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Title: AliExpress Website Enhancement

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Abstract

In the rapid evolution in the online shopping e-commerce industry, the importance of the online websites or app design and the way it is displayed is crucial for how easy it is for consumers to use it, as it can enhance the user experience. A good and user-friendly interface can help users navigate through it easily to find what they are looking for; it can improve their shopping experience and leave them with a smile on their faces. The purpose of this project is to find an app or a website that is poorly designed. And list the things that need enhancement on the website to meet the users' requirements and make it accessible to a wide variety of audience.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, online shopping is becoming the main source of shopping in the e-commerce industry. It has been going through rapid changes and advancements until our current day, so that they can fit the user requirements. However, having a user-friendly interface is one of the main requirements to rank it as one of the best websites. AliExpress is one of the known global sites that is run by Alibaba Group, which offers a variety of different products that we can purchase. Regardless of its popularity, the interface of AliExpress is one of the worst interfaces that could people are struggling to use.

AliExpress website has several issues that need to be addressed, such as, having low-quality images that don't resemble the real product, not having enough language options for it to reach a larger audience and people with color blindness are complaining about the color descriptions.

In this report we will be discussing the main issues of the AliExpress interface design in details, and we will suggest ways to make the website more accessible and easier to use. We will also apply the methods that we have learned throughout the course to make it a better design and enhance the shopping experience for users.

Our main goal in this project is to improve the interface to make online shopping easier as it can make users happy, keep them excited, and it can help in improving the feedback from users which can put the website in a higher rank among various competitors all around the world.

2. Background of AliExpress

AliExpress is a widely recognized online shopping platform, owned by the Alibaba Group. AliExpress is used by customer all over the world, it was launched in the year 2010 and it sells an extensive range of categories of products at reasonable/affordable prices, which is how it quickly grew into being among the largest and most successful online shopping platforms internationally. Regardless of the success it has achieved over the years, the users complain about some shortcomings in the user interface that limit the user usability and user experience.

A. Analysis of Current State

1. Poor Homepage Design:

In the AliExpress Website, we have noticed that the images are cluttered in the main page which leads the user to be overwhelmed with the amount of the products they are seeing obstructing the user experience.

2. Limited Language Options:

AliExpress offers only 2 language options, Arabic and English. This yields to people speaking neither language to face difficulties in accessing and exploring the website, which hinders both accessibility and inclusivity.

3. Bad Quality of Images:

Most of the images that showcase the products of AliExpress are in bad quality which leads the products to be inaccurately presented, this results in confusion and dissatisfaction among the website's users. Because of the bad quality of the images, it's hard for the users to properly see the features of the products they're interested in.

4. Absence of FAQs:

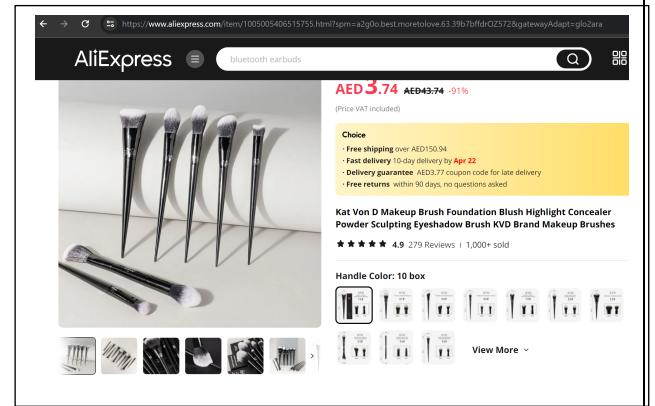
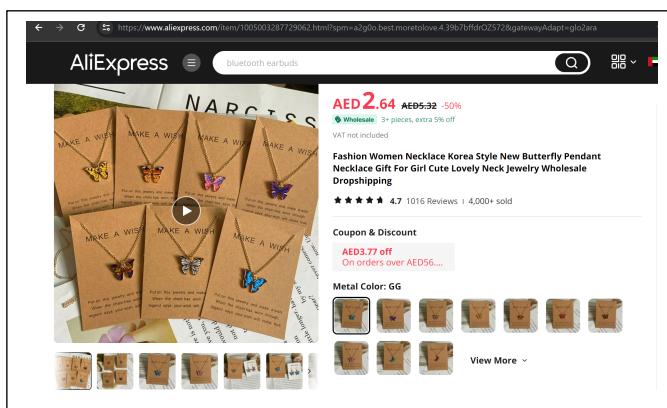
The absence of the FAQs section in AliExpress prevents the users from having helpful resources for answering typical questions they may have, as giving the customers an idea of the frequently asked questions can help them find solutions to their problems efficiently.

