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**ASSESSMENT: MARKETING ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
FOR AMAZON AND ALIBABA**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Task 1: Critical Analysis of the Macro Marketing Environment	3
2.1 Macro Marketing Environment	3
2.2 Analysis of Macro Factor 1: Technological	3
2.2.1 Impact on Amazon	3
2.2.2 Impact on Alibaba	4
2.3 Analysis of Macro Factor 2: Legal	5
2.3.1 Impact on Amazon	5
2.3.2 Impact on Alibaba	5
3. Task 2: Strategic Responses	6
3.1 Amazon's Strategic Responses	6
3.2 Alibaba's Strategic Responses	9
4. Conclusion	10
5. References	12

1. Introduction

The purpose of this assessment is to critically examine the role of strategic marketing management in environmental analysis of the external business environments. It aims to analyse two major macro-environmental factors that bring opportunities and threats to organisations. In particular, to address how these factors impact organisational strategic responses and how they develop their competitive position in the global e-commerce industry.

This paper is focused on the global e-commerce industry. The industry is growing at a high rate, with its market size reaching \$33.9 trillion in 2025 and an estimated growth of CAGR 21.6% (Grand View Research, 2026). E-commerce is one of the fastest-developing, technology-driven, and competitively intense, globally based sectors because of the influence of digitalisation, the increasing levels of smartphone penetration, and the shift of consumers towards online shopping.

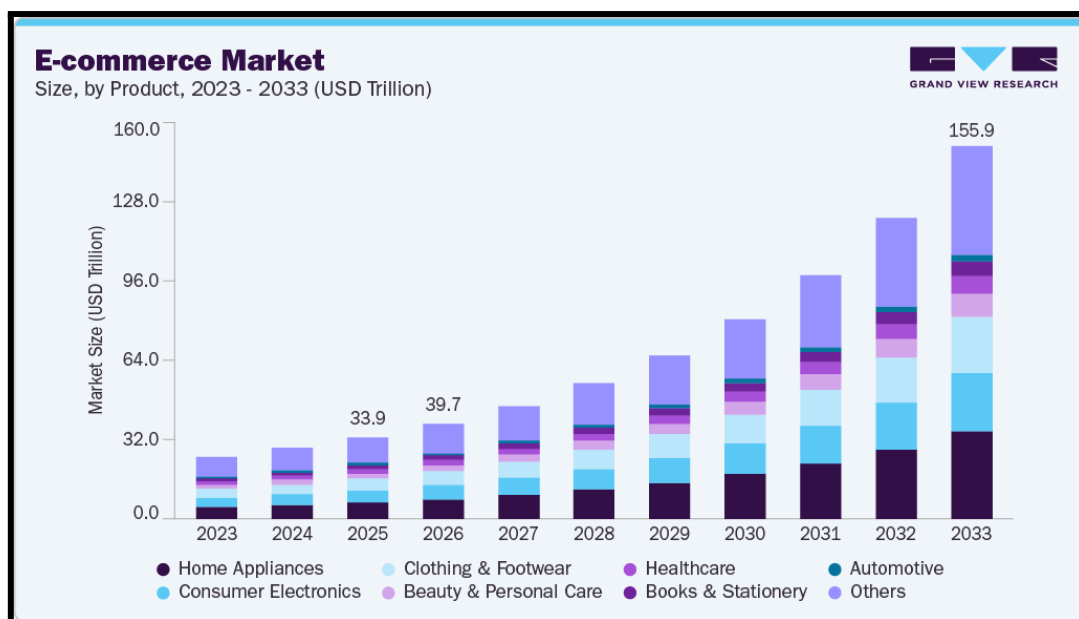


Figure 1: E-commerce Industry Size

(Source: Grand View Research, 2026)

Moreover, the industry is extremely competitive, which is illustrated by the platform ecosystems, developed logistics, and price wars. It is also data-driven, customer-focused, and technology-hyphenated and is based on analytics, customisation, and a smooth digital experience to fulfil the adaptable consumer

expectations and keep the market growing (Future Market Insights, 2025). It is necessary to analyse the macro environment as it provides an expectation of changes in the external environment and facilitates strategic flexibility in the dynamic markets. The report provides an analytical differentiation analysis of the two industry giants, Amazon (Pioneer company) and Alibaba (Follower company). This report will first look at macro factors as perceived with the PESTEL framework (Task 1) and then analyse the strategic response by Porter's Generic Strategies as a measure of sustainable competitive advantage (Task 2).

