76% aged 14-25, highlighting strong interest among young individuals. The 26-35 group (16%) represents early-career professionals, while older age groups (36-45 and 46+) make up

⁵ E-Tijorat Sohasida Bilim va Malaka Oshirishning Zarurati: Talab va Ehtiyojlar Tahlili. (n.d.). Google Docs. Retrieved March 4, 2025, from <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19Y8HdqB31g1WOMOIEYQxADnOd4pgRgkjm97xgBwnTEk/edit#responses>

just 4% each. This suggests the E-Commerce Academy should focus on young learners while also encouraging older professionals to engage in digital commerce. (Figure 3)

The geographical distribution of respondents, with 60% from urban areas, 27% from towns, and 13% from rural areas. The dominance of urban participants suggests better access to e-commerce opportunities, while the lower rural representation highlights the need for targeted digital literacy and infrastructure improvements. The E-Commerce Academy should focus on bridging this gap by offering tailored programs for rural entrepreneurs.⁶ (Figure 4)

We have conducted e survey on respondents' engagement in e-commerce. While 88 individuals are already active and 84 are in the planning stage, a significant 217 respondents express a desire to start. Only 27 are uninterested. This highlights strong potential for e-commerce growth, emphasizing the need for structured training and support. The E-Commerce Academy can play a crucial role in guiding aspiring entrepreneurs toward successful market entry. In the respondents' participation in e-commerce courses, while 18% have attended free courses and 14% have taken paid courses, a notable 59% want to participate but haven't yet. Only 9% are not interested. This indicates a strong demand for accessible e-commerce education, highlighting the potential impact of the E-Commerce Academy in providing tailored learning opportunities.

In the topic of the perceived importance of e-commerce knowledge, with a majority (219 respondents) rating it as highly important (5). Moderate importance (3 and 4) is acknowledged by 81 and 108 participants, respectively, while only a small fraction (7 and 9) consider it less relevant. This highlights the critical role of e-commerce education, reinforcing the necessity of initiatives like the E-Commerce Academy to meet growing learning demands.

In the key skill areas in e-commerce education, financial literacy is the most supported topic (67.7%), followed by digital marketing (62.4%). Working with platforms (60.5%) and customer relations (59.3%) are also highly valued. This suggests a strong demand for comprehensive training programs covering financial management, marketing strategies, and platform navigation.

The survey results show that for e-commerce professionals, certification can increase credibility (51%) and make it easier to find new customers and partners (49.9%). At the same time, 31.3% of respondents believe that gaining knowledge is more important, while 6.9% said that certification will not affect their business. Overall, certification can have positive results for entrepreneurs and professionals. These results show that the certification system expands business opportunities, especially international cooperation and plays an important role in gaining customer

⁶ Zeng, M., Zheng, Y., Tian, Y., & Jebbouri, A. (2022). Rural e-commerce entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions: Model construction via empirical analysis. *Sustainability*, 14(17), 10854.

trust. However, a certificate alone is not enough - practical knowledge and experience are also necessary.

Improving knowledge and skills in electronic commerce is of great socio-economic importance. According to the results of the research, 61.7% (258 people) see an opportunity to earn additional income by increasing knowledge in this field, and 48.1% (201 people) consider it an important factor in creating new jobs. Also, 41.4% (173 people) said that it helps to increase the income of entrepreneurs, while 35.2% (147 people) said that it helps to reduce poverty. 23.2% (97 people) noted that e-commerce will be useful in increasing the volume of exports.

The results of the research show that the most demanded courses in the field of e-commerce are related to marketing and advertising, 63.9% (267 people) indicated the need for courses in Targeting, SEO, SMM and branding. Also, 59.1% (247 people) consider elementary courses on the basics of e-commerce to be important, while 37.6% (157 people) noted the need for financial knowledge. Courses on logistics and delivery (37.1% - 155 people), legal knowledge (35.6% - 149 people) and technological solutions (41.1% - 172 people) are also in demand.

Emphasizing the requirement of education and mentoring, the table shows important difficulties experienced by individuals with lack of knowledge and experience being the most important one. Strong competition (159 responses) indicates that many struggle to stand out in the market; financial constraints (233 responses) rank second, indicating challenges in securing funding; difficulty understanding platforms and technology (120 responses) suggests a need for better digital literacy support. Overall, addressing education, financial access, and digital skills can help individuals overcome these barriers and succeed.

The results of the survey justify the need to establish a specialized academy in the field of e-commerce. The reasons for this are:

- Lack of knowledge and skills - more than 65% of respondents believe that they do not have enough knowledge and experience.
- The need for training and certification - certification is an important factor for increasing business credibility.
- Need for practical courses - there is a high demand for courses such as marketing, legal knowledge, financial management.⁷

⁷ Содикова, Д. (2024). Влияние электронной коммерции на экономическое развитие: сравнительный анализ по классификациям стран. *Экономическое развитие и анализ*, 2(10), 224-231.

In conclusion, the results of the survey showed that e-commerce education and training has a significant impact on entrepreneurship and economic development. Since the greatest interest is observed among young people, it is important to introduce special training programs, practical training and support programs for start-ups for them. Low participation rates in rural areas mean that special programs are needed to improve digital literacy and promote online commerce. Marketing, financial literacy, logistics and legal knowledge are the most demanding areas, and it is necessary to develop courses of various levels that include them. Also, although certification is seen as an important factor in increasing business credibility and attracting customers, it should be combined with practical experience. To increase the effectiveness of e-commerce education, theoretical knowledge should be combined with real projects, and a training system should be established in cooperation with marketplaces, small businesses, payment systems, logistics services, and digital marketing agencies. Strengthening relations between entrepreneurs and investors will help to solve the problems of lack of knowledge and financial resources. Improving knowledge and skills in e-commerce is expected to have a positive impact on business development, job creation and economic growth.

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