COVER PAGE AND DECLARATION

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Effect of digital marketing on business in KSA

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1. Abstract

The study aimed to evaluate the efficacy of digital marketing techniques in enhancing the performance of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Saudi Arabia (KSA). The research approach employed was a descriptive survey. We included 500 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) based in KSA in our investigation. The study's sample was selected using a combination of stratified and random sampling procedures. Interrogations were conducted in order to gather data. The quantitative data were evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistics. The inferential statistics utilized in the study encompassed factor analysis and F-test. On the other hand, the descriptive statistics consisted of frequency distributions, means, and measures of dispersion. The outcomes of this study indicate that digital marketing accounted for the variance in the performance of SMEs. Moreover, the study reveals that digital marketing significantly enhances the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). According to the descriptive data on the association between digital marketing and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), most business owners and managers who used digital marketing noticed an improvement in their organizations' performance. This study suggests that owners and administrators of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Saudi Arabia should adopt digital marketing tactics to improve their operations. Entrepreneurs operating in Saudi Arabia can wisely utilize the country's high social media usage, enhanced internet access, and dynamic, user-friendly social media platforms as effective advertising tools.

2. Introduction

It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) within the context of their contribution to the expansion of a nation's economy. There are a number of important variables that contribute to the resilience and flexibility of economies. These aspects include the development of multiple sources of income for a country, the enhancement of its competitive edge, and the promotion of economic growth. Furthermore, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have a significant impact on the enhancement of social sectors. They do this by facilitating the creation of substantial job opportunities, fostering local expertise and technological advancement, promoting entrepreneurial initiatives and innovation, and establishing a comprehensive framework for the development of the industrial sector.

When it comes to the structure of the economy, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role since they encourage diversification, stimulate innovation, and generate employment possibilities. The Saudi Arabian small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector has had substantial growth and development during the past ten years, mostly as a result of the help provided by the government and the implementation of the Saudi Vision 2030. (Alharbi, 2023)

According to the most recent report that was made public by the General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (Monsha'at), there was a significant increase in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are now operating in Saudi Arabia. To be more specific, the figure reached 752,560 during the first quarter of 2022, which is a significant increase from the 650,550 total that was recorded during the same time of the previous year. (Almohammadi, 2023) Consequently, this results in a growth of 14.6% when compared to the previous year.

The contribution of the small and medium-sized company (SME) sector to the gross domestic product (GDP) of Saudi Arabia is roughly thirty percent. This figure is somewhat lower than the average of forty-six percent that is recorded among the top fifteen percent of economies around the world. However, since 2013, when it was recorded at 21%, there has been a visible increase in the proportion. This increase has been significant. Based on this observation, it appears that the small and medium-sized company (SME) sector has experienced a substantial growth over the course of the past ten years.

There is a major contribution of 33 percent to the non-oil gross domestic product (GDP) in Saudi Arabia, and the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector is responsible for 45 percent of the total employment situation in the country. A twenty-five percent and twenty-five percent improvement, respectively, was seen in the stated figures in 2013. As an illustration, this demonstrates how the expansion of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) has contributed to the diversification of the economy and the creation of more employment possibilities, hence lowering reliance on oil.

There has been a considerable contribution made by the Saudi Arabian government in the form of policies and initiatives that have been implemented in order to encourage the expansion and development of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). The purpose of these initiatives is to

grant help and empowerment to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This is a list that contains a number of different initiatives.

- The Kafalah project is an initiative that aims to raise the availability of capital for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) by providing loan guarantees to financial institutions.
- The Tamweel platform is designed to facilitate cyber connections between potential investors and financiers and small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs).
- A government-owned corporation known as the Saudi Venture Capital Company offers financial assistance to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and startups that demonstrate strong growth prospects. This assistance is provided in order to facilitate investments.

Through the utilization of intermediaries such as non-bank financial institutions and microfinance organizations, the project that was described above, which is known as the Indirect Lending Initiative, makes it easier for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to acquire money. As an additional point of interest, the government has implemented a variety of legislative initiatives and reforms with the intention of improving the environment for business and reducing the challenges that are encountered by small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). It has been decided to implement a number of changes.

