

The Role of Electronic Marketing to Increase Sales and Enhancing Competitive Advantage at Deemah Company, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT: *Electronic marketing system plays vital roles in business firms to achieve their basic objective of profit maximization. Such roles including enhancing consumers to purchase, increasing sales volume and firms competitive advantage. This research addresses the role of electronic marketing in increasing sales and enhancing competitive advantage at Deemah Company in Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire used to collect the primary data from 101 respondents who purposively selected from the the company products consumers, while the secondary data obtained from relevant sources. The study findings revealed a statistical significant relationship between electronic marketing and enhancing consumer confidence to purchase; increased sales; and competitive advantage. The study proposed some recommendations including development and introduction of contemporary digital marketing methods to enhance consumer confidence to purchase. The Company also ensures quick customer service and responds to inquiries, which creates competitive advantage that distinguishes it from other competitors.*

Keywords: Electronic marketing, consumer confidence, increase sales, competitive advantage

INTRODUCTION

Marketing may be defined in general as a comprehensive system of activities of a business organization, designed for the purpose of planning, pricing, promoting and distributing goods and services that satisfy the needs and desires of current and prospective consumers. The sales department in the facility organizes the sales force collectively through the use of attractive activities, and its success is based on developing a collective work program, defining relationships, developing strategies, developing the work team, developing and diversifying the workforce, developing finances, as well as the skills of the officers and problem solving (Jaballah and Belmroush 2021, Mahmoud, 2010).

Sales management represents an integrated system of business activities that are carried out with the aim of planning sales, pricing, promotion and distribution of the organizations' products and services to current and future customers (Binsheikha et al, 2016). Therefore, as indicated by Sayed (2008) and Butt, (2016) sales management means following all necessary procedures to sell the quality and safety of products, deliver them to consumers and collect their price value, and this field includes: Strategic planning for sales, implementing and monitoring plans, and making important decisions regarding increasing sales and reaching the target customer. Accordingly, it can be said that sales management is concerned with making and implementing the decisions included in the marketing strategy, and this is because the executive sales manager has a role in designing and developing the organization's comprehensive strategy, and it also contributes to sales management in making decisions related to production plans or setting prices. The sales function revolves entirely around two aspects of the job: i- Managing sales activity: It is considered part of marketing activity in institutions. These include : Sales activity planning, organizing sales activities, monitoring the efforts of the sales team, coordination of sales activities with other departments , and monitoring and evaluating sales activities and ii- Managing the sales team, recruitment and selection of sales personnel, determine training topics and when and by whom to train sales representatives, motivating sales representatives by identifying different incentive methods, and why and how to use them, and iii- determine the reward for sales employees in a way that is appropriate to the nature of the work to create the best performance for organizations and sales employees , and evaluate the efforts of the sales team in terms of identifying valid and objective evaluation models to enable judgement (Albakri, 2019 and Blut et al. 2015).

The terms E-commerce, E-marketing and recently Digital marketing are used interchangeably to denote the sale and purchase of goods and services through the internet in exchange for money and data transfer to complete the transactions. E-commerce as indicate by Issa and Lee (2020) is at the forefront of transforming marketing strategies, based on new technologies, and facilitates product information and improved decision-making. In this way, marketing strategy increasingly require large amounts of information to better understand client needs, which raises the question of choosing the right marketing strategy to better fit consumer expectations. According to Wu et al. (2010), E-service quality had a positive impact on customer trust. He commented that the better the e-service quality of a company, the higher the customer trust. In the same context Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003) indicated that when customers are satisfied with a product or service they buy, they will purchase it again from the same provider in the future. Rita et al. (2019) indicated that the more a customer trusts a company, the more likely (s)he is to recommend the company to others. In turn providing good service quality enhances customer satisfaction and customer trust. The investigation found that customer satisfaction had a positive impact on repurchase intention, word-of-mouth, and site revisit. Moreover, Rosario and Raimundo (2021) indicated that contemporary research has examined this change in human interaction due to social network building, mostly through the themes of online marketing and social media marketing, also comprehending issues such as cost efficiency, information quality and trust development towards online shopping.