2. Task 1: Critical Analysis of the Macro Marketing Environment

2.1 Macro Marketing Environment

PESTLE analysis assists organisations in recognising external forces and mostly uncontrollable forces that define the market conditions. It is a strategic tool employed in the analysis of the macro-environmental forces such as political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental forces (Olayiwola et al., 2025). It. The need to know these factors is grounded on the fact that they have a huge influence on long-term strategic planning, risk management and organisational competitiveness. In this analysis, two macro-environmental factors that are chosen as the most strategically important are technological and legal factors. The choice of technological and legal factors can be explained by the fact that they are critical to the e-commerce industry. Innovation is centred on technological developments, especially on the establishment of AI, and 84% of companies give more importance to AI to improve efficiency and customer experience (ICAI, 2026). At the same time, the growing regulatory pressure, including data privacy legislation, has shrunk online traffic and incomes by as much as 10%, which has a direct impact on competitiveness and scalability (Miller et al., 2024). These are some of the critical aspects that are analysed in different sections.

2.2 Analysis of Macro Factor 1: Technological

2.2.1 Impact on Amazon

The technological factors are a great opportunity for Amazon because it has made massive investments in AI, automation and cloud computing. With fulfilment centres

in more than 750,000 robots, the company is also optimising demand forecasting and delivery routes with AI systems, cutting down on delivery distances by more than 15% and increasing warehouse throughput up to 25% (Stone, 2025). Furthermore, the increase in the significance of cloud-based innovation resulted in the fact that AWS earned a total revenue of \$128.7 billion in 2025 (Bensinger, 2026). The technologies facilitate quicker delivery, efficiency in operations and customised suggestions.

The technological capability enhances the competitive edge of Amazon since at the same time, it enables the company to achieve cost leadership and differentiation, as well as develop high entry barriers because of heavy capital and infrastructure demands. Scalability is again improved by efficiency gains, including the level of productivity in engineering, which is enhanced by 35% (AWS, 2024). Nevertheless, excessive dependence on the ongoing investment in technologies puts Amazon under the threat of new technological changes and rising expenses. In general, technology has greatly contributed to the market dominance of Amazon and has brought about long-term strategy dependencies.

2.2.2 Impact on Alibaba

The technological aspects of the Alibaba platform-centric model of innovation figure as both an opportunity and a threat. By utilising advanced data analytics, cloud computing, and digital payments via Alipay, the company supports a highly scalable ecosystem and serves more than 1.8 billion consumers worldwide and processes huge volumes of transactions across its platforms (Alipay, 2025). Its logistics subsidiary, Cainiao, provides more than 5 million cross-border packages in a day and uses AI-powered supply chain solutions to improve efficiency (China Daily, 2021). Nevertheless, in contrast to Amazon, Alibaba's partner-based logistics network is based in Alibaba, restricting the control of the full operational range.

Comparatively, Alibaba is more flexible in innovating the platform and integrating the ecosystem, which allows the organisation to grow and become cost-efficient in the shortest possible time. However, due to its asset-light model, it loses control over the speed of fulfilment and consistency to establish a competitive advantage in global logistics (Koala Gains, 2025). Although the domestic infrastructure is very strong,

allowing delivery within the day in large cities in China, it is less advanced when it comes to delivery internationally. Because of this, Alibaba has remained dominant in China but encounters limitations in becoming a global logistics powerhouse such as Amazon.

2.3 Analysis of Macro Factor 2: Legal

2.3.1 Impact on Amazon

The presence of legal and regulatory considerations poses a major threat to Amazon due to mounting antitrust concerns, data privacy regulations and labour pressures. The company has also paid significant fines, such as the €746 million GDPR penalty in data privacy breaches, one of the largest in history (Data Privacy Manager, 2020). Furthermore, in Italy, Amazon paid a fine of around €752 million for antitrust violations committed by its dominance in the market (Reuters, 2026). Although additional enforcement of the EU digital market laws may impose a fine of upto 10% percent of the world turnover (Chee, 2024). There are also heightened labour-related regulations, including a fine of €32 million in France due to excessive monitoring of employees (EDPB, 2024). These regulatory forces raise the cost of doing business, and the compliance costs would be very heavy and limit the aggressive expansion policies of Amazon.

Nevertheless, Amazon reaches these costs better because of its scale and financial ability, consolidating its dominance in the market and increasing entry barriers. In addition, there is evidence that stricter regulations have a disproportional impact on smaller firms, which further consolidates the power of large players. Overall, regulatory forces have both positive and negative effects on Amazon, such as limiting its operations, but securing its competitive stance over the long term.

2.3.2 Impact on Alibaba

Regulatory and legal considerations constitute a tremendous threat to Alibaba, and it could be attributed partly to the increased governmental interference in the Chinese platform and fintech markets. In the case of the company, the antitrust fine amounted to the record \$2.75 billion, which is approximately 4% of its domestic revenue due to its market dominance (Murdoch and Stanway, 2021). It was also fined about \$984

million, and its affiliate plan, Ant Group, had to be restructured under stricter financial supervision, after it suspended its \$34 billion IPO (Bloomberg, 2023). These measures show stronger state regulation of the data, competition, and financial operations.