The rules and procedures that are related with the establishment and operation of corporations have been simplified as a result of the introduction of the Firms Law in the year 2015. The National Industrial Development and Logistics Package (NIDLP), which was introduced in 2019, was developed with the intention of stimulating growth within the industrial sector and increasing the competitiveness of local goods. This was the ultimate goal of the NIDLP. (Melibari, 2023)

In 2017, the National Centre for Privatization and Public-Private Partnerships (NCP) was established with the primary purpose of promoting the involvement of the private sector and facilitating the formation of inter-sector partnerships between the public sector and the private sector. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Saudi Arabia continue to face unique challenges and possibilities that require careful analysis, notwithstanding the substantial

achievements that have been made in this sector. An additional set of examples may be offered, which includes the following:

In the course of the global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, small and medium-sized organizations (SMEs) have been significantly impacted. Nevertheless, certain small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) have showed resilience and adaptation through the adoption of digital methodologies, the shift towards online platforms, and the introduction of novel goods. In order to provide assistance to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), the government has enacted a number of different measures, such as tax exemptions, subsidies, and deferments. The essential place that innovation plays: For small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to thrive and survive in today's intensely competitive market, the ability to innovate is absolutely necessary. As a result, it is of the utmost importance for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to increase the amount of resources they devote to research and development, to adopt cutting-edge technologies, and to foster an atmosphere that encourages both innovative thinking and an entrepreneurial spirit. The government has the ability to encourage innovation by providing small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) with incubators, subsidies, and other forms of financial assistance.

Due to the fact that they make up a sizeable portion of the population and demonstrate strong entrepreneurial talents, women and adolescents in Saudi Arabia bring a great deal of significance to the relevance of their presence in the country. Individuals, on the other hand, are confronted with a plethora of challenges, such as limitations imposed by society, barriers to cultural exchange, and restricted talents and opportunities. As a result, it is of the utmost importance to improve the capacities of young people and women by providing them with possibilities to get financial assistance, educational opportunities, training programs, and mentoring programs. There is the possibility for government interventions to encourage young people and women to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors. These interventions may include the establishment of networks, the execution of awareness campaigns, and the availability of personalities who exhibit exemplary behavior.

In Saudi Arabia, the participation of small and medium-sized businesses (also known as SMEs) is absolutely necessary for the promotion of innovation and the acceleration of economic increase. In the past ten years, there have been significant gains made, primarily as a result of the support of the government and the implementation of the Saudi Vision 2030. On the other hand, there are

a few challenges and opportunities that still need to be thoroughly investigated and decided upon. Through the adoption of strategies such as employment creation, diversification, innovation, and adaptation, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have the potential to significantly improve an economy's ability to resist recessions. This is achievable through the application of strategies. As a result, it is of the utmost importance to recognize and appreciate the tremendous contribution that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have made to the advancement of the Saudi Arabian economy.

Their catalytic functions have been established as the principal drivers of gross domestic product in a number of countries around the world, demonstrating their international significance. Small and medium-sized businesses SMEs) are responsible for creating sixty percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in countries like China and Japan. The ratio rises to 65% in the United States of America. SMEs in the UAE contribute roughly 52% of the GDP. (Poma, 2020) The percentage of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) that have an impact on employment rates is significantly higher in countries with a lower per capita income, accounting for around 78% of the total. This is in contrast to countries with a higher income, where the percentage drops to 59%.

Using a combination of classic marketing strategies and technologically advanced solutions, digital marketing is a marketing strategy. Having a complete awareness of the complications and complexity involved with digital marketing endeavors is necessary for the formulation and implementation of marketing plans that are successful.

Objectives

Following are the objective of this research:

- How digital marketing effect the business?
- Why digital marketing is necessary now a day?
- What are the effective practices of digital marketing to grow business?

3. Literature Review

Technological advancements in customer feedback monitoring, feedback response, digital implementation plans, reputation building in digital management, social media impact analysis,

and the use of third-party review sites have made marketing in the digital age a focus of academic research.

