## Deutsche Bank Research

# Rating Buy

Asia China

Consumer Retail / Wholesale Trade

Company
Alibaba

Bloomberg 9988 HK Exchange Ticker HSI 9988

## Longer-term growth comes at a price; TP cut to HK\$274

Reuters

9988.HK

## Mar Q results in line; TP cut to HK\$274 on stalled earnings growth; Buy

BABA's Mar Q revenue was RMB187.4bn (+64% yoy), with adjusted EBITDA coming in at RMB29.9bn (+19% yoy), both largely in line with expectations. The company's Mar Q turned loss-making due to the recent antitrust fine of RMB18.2bn. Operating wise, annual active consumers in China increased by 12% yoy to 811mn. Looking ahead to FY22E, BABA plans to invest its incremental profits in business initiatives, logistics, and the supply chain in order to enhance user experience and merchant support, and to invest in cloud services. We believe that investment will be front-loaded in June Q and Sept Q in FY22E, likely putting pressure on near-term earnings. Moreover, we expect margin erosion along with a higher proportion of 1P business. Hence, we cut FY22E/23E adjusted EBITDA by -20% / -9%, and we lower our TP by 14% to HK\$274. Buy maintained.

## Stalling short-term growth for long-term prospects

FY22E should be a transition year in which incremental profits will be invested in strategic areas in order to re-accelerate longer-term growth in: 1) domestic consumption, 2) global expansion, and 3) the cloud. We believe that a good portion will go into the newly formed community market place segment, Taobao Deal, and user acquisitions. As such, we have the impression the management will focus on: 1) converting users from annually active to monthly and daily active, 2) enhancing user experience and engagement via improvement in SKUs and logistics, 3) providing support to merchants, and 4) improving infrastructure. Moreover, BABA targets FY22E revenue of RMB930bn (+30% yoy), with annual active consumers (AACs) in China reaching 1bn, and overseas AACs doubling. Meanwhile, we believe losses from new retail and new initiatives will offset the growth, and we expect a flat year in terms of adjusted EBITA (with FY21 recording RMB170bn).

## Mar Q results highlights in four sentences

- AACs grew 12% yoy to 811mn in Mar Q; monthly MAUs: 925mn (+9% yoy).
- Taobao Deals recorded over 150mn annual active consumers (vs. 100mn in Dec Q) since the new version was launched in March 2020.
- Taobao Live's GMV hit RMB500bn in the twelve months ended Mar 2021.
- Mar Q non-GAAP net profit increased by 18% yoy to RMB26.2bn, although this excludes an antirust fine of RMB18.2bn.

#### Date 14 May 2021

## **Results**

Price at 13 May 2021 (HKD)	213.20
Price target - 12mth (HKD)	274.00
52-week range (HKD)	307.40 - 193.50
Unavailable	28,231

### Valuation & Risks

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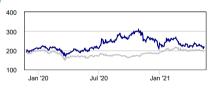
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#### Key changes

no, onangee			
ТР	318.00 to 274.00	$\downarrow$	-13.8%
Sales (FYE)	964,265 to 930,320	$\downarrow$	-3.5%
Op prof margin (FYE)	19.2 to 14.4	$\downarrow$	-25.2%
Net profit (FYE)	198,217.0 to 222,568.6	$\uparrow$	12.3%
Source: Deutsche Bank			

### Price/price relative



Performance (%)	1m	3m	12m
Absolute	-8.6-	18.3	8.6
HANG SENG INDEX	-0.9	-6.4	16.8
Source: Deutsche Bank			

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#### Valuation and risks

Our TP for BABA is derived via an SOTP valuation by applying 19.8x EV/EBITDA to FY22E underlying core operations, with a similar framework for China e-commerce companies; 19.8x is based on 0.9x of the three-year EBITDA CAGR, benchmarking the historical average and keeping within the global peers average. Moreover, we take a conservative approach by using the book value of the latest disclosure of equity investments, with a 40% holding discount due to liquidity constraints. However, we like BABA's sustainable growth, with new business ventures gradually turning profitable and enhancing ROE.

Key risks include: 1) FX volatility and a macroeconomic slowdown, 2) intensifying competition from global/local e-commerce platforms, 3) inability to successfully integrate invested entities into Alibaba's ecosystem, 4) inability to expand or monetize the AliCloud business, and 5) regulatory uncertainties.

