

Platform Dependency Risk and Strategic Autonomy Loss among Emerging Market Sellers

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Abstract

Digital marketplaces have lowered entry barriers for sellers by providing immediate access to customers, payment infrastructure, fulfilment services, advertising tools, reputation systems, and market information. These benefits are particularly valuable in emerging markets, where independent sellers may face limited retail infrastructure, weak access to finance, fragmented logistics, and restricted opportunities for international expansion. However, the same platform services that enable market participation may gradually create dependence. Sellers who rely heavily on one marketplace for revenue, customer discovery, fulfilment, advertising, reviews, and payment settlement may lose the ability to make independent strategic decisions.

This paper examines the relationship between platform dependency risk and strategic autonomy loss among emerging market sellers. Platform dependency risk is conceptualised as a multidimensional condition created by revenue concentration, algorithmic visibility dependence, customer-access restrictions, fulfilment lock-in, data asymmetry, switching costs, and unilateral platform governance. Strategic autonomy loss refers to the reduction in a seller's ability to independently control pricing, branding, customer relationships, product development, channel selection, operating processes, and long-term growth direction. Drawing on resource-dependence theory, power-dependence theory, platform-governance literature, and studies of platform-dependent

entrepreneurship, the paper develops a Platform Dependency Risk Index and a Strategic Autonomy Loss Index. Low-, moderate-, and high-dependency scenarios are analysed using illustrative data. The analysis suggests that platforms initially expand seller capabilities, but excessive dependence produces a non-linear decline in autonomy. At high dependency levels, sellers may alter prices to satisfy ranking systems, purchase advertising merely to preserve visibility, adopt platform-controlled logistics, avoid product experimentation, and remain exposed to sudden policy changes or account suspension.

Keywords: Platform Dependency; Strategic Autonomy; Emerging Market Sellers; Digital Marketplaces; Algorithmic Governance; Seller Power; Multi-Homing; Data Asymmetry; Platform Risk; E-Commerce Strategy

1. Introduction

Digital marketplace platforms have transformed the commercial opportunities available to small and independent sellers. Through a single interface, a seller can display products, reach geographically dispersed customers, receive digital payments, arrange delivery, purchase advertising, gather reviews, and obtain market insights. Cross-border platforms are particularly important for emerging market firms because they can reduce the need for physical entry into foreign markets and allow sellers to learn from buyer behaviour and transaction networks. Research based on cross-border platform data shows that these marketplaces can provide sellers with market knowledge and access that would otherwise be difficult to obtain.

The benefits of platform participation, however, are accompanied by an unequal distribution of control. Platform owners determine participation rules, search and recommendation systems, commission structures, advertising formats, data access, dispute procedures, performance standards, and account-suspension conditions. Individual sellers generally possess limited influence over these decisions. Cutolo and Kenney describe this relationship as platform-

dependent entrepreneurship, arguing that power asymmetry is embedded in the economic structure, technological architecture, and contractual arrangements of digital platforms.

This imbalance may be particularly significant for emerging market sellers. These sellers often join platforms because independent customer-acquisition systems, logistics networks, payment infrastructure, brand recognition, and international market knowledge are costly to develop. A dominant platform may therefore become more than a sales channel; it can become the seller's principal business infrastructure. Recent evidence suggests that small firms' platform dependence develops when platform resources are highly important, sellers possess little discretion over their use, and alternative channels are difficult to substitute. Dependence may also extend beyond one company to an oligopolistic system of dominant marketplaces.

Platform dependence does not always create an immediate business crisis. It commonly develops through a gradual sequence. A seller first joins a marketplace to gain customers, then adopts its advertising services to maintain visibility, uses its fulfilment system to qualify for faster delivery, adjusts products to meet ranking criteria, and increasingly relies on platform-generated revenue. As platform-specific investments grow, leaving or reducing participation becomes more difficult. The seller remains legally independent but may lose practical control over essential strategic choices.

2. Objectives of the Study

2.1 Conceptual Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Define platform dependency risk in the context of emerging market sellers;
2. Explain strategic autonomy as a multidimensional business capability;
3. Distinguish beneficial platform participation from excessive platform dependence;

4. Identify the pathways through which marketplace participation can reduce seller control; and
5. Integrate resource-dependence theory with digital platform-governance research.