5. Vague Error Messages:

The error messages in the AliExpress website are ambiguous which is a big problem, the error messages should be clear to help the users revert from the mistakes easily. If the users find the error messages to be unhelpful, this will lead to them losing their trust in this platform which affects the user experience badly.

6. Unclear Color Descriptions:

AliExpress doesn't offer the users with clear descriptions of the colors of the products, this makes the shopping experience hard especially for people suffering from Color Vision Deficiency since it's hard for them to distinguish between colors, this feature makes things difficult for them which results in their frustration. An example of this issue is the pictures below:



7. Lack of Filter Search:

The website doesn't provide the users with broad options for filtering, this is inefficient for the users as it'll be difficult for them to personalize their search results.

8. Inconsistent Task Sequences:

The fact that AliExpress has inconsistent task sequences leads to the customer's frustration. For example, when a user picks the women's category, they expect to see women related subcategories like dresses, accessories and so on, but in AliExpress if a user picked the women's category, they may see results that are supposed to be in the men's category and are not related to women.

3. Proposed User Interface Design

A. Identify Requirements

- Enhanced product images: put high quality images representing the products.
- Add more language options for the user.
- Simplify home page layout.
- FAQs
- Provide color descriptions.
- Provide clear error messages.
- Enhance the Search method: Add Filters
- Clear sequence of actions
- Provide recommendations for enhanced user experience.

B. Suggestions and Improvements of Design:

In our AliExpress recreation process, we've ensured to highlight a variety of guidelines, principles, and theories. Applying guidelines, principles, and theories we covered throughout the course will ensure successful fulfillment of the requirements mentioned in the previous section.

Once you get into any website the first thing that attract your concern is the visual appeal of the interface. We ensured that the images representing the products that are sold by the website is with high quality and tend to look more realistic.



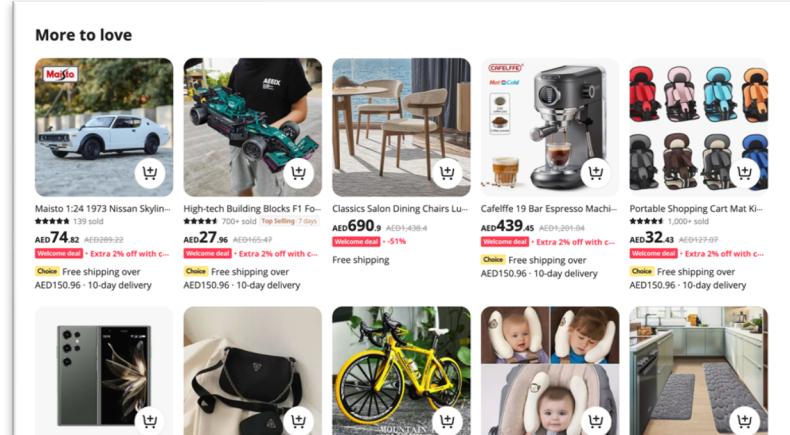
In the provided images above, we can see the same product image from the AliExpress website on the left-hand side and the enhanced version on the right-hand side. It's clear that the image provided from the website doesn't focus on the selling product as there is another watch next to it which will negatively distract the customer. Whereas on the right side we can clearly see the watch meant in the description.

Additionally, we can determine the difference in the font size highlighting the guidelines focused for getting the user's attention. In our enhanced design, the font is better as well as the font size is larger, and we can see the full description without clicking on the product to see further details. Making the description **bold** also helps with attracting the user's attention to the description of the product.

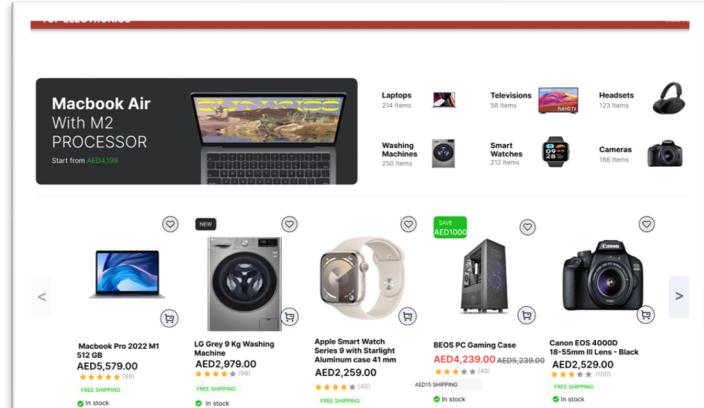
Moving to the full-page layout, we ensured that we simplify the layouts in all the pages not only the homepage but it's the most crowded in the AliExpress website.