Forecasts and ratios					
Year End Dec 31	2020A	2021A	2022E	2023E	2024E
Sales (CNYm)	509,711.0	717,289.0	930,320.0	1,157,634.	0 1,457,042.7
EBITDA (CNYm)	125,341.0	128,494.0	178,342.8	256,828.9	357,266.7
Reported NPAT (CNYm)	149,433.0	150,578.0	222,568.6	312,593.0	413,965.9
Reported EPS FD(CNY)	7.00	6.85	10.26	14.35	18.93
DB EPS FD(CNY)	6.21	7.82	12.00	16.05	20.61
OLD DB EPS FD(CNY)	6.21	8.16	10.86	13.32	-
% Change	0.0%	-4.1%	10.5%	20.5%	_
DB EPS growth (%)	39.5	26.0	53.4	33.7	28.5
PER (x)	33.4	25.1	14.7	11.0	8.6
EV/EBITDA (x)	32.1	28.9	-2.1	-2.6	-2.6
Source: Deutsche Bank estimates, company data					

#### Key indicators (FY1)

ROE (%)	20.2
Net debt/equity (%)	-30.1
Book value/share (CNY)	60.09
Price/book (x)	2.9
Net interest cover (x)	-
Operating profit margin (%)	14.4
Source: Deutsche Bank	



## Key conference call takeaways

- Key focus areas: Management noted its intention to continue to put focus on three key areas: 1) domestic consumption, 2) global expansion, and 3) cloud development.
  - Domestic consumption could be further lifted by improvements in:
     1) higher purchase frequency while covering more categories, 2) deeper penetration into lower-tier cities and rural areas, and 3) more support to merchants in order to achieve higher customer satisfaction.
  - **Global expansion** will continue, and BABA has recorded more than 240mn annual active consumers under overseas operations.
  - **Cloud development** in big data and other strategic areas should continue to expand.
- **FY22 guidance:** Management targets to generate more than RMB930bn in revenue, implying a growth rate of 30% yoy.
- **CMR business:** Management noted growth of 40% yoy for Mar Q and an increase of 24% yoy in FY21, while the current take rate is around 4%.
- 1P and 3P split: Management noted that it has not set out a clear split ratio between 1P and 3P business, while the outcome is a result of normal operation.
- Taobao and Taobao Deal: The value propositions are different. Hence, there is no significant cannibalization. Taobao Deal focuses on manufactures and farmers in order to cut the layers. Hence, the platform could supply more price-competitive products in order to target customers.

## Valuation and risks

Our new target price of HK\$274 is derived by applying an SoTP approach. We perform a cross-check with 19.8x FY22E EV/EBITDA for e-commerce, based on the historical trading average. Key downside risks include: 1) macroeconomic headwinds, 2) adverse regulations, 3) RMB depreciation, and 4) intensifying competition from global/local e-commerce platforms. We also view prolonged investment into new strategic initiatives as a downside risk.

19.8x

0.6x

1.0x

41,573

90 187

\$282

# Figure 1: Our SoTP valuation Segment Value, RMB mn Alibaba operating business FY22E EV/EBITDA 211,484 Equity investments @40% discount H22E EV/EBITDA 211,484 Net cash FY22E 569,345 Minority interest FY22E 569,345 Total valuation (USSmn) # of FD ADS (mn) #

Valu	e per shar	e (HK\$), !	9988	HK					
~					 				

Source : Company data, Bloomberg Finance LP, Deutsche Bank estimates

Value per ADS (US\$), BABA US



## Valuation

## Figure 2: China e-commerce comps

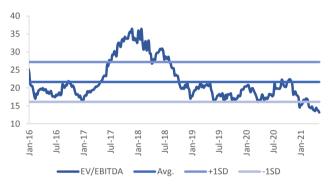
Name	Ticker	Cur	Curr	Rating	Market cap			P/E		ROE		EV/EBITD	A
	As of 12-0	5-2021	Price		(US\$mn)	FY21E	FY22E	FY21E	FY22E	FY21E	FY22E	FY21E	FY22E
China E-Commerce	A5 01 12 0	0 2021					11222		TILLE		11222		11222
ALIBABA GRP-ADR	BABA US	USD	219.90	Buy	596,175	2.9x	2.4x	21.6x	19.4x	17.3%	17.8%	10.6x	20.6x
MEITUAN-B	3690 HK	HKD	251.60	NR	196,803	6.9x	5.0x	NA	135.3x	5.0%	-10.7%	NA	79.7x
PINDUODUO IN-ADR	PDD US	USD	124.06	Buy	155,477	8.2x	5.9x	-119.3x	-428.1x	-12.8%	21.6%	-76.9x	-141.8x
ID.COM INC-ADR	JD US	USD	71.25	Buy	111,078	0.6x	0.5x	82.8x	61.4x	14.5%	16.0%	18.4x	14.3x
VIPSHOP HOLD-ADR	VIPS US	USD	25.71	NR	17,679	0.8x	0.7x	14.8x	12.4x	23.5%	21.3%	10.4x	8.4x
DADA NEXUS L-ADR	DADA US	USD	21.35	NR	5,033	4.2x	2.7x	N/A	N/A	-43.5%	-25.4%	NA	NA
BAOZUN INC-ADR	BZUN US	USD	31.81	NR	2,493	1.1x	0.9x	23.1x	16.5x	9.8%	12.1%	14.5x	10.8x
Average						3.5x	2.6x	4.6x	-30.5x	2.0%	7.5%	-4.6x	-1.3x