In comparison with Amazon, Alibaba has to work with an even greater degree of regulatory uncertainty and the influence of a direct state, which limits the degree of strategic innovation. The business models can be quickly restructured by government intervention and restricted to fintech and data-driven services (Kerse et al., 2024). However, this regulation can also provide an entry barrier to competitors in China, indirectly safeguarding Alibaba's dominance in the country. As a result, the regulatory pressures limit the innovation and internationalisation, as it makes Alibaba more stable on the domestic market.

3. Task 2: Strategic Responses

3.1 Amazon's Strategic Responses

Strategy Overview

The positioning of Amazon can be described as a hybrid strategy with a combination of cost leadership and differentiation as a response to the technological and regulatory pressures, with huge investments and improvisational compliance. Automation and cloud infrastructure have been the company's greatest investment in the past, which has used over 1 million robots in fulfilment centres and robotics help facilitate about 75% of deliveries worldwide, thus considerably enhancing speed and efficiency (Greenawalt, 2025). At the same time, AWS earned a turnover of \$128.7 billion in 2025, which is facilitated by a high capital investment in AI and data infrastructure (Bensinger, 2026). To deal with the effects of regulatory pressures, Amazon has reinforced its compliance mechanisms and has reorganised some operations to respond to the antitrust and data protection laws. Overall, the combined strategic approach will help Amazon remain efficient, innovative, and adaptable to regulations, which will solidify its competitive advantage.

Application of Porter's Generic Forces

Porter's Generic Strategies justify how firms gain a competitive advantage via cost leadership, differentiation, or focus (Islami et al., 2020). Amazon pursues a hybrid approach, as it has combined cost efficiency and differentiation in maintaining its dominance of the market.



Figure 2: Porter's Generic Strategies

(Source: Jurevicius, 2025)

Application to Amazon

Cost Leadership

- Amazon leverages economies of scale and smart logistics and has more than 1,100 fulfilment centres worldwide that help it reduce the unit cost (Growthskale, 2025).
- Its automated supply chain and AI-primed supply chain minimise the cost of fulfilment and delivery time, which promotes low prices.

Differentiation

- Amazon has over 200 million Prime subscribers globally, and the services include prompt delivery, streaming, and exclusive (Statista, 2024).

- With a market share of approximately 30%, AWS dominates the world cloud market and provides services of differentiation (Jackson, 2025).

Although the hybrid strategy will enhance competitiveness, its long-term viability is faced with the increasing regulatory demands and cost pressures that may constrain strategic adaptation in the long term.

Effectiveness of the Strategy

The strategy implemented by Amazon proves to be highly effective as the company is dominating the country and is reaching out to the rest of the world. In 2025, the company earned more than \$716.9 billion in total revenue, continuing to be the most popular e-commerce platform in the world (Haleem, 2026). It also dominates around 37-40% of the U.S. market in online commerce and also dominates a huge portion of online U.S expenditure (Lee, 2026). These numbers reflect its macro-environmental resiliency due to scale, diversification and technological integration.

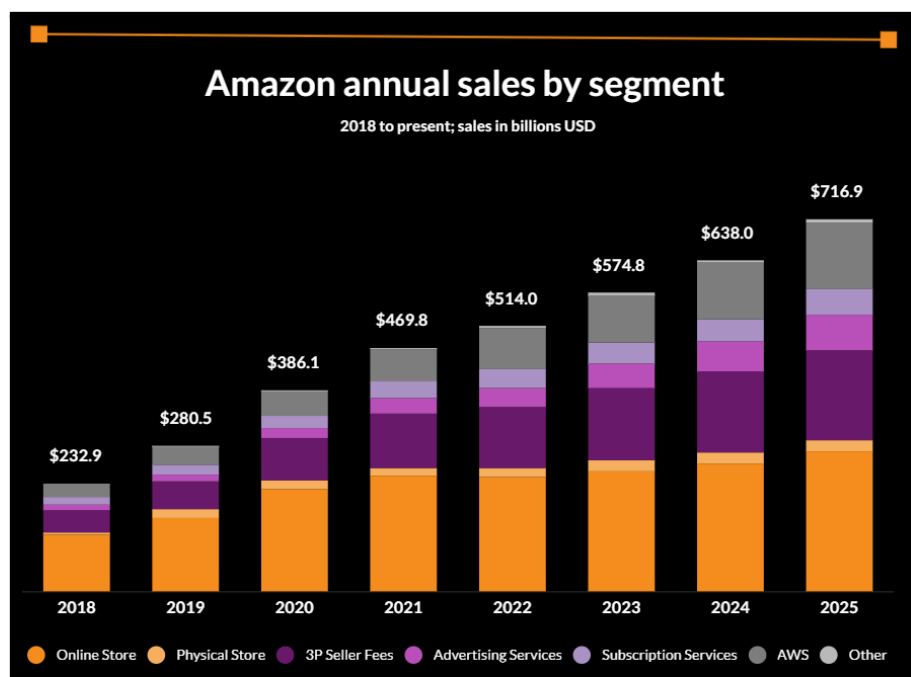


Figure 3: Amazon Annual Sales

(Source: Haleem, 2026)