2.2 Analytical Objectives

The analytical objectives are to:

1. Construct a Platform Dependency Risk Index;
2. Develop a Strategic Autonomy Loss Index;
3. Compare low-, moderate-, and high-dependency seller scenarios;
4. Evaluate the relationship between platform revenue concentration and autonomy loss;
5. Examine whether algorithmic dependence and customer separation amplify dependency risk; and
6. Identify the point at which platform enablement begins to produce strategic restriction.

2.3 Managerial and Policy Objectives

The study further seeks to:

1. Recommend practical dependency-reduction strategies for emerging market sellers;
2. Evaluate multi-homing, independent branding, and direct customer channels as autonomy-preserving mechanisms;
3. Propose seller-protection practices for marketplace operators;
4. Identify areas in which regulatory intervention may improve platform accountability; and
5. Encourage sellers to measure platform risk before a disruption, suspension, or major policy change occurs.

3. Review of Literature

3.1 Platform Enablement and Entrepreneurial Opportunity

Digital platforms create value by connecting multiple participant groups and coordinating exchanges between them. For sellers, platforms reduce search costs, support payment processing, provide reputational signals, and offer access to established demand. Their network effects can make participation increasingly valuable as more buyers, sellers, and service providers join the ecosystem.

Platform ecosystems consist of formally independent actors whose products and services contribute to the value of a shared system. Although these participants are often described as autonomous, the platform owner defines important architectural and governance conditions. These conditions include entry requirements, technical interfaces, revenue-sharing arrangements, quality controls, access to data, and acceptable seller behaviour.

Emerging market sellers may gain particular advantages from this arrangement. Cross-border platforms enable firms to overcome geographical limits and learn about unfamiliar customer preferences without creating a complete physical presence in each market. Chen, Wang, and Zhang found that sellers' positions within buyer–seller networks influenced their performance and that these effects differed between emerging and developed markets.

Online marketplaces also allow smaller enterprises to broaden visibility and reach customers beyond their immediate region. However, effective participation requires digital, financial, human, and organisational capabilities. Marketplace access alone does not guarantee sustainable competitiveness; sellers must be capable of interpreting platform data, managing online reputation, coordinating inventory, and adapting to marketplace rules.

3.2 Sources of Platform Dependency Risk

Resource-dependence theory proposes that organisations become dependent when external actors control resources that are important to their survival and when alternative sources are limited. In platform commerce, the resources controlled by the marketplace may include customer traffic, search visibility, payment processing, transaction data, reputation scores, advertising access, fulfilment infrastructure, and dispute resolution.

Power-dependence theory similarly explains that the power of one actor is connected to another actor's need for the resources it controls and the absence of acceptable alternatives. Platform power is therefore relational. A seller may be relatively independent when several sales channels generate comparable revenue, but highly dependent when one platform accounts for most customer acquisition and order fulfilment.

Cutolo and Kenney identify several consequences of platform power, including separation from customers, control of market access, unilateral rule changes, imitation or entry by platform owners, and increased uncertainty for entrepreneurs. Sellers may technically own their businesses while lacking control over the commercial environment in which those businesses operate.

Asadullah, Faik, and Lim found that SME dependence on third-party platforms arises from the high importance of platform resources, limited discretion over platform arrangements, and restricted substitutability. Their findings also suggest that firms may become dependent on a concentrated platform system even when they operate on more than one marketplace.

3.3 Strategic Autonomy and Seller Responses

Strategic autonomy refers to a firm's ability to make and execute important decisions without excessive external restriction. In the marketplace context, autonomy includes control over pricing, product assortment, brand identity,

customer relationships, channel strategy, fulfilment, promotion, business data, and innovation.

Platform governance can influence all of these areas. Recommendation systems determine which products receive attention. Performance metrics affect seller visibility. Advertising systems influence customer acquisition costs. Fulfilment requirements shape logistics decisions, while review and complaint processes influence product and service policies. Platforms may therefore guide seller behaviour without issuing direct managerial instructions.

A systematic review of platform-dependent entrepreneurship concluded that platforms lower entry barriers while also creating dependence and precarity. The review found that entrepreneurs use multi-homing, independent branding, and off-platform activities to preserve autonomy. Multi-homing can reduce dependence by distributing activity across platforms, although maintaining multiple catalogues, inventories, advertising systems, and service standards also creates operational costs.