Source : Bloomberg Finance LP, Deutsche Bank estimates; Note: Bloomberg consensus for non-rated (NR) companies



Source : Company data, Bloomberg Finance LP, Deutsche Bank estimates

Figure 4: 12-month Forward EV/EBITDA





-50

2024E

20.61

18.93

0.00

100.3

21,103

421.627

-943,582

8.6

9.3

1.76

5.8 0.0

-0.6

-2.6

-3.1

1,457,043

670,016 357,267 43,711

13,660

299,895

126,956

13,965

5,991

432,843

42,907

-10,065

413,966

36,736

450,702

351,392

-133,849

217,544

10,000

-10,065

217,479

-10,099

1.025.094

343,317

354,164

589,544

837,086

139,322

783,149 922,471

110,108

2,116,627

2,226,734

-885,772

25.9

28.5

24.5

20.6

0.0

21.9

9.2

31

-39.8

nm

3,149,205

0

0

0

0

2023E

16.05

14.35

0.00

79.4

11.0

12.3

2.23

5.0

0.0

-0.6

-2.6

-3.2

1,157,634

466,778

256.829

34,729

12,890

209,210

108.394

5,991 323,595

32,847

-9,150

312,593

36.881

349,474

293.848

-108,399

185,449

75,000

-9,150

251,299

22,901

807.615

263,180

357,824

548.457

652,109

139,322

700,105

839.427

120,172

1,669,584

1,789,757

-668,293

24.4

33.7

22.2

18.1

0.0

21.4

9.4

31

nm

-37.3

2,629,184

0

0

12,695

0

0

21,019

421.627

-674,951

2022E

12.00

10.26

0.00

60.1

14.7

17.2

2.94

4.8

0.0

-04

-2.1 -2.9

930,320

347,879

178,343

31.631

12,890

133,822

87.520

11,541

5,450

226,792

23,934

-8,169

222,569

37,862

260,430

272,635

-93,729

178,906

64,317

-8,169

235.053

72,956

556.315 199,510

360,714

517,263 499,331

2,133,133 139,322

606,489 745,811

1,258,000

1.387.322

-416,993

29.7

53.4

19.2

14.4

0.0

20.2

10.1

3.0

nm

-30.1

129,322

0

0

0

0

20.935

421.627

-383,308

Model updated: 13 May 2021	Fiscal year end 31-Dec	2019	2020	2021
Running the numbers	Financial Summary			
Asia	DB EPS (CNY)	4.45	6.21	7.82
China	Reported EPS (CNY) DPS (CNY)	4.19 0.00	7.00 0.00	6.85 0.00
Retail / Wholesale Trade	BVPS (CNY)	24.2	36.4	43.8
Alibaba	Weighted average shares (m) Average market cap (CNYm) Enterprise value (CNYm)	20,640 3,646,606 3,503,776	21,016 4,354,990 4,017,272	21,620 4,240,642 3,708,164
Reuters: 9988.HK Bloomberg: 9988 HK	Valuation Metrics	5,505,770	1,017,272	5,700,101
D	P/E (DB) (x)	39.7	33.4	25.1
Buy	P/E (Reported) (x) P/BV (x)	42.2 7.56	29.6 5.69	28.6 4.07
Price (13 May 21) HKD 213.2	FCF Yield (%)	2.8	3.1	3.6
Target PriceHKD 274.0	Dividend Yield (%) EV/Sales (x)	0.0 9.3	0.0 7.9	0.0 5.2
52 Week range HKD 193.50 - 307.40	EV/EBITDA (x) EV/EBIT (x)	42.3 61.4	32.1 43.9	28.9 41.3
Market cap (m) HKDm 508,269		01.4	45.7	41.5
USDm 65,445	Income Statement (CNYm)	274.044	500 711	717 000
Company Profile	Sales revenue Gross profit	376,844 169,915	509,711 227,344	717,289 296,084
Founded in 1999, Alibaba leads the China retail market through	EBITDA	82,773	125,341	128,494
Taobao (the largest online shopping platform in China based on GMV),Tmall (the largest 3rd party platform for retailers/brands	Depreciation Amortisation	14,962 10,727	20,523 13,388	26,389 12,427
in terms of GMV) and Juhuasuan (a leading China group buying	EBIT	57,084	91,430	89,678
platform). The company caters to global wholesale market through Alibaba.com and China wholesale market through 1688.com. Alibaba	Net interest income(expense)	38,916	67,776	68,318
also serves the global consumer market place via. AliExpress and also	Associates/affiliates Exceptionals/extraordinaries	566 0	-5,733 0	6,984 0
	Other pre-tax income/(expense)	221	7,439	7,582
Price Performance	Profit before tax	96,221	166,645	165,578
350	Income tax expense Minorities	16,553 -7,652	20,562 -9,083	29,278 -7,294
300	Other post-tax income/(expense)	0	0	0
250	Net profit	87,886	149,433	150,578
200	DB adjustments (including dilution) DB Net profit	5,521 93,407	-16,954 132,479	21,407 171,985