The products shown on the website's homepage are very random and not properly categorized. In our enhanced version, we ensured that the product on the homepage is shown by the category just as shown below.

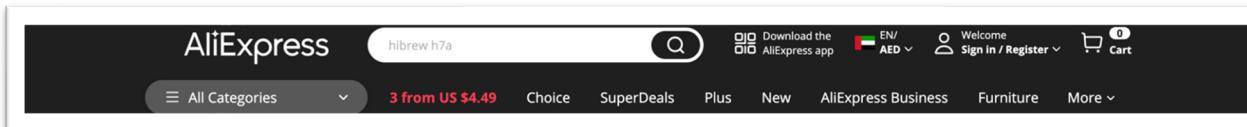
- A Screenshot of the AliExpress Homepage:



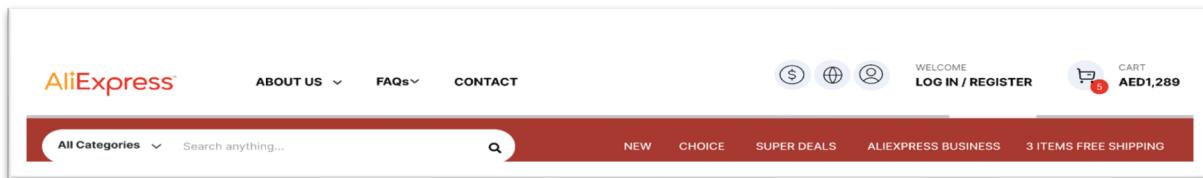
- A Screenshot of the Enhanced Homepage:



Colors also play an important role in the visual appeal and in user attraction. AliExpress website uses boring and unattractive colors. Just as shown below, the menu bar is black which isn't appealing for an e-commerce website like AliExpress as it also doesn't show the real colors of the logo which we think is an important representation.



- **AliExpress Menu Bar colors**



- **Enhanced Menu Bar with better colors**

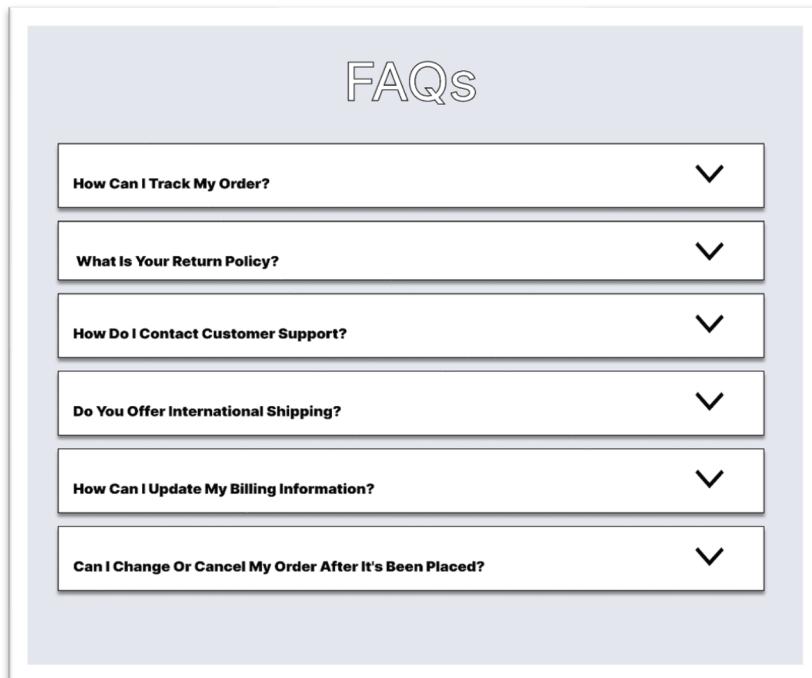
Additionally, we followed the '*Strive for Consistency*' principle by using consistent colors in the background and homepage. We also ensured consistent navigation, so for example the menu bar will be shown in the same place while navigating through the website. The information provided at the end of the page will also be shown in each page you navigate to.

Seeking universal usability is one of the most important rules out of the eight golden rules. To ensure a better user experience for diverse users it's a good practice to have multiple language options for the user to choose from.

