



Dissertation Report on

**“Localization strategies by International E-commerce platforms for the  
Indian E-commerce market”**

for the purpose of conferring the degree of

**MBA in International Business from IIFT Delhi**

submitted by

**Yash Kumar Jain (51C)**

under the guidance of

**Dr. Rakesh Mohan Joshi**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have to express my warmest thanks to my guide Dr. Rakesh Mohan Joshi, dean and professor at Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Delhi without whose guidance this paper would not have been possible. I thank him for giving me the freedom to do this paper on my own and helping bring shape to my ideas. I am indebted to my college, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Delhi for the resources they provided me towards the completion of this project. And finally, I would like to thank all the researchers whose work inspired me to research on this paper, who provided a strong base understanding of their work for laymen like me who want to study the topic and add their own understanding of it.

## **CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Global E-commerce .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Indian E-commerce.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Localization .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Amazon .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Samsung.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Objective .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Research Gaps.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Reasons for Localization in E-commerce.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Implementation of Localization in E-commerce .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>38</b>

## INTRODUCTION

### **Global E-commerce**

The value of the global e-commerce market has nearly tripled from \$1,336 billion in 2014 to \$4,938 billion in 2021. Even the percentage of e-commerce as a part of the total retail sales has gone up from 7.4% in 2015 to 19.6% in 2021. These figures show the acceptance of e-commerce is only increasing. The growth of retail e-commerce was greater than 40% in 9 countries in 2020 (Thailand, UK, Brazil, Australia, Russia, Mexico, Singapore, Canada, Argentina) with an average growth of 25.7%. The biggest e-commerce markets are China, USA, UK, Japan & Germany. With digital sales of almost \$2.992 trillion in 2021, Asia-Pacific is by far the largest market for retail ecommerce. It has been estimated that the digital retail sales for the Asia Pacific region were approximately five times higher than in Western Europe and more than three times higher than in North America. (Coppola, E-commerce worldwide - statistics & facts, n.d.)

### **Indian E-commerce**

India's e-commerce market is the world's eighth largest. Despite the pandemic's continued influence, India will be the fastest expanding market this year. Presently at \$65.3 billion, the Indian e-commerce market has expanded at excellent rates over the last five years, with growth of 30 percent in 2018 and 22 percent in 2019, despite a slowdown during the epidemic. From now until 2024, revenues are predicted to grow at a 14.5% compound annual growth rate (CAGR). With just four out of every ten Indians shopping online, the country's ecommerce potential remains largely untapped. Platforms are the most effective approach to reach India's 1.4 billion people: Amazon.in, Bigbasket, and Grofers are the top three e-commerce sites in India by net sales. (Global E-commerce Trends Report, n.d.)

Even after the disruptions caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, India's e-commerce market continues to grow. It has caused a change in purchase behaviour with more Indians having adopted online shopping instead of stepping outside their houses. A look at the numbers from the festive season between October 15 to November 15 in 2020 confirms this with a record ₹ 58,000 crore (US\$ 8.3 billion) gross sales value for all e-commerce businesses or a growth of 65% compared to the ₹ 35,000 crore (US\$ 5 billion) worth of sales in the same period in

2019. In terms of volume and value, e-commerce grew by 36% and 30% year over year in the fourth quarter of 2020.

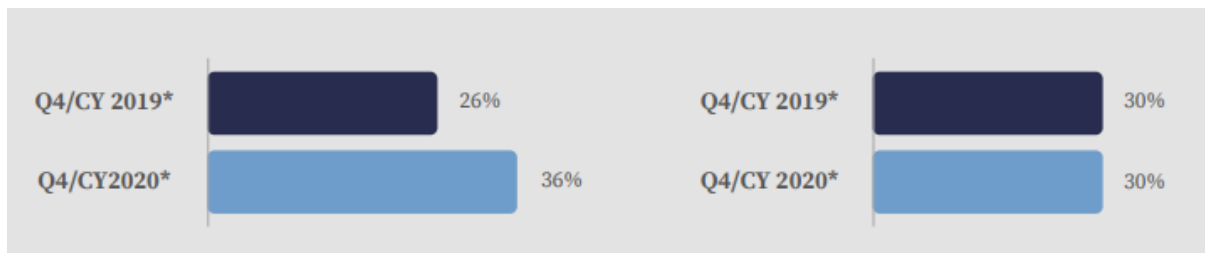


Figure 1 – Indian E-commerce Volume and Value Growth

As expected, traditional urban and Tier 1 cities continue to account for the majority of volume and value.. However, the increasing focus of e-commerce companies on Tier 2 and Tier 3+ cities has gradually grown their share of the overall e-commerce market over the last few years. Tier 2 and Tier 3+ cities now account for 46% of overall contribution, up from 32% in Q4 2019 and 14% in Q4 2020, displacing conventional metropolitan and Tier I cities. In the meantime, growth in Tier 1 cities has decreased to 19 percent. E-commerce is predicted to continue to grow at a greater rate in Tier 2 and Tier 3+ cities, as seen by remarkable growth of 87 percent and 151 percent in Q4 2020, respectively, when compared to the same period last year. There are various reasons for this such as the expanding adoption of social commerce, faster and more timely deliveries, catering to audiences in their own mother tongues, and the rising acceptance of online payment along with ever increasing access to internet, are all contributing to the growth. Tier 3 city shoppers are the most active in Q4 2020, with a value increase of 178 percent from 66 percent in Q4 2019 to 178 percent in Q4 2020. Tier 3 cities also reported amazing growth in order volume, with a 37 percent increase in Q4 2019 vs. Q4 2018, and a staggering 151 percent increase in Q4 2020 vs. Q4 2019.

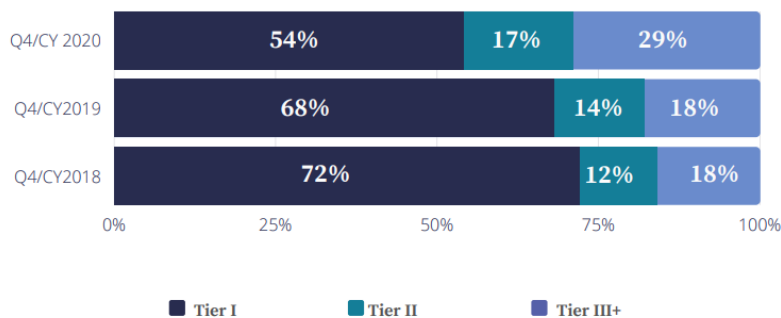
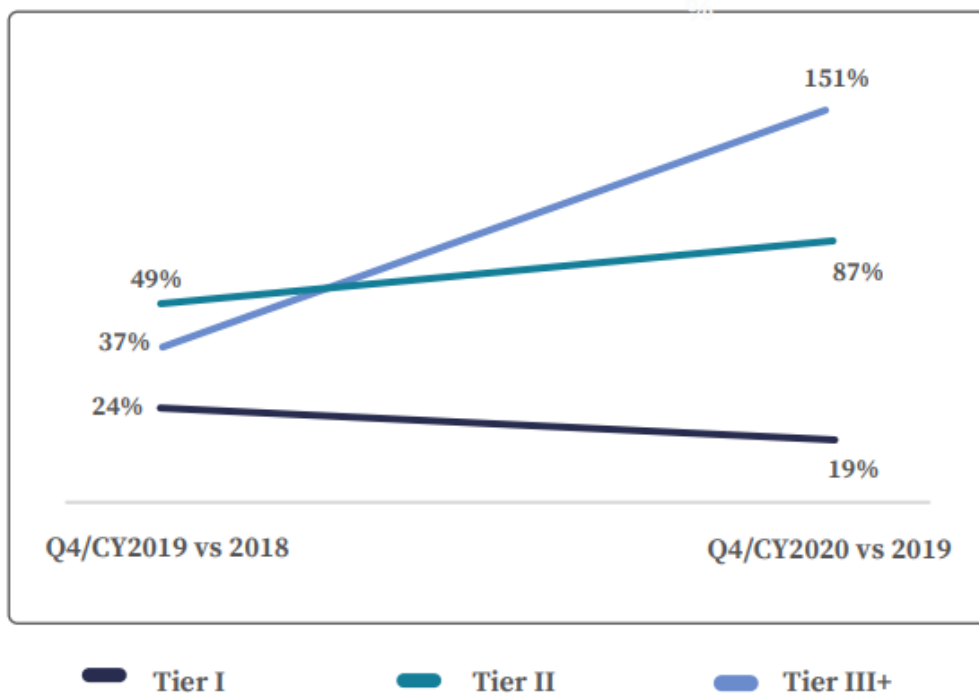


Figure 2 – Cluster-wise share by Volume



*Figure 3 – Tier-wise Volume Growth*

This growth in the Tier II and Tier III cities again sheds light on the importance of localization in order to reach the next billion consumers across the country. The increased online spending in India will only encourage e-commerce firms to aggressively scale their operations to enter the Indian e-commerce space or increase their presence pan-India.

**Localization**

For the international e-commerce firms entering India, their success depends a lot on the quality of their online marketing content. They will aim to attract the newly online savvy shoppers with personalized online content that helps build a connect with these customers. The key to establishing themselves in the minds of the Indian consumer lies in the ability of the e-commerce platforms to recognize the unique needs of the Indian customers, take into account the cultural differences and habits and then personalize the shopping experience to meet their expectations. For this they need localization.

**E-commerce localization** is the process of modifying all of the e-commerce platform's content (website or app—including information about the products, blogs, videos, social media posts etc) so that it resonates strongly with the local consumers in the target market,

wherever it may be in the world. This involves the transformation of content so that it appears to have been made *by* and *for* the local market. Some simple examples of this are modifying the text to suit local preferences & interests, adjusting images to reflect local environments, and adopting local languages, currency, units of measurement & formatting. Looking at the e-commerce websites with highest traffic, we see Amazon.com & Samsung.com in the top 10. Going forward, we look at how these two sites localize their e-commerce sites.

## Amazon

Amazon has evolved from an internet bookshop to one of the world's most valuable public firms. From cloud computing to voice technologies, Amazon has established itself as the unchallenged industry leader. It has surpassed Google as the most popular destination for product searches.

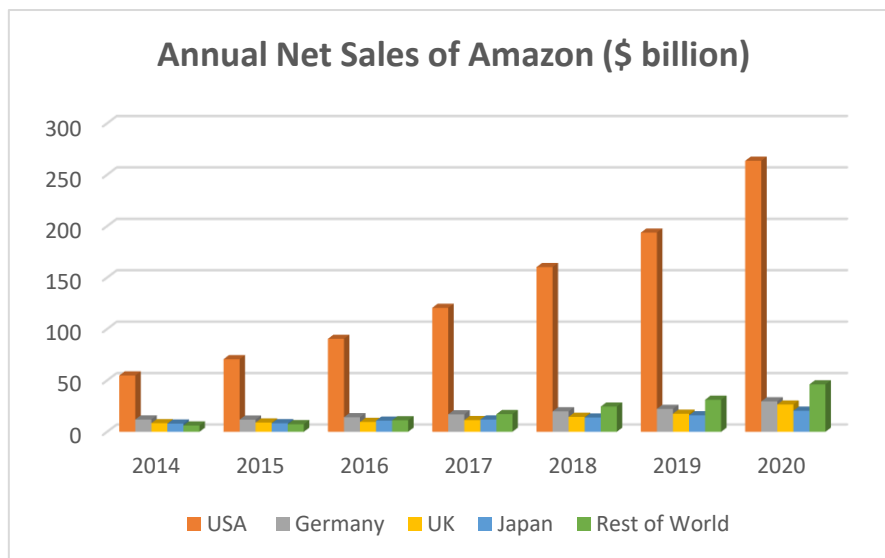


Figure 4 – Annual Net Sales of Amazon (Region wise) (Coppola, Net sales of Amazon in leading markets 2014-2020, n.d.)

Region	CAGR (2014-2020)
USA	29.95%
Germany	16.35%
United Kingdom	21.23%

Japan	17.16%
Rest of the World	40.06%

Amazon has been busy ramping up its global operations. In 2010, Amazon only had a presence in seven countries: Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Japan, China, and Italy. After a decade, activities outside of the United States accounted for almost one-third of total sales, encompassing more than 20 countries. As seen in the figures, while USA has been the biggest market for Amazon, there has been a steady rise in the Rest of the World segment. As of now, it is the second biggest segment for Amazon. It also has the highest compounded growth of 40.06% compared to the 29.95% of the USA region. As of 2022, Amazon ships to 100+ countries but has specific sites as well as operations in 13 countries – The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, and Spain are the countries represented. These countries are also the focal point of Amazon Prime, their subscription service that offers premium services like free delivery as well as access to digital content on Amazon Prime Video and Amazon Music to members in 21 countries.