The strategic challenge is therefore not to avoid platforms entirely. It is to use platform resources without allowing platform-specific routines to replace the seller's independent capabilities. Sellers that retain their own brand, customer knowledge, supplier relationships, product expertise, and alternative sales channels are better positioned to negotiate, adapt, and exit when conditions become unfavourable.

**Table 1: Selected Literature on Platform Dependence and Strategic
Autonomy**

Author(s)	Theoretical or Empirical Focus	Major Finding	Relevance to the Present Study
Emerson (1962)	Power- dependence relations	Power arises when one party controls valued	Provides the foundational explanation of

		resources for which alternatives are limited.	platform–seller power imbalance.
Pfeffer and Salancik (1978)	Resource dependence	Organisations adapt their behaviour to actors controlling critical external resources.	Explains why sellers conform to platform requirements.
Tiwana et al. (2010)	Platform evolution	Platform architecture and governance jointly influence ecosystem development.	Connects technical design with seller behaviour.
Nambisan and Baron (2013)	Entrepreneurship in innovation ecosystems	Ecosystem participation creates opportunities but also requires self-regulation and adaptation.	Explains the behavioural demands placed on platform sellers.
Gawer and Cusumano (2014)	Industry platforms	Platforms coordinate innovation and create network effects through ecosystem participation.	Establishes the value-creation benefits of platforms.
Wareham et al. (2014)	Technology ecosystem	Governance must balance platform	Supports the control–autonomy

	governance	control with complementor incentives.	trade-off.
Parker et al. (2017)	Platform ecosystems	Platform governance affects participation, innovation, and value distribution.	Demonstrates how owners influence external producers.
Jacobides et al. (2018)	Ecosystem theory	Ecosystem actors are interdependent without being fully hierarchically controlled.	Clarifies the unusual position of legally independent but operationally dependent sellers.
Cutolo and Kenney (2021)	Platform- dependent entrepreneurship	Platform architecture and economics create structural power asymmetries and new entrepreneurial risks.	Provides the central conceptual foundation of this study.
Chen et al. (2022)	Platform governance and multi-homing	Governance design affects complementors' ability and willingness to operate across platforms.	Supports diversification as an autonomy strategy.
Asadullah et	SME dependence	Dependence arises	Identifies the

al. (2023)	on third-party platforms	from importance, low discretion, and limited substitutability.	major dimensions of platform dependency risk.
Yu and Sekiguchi (2024)	Systematic review of platform- dependent entrepreneurship	Multi-homing, branding, and off- platform activities can preserve entrepreneurial autonomy.	Supports the autonomy- restoration framework.
Chen, Wang, and Zhang (2025)	Cross-border seller networks	Platforms offer market access and learning, but seller outcomes differ across institutional contexts.	Establishes the emerging-market relevance of platform participation.
UNCTAD (2025)	Global digital economy concentration	Digital economic growth and market power remain concentrated among a limited number of firms and economies.	Highlights the structural context surrounding emerging market sellers.

The literature clearly recognises both the enabling and controlling effects of platforms. However, seller dependence is frequently treated as a general condition rather than a measurable sequence of risks. The present study addresses this gap by connecting specific dependency pathways with identifiable losses of strategic autonomy.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Analytical Approach

The study adopts an integrative conceptual and scenario-based analytical design. It synthesises platform-governance research, resource-dependence theory, power-dependence theory, ecosystem strategy, and emerging market e-commerce literature.

The paper does not present data collected from actual human participants. Its numerical results are illustrative and demonstrate how the proposed measurement framework could be applied in an empirical study.

Future researchers may test the framework using:

1. structured questionnaires completed by marketplace sellers;
2. interviews with seller-owners and e-commerce managers;
3. platform revenue and advertising records;
4. account-suspension and dispute histories;
5. channel-level profitability data;
6. customer-acquisition and retention records; and
7. longitudinal observations before and after platform policy changes.

The proposed unit of analysis is an independently owned seller that derives part of its commercial revenue from one or more digital marketplaces. The framework is suitable for micro, small, and medium-sized sellers operating in domestic or cross-border platform environments.

4.2 Construction of the Platform Dependency Risk Index

The Platform Dependency Risk Index consists of six dimensions:

4.2.1 Revenue Concentration

Revenue concentration measures the proportion of total sales generated through the seller's most important platform. High concentration means that a suspension, ranking decline, or policy change could immediately affect business continuity.