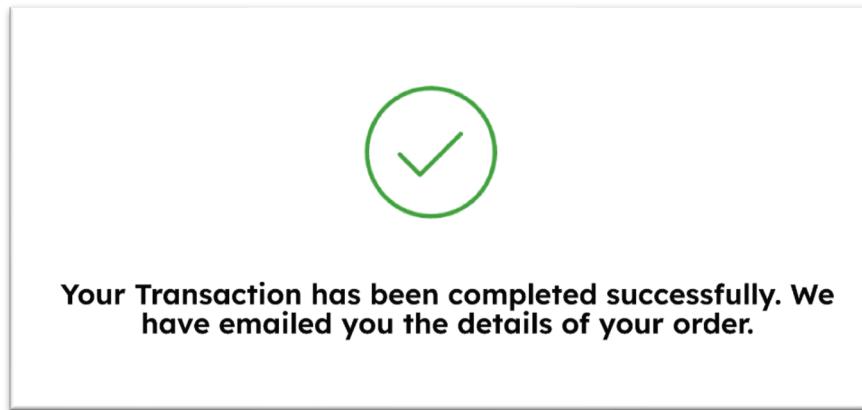
The website had limited language options depending on the delivered to country which isn't practical. For example, what if I want to browse in Malay but I want the shipment to be delivered to the US.

What if I have a concern about something that is frequently asked? Lots of people face the same issues when ordering anything from anywhere, so they have common basic questions. This is where frequently asked questions (FAQs) become handy and required. Adding such a feature will

greatly enhance the user's experience as I can't as a user contact the company through the customer service phone numbers to ask such basic questions.



Moreover, we've followed the '*offer informative feedback*' & '*Design dialogs to yield closure*' rules in the shopping process. For instance, if your transaction was done successfully the screen below will show up.



‘Prevent errors’ and ‘Permit easy reversal of actions’ have been also put into consideration while designing the enhanced interface. For example, you want to add your billing information to complete the shopping process but you missed filling a required field so you will get a message indicating that this field is required, and you need to fill it. Simply, you can go back and try again but clicking on ‘[Click here to try again!](#)’.

CHECKOUT

Returning customer? [Click here to log in](#)

Have a coupon? [Click here to enter your code](#)

Billing Details

First Name *

Last Name *

Country / Region *

Street Address

Town / City *

State / County *

Zip Code *
This Field is required to fill

[Click here to try again!](#)

Phone Number *

Email Address *

Create an account?

Additional Information

Order Notes (Optional)

Your Order

PRODUCT	SUB TOTAL
	French Riviera Vacation High Waist Pleated Wide Leg Pants x 1
	Worldwide Standard Shipping Fee
	AED 0
Order Total AED 77	

Direct Bank Transfer
 Make your payment directly into our bank account. Please use your Order ID as the payment reference. Your order will not be shipped until the funds have cleared in our account.

Cash on Delivery

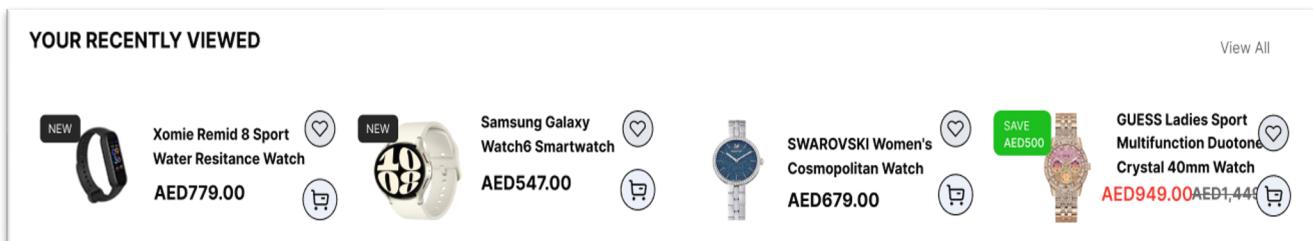
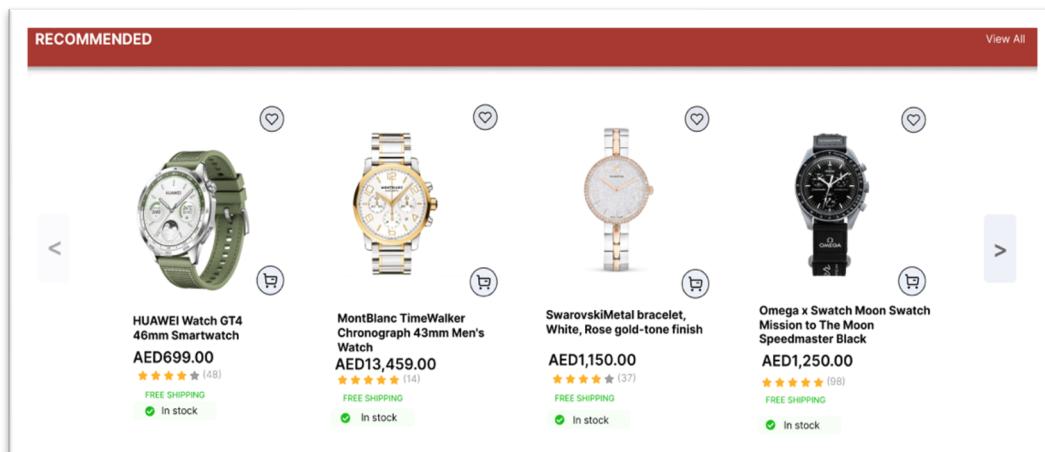
Paypal [What's Paypal?](#)