With respect to India, Amazon has invested over \$6.5 billion dollars since its entry in 2013. Since then it has steadily expanded the offerings like Amazon Now (grocery) & Amazon Prime in 2016, Amazon Prime Music in 2018 etc.

Company	FY 2021 (₹ crores)		FY 2022 (₹ crores)	
	Revenue	Profit/Loss	Revenue	Profit/Loss
Flipkart India	₹ 42,941	- ₹ 2,445	₹ 34,170	- ₹ 3,150
Flipkart Internet	₹ 7,840	- ₹ 2,881	₹ 5,916	- ₹ 1,936
Amazon Wholesale	₹ 3,131	₹ 46	₹ 3,384	- ₹ 132
Amazon Seller Services	₹ 16,200	- ₹ 4,748	₹ 10,847	- ₹ 5,849

(Amazon India marketplace clocks 49% revenue growth in FY21, n.d.)

Amazon Seller Services is the company that runs the online marketplace of Amazon India. It reported a 49% rise in revenue from operations (₹ 16,200 crs in FY21 from ₹ 10,847.6 crs in FY20). It was still at a loss though (₹ 4,748 crs in FY21 from ₹ 5,849 crore in FY20). The other company is Amazon Wholesale (India). Out of this revenue for Amazon India, ₹ 7,555 crs was from offering marketplace services in FY21 compared to ₹ 4,949 crs in FY20. The



revenue from other marketplace services (including advertising services), was ₹ 2,554 crs in FY21 from ₹ 1,636 crs in FY20.



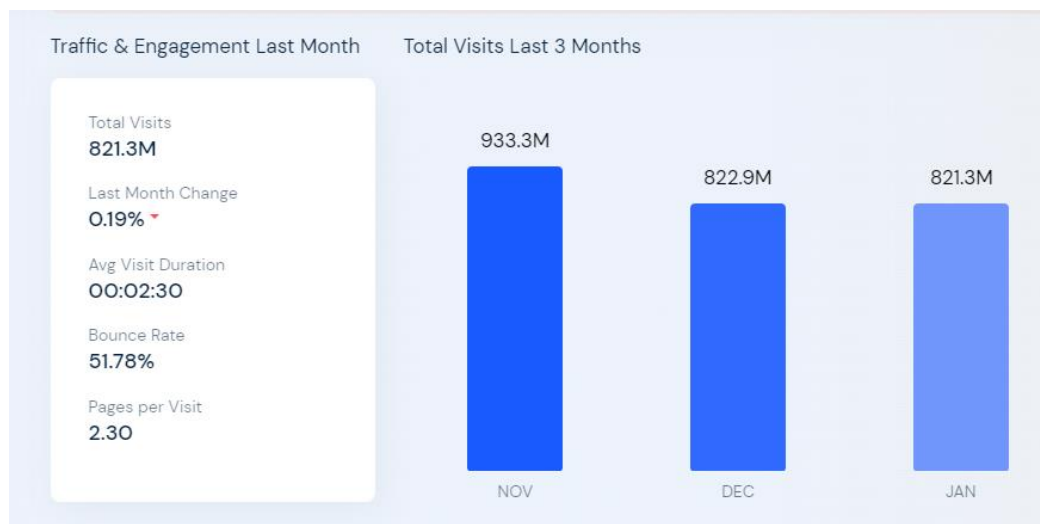
Figure 5 – Comparison of traffic on Amazon.in & Flipkart.com in Jan 2022 (Amazon.in vs Flipkart.in Traffic Comparison, n.d.)

## Samsung

Samsung Electronics is one of the most valuable technology companies in the world with a market cap of \$ 412.31 billion. While Samsung is into consumer electronics, semiconductors, telecommunications, and digital media technologies, it is most recognized for being the leading smartphone vendor worldwide. As recently as Q2 of FY21, Samsung's market share in the global smartphone market was at 20.8% followed by their closest competitors, Apple and Huawei. Looking at the region wise split, we get (Inside Samsung Galaxy's Global Market Share, n.d.)–

Region	Market Share (Samsung)	Market Share (Competitor)
North America	28%	55% (Apple)
China	<1%	23% (Vivo)
India	17.7%	28.4% (Xiaomi)
Southeast Asia	19%	22% (OPPO)
Korea	70%	22% (Apple)
Japan	6.8%	52.6% (Apple)
Latin America	42.4%	21.8% (Motorola)
Europe	33%	32% (Apple)

As we can see, apart from Korea & Latin America, Samsung has lost ground to cover for in all of the regions. The biggest smartphone markets in the world are presently China & India wherein it is not close to being the market leader. The domestic competitors in these markets are able to offer product features at cut-throat prices and have more localized services as well. Samsung has an established distribution and retailer network which is responsible for the majority of sales. However, in order to remain competitive, Samsung has been focussing on building its D2C e-commerce capabilities. Their marketing spends also reflect this with almost equal expenditures on online and offline efforts now compared to a 70/30 ratio of offline/online spends in the past. This can be seen even on their advertisements wherein the CTA is visit the website rather than the stores. This change in strategy has resulted in almost 10% of sales being from e-commerce channels as well as Samsung.com being in the top 5 list of e-commerce website traffic.



*Figure 6 – Traffic on samsung.com in Jan 2022 (Samsung.com Traffic Analytics & Market Share, n.d.)*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1) E-Commerce on the global platform: Strategic Insights on the Localization-Standardization Perspective (Hadi S. Alhorr, 2010)

This paper talks about the choice of approach that should be used in global e-commerce – a globalized approach with homogenized communication or a localized approach with tailored communication. The argument for standardization revolves around the nature of technology being uniform even when spread globally. This means that the effect of the local environments and culture is minimized in e-commerce. Some of the advantages of standardization are – reduced costs & economies of scale since the standard template is used over and over which saves firms the localization costs, an uniform brand image is propagated which is strengthened easily over time making it more recognizable as well as the easier maintenance of a single website or app which is a specific application of standardization in e-commerce. However, the key assumption of all customers having similar needs is one that does not keep with the market demands of the present e-commerce where personalization & customization are not just wanted, they are expected at the very least. When it comes to localization, there is importance given to the culture of the customers just by the virtue of humans are cultural beings and hence there is an emphasis on understanding the needs of the local customers in order to ensure customer satisfaction. There are 4 different strategies that have been laid out depending on the degree of globalization (global integration) or localization (local responsiveness) that is required by the industry of the organization as well as the other external factors of the organization–

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Degree of Globalization</b>	<b>Degree of Localization</b>
Global	Strong	Weak
Multinational	Weak	Strong
International	Weak	Weak
Transnational	Strong	Strong

2) A Framework to Localize International Business to Business Web Sites (Singh, Park, & Kalliny, 2013)

This paper presents a framework which allows for the creation and rating of B2B websites on the basis of how well they are localized for a non-home market. Firstly, it lists extensive prior research on the heightened importance of culture as a by product of globalization and applies this to e-commerce – cultural differences can not be ignored by e-commerce websites especially when catering to a global audience. While using an e-commerce website, the customer experience can be very negative if factors like the usage of a relevant language, culturally accurate signs and symbols or any web content that is culturally at odds with the host country. This is where the concept of web localization comes in – to make a website seem consistent and intuitive for the local audiences. There is conclusive evidence which shows effective web localization can improve the user experience as well as their attitude towards the website which leads to increased chances of sales. In order to start the localization efforts for a B2B website, three main categories should be looked at –

- 1) Context – Context refers to the requirements of the specific customers or the industry of the business
- 2) Content – Content refers to the changing the elements like language, customer assistance, navigation of the website etc
- 3) Culture – Culture refers to the cultural elements that are relevant to the target customer or market

Two key factors discussed in the paper are the i18n & L10n, which stand for internationalization and localization of software by facilitating easy adjustment of the languages, technical specifications as well as other region-specific needs. The most visible component of L10n is the accurate translation of the original content into the required languages ie preferred language of the targeted customers. This step is often ignored by organizations (esp non-tech) which then increases the efforts in the future to actually change the websites and apps to an international format since the lack of internationalization means that there is no foundation to base the changes on. The lack of internationalization also increases the work required as well as the costs to introduce new templates for new locations as and when required. Finally, after an analysis of Korean and US websites, the paper outlines how much work remains to be done on the localization front especially beyond simple translations of the original content into different languages.

### 3) Framework for Localization of B2C E-Commerce Websites in Saudi Arabia (Ibrahim, Hussin, & Busalim)

This paper firstly lists out the reasons why websites are having to cater to Saudi Arabia since it is one of the biggest economies in the Middle East region as well as the high number of native Arabic speakers in the region. It also covers the points about the globalization and localization debate from the previous research. Looking specifically into the websites of Arabic e-commerce, it speaks of the opportunities available in the market due to the lack of competition which targets the Arabic speaking audience as well as the rapid growth rate of the Arabic internet user base. Some of the obvious localization features that should have been taken care of by the websites apart from the translation of the content into Arabic were the usage of the centimeter unit instead of inches as well as the orientation of products from right to left instead of left to right.

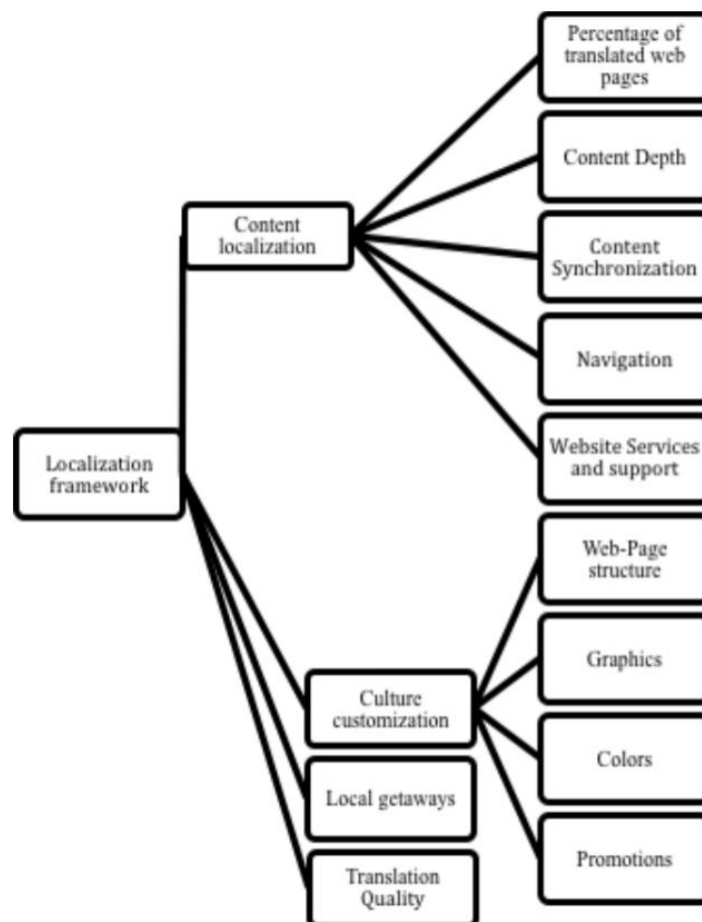


Figure 7 – Localization Framework (Ibrahim, Hussin, & Busalim)

#### 4) Culturally Sensitive Website Elements & Features: A Cross-National Comparison of Websites from Selected Countries (Cermak, 2020)

This paper compares websites from 9 selected countries – Austria, Chile, China, Japan, Latvia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, USA & the Czech Republic. These countries were selected based on the Hofstede's cultural dimensions. After a careful discussion on the existing research on the affect of culture on websites, the paper establishes that websites need to be sensitive culturally in order to improve the usability of the site, create a favourable attitude in users so that they take positive actions and hence, improve the effect of the e-commerce website. The paper also looks at research to see how the concept of Hofstede's cultural dimensions has been previously applied and how it can be relevant in the context of e-commerce websites.

The methodology used in the paper was to use content analysis to compare the different websites from the selected countries with a focus on 42 specific web elements. 50 websites were analyzed from each country. The countries were selected on the basis of extreme values of Hofstede's cultural dimensions as well as on the availability of comparisons for the countries based on differing methodologies in other papers. The websites mostly reflected the dominant cultural dimension of the country. They were from sectors which served the local population of the country in order to get the most accurate results. After the content analysis of the websites, the presence of the web elements in the websites of a particular country was documented and compared to the cultural dimensions of the country. From this, it was possible to isolate the web elements that are important to localize a website in a country based on the cultural dimensions of the country. For example, China has the following characteristics –

- High Long-term Orientation
- High Power Distance
- High Collectivism
- Low Uncertainty Avoidance

For a high power distance, the websites should have linear navigation, less links, a well defined hierarchy of data and minimal information at the first level. Similarly, the high collectivism score means that the colours and images used are traditional along with lots of symbols and pictures which highlight the Chinese nationality.