Nonetheless, the advantage is highly contingent on the ongoing technological investment, as more than \$100 billion is spent yearly in infrastructure and AI

implementation (Hale, 2025). Furthermore, the expansion can be limited in the future by growing regulatory oversight, such as legal settlements and antitrust investigations. Comprehensively, although Amazon is highly resilient, its expansion path is becoming susceptible to technological and regulatory demands.

3.2 Alibaba's Strategic Responses

Strategy Overview

The platform-based model of growth is the centre of an overall strategy of Alibaba in response to technological and regulatory forces, which includes mobilising the e-commerce, digital finance, and cloud ecosystems. By building a very carefully designed ecosystem of Taobao, Tmall, Alipay, and the Alibaba Cloud, the company is in a position to maximise the network effects and achieve data-driven scaling (Ping, 2025). Within a few years, recent periods have seen major investments in AI and cloud infrastructure estimated at over RMB120 billion, which have been driving growth at an accelerated rate, and cloud revenue growth of 34% year-on-year (The Economic Times, 2025). To counter regulatory measures, Alibaba has implemented restructuring efforts, especially the separation and reorganisation of its fintech business, including Ant Group, to meet even more rigorous financial regulations. In general, this strategy represents a flexible, ecosystem-oriented strategy that balances innovation with regulation.

Application of Porter's Generic Strategies

Cost Leadership

- Alibaba also has a business model of an asset-light platform, which does not incur inventory and warehousing expenditures, as is the case with Amazon (Koala Gains, 2025).
- This facilitates the low operating cost and price competition, where more than 1.3 billion consumers actively use its product each year, contributing to scale efficiencies (Ahern, 2022).

Differentiation

- Alibaba has made a distinction by having a system of e-commerce (Taobao, Tmall), online payments (Alipay), as well as cloud computing (Ping, 2025).
- The Alibaba Cloud has a leading position in Asia-Pacific with an approximate market share of 34% (Butler, 2025).

Alibaba has low control over the logistical processes and fulfilment, and though it is highly scalable, the services are less consistent in comparison to Amazon. This trade-off limits the competitiveness of the global trade alliance even with the dominance within the country.

Effectiveness of the Strategy

The strategy employed by Alibaba is highly effective in terms of its market-leading position in the domestic market and scalable ecosystem. It has an estimated market share of 35-40% of the Chinese e-commerce sector, currently leading the market, despite heavy competition (Seeking Alpha, 2025). Its sites, such as Taobao and Tmall, continue to add to a market in which China contributes to nearly 50% of retail e-commerce operations globally, which supports the strength of the scale Alibaba has (Curry, 2026). Furthermore, revenue in international commerce has increased by 25% annually, which suggests slow growth in the rest of the world (Brohan, 2025). Nevertheless, the international distribution of Alibaba is still less strong than that of Amazon because of the use of cross-border platforms instead of wholly integrated logistics systems. Moreover, in China, the level of regulatory dependency restricts strategic independence, with the government interventions literally changing the operations. Irrespective of these shortcomings, the asset-light and platform-based business model of Alibaba has been extremely scalable to help the company maintain its competitiveness in the domestic market.

4. Conclusion

This assessment was aimed at critically reviewing the impact of macro-environmental factors in strategic marketing decisions and competitive positioning. The report proves that technology and legal issues are critical in determining competition in the e-commerce sector. Amazon has a strong global logistics-based competitive advantage and uses a high level of technological

infrastructure. Alibaba, in turn, employs a significantly more integrated ecosystem model that helps to scale and dominate in the domestic environment. However, it is regionally limited by logistical constraints across the globe and regulatory problems. Overall, the two companies lie within the reach of external influence, though the potential of these companies defines their ability to successfully exploit existing opportunities and to eliminate threats.

This discussion has shown that there is a need to evaluate the macro-environment to provide strategic compatibility and effective risk management of dynamic markets. The companies should keep up with the external changes and synchronise their strategies with the changing technological and regulatory circumstances. Finally, the long-term success of the e-commerce market relies on the flexibility of an organisation, its capacity to operate within intricate regulatory landscapes and its capacity to invest in technological revolution that will help to retain its competitive edge and develop further.

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