Several scholars have suggested conducting empirical study on digital marketing methods that enhance the effectiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). (Chatterjee, 2020) With the rise of technology-driven digital marketing, firms need to review their marketing strategy to stay competitive in the modern digital economy. When content marketing was first introduced, it was seen as a powerful tool by digital marketers and a key factor in successful online marketing efforts. A group of academics conducted online interviews with 262 marketing professionals to predict the future direction of digital marketing and identify projects that could result in higher spending.

Well-known companies such as Rolex, Coca-Cola, Nike, and the New York Times have recently incorporated digital content marketing into their digital marketing campaigns. It was determined that DMC's importance was significant enough to create and maintain consumer awareness. Digital content marketing has been proven to enhance employee engagement, boost revenue, foster loyalty, and build trust. The global income generated from digital content marketing rose from $87.2 billion in 2017 to $144.8 billion in 2018 and is projected to reach $313.4 billion in 2019, as reported. (Bu, 2021) Digital marketing and content management (DMC) is a management method that aims to define, anticipate, and ensure profitable consumer delight by efficiently using digital information.

Enhanced performance is linked to the creation of customer attachments and connections through successful digital content marketing strategies. The growing importance of digital content marketing is due to the results of various research highlighting its importance. Academics have focused extensively on intent technology because of its significant impact on modern business and technology-driven activities, particularly in marketing. (Grewal, 2020) Electronic marketing's widespread availability enables businesses to reach a large audience. Marketing regulations have been reassessed because of changes in consumer behavior and purchase patterns, with internet-based applications also impacting these regulations. The inadequacy of previous models for ensuring the ongoing success of firms has led to a significant change in traditional marketing methods due to the rise of digitalization and technology. Digital marketing is crucial for firms to be competitive in today's fast-paced business world. Digitalization promotes revenue growth and

the establishment of long-lasting connections through efficient information sharing and communication across company entities.

Scholars have categorized the digital market into five unique attributes to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

1. For your internet business to succeed, you need a top-notch website that can attract people worldwide. Furthermore, it serves as an internet platform for the audience.
2. Organizations with a strong social media presence may directly communicate with consumers through platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This enables the creation of long-lasting relationships that are respected, improved, and everlasting.
3. Search engine optimization (SEO) is crucial in digital marketing strategies to gauge online popularity.
4. Email marketing is still efficient for communicating with individuals, but it takes careful planning to achieve success. Interest in the organization has shown that emails receiving timely answers from people can lead to better outcomes. Repeat purchases and client retention are directly linked to offering individualized deals and providing clear, consistent information.
5. Mobile-compatible applications have shown to be incredibly effective in client communication. Most people use mobile applications to research products on different internet merchants to find what they want. Enterprises must create mobile applications that exceed expectations in usability and efficiency to provide consumers with quick and effective access.

The economic impact of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) on developing countries depends on their level of economic activity. Developed countries value the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector for its significant impact on GDP development and job creation. (Ahmed, 2020)

Prior studies have analyzed the impact of digital marketing on business results. It is well recognized that internet-based technologies and processes have greatly altered several types of businesses. Scholars analyzed the hotel sector and its executives to assess the influence of digital marketing on hotel performance. (Anser, 2020) The study found that using information technology systems and equipment for marketing can greatly improve performance by improving client

involvement through timely communication and direct distribution of critical information. Academics contend that internet feedback can offer managers significant insights into the attitudes, opinions, and satisfaction levels of their clients. This insight can be used to guide investment decisions and operational plans that are tailored to consumer feedback. Research indicates that managers have the ability to impact consumer perception and enhance product quality by incorporating and responding to feedback in the formulation of marketing strategy. Moreover, guests' behavior can be impacted by hotel websites and social media platforms. The study suggests that customers' views on the usefulness, enjoyment, social engagement, and contentment of websites and social media platforms impact their intention to make a purchase.