5) Electronic Business of Japan in Comparison with the U.S (MYKOLA V. MELNYK, 2021)

This paper makes the comparison between the e-commerce websites in Japan and USA based on the differences in the e-commerce website content, strategies and designs like -

- Difference in categories on the website

Use of search portals is key to get to e-commerce websites. While Japan uses generic portals, USA uses specific portals. Another variation is the presence/absence (USA/Japan) of service sites on e-commerce websites

- Difference in the website layouts

The information density on Japanese websites is very high which gives it a very cluttered look and feel. This is also less convenient when compared to USA websites which are clean in design, have minimal information and easy navigations.

- Difference in the payment processes & options

USA has been ahead in adopting newer payment options than Japan. While credit cards were the most preferred mode of payment for USA transactions, for Japan it was cash on delivery or picking it up at the nearest stores.

- Difference in the prevalence of e-commerce

USA has a higher user base than Japan. USA also has a higher internet penetration. The number of online retailers is also higher in the USA. Hence, with e-commerce being more prevalent in the USA, the sales from e-commerce are much higher than that of Japan.

- Differences during the COVID 19 pandemic

The imposition of new border restrictions has affected the stocks and hence the supplies of goods sold online differently in Japan and the USA. However, the pandemic also increased the acceptability of online shopping especially amongst older audiences which benefits Japan more given their demographic profile. There was also an acceleration in the adoption of cashless payments which again boosted the sales of e-commerce in both the countries.

## 6) Influences of Culture, Geography and Infrastructure on Website Localization Decisions (Shneor)

This paper looks into the factors that are taken into account by European airlines while launching websites for new markets. Some of the factors mentioned in the paper are –

- The level of IT infrastructure of the target country
- The level of web traffic originating from the target country
- The level of cultural differences between the target country and the home country of the airline
- The degree of individualism of the target country
- The level of masculinity of the target country
- The level of uncertainty avoidance of the target country
- The power distance between the target and the home country
- The level of economic regulations in the target country

Based on a regression, it was found that among these factors, the level of IT infra plays no role in decided whether a localized website has to be launched. The key factors that did influence the decision to create a localized website were –

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
Volume of website traffic	Positive
Physical distance between the two countries	Negative
Demand condition in target country	Negative
Level of competition	Negative
Cultural distance	Negative

However this paper is limited as it only looks at one industry – the airline industry whose patterns vastly differ from regular B2C e-commerce. Another key point is the difference of the European market compared to the major e-commerce markets of today.



## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Objective**

The main objectives of this report are as mentioned below –

- Discuss reasons for implementation of localization strategies in e-commerce
- Discuss the aspects of e-commerce that are localized
- Discuss the localization strategies & best practices from e-commerce companies like Amazon & Samsung

### **Methodology**

The research methodology used for this report is –

- Secondary Research: This has been done by going through various sources such as research papers, articles, research reports by blogs, newspapers and other online resources. The secondary research will be used to identify the main reasons for localization and the aspects of e-commerce that are localized presently.
- Detailed Case study of the different localization attributes on the e-commerce websites of Amazon & Samsung to help explain how localization makes a difference and also suggest steps for the future. This will involve a comparison of the existing websites of Amazon and Samsung in order to look at actual applications of localization in India as well as a localized version of the same websites in another country.

### **Research Gaps**

From the literature survey and the other secondary research that has been done for this paper, there were several instances of localization being shown for various countries or markets but there was an acute lack of localization examples specific to India. There is also a dearth of material which shows the latest instances of localization in e-commerce websites. This paper aims to address these gaps by delving into Amazon and Samsung, two of the most prominent e-commerce websites globally and in India in order to portray their efforts to localize their websites for the Indian users and the difference in approach used for the Indian market in comparison to the other countries.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### Reasons for Localization in E-commerce

While e-commerce had been in a state of steady growth, it gained renewed traction post the COVID pandemic. E-commerce has been able to attract plenty of new users who have embraced online shopping, having tried it during the pandemic only out of necessity. There exists a significant opportunity for e-commerce websites to hasten the acquisition of the next set of customers from previously untapped markets. Here are some reasons how localization exactly helps e-commerce –

- Cater to newer target markets

A normal e-commerce website or an app misses out on people who may have use for their products and services but are unable to use or put off by the language, culture, functional or other issues. For example, initially the majority of internet users were those who knew English and hence the majority of websites were also in English. However, the most internet users now are from China and India, where people are more comfortable with browsing & interacting in their native languages. Localization makes sure that any website can easily be used by potential customers in their own languages and in line with their own culture & customs. This way, a global e-commerce website can also compete with the local competitors and minimize the differences that may put off the customers while using their website.

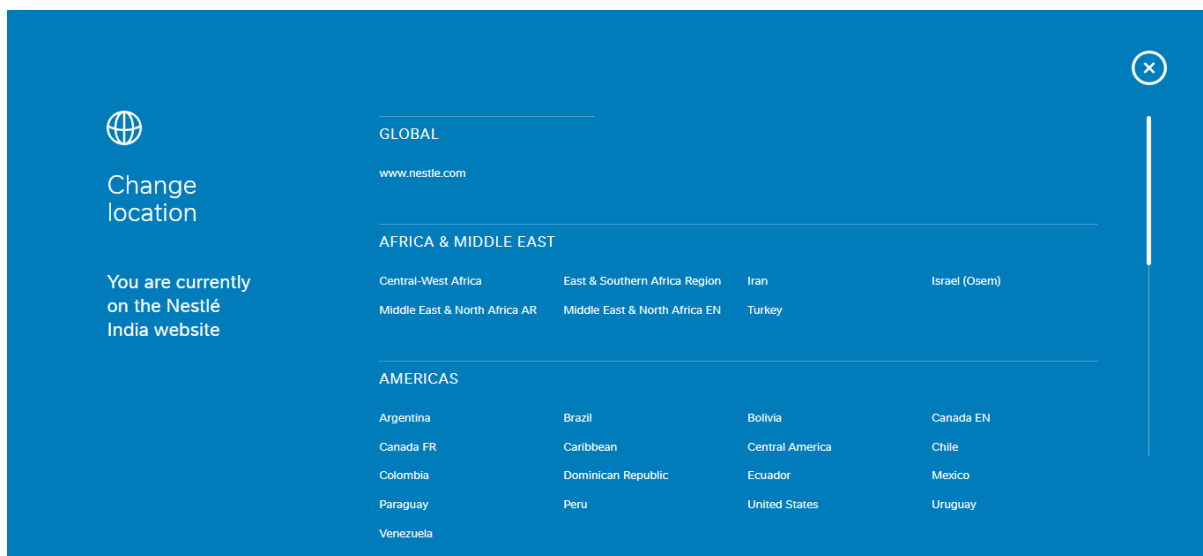
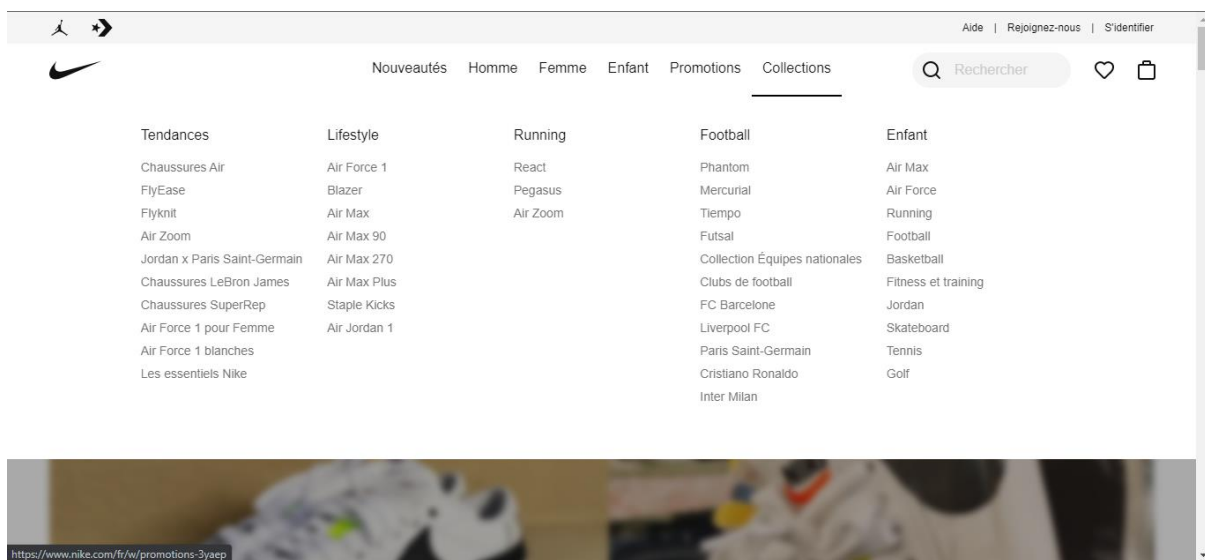


Figure 8 – The official site of Nestle has 83 location options (Nestle India, n.d.)

- Increase trust amongst existing customers

Even if it appears that the entire web is available in their language, consumers may not realise that most online sites aren't written in their language when browsing. Instead of the original web pages, they see direct machine translations of the original material. However, direct translations of the content can result in many errors as they may not make sense at a very basic level (like grammar issues) or can result in errors due to lack of cultural context.

Hence, when an e-commerce website or app is localized, care is taken to ensure that not only is the content translated but it is also culturally accurate & socially acceptable. This way people who browse the website once are more likely to come back to the site since the content is easier for them to comprehend, which makes purchasing easier as well. This tells the customer that the website empathizes with them and puts them at a level of comfort.



*Figure 9 – The official French site of Nike (Nike. Just Do It. Nike FR, n.d.)*

- Improve the customer experience

In e-commerce, there is a heavy emphasis on evaluation of information by customers. From the start of the purchase journey which is from the discovery stage to the post-purchase stage, customers seek information in various forms such as product attributes & specifications, product reviews etc. When all this information is available to them in their native languages and with their local symbols, logos etc, it becomes easier for them to understand. Most

importantly, when the customer service is also in their own language (FAQ's, chatbots, terms of purchase etc), then the chances of customer issues and queries being resolved are much higher. All this makes shopping on a localized e-commerce website a better experience.

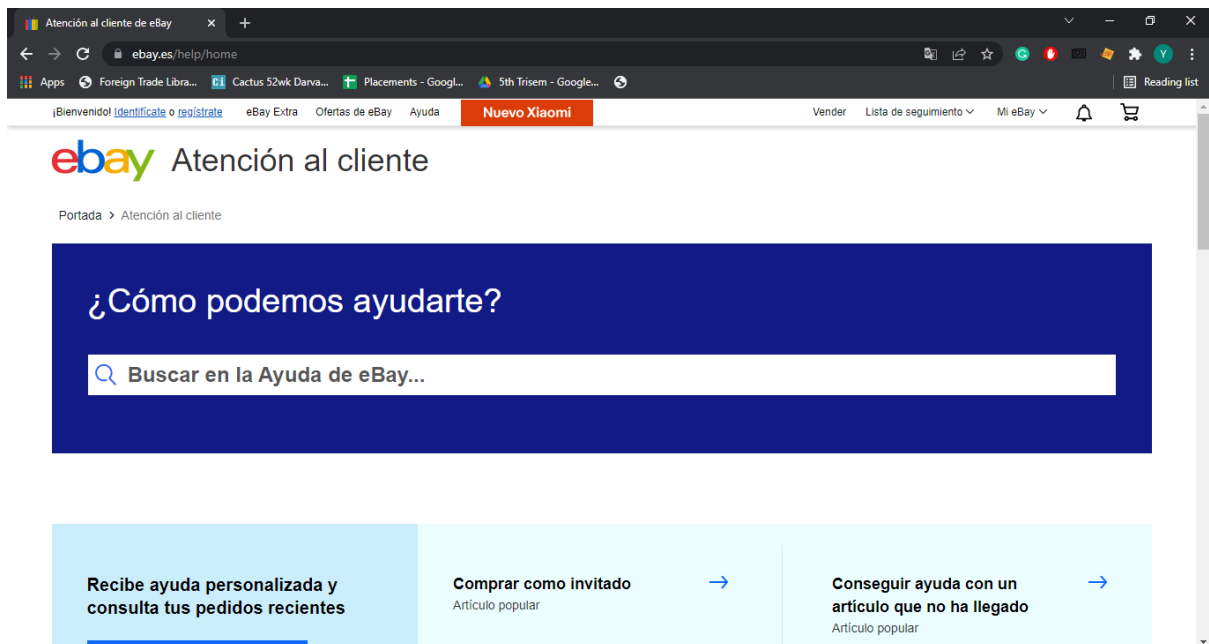


Figure 10 – The Spanish customer support site of Ebay (Atencion de cliente el Ebay, n.d.)