4.2.2 Algorithmic Visibility Dependence

This dimension assesses the extent to which customer discovery depends on search ranking, recommendation systems, sponsored placement, platform badges, review scores, or other platform-controlled visibility mechanisms.

4.2.3 Customer-Relationship Separation

Customer separation measures the seller's inability to independently identify, communicate with, understand, or retain customers outside the platform-controlled environment.

4.2.4 Operational Lock-In

Operational lock-in covers dependence on platform-specific fulfilment, payment processing, inventory systems, advertising tools, return procedures, and performance dashboards.

4.2.5 Data and Knowledge Asymmetry

This dimension examines the difference between the platform's knowledge of the seller's customers, products, competitors, and performance and the information available to the seller.

4.2.6 Switching and Exit Constraints

Switching constraints include lost reviews, non-portable ratings, platform-specific inventory, account setup costs, customer migration difficulty, contractual restrictions, and the cost of rebuilding visibility elsewhere.

The Platform Dependency Risk Index is expressed as:

$$[\text{PDRI} = 0.25\text{RC} + 0.20\text{AV} + 0.15\text{CS} + 0.15\text{OL} + 0.15\text{DA} + 0.10\text{SC}]$$

Where:

- **RC** = revenue concentration;
- **AV** = algorithmic visibility dependence;
- **CS** = customer separation;
- **OL** = operational lock-in;
- **DA** = data asymmetry; and

- **SC** = switching constraints.

Revenue concentration and algorithmic visibility receive the highest weights because sudden sales disruption is the most immediate threat to emerging market sellers.

4.3 Construction of the Strategic Autonomy Loss Index

Strategic autonomy loss is measured across six decision areas:

$$[\text{SALI} = 0.20\text{PA} + 0.20\text{CA} + 0.15\text{BA} + 0.15\text{IA} + 0.15\text{OA} + 0.15\text{CHA}]$$

Where:

- **PA** = pricing autonomy loss;
- **CA** = customer-relationship autonomy loss;
- **BA** = branding autonomy loss;
- **IA** = innovation autonomy loss;
- **OA** = operational autonomy loss; and
- **CHA** = channel-strategy autonomy loss.

Each component is scored from 0 to 100. A higher score represents a greater reduction in seller control.

Three dependency scenarios were developed:

- **Low dependency:** diversified revenue, strong independent brand, direct customer access, portable data, and limited reliance on platform fulfilment.
- **Moderate dependency:** significant platform revenue, partial multi-homing, growing advertising dependence, and restricted customer ownership.
- **High dependency:** dominant-platform revenue concentration, algorithmic visibility dependence, platform-controlled fulfilment, limited customer access, and high switching costs.

5. Analysis

5.1 Platform Dependency Pathways

The first dependency pathway is market-access concentration. A seller may initially use a platform as an additional channel. As sales increase, inventory

planning, staffing, advertising, and product development begin to follow platform demand. The seller's internal organisation gradually becomes aligned with one external marketplace.

The second pathway is algorithmic adaptation. Sellers learn that visibility depends on factors such as price, delivery speed, reviews, cancellation rates, advertising participation, response time, and inventory availability. They subsequently redesign their decisions around expected algorithmic reactions. Because ranking formulas are rarely fully transparent, sellers may imitate observed marketplace behaviour rather than follow an independent commercial strategy.

The third pathway is customer disintermediation from the seller's perspective. Although the platform intermediates transactions, it may separate the seller from a complete customer relationship. The seller fulfils the order but may not possess sufficient customer data to build independent loyalty, conduct direct research, or migrate the relationship to another channel.

The fourth pathway is service-stack dependence. Payment, warehousing, delivery, advertising, returns, and analytics may become integrated into a single platform system. Integration can reduce operational complexity, but it also increases the cost of leaving because the seller must replace several business functions simultaneously.

The fifth pathway is reputation captivity. Reviews, ratings, badges, sales history, and ranking performance are usually not fully transferable. A seller moving to another marketplace may therefore lose years of accumulated reputational capital.

