

The Relationship between Digital Marketing and SMES in Creating Value for Customers in Light of the Corona Pandemic in Jordan

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Abstract

Since the emergence of the Corona virus and its spread to become a global pandemic, many changes have occurred in human life, and it was necessary to unite the world and exchange experiences and experiences in overcoming this disease and its negative repercussions on all sectors and levels that imposed new habits on individuals, the most important of which is shopping through digital technologies to obtain them. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the impact of digital marketing on the SME sector to create value for customers. To achieve this, the comparison method was adopted for previous studies. It was found that digital marketing has an effective role in reaching customers and marketing products electronically, in addition to that social media platforms were among the most effective tools in Jordan, and stakeholders should focus on digital marketing in the SME sector, especially by relying on social media platforms to benefit from this opportunity that the epidemic imposes on customers, which increases the strength of this sector to overcome the crisis and enable it in the future. The SME sector in Jordan is considered one of the most important sectors that support the Jordanian economy due to its daily activities, job opportunities and rapid financial exchange.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, SMES, Customers, COVID-19, Corona Pandemic, Jordan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the Corona virus was in a Chinese city called Wuhan, and then within a short period it moved to more than two hundred countries to reach Jordan, during a record time, which ignited the global alarm about this disease as its repercussions reached all activities and sectors, especially economic and health (Organization, 2020), which led to A change in the working mechanism of these sectors and activities, such as education in schools and universities, has become remotely based on digital channels (Al-Marroof *et al.*, 2020). In the health field, some medical services have become provided remotely, such as medical prescriptions and dispensing medicines (Rahi, Khan and Alghizzawi, 2020). At the level of the business environment, services and goods are also offered through digital channels, and this The matter generated great pressure on these sectors and activities that method they This is due to the fact don't have a digital environment (Alandijany, Faizo and Azhar, 2020). This, in turn, was reflected to a large extent in small and medium companies, and not as much as large

companies, as they enjoy higher capabilities and it is necessary to stand on small and medium companies because they achieve a great balance for the economies (Dey *et al.*, 2020), especially of developing countries, especially Jordan, Where small and medium companies in Jordan constitute 50% of the GDP, in addition to approximately 60% of the employment forces and 70% of new jobs. At the level of developing countries, the discussion of the importance of these small and medium companies is almost inevitable (Alshir'ah, Abdul-Jabbar and Samsudin, 2016), in Jordan, many government decisions were issued to confront this virus, represented by a comprehensive ban from March 19, 2020, and then limited closures and decisions binding movement on citizens were also followed, and this was greatly reflected on these companies, most importantly, the classification of these companies constitutes 95% of the Jordanian companies, and this indicates the importance of small and medium companies on the Jordanian economy as these closures led to a complete paralysis of these companies during the Corona pandemic and this was reflected on the economy, so

these companies sought a continuity plan business only, due to the lack of preparation for crises and the lack of environmental and digital channels for them (Abu-Mater, Afifa and Alghazzawi, 2021).

Hence, digital marketing has become the lifeline for these small and medium companies due to its effectiveness in influencing customers and reaching them despite emergency conditions. In addition, digital channels guarantee business continuity for these small and medium companies (Yamin, 2017). With the general development, digitization has become an important issue in all sectors, especially marketing, and its importance increases with the high competition in the business environment and with global crises and emergencies, which confirms the positive impact of digital marketing on individuals and companies in light of the current data (Alghizzawi, 2019b). Based on what was previously explained, we now have a general perception about the importance of digital marketing for small and medium companies, so the Corona pandemic remains, especially since these companies have suffered a lot from this pandemic and need to be re-prepared to be able to continue in the future and to take advantage of this crisis to be the cornerstone for them in hiring digital marketing in its business, which confirms the right strategy for stakeholders in the Jordanian business environment to employ digital marketing in their business to serve these companies. Therefore, this study aimed to give decision-makers in these companies the ability to employ digital marketing by relying on digital channels to ensure their survival in light of this pandemic that still stands.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, previous studies that dealt with digital marketing and its impact on the business environment and its effectiveness in developing the business of small and medium-sized companies will be reviewed, so that it will go beyond the Corona crisis, and that will gradually highlight the required data that the study aims to reach.

2.1 Digital Marketing

Currently, the term digital marketing has become very popular, knowing that it has existed since ancient times (Alghizzawi, 2019a) and is defined as the process of displaying and marketing certain services or goods belonging to a brand by relying on digital means such as the Internet, electronic platforms and smart phones, which means reaching customers without restrictions where communication can be made with customers anytime and anywhere, which gives many advantages to customers and companies (Visser, Sikkenga and Berry, 2019). Accordingly, for the importance of the science of digital marketing, there are many studies that dealt with this term, according to Omar and Atteya, (2020), who sees that digital marketing means the use of various digital technologies

to be part of the process of providing services and manufacturing goods, in addition to that digital marketing is a source of strength to communicate with customers for the purposes of employing marketing techniques and strategies to serve companies.