- Better rankings on SEO

The discovery stage of e-commerce is very heavily dependent on SEO. A good SEO strategy can help e-commerce websites to drive traffic organically and significantly reduce customer acquisition costs. When it comes to searches on search engines, the keywords that are used by the customers are different and unique to different locations and their native languages. Hence, when a website is localized, these unique keywords are accounted for in the content and this helps users find exactly what they are looking for on the website. Apart from the keywords, even the title & descriptions of localized websites make more sense and stand out amongst the others which increases their click rates on Search Engine Result Pages.

- Effective Promotion

Localization allows e-commerce websites to have more appealing promotions by making the use of local elements. One well known example of this is the use of the local holidays to

promote sales. For example, most e-commerce websites provide special bargains during Ramadan in the Middle East and Africa.



Figure 11– Ramadan Sale on <https://www.ubuy.ae/en/>

- Avoid cultural gaffes

It may be quite costly to upset a subset of customers with inappropriate marketing messages. The cost is not just in monetary terms from the loss of customers but also legal hurdles and repercussions. Hence, localization is necessary to enable the communication of culturally appropriate messages only to the consumers



Figure 12– Dominos Karen Advertisement

Dominos had run a campaign in Australia and New Zealand to give women named Karen a free pizza based on a running internet joke in which Karen is a mean person. While it was received well in Australia, Dominos received severe backlash in New Zealand where Karen is a derogatory term used to describe racist white women.

- Participate in the local community

Before making a purchase, shoppers are now accustomed to gathering and comparing product information by looking at reviews and other user generated content. In order to get this content, it is important for e-commerce websites to have localized social media presence as well so that they can get comments, videos and other content from users in their own languages.

### **Implementation of Localization in E-commerce**

When an e-commerce website has to be localized, there are some key elements that have to be modified in order to ensure that the website benefits from the localization. The most obvious element of localization is translating the content into the local languages. This is particularly relevant to India because India officially has 22 languages by itself! There are also other stats which show how important local languages are – 9 out of 10 internet users in India consume content in native languages as per Google India, or that rural internet users outnumber the urban internet users. Care has to be taken to ensure that the translations actually make sense beyond simple grammar especially when it comes to the cultural context of words, phrases, idioms & dialects. However, the translation of language is common to all the key elements. Here, the key elements with respect to e-commerce are listed along with examples of their implementation by Samsung and Amazon –

- Global Landing Pages

For a truly global e-commerce page, the very first interaction is decided by the location of the user. The location of the user usually decides which gateway or landing page is shown. But even then, users always have the option to choose the right gateway based on the location or language. This is to ensure that users are taken to the right page that has been localized for

them. Most global gateways are very simple by design and require no thought or pause from the user – One simple click and the user is taken to the right page.

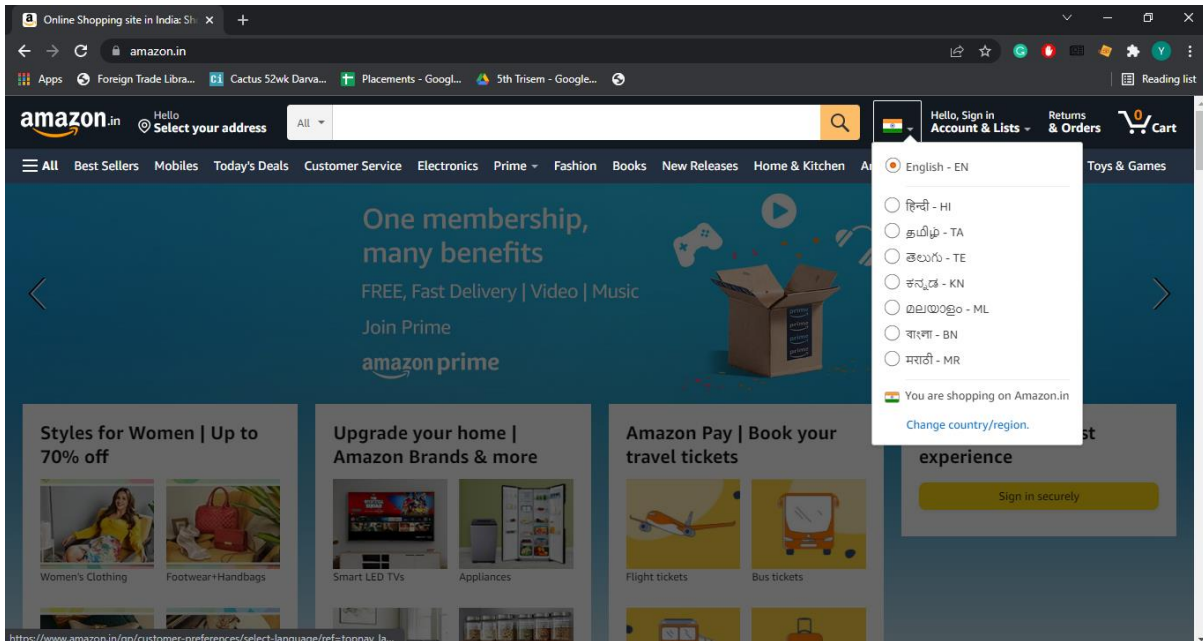


Figure 13– Gateway Options on Amazon.in

The Amazon webpage has a very convenient design which allows users to choose their language or the location based gateway on the very first screen. The option for languages is primary because this is already an India specific gateway (Amazon.in). For global gateways (.com), the primary option is usually the location or a combination of that & the language.

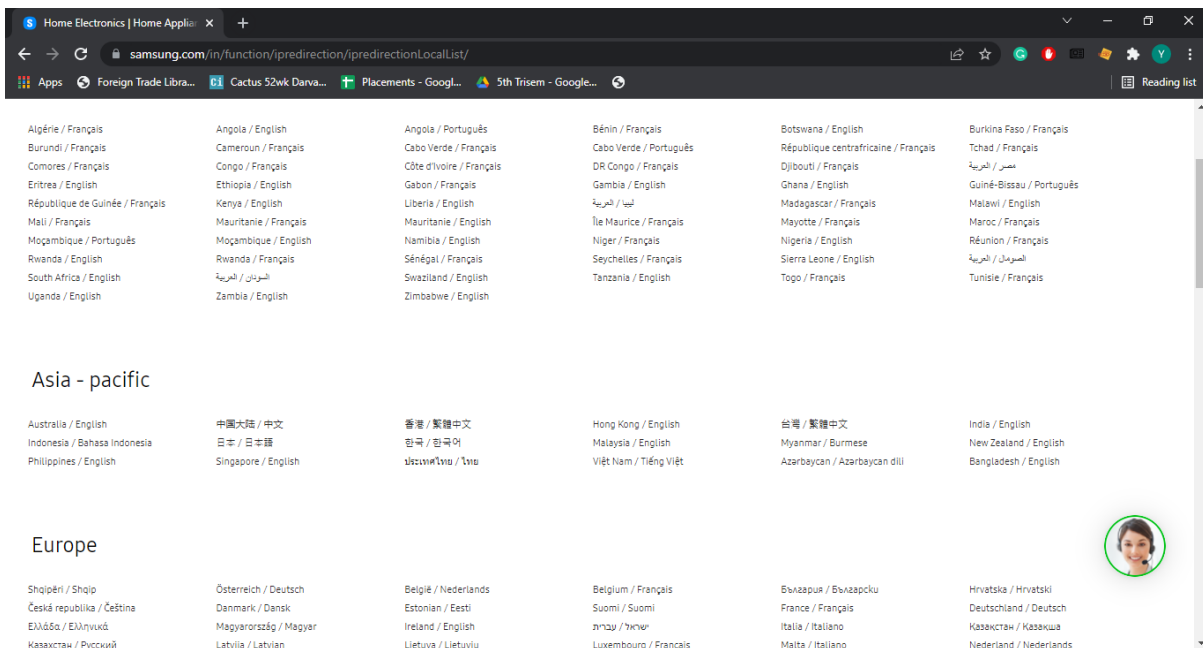


Figure 14– Gateway Options on Samsung



Samsung has a India specific gateway (as seen in the Asia – Pacific region) which is crucial considering the number of users on its site from India. As mentioned above, the primary gateway options are a combination of the language as well as the region.



Figure 15– Break up of the origin of traffic on Samsung.com (Samsung.com Traffic Analytics & Market Share, n.d.)

- UI Elements

All of the website's elements will not be the same across all of the gateways. This could be due to variances in the offerings or in the design of the products with the target customers in mind. As a result, the UI of the localised website only shows the aspects that are relevant to that particular user. An example of this is shown below -

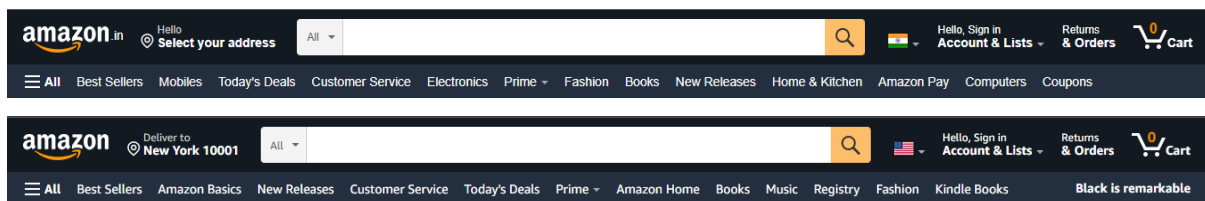


Figure 16– Navigation Bar of Amazon.in & Amazon.com

The differences in the navigation bars of Amazon.in and Amazon.com (USA) can be clearly seen. The relative importance of the product categories can be deduced from their position on the navigation bar. The Indian website lists categories such as Mobile, Electronics & Computers which are the most preferred categories for Indian shoppers. The presence of Today's Deals as well as Coupons are specifically to attract the value-hunting pre-disposition of Indian customers. Amazon Pay is an additional feature which is only available in India. On



the other hand, the USA version has an option for Registry which is a way of gifting prominent in their culture. The USA version also includes a caption, ‘Black is remarkable’, in order to communicate their solidarity with people, especially African-Americans who are protesting against racism. This is a key issue in the USA and hence is a good example of how localization is used to show that the website is in touch with the happenings on the ground.

On the other hand, the main page of Samsung is fairly standard across all gateways and languages. However, there are instances of elements being localized. For example, the Canada version has a promotion based on the Winter Olympics.

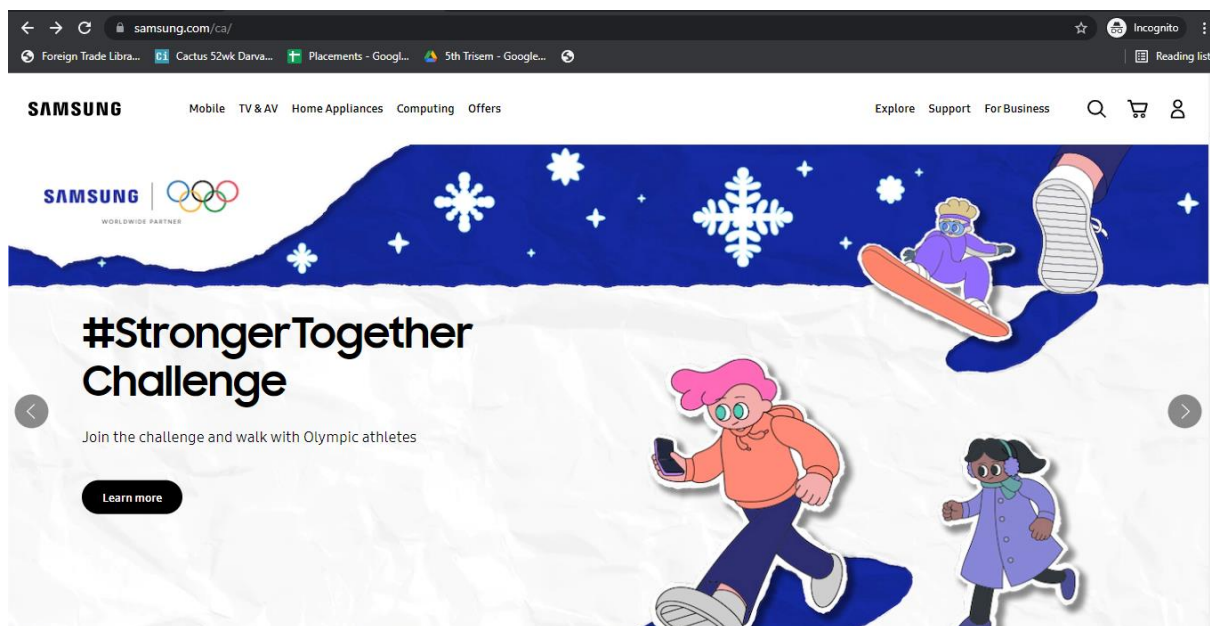


Figure 17– A promotional banner around Winter Olympics on the Canadian site of Samsung