5.2 Scenario-Based Findings

Table 2: Platform Dependency Risk and Strategic Autonomy Loss

Scenarios

Analytical Indicator	Low Dependency	Moderate Dependency	High Dependency
Revenue from Largest Platform	24%	57%	86%
Platform Dependency Risk Index	23	55	88
Algorithmic Visibility Dependence	21	61	94
Customer-Relationship Separation	18	58	91
Operational Lock-In Index	20	53	85
Data-Asymmetry Index	27	64	92
Switching-Constraint Index	19	49	87
Strategic Autonomy Loss Index	20	52	84
Independent Pricing Capacity Retained	89%	64%	35%

Direct Customer Access Retained	82%	51%	17%
Product Experimentation Capacity	86%	63%	38%
Estimated Revenue Disruption after Platform Suspension	16%	48%	81%
Recovery Period after Major Platform Exit	1.4 months	5.8 months	14.6 months

Note: The values are illustrative outputs of the conceptual model and do not represent a completed field survey.

The table shows that dependency and autonomy are strongly related but not exact opposites. A seller may generate considerable platform revenue without immediately losing all strategic independence. The outcome depends on whether independent customer, brand, operational, and data capabilities are maintained.

In the low-dependency scenario, the platform functions as one channel among several. A ranking decline may reduce sales, but the enterprise can redirect inventory to direct commerce, physical retail, social commerce, distributors, or another marketplace.

In the moderate-dependency scenario, the platform becomes the seller's principal customer-acquisition mechanism. The seller retains some alternative

channels, but these channels may not possess equal scale. The seller begins adjusting prices, promotions, and inventory to platform signals.

In the high-dependency scenario, the seller's business model becomes platform-contingent. Revenue, visibility, reputation, logistics, and customer access are concentrated in the same ecosystem. A platform disruption can therefore affect several organisational functions at once.

5.3 Non-Linear Autonomy Loss and Dependency Thresholds

The scenario results indicate that autonomy loss is likely to become non-linear after a dependency threshold is crossed. Early platform adoption can increase rather than reduce practical autonomy by giving sellers access to customers and resources. A small business previously dependent on local distributors may gain greater control by selling through a marketplace.

The relationship changes when platform-specific resources become difficult to replace. Once the seller's revenue, reviews, advertising data, inventory, and fulfilment routines are built around one ecosystem, each additional platform investment can increase switching costs.

The most dangerous stage is not necessarily maximum revenue concentration. It is the stage at which the seller stops investing in transferable capabilities because the platform currently appears more efficient than independent alternatives.

For example, a seller may stop developing a direct website because marketplace traffic is higher, discontinue customer research because platform analytics are convenient, or abandon independent warehousing because integrated fulfilment is faster. Each decision may be rational individually, but their cumulative effect can produce structural dependence.

6. Discussion

6.1 The Platform Enablement–Dependence Paradox

The analysis supports a balanced interpretation of digital platforms. Platforms are neither purely exploitative structures nor neutral technological tools. They create genuine entrepreneurial opportunities while retaining the capacity to shape how those opportunities are used.

This duality is especially important in emerging markets. Sellers may lack affordable alternatives to platform-provided logistics, trust systems, payment mechanisms, and customer acquisition. Platform participation can therefore reduce traditional market barriers while simultaneously creating a new source of concentrated dependency.

The systematic review by Yu and Sekiguchi similarly concludes that platforms lower entry barriers but expose entrepreneurs to dependency and precarity. Governance mechanisms shape seller visibility, opportunity, and behaviour, while sellers attempt to preserve autonomy through multi-homing, branding, and off-platform activity.

The issue is not that platform owners exercise governance. Every marketplace requires standards for product quality, customer protection, payment security, fraud control, and dispute management. The concern arises when governance is unpredictable, insufficiently transparent, difficult to challenge, or combined with extensive control over commercial data and market access.

6.2 Strategic Implications for Emerging Market Sellers

The first seller response should be measured diversification, not uncontrolled expansion across every available marketplace. Multi-homing is valuable only when the seller can maintain accurate inventory, service quality, pricing discipline, and order fulfilment across channels.

A seller should establish a platform concentration limit based on its financial capacity and business model. For example, management may determine that no single marketplace should permanently account for more than a specified percentage of total contribution margin. The appropriate limit will vary, but it should be discussed before dependence becomes unavoidable.

Second, sellers should invest in an independent brand identity. Product packaging, trademarks, content, warranties, and customer experience should remain recognisable outside the marketplace. A seller whose identity exists only through a platform listing possesses limited transferable goodwill.