100	Cash Flow (CNYm)			
Jan '20 May '20 Sep '20 Jan '21 May '21		150.075	180 (07	221 796
— Alibaba — HANG SENG INDEX (Rebased)	Cash flow from operations Net Capex	150,975 -49,643	180,607 -45,386	231,786 -78,142
Margin Trends	Free cash flow	101,332	135,221	153,644
30	Equity raised/(bought back) Dividends paid	-11,641 -226	76,104 -278	57,429 0
25	Net inc/(dec) in borrowings	-4,231	-16,022	16,765
20	Other investing/financing cash flows	-89,466	-47,537	-198,132
	Net cash flow Change in working capital	-4,232 32,250	147,488 21,418	29,706 27,682
	Change in working capital	52,250	21,410	27,002
19 20 21 22E 23E 24E	Balance Sheet (CNYm)			
👄 EBITDA Margin 🛛 🔶 EBIT Margin	Cash and other liquid assets	189,976	330,503	321,262
Growth & Profitibility	Tangible fixed assets Goodwill/intangible assets	92,030 333,211	103,387 337,729	147,412 363,604
80 25	Associates/investments	188,370	247,792	488,029
	Other assets Total assets	161,489 965,076	293,574 1,312,985	369,911 1,690,218
	Interest bearing debt	119,190	1,512,985	139,322
	Other liabilities	230,484	307,904	467,262
20 + + + + + 17.5	Total liabilities Shareholders' equity	349,674 499,076	433,334 764,504	606,584 946,143
0 + + + + + + + + + + + + 15 19 20 21 22E 23E 24E	Minorities	116,326	115,147	137,491
Sales growth (LHS)    ROE (RHS)	Total shareholders' equity Net debt	615,402 -70,786	879,651 -205,073	1,083,634 -181,940
Solvency	Key Company Metrics			
	Sales growth (%)	50.6	35.3	40.7
-10	DB EPS growth (%)	11.7	35.3 39.5	40.7 26.0
-20	EBITDA Margin (%)	22.0	24.6	17.9
-30	EBIT Margin (%) Payout ratio (%)	15.1 0.0	17.9 0.0	12.5 0.0
-40	Payout ratio (%)	20.3	0.0	0.0

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19

Source: Company data, Deutsche Bank estimates

20.3

13.2

3.3

nm

-11.5

23.7

8.9

22

-23.3

nm

17.6

10.9

3.0

nm

-16.8

ROE (%)

Capex/sales (%)

Capex/depreciation (x)

Net debt/equity (%) Net interest cover (x)

20

Net debt/equity (LHS)

21

22E

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23E

Net interest cover (RHS)

24E



## Appendix 1

## Important Disclosures

## \*Other information available upon request

Disclosure checklist			
Company	Ticker	Recent price*	Disclosure
Alibaba	9988.HK	213.2 (HKD) 13 May 2021	2, 7, 13, 14

\*Prices are current as of the end of the previous trading session unless otherwise indicated and are sourced from local exchanges via Reuters, Bloomberg and other vendors. Other information is sourced from Deutsche Bank, subject companies, and other sources. For disclosures pertaining to recommendations or estimates made on securities other than the primary subject of this research, please see the most recently published company report or visit our global disclosure look-up page on our website at <a href="https://research.db.com/Research/Disclosures/company/seearch.db.com/Research.db

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#### Historical recommendations and target price: Alibaba (9988.HK)



## Equity Rating Key

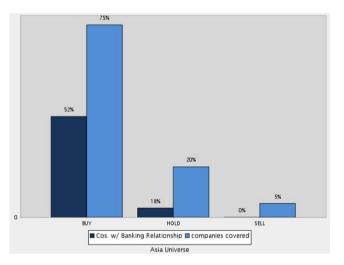
Buy: Based on a current 12- month view of total share-holder return (TSR = percentage change in share price from current price to projected target price plus pro-jected dividend yield), we recommend that investors buy the stock.

Sell: Based on a current 12-month view of total share-holder return, we recommend that investors sell the stock.

Hold: We take a neutral view on the stock 12-months out and, based on this time horizon, do not recommend either a Buy or Sell.

Newly issued research recommendations and target prices supersede previously published research.

Equity rating dispersion and banking relationships





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