Accordingly, the digital marketing promotes many benefits and advantages that it can offer to companies and individuals, which are manifested in the speed of application of marketing strategies through it, with the possibility of accurately measuring the extent of implementation of these strategies, in addition to that through digital marketing, wide geographical areas can be reached so that the company reaches customers wherever they are, at a negligible cost, which may save a lot for these companies in the same context, digital marketing enhances the brand with customers because it provides information that can be easily accessed by any customer. Digital marketing has several paths that consist of websites, search engines, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, for example, e-mail and animated ads on the Internet in various sites. All of them are considered important paths for digital shopping to achieve the extent of its effectiveness and impact on customers, where the extent of the impact of the path varies based on several factors (Wardhana, 2015).

2.2 Small and Medium-sized Companies (SMEs)

Small and medium-sized companies are considered one of the most prevalent categories in countries and global economies (Halme and Korpela, 2014). When compared to large companies, see that the extent to which they are affected by crisis and emergencies is very large and may threaten to close them (Ardiyanto and Yoga, 2018). Therefore, many reinforcements have been put in place to protect these small and medium companies by governments. This is a motive for some individuals that they want their business to be at the level of small and medium companies, because these companies are provided with support, in addition to the fact that the level of development and obligations in them are less on the employers. This motivated some individuals to want their businesses to be at the level of small and medium-sized companies, because these companies are provided with support, in addition to the fact that the level of development and obligations in them are less on employers, which makes them flexible in compatibility with the labor market environment, but at the same time sensitive to any emergency and this is what links the importance of digital marketing with these companies. One of the most important advantages of small and medium-sized companies over large ones is that they are flexible in terms of adjusting their products and their location at any time and that they do not carry large financial and administrative burdens on employers (Grando and Belvedere, 2006; Prasetyo, 2008). In 2021, small and medium-sized companies accounted for 95%

of the business market in Jordan, and this is expected in a developing country (Abu-Mater, Afifa and Alghazzawi, 2021), This is an important indicator of the importance of these companies in the Jordanian economy, thus there is a need to support these companies to face crises.

Hence, it is possible to rely on the Internet in the application of marketing plans and strategies to reach customers and promote the brand, which achieves the wide spread of this company as it will be available at anytime and anywhere through the Internet, which provides advantages for customers to reach services and products at any time A place with ease and flexibility, and if he desires these services and products, he does not need to come to the exhibition because he can order them online (Redjeki and Affandi, 2021).

It is known all over the world that the Corona epidemic has negatively affected all companies, especially small and medium ones, as there are some of these companies who were able to stay in the labor market and the other froze their work, which confirms the need to employ marketing strategies to restore the work of these companies to stand again in the face of competition as well. Crises, especially Corona (Al Rasyid and Indah, 2018; Al- Samirae, S. Alshibly and Alghizzawi, 2020).

2.3 Customer

The customer is defined as a consumer or purchaser of a particular service or commodity and can repeat the request based on the extent to which his desire is satisfied with what was obtained from these services and goods (McNealy, 1994). Customers are classified based on several characteristics, the most important of which are medium customers who play the role of intermediaries, as for the internal customers who are in contact from within the organization, finally the external customers, who are the most important because they are individuals who fulfill their desires from this company based on the fact that their needs have been satisfied with the services and goods provided by this company And the characteristics of customers crystallize around satisfying their desires with the importance of providing attention to them, as they are considered the source of the company's income, which confirms the importance of company employees taking care of customers and providing them with service at the highest level in a manner that provides praise to enhance their position towards the company (Redjeki and Affandi, 2021).

The purchasing process for customers goes through five basic stages, shown in Figure 1, where sellers must pay attention to companies for these stages (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