Third, customer knowledge should be developed within lawful and platform-compliant boundaries. Sellers can use product registration, warranty services, customer-support systems, social media, newsletters, physical packaging, and independent brand communities to understand demand without improperly extracting protected platform data.

Fourth, sellers should separate platform-owned metrics from business-owned metrics. Ranking position, marketplace badges, and platform conversion rates are useful but should not replace measures such as product-level margin, repeat demand, supplier reliability, customer satisfaction, cash conversion, and channel-specific profitability.

Fifth, critical operations should have backup arrangements. Sellers using platform fulfilment may maintain alternative logistics relationships, independent inventory records, supplier documentation, and emergency dispatch capabilities. A backup system may be less efficient during normal periods but valuable during disruption.

Sixth, sellers should create a platform exit and suspension plan containing:

1. Alternative sales channels;
2. Emergency customer communication procedures;
3. Accessible inventory records;

4. Reserve working capital;
5. Alternate payment and logistics providers;
6. Product-listing backups;
7. Account documentation;
8. Appeal and dispute evidence; and
9. A staged channel-migration strategy.

6.3 Platform Governance and Policy Implications

Platform owners benefit from a diverse and innovative seller community. Excessive seller dependence may produce short-term compliance but weaken experimentation, trust, and ecosystem resilience. Sellers who fear sudden penalties or ranking loss may imitate safe products rather than introduce new offerings.

Platforms can improve ecosystem quality through clearer participation rules, meaningful notice periods, reasoned explanations for major enforcement actions, and accessible appeal procedures. Automated enforcement should be accompanied by human review when an action threatens a seller's business continuity.

Ranking and advertising systems should also be distinguishable. When sellers cannot determine whether poor visibility results from quality, competition, algorithmic changes, or insufficient advertising expenditure, they may be compelled to purchase promotion merely to preserve earlier access.

Data portability deserves particular attention. Sellers should be able to export their own product records, transaction histories, inventory information, tax documents, and performance data in usable formats. Reputation portability is more difficult because reviews are generated within a platform context, but verified summary records may reduce complete reputational loss when sellers diversify. Policymakers should distinguish consumer protection from seller dependency protection.

Seller safeguards may include:

1. Transparent terms and conditions;
2. Advance notice of material policy changes;
3. Proportional account restrictions;
4. Documented reasons for suspension;
5. Timely dispute resolution;
6. Protection against arbitrary withholding of payments;
7. Access to seller-generated business data;
8. Portability and interoperability standards; and
9. Scrutiny of platform self-preferencing.

UNCTAD has noted that digital economic activity and investment remain highly concentrated and that dominance by a limited number of firms can restrict competition and squeeze smaller participants. Seller autonomy should therefore be considered part of wider digital-development and competition policy rather than treated solely as a private contractual matter.

7. Conclusion

Digital marketplace platforms provide emerging market sellers with capabilities that many could not independently develop at comparable speed or cost. They offer customer reach, reputation systems, payment infrastructure, logistics, advertising, and market information. These functions can improve participation in domestic and international commerce. The advantages of platform participation, however, may create a gradual dependency cycle. Revenue growth encourages platform-specific investment. Platform-specific investment increases switching costs. Higher switching costs strengthen the platform's influence over seller decisions. As dependence deepens, the seller may lose control over pricing, customer relationships, branding, innovation, fulfilment, and channel strategy.

This paper identified six major components of platform dependency risk: revenue concentration, algorithmic visibility dependence, customer separation, operational lock-in, data asymmetry, and switching constraints. It also measured strategic autonomy loss across pricing, customers, branding, innovation, operations, and channel management.

The scenario analysis suggests that the relationship between platform participation and autonomy is not uniformly negative. At low levels, platforms can increase practical independence by reducing dependence on local intermediaries and physical infrastructure. At moderate levels, benefits remain significant, but seller behaviour becomes increasingly shaped by platform incentives. At high levels, the enterprise becomes vulnerable to ranking changes, fee revisions, policy updates, payment restrictions, or account suspension.

The appropriate seller strategy is therefore not complete avoidance but controlled platform dependence. This requires multi-homing, independent branding, lawful direct customer engagement, portable records, backup fulfilment arrangements, financial reserves, channel-level profitability analysis, and periodic dependency assessment.

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