- SEO

While optimizing pages for search engine results, the most important factor is the keywords to target the customers based on their intent & relevance. To find the right keywords to target, websites have to do extensive research into the target groups and identify the differences in the terms used as well as the search habits of the different audiences. There are also a variance in the way the title and description of the pages are written for the SERP since the word count in these is fairly limited and the copy which appeals to the audiences is also very different. Another factor in SEO localization is the url or the domain name used. Having a country specific domain also boosts the SEO rankings of the localized pages. The adaptation of the SEO strategies to fit different locations by Amazon & Samsung can be seen below –

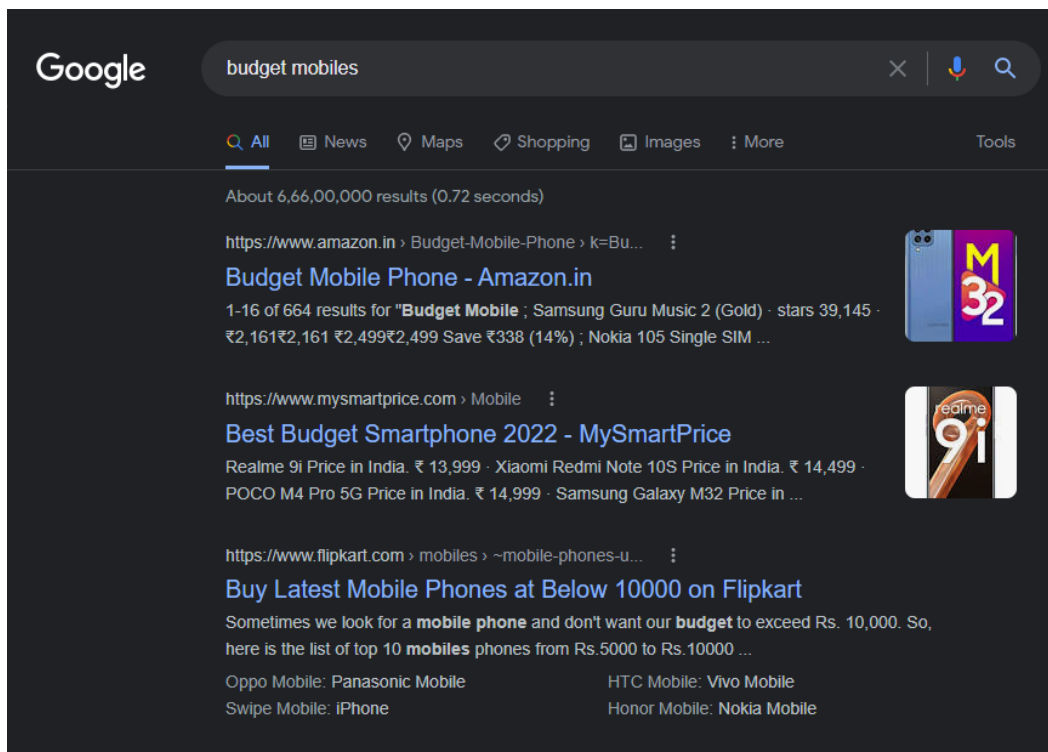


Figure 19– SERP results while searching the term ‘budget mobiles’ in India on Google.com

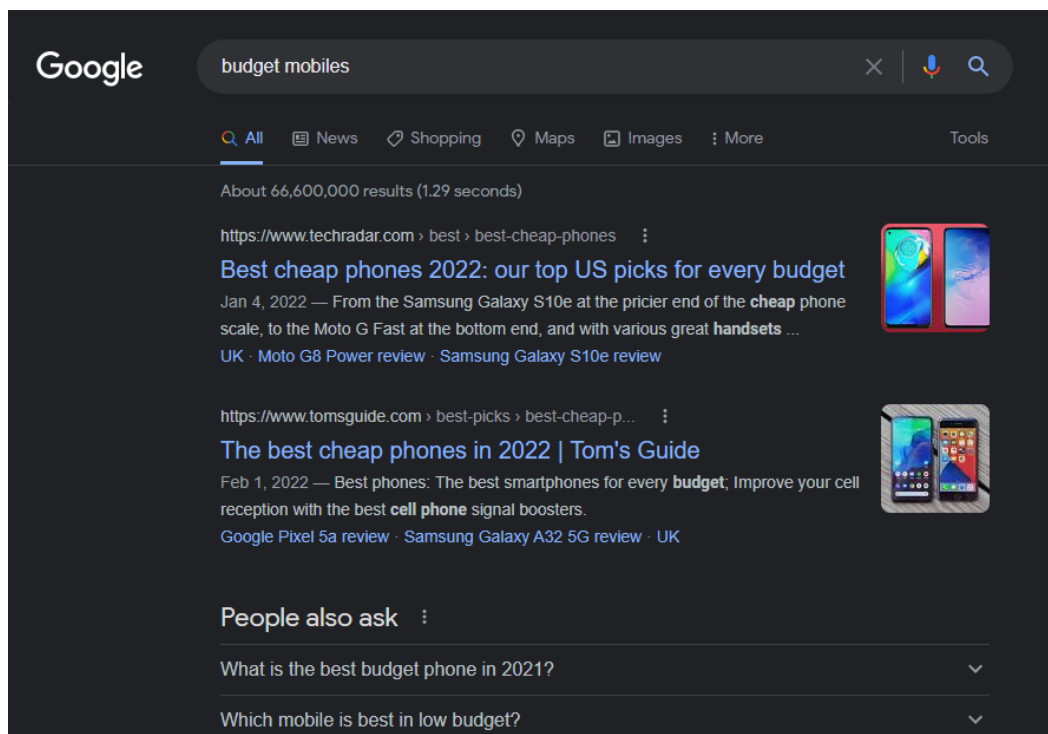
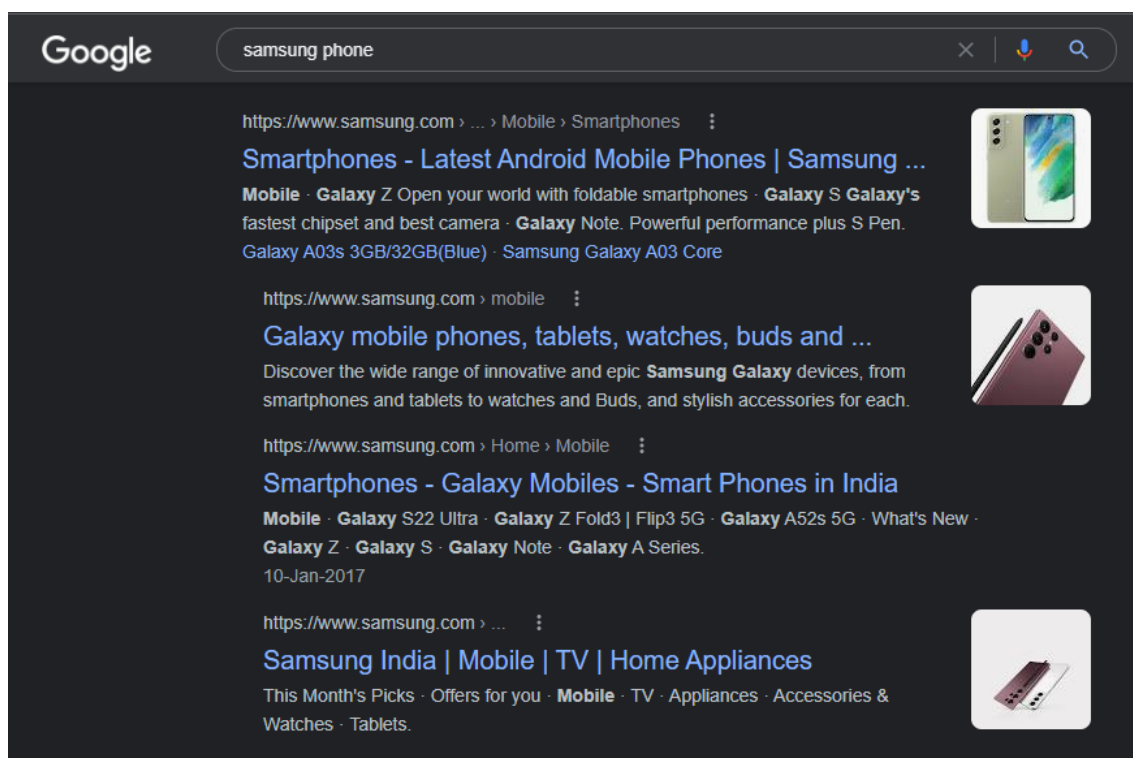


Figure 20– SERP results while searching the term ‘budget mobiles’ in USA on Google.com

Looking at Amazon’s SEO optimization, it can be observed that their page has been optimized for the term ‘budget mobiles’ in India which is in line with the preference of Indians looking to buy cheap smartphones. Hence the Amazon page shows up at the very top of the SERP. However, since the relative importance of mobiles for Amazon.com (USA) is lower than that of Amazon.in, the USA page does not show up on the SERP at all. For Indian customers, price is the most important aspect while purchasing a phone. However, American customers usually look at the brand and not the price. This is why the content strategy of Amazon.com (USA) does not target terms like ‘budget mobiles’.



*Figure 21– SERP results while searching the term ‘samsung phone’ in India on Google.com*

Similarly, looking at Samsung’s SEO, there are modifications in the strategy based on the location of the targeted audiences. This can be perceived from the SERP results for India and the USA on Google. The first result on the SERP for the term ‘samsung phone’ has the title ‘Smartphones – Latest Android Mobile Phones | Samsung’ when the location is India while the result for USA shows ‘Latest Samsung Galaxy Smartphones | Mobile Phones’. Clearly the emphasis on the brand name is greater in the USA than in India whereas the term Android works better for the Indian audiences. The description in the India result lists the models of the phones as well as one key feature about the models while the description in the USA result lists the phones and their prices. In both cases, the most important part is not revealed

to ensure that the users click on the page to see the information. The number of sitelinks on the Indian SERP result is more. The prominence of the ‘Galaxy’ series of Samsung is common across both locations. But, the Indian results emphasize all the devices in the Galaxy series apart from smartphones such as the tablets, the smartwatch, the ear buds as well as a separate sitelink for the TV and related accessories while the USA results only focus on the smartphones. The thumbnails used are also different featuring the most popular phone of Samsung in India and USA.