PLACE ORDER

Searching for an item with a specific characteristic might sometimes be overwhelming. We integrated a filter type search into our design which will save the user time searching for the desired item as we don't want our users to have bad experiences while using the interface. The example provided was designed for the clothing category as the filters may vary depending on the desired category.



Providing recommended products depending on the previous browsing of the user can play a great role in enhancing the user experience. As he may find a more suitable option than the ones they saw.



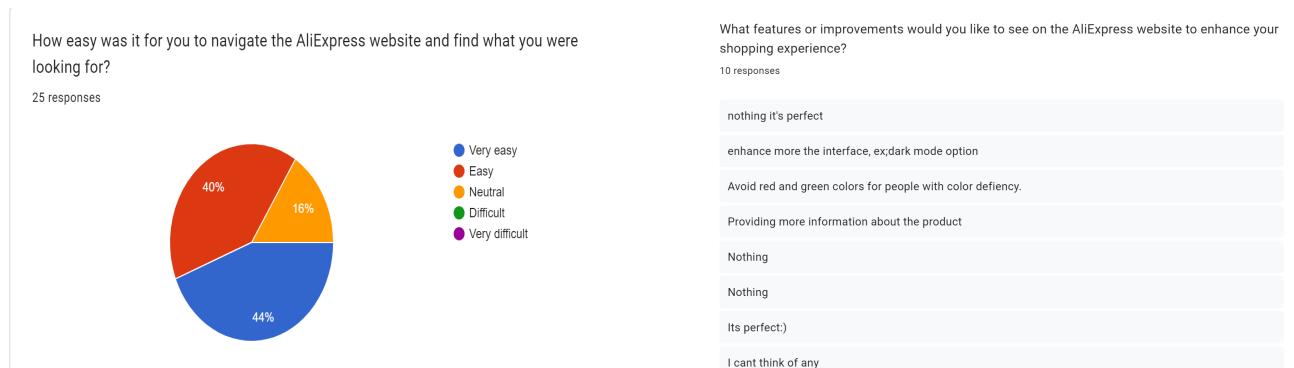
c. Prototype

Since we explained above the enhancements we have made in detail, here's a link of the prototype: <https://www.figma.com/file/NwgH0px0jKeciB3Is0WULD/Enhanced-AliExpress-UI-Design?type=design&node-id=0-1&mode=design&t=1kxQwM2cli9v8wst-0>

4. Evaluation of the Proposed User Interface

A. Remote Usability Testing

In this part of the report, we will be evaluating our enhanced interface to test its effectiveness by making a diverse group of users test the enhanced interface, including novice users, knowledgeable intermittent users and expert frequent users to represent a broad spectrum of user expertise. We evaluated the proposed interface by providing access to different family members, friends and colleagues to the enhanced AliExpress website and got their feedback through a survey that was provided to them. We got 30 responses back, and here's a summary of some of the responses:



Based on these responses, we will be adding more features and enhancing them to improve the user experience.

B. Competitive Testing

We have applied another evaluation method, where we selected a random sample of knowledgeable intermittent users and had them compare the original AliExpress website, and the website after we have made our enhancements to it to help us compare and analyze the difference between both of them effectively and to identify the strengths and weaknesses and areas of differentiation.