Competitive advantage in the service industry as indicate by Fared *et al.* (2021) is found in various forms of superior services. Service is an important element that makes a difference as well as a determinant of success in maintaining customers and attracting new customers. Various service differentiations are applied by companies that use internet and technology-based media. The presence of the internet world that can be used with smart phones increasingly adds to the ease of users to carry

out activities including shopping online or remotely (Kemarauwana, 2020). Online shopping provides convenience and is more effective for consumers or producers. For consumers, online shopping can save time and money to find out information, choose goods, and also buy products that suit their needs. For manufacturers, online shopping can increase revenue levels, company profits, save operational costs, expand market reach (Fared *et al.*, 2021). The online shopping business continues to develop from time to time. The growth of the online shopping business encourages intense competition, online business people must make strategies in order to be successful in surviving the competition and getting more customers. In Indonesia itself, there are already many applications for online shopping and the marketplace for that is also done by the marketplace. According to Hassan (2024) improving the level of services provided to customers contributes to gaining their satisfaction and loyalty, which leads to increasing sales and profits and thus gaining a competitive advantage. Thus the firm can achieve a competitive advantage that will continue until the competitor can possess the same ability.

Deemah is a Saudi food & beverage manufacturing company, founded in 1986. At present Deemah's products from both the Biscuits and Confectionery line of products fully established in competitive regional and international markets. The Company is continuously active in market research and product development to keep up with the market trend and satisfy its ever-growing market base. As indicated at the Company website, plans are currently under way to introduce new products such as potato chips, snacks, juices and other foodstuff, which have proved popular in the regional market and beyond. It is also indicate that the Company is further committed to improving the quality of its existing products as well as in introducing new products in response to the changing tastes and market needs. The Company's production facilities and activities centralized at its factories in Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia, with 16 branches in all the major cities of the kingdom acting as distribution outlets (www. Deemah.com, 2023)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the role of electronic marketing as a mechanism at Deemah Company to increase sales volume. The specific objectives were:

- 1- Identifying the electronic marketing methods adopted by Deemah Company.
- 2- Investigate the efficiency of the electronic methods introduce by the Company to increasing sales from customers point of view.
- 3- Propose some recommendations based on the study findings for improvement and better achievements

PROBLEM STATEMENT

To attain their prescribed objective "profit maximization", business firms used to develop and introduce relevant and contemporary marketing methods to meet customers' needs desires and to compete with others to increase its market share. This study attempted to see to what extent that the E-marketing mechanism adopted by Deemah Company succeeded to meet its prescribed objectives.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were put to be tested:

1-There is a statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and enhancing consumer confidence to purchase.

2-There is a statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and increasing sales.

3-There is a statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and competitive advantage.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research targeted for specific groups as respondents that would provide the data needed to meet the objectives of the study and who matched some set criteria. The criteria for respondent selection were the Saudi and non-Saudi residents (males and females), the internet users, who had visited, bought, or used the service offered by online retailers, which widely, intensive and commonly in the Saudi Arabia following the COVID-19. A questionnaire used to collect the primary data from 101 respondents who purposively selected from the consumers of Deemah company's products. The secondary data obtained from relevant sources. Respondents were based on the last online purchase that they made at least during the last month.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows that 91.9% of respondents are females, 77.3% had more than 5 family members, 66.3 are married, 51.5 % had secondary education or higher. About 74.3 % employed by the public or private sector, while 11.9% are self-employed.

Table 1: Respondents Distribution and Percentages by Socioeconomic Situation

Variable	F	%	Variable	F	%
Gender			Education		
Female	92	91.9	Basic	17	16.8
Male	9	8.91	Intermediate	32	31.7
Total	101	100	Secondary	33	32.7
Family size			University	19	18.8
3-5	23	22.7	Total	101	100
6-8	75	74.3	Occupation		
9+	03	03.0	Self-employed	12	11.9
Total	101	100	Government Employee	52	51.5
Marital status			Private sector employee	23	22.8
Single	34	33.7	Home maker	11	10.9
Married	67	66.3	Student	03	02.9
Total	101	100	Total	101	100

Test of Hypotheses:**Relationship between electronic marketing and consumer confidence to purchase.**

Data in table 2 shows that the arithmetic mean value for the extent of the relationship between electronic marketing and enhancing consumer confidence to purchase, reached (3.92) degrees out of two degrees, which is greater than the measurement value adopted in this study (3.4) degrees, with a standard deviation of (0.478). The calculated (t) value is (82.400), and the significance level of the test was less than the 0.05 confidence level, as it reached 0.000, indicating statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and enhancing consumer confidence to purchase. This result is aligned with Wu et al. (2010), who commented that e-service quality had a positive impact on customer trust. He commented that the better the e-service quality of a company, the higher the customer trust. Same conclusion was reached by Rita et al. (2019), who indicated that the more a customer trusts a company, the more likely (s)he is to recommend the company to others. The investigation found that customer satisfaction had a positive impact on repurchase intention, word-of-mouth, and site revisit. In this respect Wolfenbarger and Gilly (2003) indicated that when customers are satisfied with a product or service they buy, they will purchase it again from the same provider in the future. In turn providing good service quality enhances customer satisfaction and customer trust.