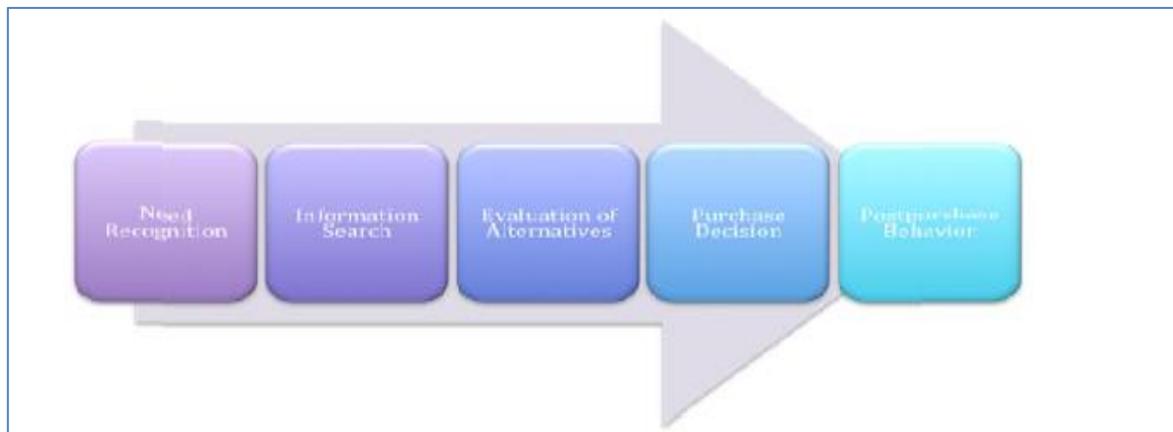


Fig-1: The customer buying decision process

by looking at these stages, we see the importance of digital marketing with these stages, as it provides the necessary information to customers and draws their attention to what they are looking for, which achieves the required purchase process for companies and customers.

3. METHODS

The study aims to reach the application of digital marketing in small and medium companies to face the Corona crisis in Jordan. To achieve this, previous studies on this topic were verified and their

results were compared, will the comparative approach was used.

4. DECISION

The Corona crisis resulted in wide negative effects on economic sectors all over the world, the most difficult of which was and still is on small and medium-sized companies, for many reasons taken by governments to prevent the spread of the epidemic, which were to a large extent. It is represented in imposing a comprehensive ban, reducing the movement of citizens and successive closures, in addition to the weak purchasing power of individuals so that they do not spend their money except on very important

matters, which greatly affected the turnover of the economic wheel, and this was. This is reflected in small and medium companies, and from here economists and marketers searched for appropriate solutions and ways to get out of the crisis with the least amount of damage, so digital marketing and modern technology techniques had an active role and great importance (Ištvanic, Crnjac Milić and Krpić, 2017; Alshaketheep *et al.*, 2020; El Junusi, 2020; Kim, 2020; Omar and Atteya, 2020; Redjeki and Affandi, 2021). Many studies have shown that relying on technology and electronic platforms is the most appropriate solution in the face of the Corona crisis in all sectors, which was manifested in the fact that the use of technology during the Corona period increased by individuals with a great deal, and therefore, digital marketing based on this technology cannot be excluded in light of the widespread adoption of this technology Electronic services by individuals during the Corona period (Alnaser *et al.*, 2020; Habes *et al.*, 2020; Rahi, Khan and Alghizzawi, 2020; Habes, Elareshi and Ziani, 2021). Especially since Jordan is considered one of the first countries in the world in terms of the number of Internet users, before the Corona crisis (Salem, 2017). This is an important indicator for decision-makers in small and medium companies in Jordan to employ digital marketing, especially through social media platforms, which provides them with great effectiveness because the greater use of citizens is through social media platforms, which are the most popular, which provides small and medium companies a bridge to customers and at low costs, with high benefits that suit customers. According to Harto *et al.*, (2019) study, it has shown that relying on social media platforms in digital marketing has an important impact on small and medium-sized companies' customers, as they achieved higher profits. Accordingly, it must be emphasized that digital marketing has many advantages in supporting small and medium-sized companies, which brings them better profits and higher sales, as converting these projects to the digital aspect develops their capabilities to face any crises and gives them wider areas for maneuvering.

5. CONCLUSION

The small and medium-sized companies sector are effective engines in supplying the economy worldwide and in more developing countries, so in Jordan they have a very important impact, and the Corona pandemic led to the disruption of the path of these companies in supplying the economic sector, especially that this sector employs many individuals in Jordan in addition to that Has daily active movement This is due to many reasons, but the most important thing is the imposition of restrictions and immobility on citizens, which had the most negative impact on these companies. Therefore, stakeholders in the SME sector had to take effective steps to overcome these obstacles. Digital marketing plays an effective role by relying on the technological environment and digital technologies.

This environment is highly developed and rapidly growing, which creates a challenge to follow. In Jordan, we find that social media platforms are among the most influential digital marketing tools for individuals, making it an opportunity for the SME sector. Based on previous studies that dealt with the subject, digital marketing must be exploited by relying on social media platforms in Jordan, as the level of dependence on digital technologies is still modest in Jordan by the small and medium-sized companies sector. Therefore, the Corona pandemic generated the opportunity for the small and medium-sized companies sector to start employing digital marketing and its tools in the broadest way to overcome the crisis and to enable and support this sector in the future, which will achieve many advantages and benefits for the owners of the sector and customers at the same time by providing services and goods at any time. And in an available way and with abundant information spread easily across digital platforms, which reduces effort and cost on all parties.

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