We had them test on different features, such as: navigation, the filter search, product description, the process of checkout and their overall user experience. After getting feedback from the users, we gained valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses on the website before and after enhancements. As the enhanced version of AliExpress has outperformed the original AliExpress website, the feedback included that the enhanced version was easy to use, the product description is clear, they have mentioned that in the original website the color descriptions were unclear like codes of colors, or something random that doesn't represent the actual color, they have also found it easy to navigate and the task sequences were predictable unlike the original website.

A. Other Relevant Information

Based on the comments and responses from the participants in the evaluation phase, we have decided to add more features, such as: adding dark mode option, as some people's eyes hurt from the bright/white color of the background of the website which can make them uncomfortable and that affects their experience as customers, and people who prefer the light mode can keep it as it is. Also, one of the responses was from a person who suffers from color blindness, that person mentioned that they can't properly see the color that we have changed in the menu bar, which is red, so we will be changing it back to black as our purpose is to satisfy all of our users. Moreover, we have added more comprehensive descriptions of the products like the usage instructions of certain products and sizing charts. We have also simplified the process of checkout by reducing the checkout steps to complete their purchases and we have provided instructions at each step to help them avoid any mistakes or face any difficulties. And lastly, we have made the option to allow customers to make purchases without creating an account as some people are lazy to make purchases because of the hassle of creating an account.

B. Conclusion

In conclusion, after analyzing and enhancing the AliExpress website, we have made sure to satisfy the needs that bother or annoy some users when shopping in the AliExpress website to make sure that they have the best shopping experience. We have applied different principles and guidelines that we have taken throughout the course, and we have gone through a thorough examination of the website to identify as many features that need enhancement as possible aiming to satisfy all users of different expertise. After evaluation, we have gained valuable insights and we have taken into account the feedback from the users, we have gone through another phase of enhancing the interface to improve usability and accessibility. The enhancement of AliExpress highlights the dedication to excellence in user interface design, with our goal to enhance a platform that makes shopping experience easier for customers as the interface plays a huge role in that, enabling customers to shop and explore with confidence.

C. References

- [1] Aliexpress, “Find quality wholesalers, suppliers, manufacturers, buyers and products from our award-winning international trade site. wholesale products from china wholesalers at aliexpress.com.,” *Aliexpress*, 2010.
<https://www.aliexpress.com/>
- [2] E. Wong, “Shneiderman’s Eight Golden Rules Will Help You Design Better Interfaces,” *The Interaction Design Foundation*, 2021. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/shneiderman-s-eight-golden-rules-will-help-you-design-better-interfaces>
- [3] “CS 315 -Intro to Human Computer Interaction (HCI) Guidelines 1.” Available:
<http://zeus.cs.pacificu.edu/shereen/OldCourses/cs315s13/Lectures/04Lecture.pdf>
- [4] <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ZwJcYXrhZIjeJYUMdE0Coop0C9XtmyAxHDgeleqLiQ/edit#responses>

D. Appendices

The image shows the homepage of the AliExpress website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "ABOUT US", "FAQs", "CONTACT", "WELCOME LOG IN / REGISTER", and a "CART" icon showing "AED1,289". Below the navigation bar is a search bar with the placeholder "Search anything...". To the right of the search bar are buttons for "NEW", "CHOICE", "SUPER DEALS", "ALIEXPRESS BUSINESS", and "3 ITEMS FREE SHIPPING". The main content area features several product banners: a baby diaper offer ("POPPER Baby Dry, 1-month Supply (4pc/pack) AED159"), a Sony noise-cancelling headphones offer ("Sony Noise Cancelling Headphones Bosco Over-Ear Headphone Wifi, Voice Assistant, Low Latency Game Mode BUY NOW"), a Philips espresso machine ("PHILIPS Fully Automatic Espresso Machine SHOP NOW"), a Gancho Slim Snacker High Chair ("Gancho Slim Snacker High Chair Grey AED129.00 SHOP NOW"), a PlayStation 5 console ("PlayStation 5 BEST PRICE from AED1559 DISCOVER NOW"), a Logitech Bluetooth Keyboard ("Logitech Bluetooth Keyboard Best for all device"), and a Samsung washing machine ("WASHING MACHINE Anatico Max 2 Shop Now"). Below these banners are sections for "FEATURED BRANDS" (JAMIX, Digitek, tekreact, Grafbase, MSI, ohbear, OAK, snyk, sonex) and "TOP CATEGORIES" (Electronics, Clothing, Furniture, Sports). Each category has a representative image and a "View All" link.

The image above shows of the enhanced AliExpress website.