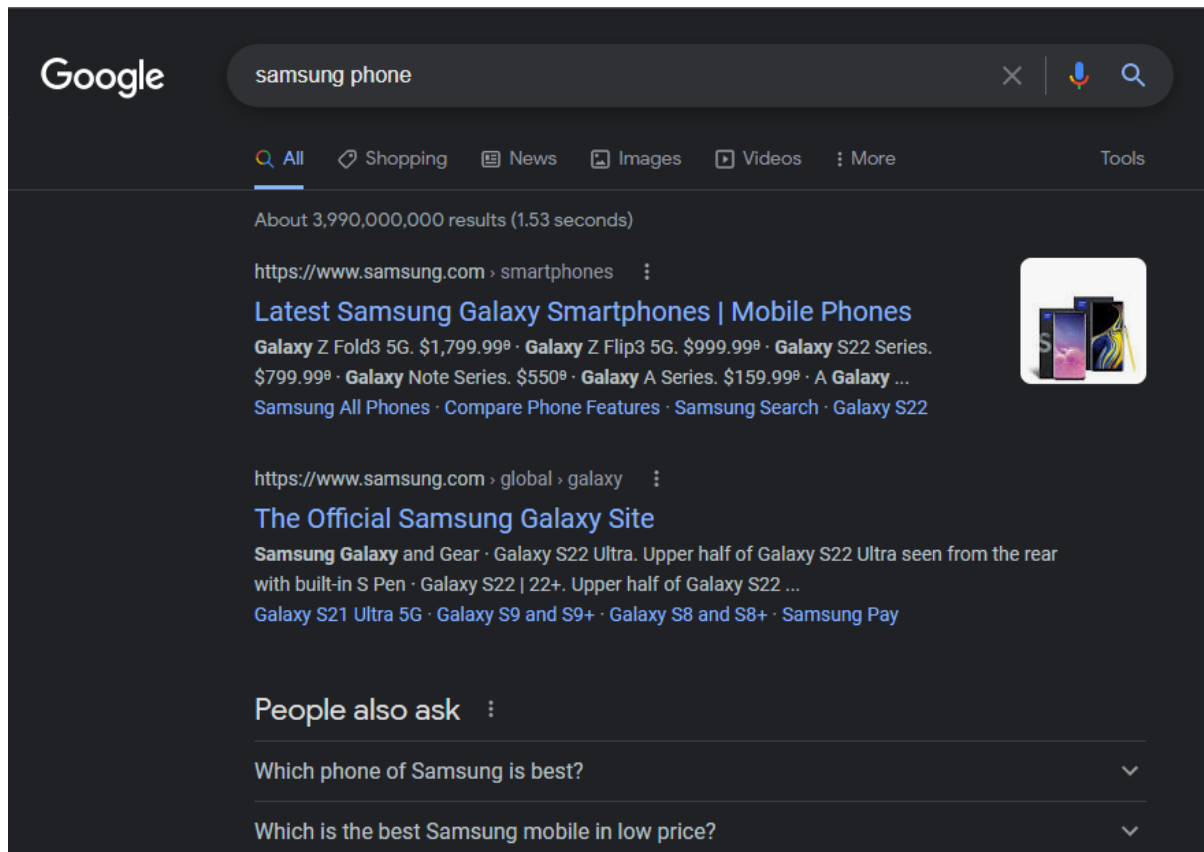


Figure 22– SERP results while searching the term ‘samsung phone’ in USA on Google.com

- Product Descriptions

Localized product descriptions are vital because with them, e-commerce websites have an assurance that all the required information about the products are conveyed without any error. For this, the product descriptions must have authentic translations and the local units of measurement. This way, customers can be sure of what they purchase and do not have to waste time & resources further on to process returns. The product descriptions must also have



the keywords in-line with the content strategy of the website to ensure that the product pages show up on top of the SERP results.



Pay on Delivery Not Returnable Amazon Delivered No-Contact Delivery

Best Before: 05 Sep 2022

New (10) from ₹893.00 **Fulfilled** **FREE Delivery.**

<b>Flavour</b>	Premium Chocolates
<b>Weight</b>	300 Grams
<b>Brand</b>	Ferrero Rocher
<b>Item Dimensions LxWxH</b>	21.7 x 21.7 x 4.3 Centimeters
<b>Allergen Information</b>	BPA-Free

[See more](#)

This is a **Vegetarian** product.

**About this item**

- Whole hazelnut covered in milk chocolate. A creamy filling, a crunchy wafer and a delicious hazelnut centre
- Ferrero Rocher offers a unique taste experience of Contrasting layers that engages all the senses
- And thanks to its inimitable golden wrapper and paper cup Ferrero Rocher is even more unique and special
- Ferrero Rocher is available in different packs making it ideal for sharing with your loved ones, for giving as the perfect gift or even for indulging yourself


Figure 23– Product Description of a box of 24 Ferrero Rocher Chocolates on Amazon India

Card. No annual fee.

SNAP EBT eligible

Size: **24 Count (Pack of 1)**

<b>Flavor</b>	Ferrero Rocher
<b>Weight</b>	0.66 Pounds
<b>Brand</b>	Ferrero Rocher
<b>Item Dimensions LxWxH</b>	1.65 x 8.45 x 8.6 inches
<b>Country/Region Of Origin</b>	United States



**About this item**

- 24 delicious Ferrero Rocher chocolate candies, presented in an impressive transparent gift box, the perfect Valentine's Day or Chinese New Year gift for him or her
- A tempting combination of smooth chocolaty cream surrounding a whole hazelnut within a delicate, crisp wafer all enveloped in milk chocolate and finely chopped hazelnuts
- A deliciously elegant confection, wrapped in glittery gold foil, loved, gifted, and appreciated all over the world
- For your most special holiday moments, a generously extravagant gift of Ferrero Rocher
- CELEBRATE THE MOMENT: Nothing says you care like valentines from Ferrero. This premium gourmet chocolate gift box is the perfect way to celebrate the moment and share Valentine's Day chocolates with someone special. Makes a great Chinese New Year gift

Roll over image to zoom in

Figure 24– Product Description of a box of 24 Ferrero Rocher Chocolates on Amazon (USA)

The product description on Amazon.in uses the units of grams for the weight and centimeters for the dimensions of the box while the units of pounds and inches are used on Amazon.com (USA). The Indian version also mentions explicitly that the chocolate is vegetarian. Also, the product description for India is relatively simpler in terms of the vocabulary and the length of the sentences. In contrast, the product description for the USA website is much more verbose.

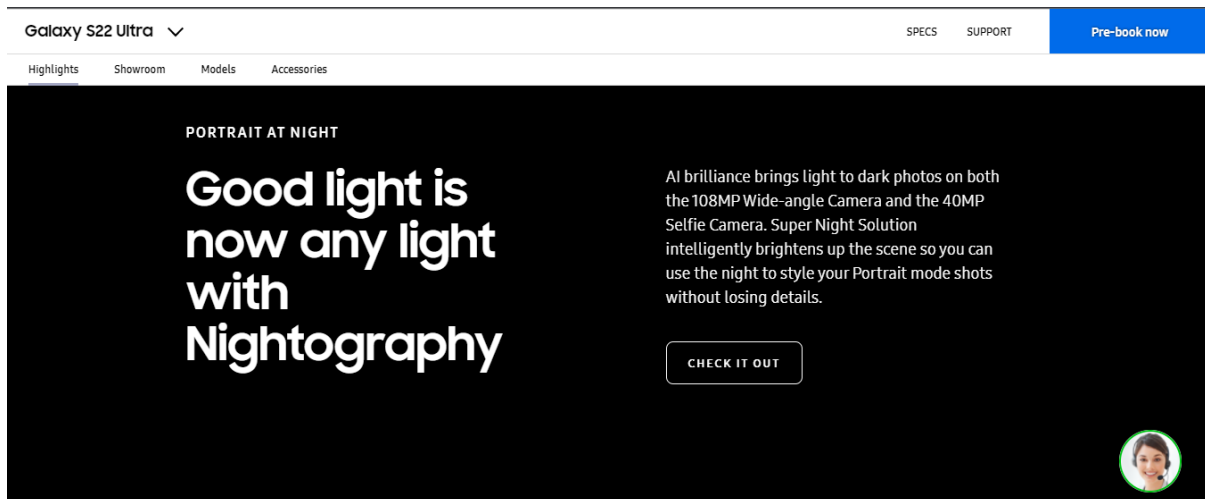


Figure 25– Product Description of the night portrait feature of the Samsung S22 Ultra on Samsung (India)

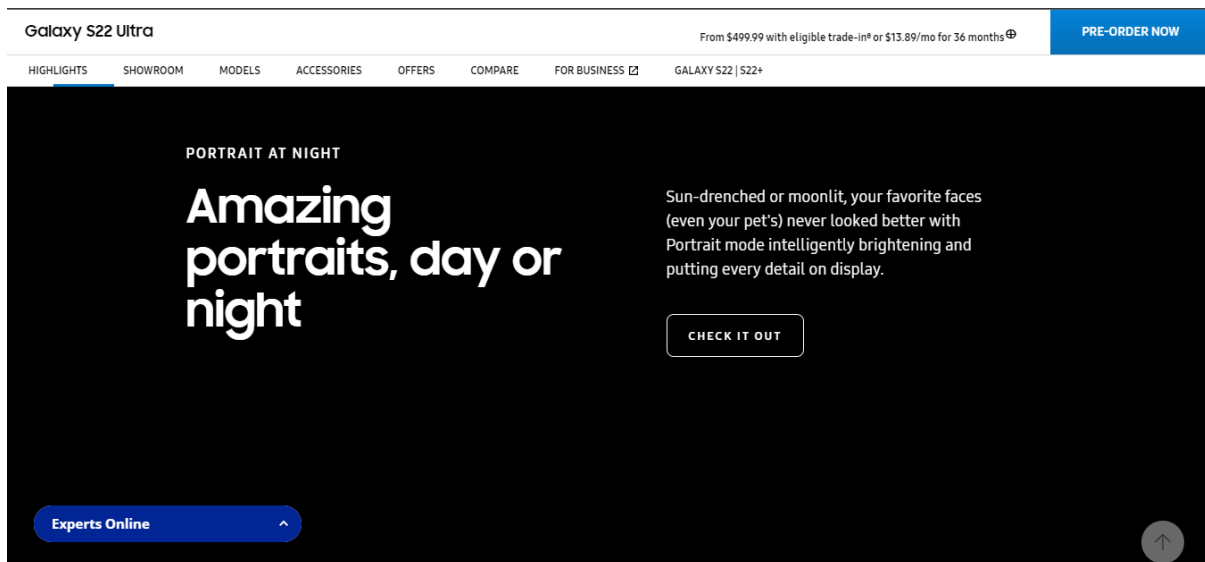


Figure 26– Product Description of the night portrait feature of the Samsung S22 Ultra on Samsung (USA)

The product description of the same feature of the same model of the same phone (Samsung S22 Ultra) should be same in theory, especially when the description is just one sentence. Yet, as can be seen, that is not the case. The product description on the India website is a bit

more descriptive with specific numbers with respect to the features (108 MP & 40 MP) and also talks about the aspect of lighting in photography while the product description on the USA website is a bit more poetic and talks about the portraits aspect.

- Customer Service

The customer support section is one where the user will pay the most attention due to the high level of involvement since it is a fairly interactive process. Usually, the help section consists of FAQ's and a chatbot. The resolution of issues is key to improving the retention of users on the website. This is one of the elements where the native language plays the biggest role. In addition, cultural contexts as well as the preferences of the customers are to be considered while creating these sections.

नमस्ते. हम आपकी क्या मदद कर सकते हैं?

कुछ चीजें जो आप यहां कर सकते हैं

 <b>आपके ऑर्डर</b> पैकेज ट्रैक करें ऑर्डर में बदलाव करें या उन्हें कैसल करें	 <b>रिटर्न और रीफ़ंड</b> प्रोडक्ट रिटर्न या एक्सचेंज करें रिटर्न मॉलिंग लेबल प्रिंट करें	 <b>पते मैनेज करें</b> अपने पते अपडेट करें पता, लैंडमार्क विवरण जोड़ें
 <b>Prime मैनेज करें</b> अपने फ़ायदे देखें सदस्यता विवरण	 <b>भुगतान सेटिंग</b> भुगतान विधियां जोड़ें या उनमें बदलाव करें समाप्त डेबिट या क्रेडिट कार्ड बदलें	 <b>अकाउंट सेटिंग</b> अपना ईमेल या पासवर्ड बदलें लॉग इन जानकारी अपडेट करें
 <b>Amazon और COVID-19</b> ऑर्डर और डिलीवरी पर प्रभाव	 <b>डिजिटल सेवाएं और डिवाइस सहायता</b> डिवाइस के लिए मदद खोजें डिवाइस की समस्याएं हल करें	

ज़्यादा समाधान खोजें *कुछ ऐसा टाइप करें, "किसी चार्ज के बारे में सवाल है"*

Figure 27– Help Section of Amazon.in in Hindi

Hola. ¿En qué podemos ayudarte?