Table 2: T- test results for significant differences according to respondents' responses regarding the relationship between electronic marketing and confidence to purchase

Hypothesis	Mean	SD	T	Significance
There is a statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and enhancing consumer confidence to purchase.	3.92	0.478	82.400	0.000

*Statistically significant ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Relationship between electronic marketing and increasing sale

It is clear from table 3 that the value of the arithmetic mean for the extent of the relationship between electronic marketing and increasing sales amounted (4.22), which is greater than (3.4), the measurement value adopted in this study, with a standard deviation of (0.544). The calculated (t) value was (77.900), which is a large value, and the significance level of the test was less than the 0.05 confidence level, as it reached 0.000. Accordingly, there is a statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and increased sales. This result is consistent with Hassan (2024), Rita et al. (2019), and Wu et al. (2010) who indicated that e-marketing enhances customer satisfaction and customer trust. Therefore, promotes firm sales resulted in profit maximization. In turn providing good service quality.

Table 3: T- test results for significant differences according to respondents' responses regarding the relationship between electronic marketing and increasing sales

Hypothesis	Mean	SD	T	Significance
There is a statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and increasing sales.	4.22	0.544	77.90 0	0.000

*Statistically significant ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Relationship between electronic marketing and competitive advantage.

Table 4 shows that the value of the arithmetic mean regarding the extent of the relationship between electronic marketing and competitive advantage amounted to (4.28), which is a value greater than (3.4) degree, the measurement value adopted in this study, with a standard deviation of (0.528). The calculated (t) value was (81.550), and the level of significance of the test was less than the confidence level of 0.05, as it reached 0.000, indicating statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and competitive advantage. This finding is consistent with Hassan (2024) Who commented that improving the level of services provided to customers contributes to gaining their satisfaction and loyalty, which leads to increasing sales and profits and thus gaining a competitive advantage. He added that in turn the firm can achieve a competitive advantage that will continue until the competitor can possess the same ability.

Table 4: T- test results for significant differences according to respondents' responses regarding the relationship between electronic marketing and competitive advantage.

Hypothesis	Mean	SD	T	Significance
There is a statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and competitive advantage.	4.28	0.528	81.550	0.000

*Statistically significant ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

E-marketing denotes the sale and purchase of goods and services through the internet in exchange for money and data transfer to complete the transactions. It is focused transforming marketing strategies, based on new technologies, and facilitates product information and improved decision-making. E-marketing is a significant development resulting from these technological changes that have significantly shifted commerce from traditional physical stores to internet-enabled marketplaces. Online businesses facilitate a consumer marketing strategy that is interaction and information-based to enhance efficiency, experiences, and satisfaction.

Competitive advantage in the service industry is found in various forms of superior services. Service is an important element that makes a difference as well as a determinant of success in maintaining customers and attracting new customers. The presence of the internet world that can be used with smart phones increasingly adds to the ease of users to carry out activities including shopping online or remotely. Online shopping provides convenience and is more effective for consumers or producers. For consumers, online shopping can save time and money to find out information, choose goods, and also buy products that suit their needs. It is therefore, improving the level of services provided to customers contributes to gaining their satisfaction and loyalty, which leads to increasing sales and profits and thus gaining a competitive advantage. Thus the firm can achieve a competitive advantage that will continue until the competitor can possess the same ability.

Generally speaking E-marketing system plays vital roles in business firms to achieve their basic objective of profit maximization. Such roles including enhancing consumers to purchase, increasing sales volume and firms competitive advantage compare to others. The study findings revealed a statistical significant relationship between electronic marketing and enhancing consumer confidence to purchase; increased sales; and competitive advantage. Based on these findings the study recommended some interventions by Deemah Company to achieve competitive advantage on a sustainable manner. These include:

- 1- Development and introduction of contemporary digital marketing methods to enhance consumer confidence to purchase.
- 2- Ensuring quick customer service in response to their inquiries, which creates competitive advantage that distinguishes it from other competitors.
- 3-Improving the quality of its existing products as well as introducing new products in response to the changing tastes and market needs.

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