Puedes hacer algunas de las cosas aquí

 <b>Tus Pedidos</b> Rastrear paquetes Editar o cancelar pedidos	 <b>Devoluciones y Reembolsos</b> Devuelve o cambia artículos Imprimir etiquetas de envío de devolución	 <b>Servicios Digitales y Soporte de Dispositivos</b> Solución de problemas con dispositivos
 <b>Administrar Prime</b> Más información sobre los beneficios Prime Cancelar membresía Prime	 <b>Pagos y Tarjetas de Regalo</b> Agregar o editar métodos de pago Ver y recargar saldo de tarjetas de regalo	 <b>Tu Cuenta</b> Administrar las preferencias de tu cuenta
 <b>Amazon y COVID-19</b> Impactos en pedidos y entregas Amazon COVID-19 Test Collection Kit DTC	 <b>Compras en Línea Seguras</b> Descubre cómo proteger tu cuenta Denunciar algo sospechoso	

Figure 27– Help Section of Amazon.com in Spanish

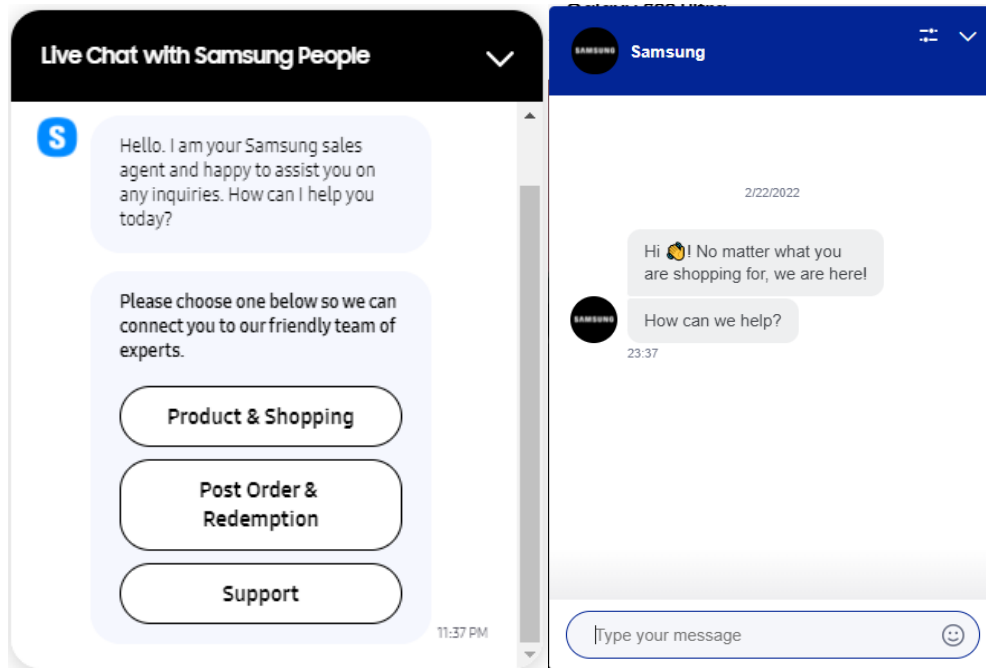


Figure 28– Chatbots of Samsung.com/in and Samsung.com/us

- Payment Options

Customers who shop online want to see prices that they can understand. They don't want to calculate exchange rates or convert currencies. Accordingly, the prices on an e-commerce website should be listed in the local currency, with applicable taxes and exchange rates included. In addition, the prevalent options for payment have to be given while checking out. Payment using debit and credit cards are the common internationally. The other modes that might differ are the UPI option in India or the Paypal option in USA. There are also various local partnerships that provide more flexibility during payment in the form of EMI's or BNPL (Buy Now Pay Later). In the case of Amazon USA, there is a tie-up with Affirm to provide the BNPL option. Another option is to use US based personal checking accounts while Amazon India has the option to use netbanking. Amazon USA also has the Amazon Store card. Surprisingly, Samsung India does not have an explicit option for UPI. It does however have a tie up with Lazypay for a BNPL option. There is also the in-house loyalty club as well as Samsung's own financing options (EMI's). As expected, the prices mentioned on the Indian sites are in INR while the ones mentioned on the USA sites are in USD.



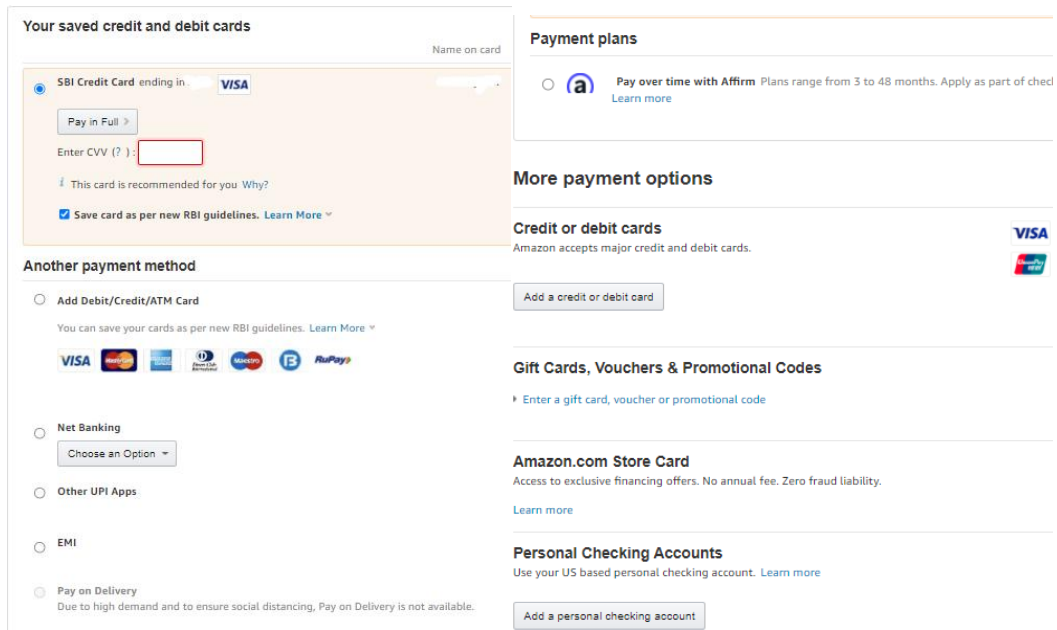


Figure 29– Payment gateways of Amazon.in and Amazon.com

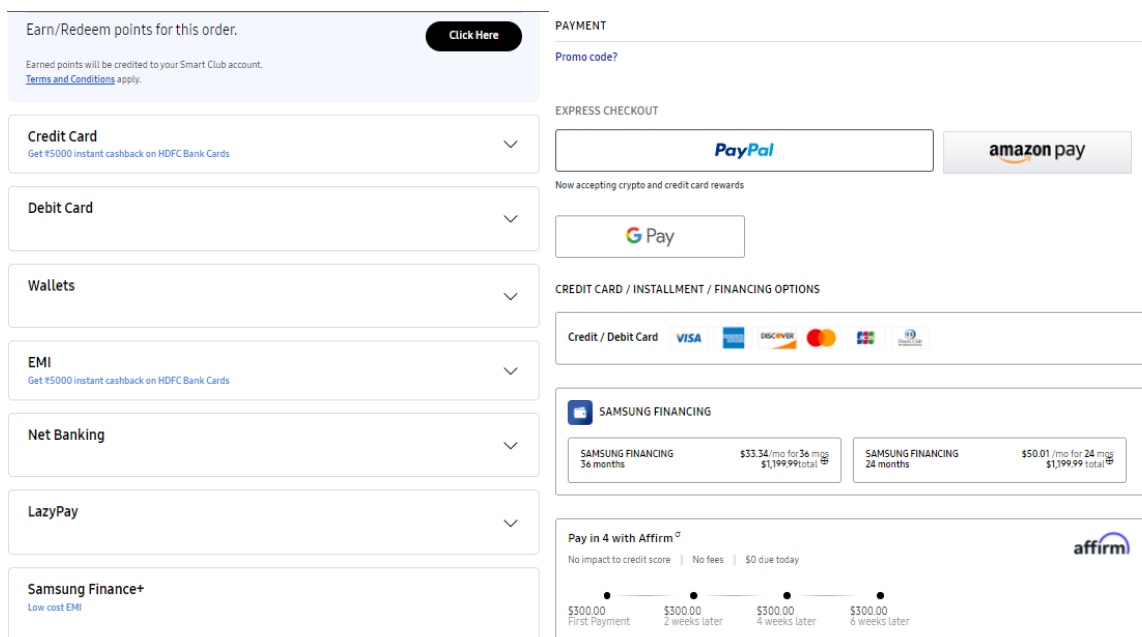


Figure 30 – Payment gateways of Samsung.com/in and Samsung.com/us

- Content Marketing

There are various types of content that are used to attract audiences. One of these ways is a blog. A localized blog has content on issues that are local to or appeals to a particular region or a particular set of people. For example, Amazon India has a guide on how to pick laptops

which is written by digit.in, a top tech magazine known for their guides on picking the best gadgets & accessories. Likewise, the Amazon USA website also has a guide but that is self-written.

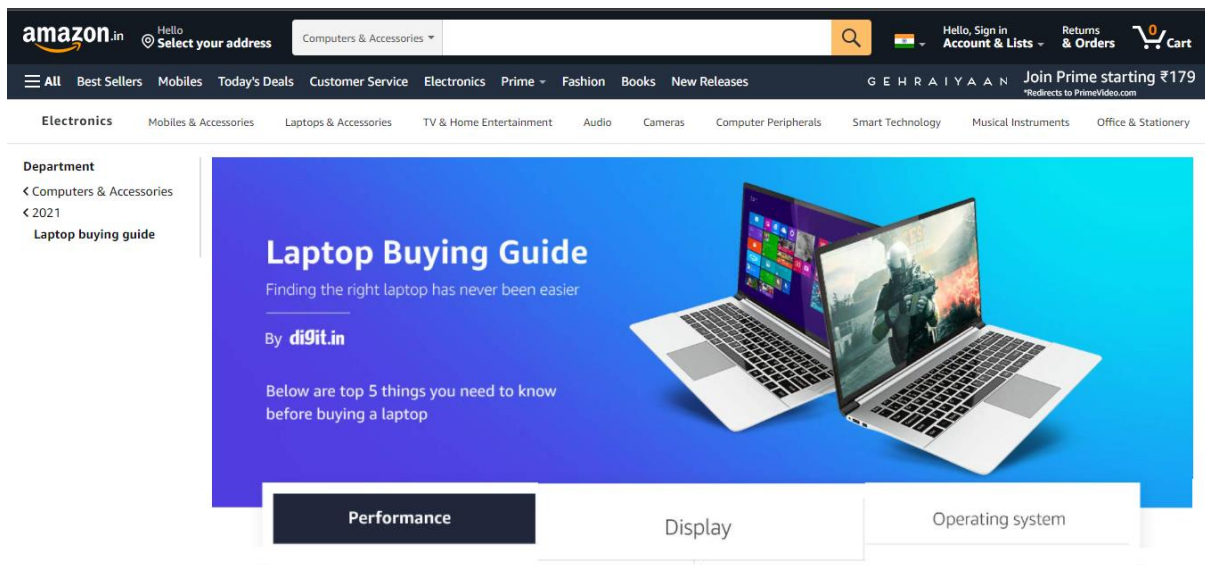


Figure 31 – Guide on picking laptops by Digit.in on Amazon.in

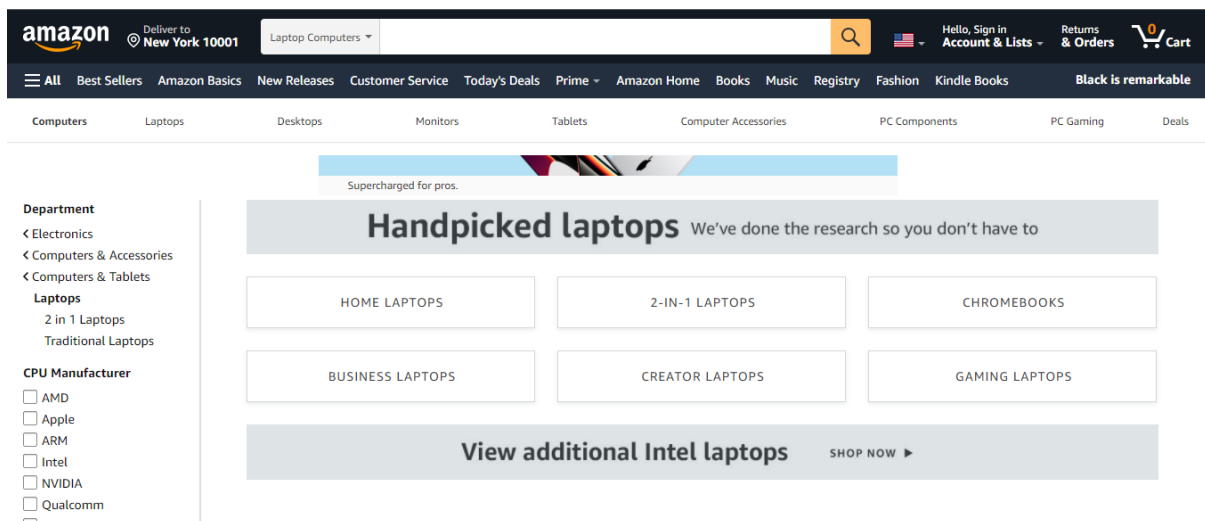


Figure 32 – Guide on picking laptops on Amazon.com

Similarly, images and videos are significant because they are much more visible & engaging when compared to content in text format and hence their effect is magnified. Hence, websites are very cautious while using any image or video so that any religious, cultural or social sensibilities are not offended. Adapting images & videos to the target demographic demonstrates that the website has tried to communicate to the customers in a manner they are accustomed to.

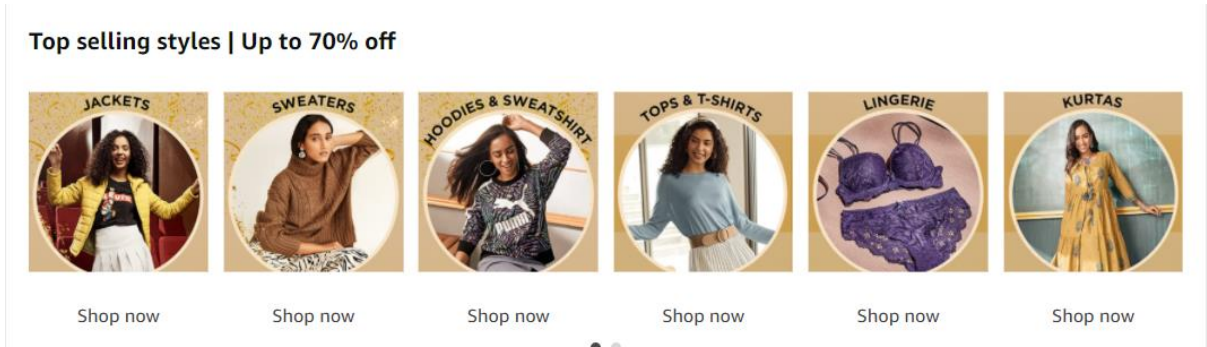


Figure 33 – Pictures of Indian models for the category thumbnails on Amazon.in

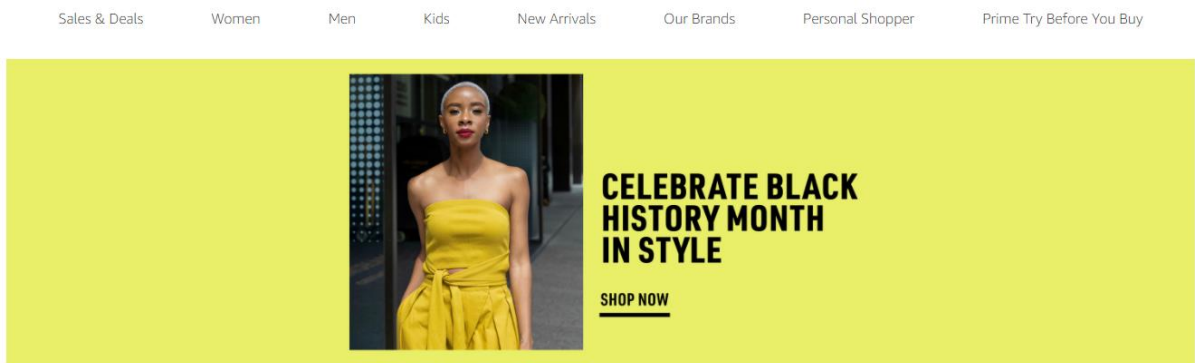


Figure 34 – Picture of an African-American model for a promotion based on Black History Month on Amazon.com

When it comes to user reviews, testimonials and other forms of user generated content, the best way to collect them is to link the social media websites. Since the proclivity of users is to communicate in their native languages, it creates localized content for the website. Both Amazon & Samsung have India-specific social media pages which are accessible from the footer of all pages on their website.

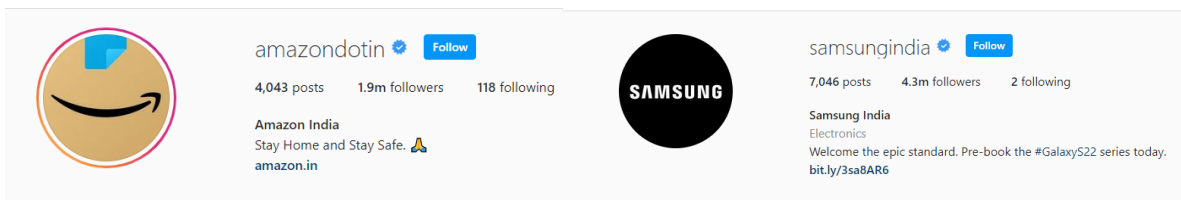



Figure 35 – India specific Instagram handles of Amazon & Samsung

## RECOMMENDATIONS

While analyzing the Amazon & Samsung websites, it was evident that both had taken care of the basic hygiene ie most localization practices were already in place. But looking at the trends as well as benchmarking them with the global leaders, one self-evident direction would be the inclusion of more languages. While Amazon.in does have a lot of content in the basic Indian languages, there is some work to be done on the design front so that the site has a similar look & feel even in languages like Hindi & Kannada. Another step would be to look at the next set of languages to be targeted based on the usage patterns of people living in India. This step is particularly critical for Samsung which presently offers browsing in English only on its Indian website.

Another disparity that is seen is the inconsistency of localization on e-commerce sites, especially across product categories. Some product categories are rich in content so localizing them is easier but some product categories can be more technical than the others and hence not enough attention is paid to their translation. This can be seen in the healthcare and pharmaceutical category. In the example given below, there is a significant difference in the product description of the same product based on the language. When English is chosen, it is fairly descriptive but the Hindi version barely has any details.


**Brand** Himalaya  
**Specific Uses For Product** Fatigue  
**Item Form** Tablet  
**Product Benefits** Stress Relief, Overall health  
**Age Range (Description)** Adult  
[See more](#)

 This is a **Vegetarian** product.

### About this item

- Ashwagandha has been found to significantly increase white blood cells which thereby enhances immunity by strengthening the antibody function.
- Ashwagandha helps improve the overall sleep quality and maintains healthy sleep patterns. It also helps combat pent-up fatigue and gives a boost to the energy levels..Free from sugar, artificial colors, artificial flavors, and preservatives
- Ashwagandha helps to control the excessive cortisol secretion thereby relieving stress.

**ब्रांड** Himalaya  
**प्रोडक्ट के लिए विशिष्ट उपयोग** थकान  
**आइटम का फॉर्म** टैबलेट  
**प्रोडक्ट के फ़ायदे** Stress Relief, Overall health  
**उम्र की रेंज** वयस्क  
[और देखें](#)

 यह एक **वेजीटेरियन** प्रोडक्ट है

### इस आइटम के बारे में

- 60 टैब
- मानसिक तनाव में उपयोगी
- उपयोग करने के लिए सुरक्षित

Figure 36 – Difference in the product descriptions in English & Hindi on Amazon.in

While the websites are localized, most of the communication between the users and the website remains in one language. The prominent marketing channels such as e-mail, social media, forms or surveys or even chatbots on the website should all have the options for native language till the extent possible. Given the preference for communication in local languages, this practice is sure to improve the engagement metrics of the users.

The customer support sections on the websites are mostly moving towards automation which reduces the human working hours & increases the responsiveness of the website towards queries & issues. However, when it comes to native languages, the automatic translations may not always make sense and this may put-off the customers. Therefore, if a website cannot guarantee high quality translations of FAQ's or chatbot responses, then it should facilitate interaction of the users with human customer support who are adept in the native language of the user so that their problems can also be solved.

Finally, with movements all around the world championing the cause of equality & inclusion, websites should make efforts to avoid the propagation of age-old stereotypes since lazy excuses such as translation mistakes will not be tolerated at all by the public. Instead, there should be an emphasis to demonstrate and communicate the intent & the commitment to make the websites more inclusive & diverse. The value system of the website should be clear regardless of the location or language chosen by the customers.

## REFERENCES

- Amazon India marketplace clocks 49% revenue growth in FY21.* (n.d.). Retrieved from Economic Times: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/amazon-india-marketplace-clocks-49-revenue-growth-in-fy21/articleshow/88700485.cms?from=mdr>
- Amazon.in vs Flipkart.in Traffic Comparison.* (n.d.). Retrieved from Similarweb: <https://www.similarweb.com/website/amazon.in/vs/flipkart.com/#traffic>
- Atencion de cliente el Ebay.* (n.d.). Retrieved from Ebay: <https://www.ebay.es/help/home>
- Cermak, R. (2020). Culturally Sensitive Website Elements and Features: A Cross-National Comparison of Websites from Selected Countries. *ACTA INFORMATICA PRAGENSIA*.
- Coppola, D. (n.d.). *E-commerce worldwide - statistics & facts.* Retrieved from [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com): <https://www.statista.com/topics/871/online-shopping/#dossierKeyfigures>
- Coppola, D. (n.d.). *Net sales of Amazon in leading markets 2014-2020.* Retrieved from Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/672782/net-sales-of-amazon-leading-markets/>
- Global E-commerce Trends Report.* (n.d.). Retrieved from JP Morgan: <https://www.jpmorgan.com/content/dam/jpm/treasury-services/documents/global-e-commerce-trends-report.pdf>
- Hadi S. Alhorr, N. S. (2010). E-COMMERCE ON THE GLOBAL PLATFORM: STRATEGIC INSIGHTS. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*.
- Ibrahim, A., Hussin, A. R., & Busalim, A. (n.d.). Framework for Localization of B2C E-Commerce Websites in Saudi Arabia . *International Conference on Research and Innovation in Information Systems*.
- Inside Samsung Galaxy's Global Market Share.* (n.d.). Retrieved from Android Central: <https://www.androidcentral.com/inside-samsung-galaxy-global-market-share>
- J.Clement. (n.d.). *Most visited online retail websites worldwide in 2020.* Retrieved from Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/274708/online-retail-and-auction-ranked-by-worldwide-audiences/>
- MYKOLA V. MELNYK, A. O. (2021). Electronic Business of Japan in Comparison with the U.S.
- Nestle India.* (n.d.). Retrieved from Nestle: <https://www.nestle.in/#>
- Nike. Just Do It. Nike FR.* (n.d.). Retrieved from Nike: <https://www.nike.com/fr>
- Samsung.com Traffic Analytics & Market Share.* (n.d.). Retrieved from Similarweb: <https://www.similarweb.com/website/samsung.com/#overview>
- Shinde, S. (n.d.). *India's e-commerce industry set to grow 84% by 2024.* Retrieved from Business Standard: [https://www.business-standard.com/article/technology/india-s-e-commerce-industry-set-to-grow-84-by-2024-says-report-121101700955\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/technology/india-s-e-commerce-industry-set-to-grow-84-by-2024-says-report-121101700955_1.html)
- Shneor, R. (n.d.). Influences of Culture, Geography and Infrastructure on Website Localization Decisions.

Singh, N., Park, J., & Kalliny, M. (2013). A Framework to Localize International Business to Business Web Sites. *The DATA BASE for Advances in Information Systems*.

*State of eCommerce Localization Study*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Blend:  
<https://www.getblend.com/news/ecommerce-localization-study/>

# Dissertation project 20-22

*by* Yash Jain

---

**Submission date:** 23-Feb-2022 09:40AM (UTC+0530)

**Submission ID:** 1768872636

**File name:** YASH\_KUMAR\_JAIN.pdf (2.44M)

**Word count:** 8214

**Character count:** 43923



# Dissertation project 20-22

---

## ORIGINALITY REPORT

---

5%

SIMILARITY INDEX

4%

INTERNET SOURCES

1%

PUBLICATIONS

3%

STUDENT PAPERS

---

## PRIMARY SOURCES

---

1

[ukcatalogue.oup.com](http://ukcatalogue.oup.com)

Internet Source

1%

2

Submitted to University of Leeds

Student Paper

1%

3

[aip.vse.cz](http://aip.vse.cz)

Internet Source

<1%

4

[economictimes.indiatimes.com](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com)

Internet Source

<1%

5

Submitted to BPP College of Professional Studies Limited

Student Paper

<1%

6

Submitted to Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

Student Paper

<1%

7

[docplayer.net](http://docplayer.net)

Internet Source

<1%

8

[www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com)

Internet Source

<1%

9

[www.ibef.org](http://www.ibef.org)

Internet Source

<1%

---

10	<a href="http://www.questia.com">www.questia.com</a> Internet Source	<1 %
11	Akshaya Kumar. "Provincialising Bollywood? Cultural economy of north-Indian small-town nostalgia in the Indian multiplex", <i>South Asian Popular Culture</i> , 2013 Publication	<1 %
12	<a href="http://seminar.spaceutm.edu.my">seminar.spaceutm.edu.my</a> Internet Source	<1 %
13	Zeynep Aycan. "The interplay between cultural and institutional/structural contingencies in human resource management practices", <i>The International Journal of Human Resource Management</i> , 2005 Publication	<1 %
14	<a href="http://brage.bibsys.no">brage.bibsys.no</a> Internet Source	<1 %

Exclude quotes  On

Exclude matches  < 10 words

Exclude bibliography  On