External pressures impacting corporate settings include competition, regulatory forces, and globalization. Businesses face external factors influenced by industry structure, suppliers, and regulatory authorities during operations. Businesses face competitive pressure when they are concerned about losing the competitive advantage they have gained in an industry due to their skill, experience, and knowledge. The research experts have recommended incorporating creative ideas to impact industrial changes at all levels in order to improve performance. Organizations can achieve long-term advantages from social media marketing and digital marketing tactics by using more sophisticated information systems that are adaptable to rivals. (Kano, 2022) Competition in an industry is influenced by variables such as technological advancements, globalization, the fast-changing external environment, and the introduction of innovative products. Greater presence of enterprises in an industry increases the likelihood of innovation and risk-taking. Research indicates that trading partners pressured Europe to adopt electronic business to ensure all sides stayed technologically up-to-date.

The act of advertising a product through digital means, such as the internet and digital media, is referred to as digital marketing [also known as digital marketing]. The objective of digital marketing is to acquire prospective clients as rapidly as is practically possible. It should not come as a surprise that a significant number of businesses have selected digital marketing as their primary marketing approach, given the widespread availability of online and digital technology around the worldwide community. The following are the six primary types of digital marketing that organisations typically employ:

The Marketing of Websites: Businesses have the opportunity to showcase their professionalism, educate clients about the organisation, reduce the amount of money spent on advertising, and facilitate the smooth operation of commercial transactions through the use of websites.

For the purpose of increasing a company's exposure on search engines, search engine marketing refers to the strategic actions that are conducted by the company. Search engine optimisation, sometimes known as SEO, is a topic that is significant in the field of search engine marketing.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are examples of platforms that may be used to sell products and improve the image of a firm at a cost that is little or even nonexistent.

It is possible that the cost of online advertising, which comprises placing sponsored advertisements on the Internet in order to recruit clients in a more expedient and efficient manner, is slightly higher than the approaches that have been discussed previously.

Email marketing refers to the process by which a firm communicates with potential customers by email about the most recent products, services, or sales activities that it has introduced.

Video marketing: A firm can use promotional videos to explain and promote its operations, goods, and services, as well as providing testimonials from satisfied customers and instructions on how to use the product.

Digital marketing has a significant influence on many business results, as shown. Research on the relationship between digital marketing and financial performance for firms is limited. The aim of this study is to assess the influence of digital marketing on business performance. The study examines environmental variables such as industry competition and pressure to use digital technology to evaluate their relationship and moderating influence.

4. Methodology

This study examines how digital marketing applications affect the commercial performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with ambient circumstances serving as a moderating factor. A descriptive survey design has been employed.

This design has been selected for its suitability in representing the participants in the investigation. A specialized methodology for assessing the impact of digital marketing on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The current research sample has been randomly selected from the small and medium-sized firm sector. The SME list was created using data from a directory that had a list of operational firms categorized as SMEs nationwide. It is well-established that 95% of private firms are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The investigator can likely create a varied sample to generate suitable responses.

The main participants have been IT and marketing administrators. They were likely to be knowledgeable about their organization's technical implementation, marketing tactics, and impact on performance. Physical surveys were considered crucial in research for their quickness, affordability, and straightforwardness as a method of data gathering. 500 questionnaires will be sent to gather data.

The collected data was edited and coded prior to analysis to guarantee thoroughness and uniformity. The qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis to identify main themes. The quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics included frequency distributions, means, and measures of dispersion. The inferential statistics utilized were t-tests, and F-test.

5. Findings

Reliability Analysis

Before beginning any kind of analysis, the data were first evaluated using Cronbach's alpha to see how reliable they were and how consistent they were internally. The computation of Cronbach's alpha is carried out in situations when a survey or questionnaire employs multiple Likert questions for the goal of data collection. This was the case in the study that was being conducted at the moment. Based on the reliability statistics, it was evident that the survey questions exhibited remarkable internal consistency for all Likert items. This was proved by the fact that the α values exceeded 0.7. After performing the computation in Minitab, the result was 0.711, which indicates that there is a significant amount of internal consistency.

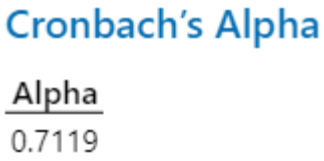


Figure 1: Cronbach's Alpha

Descriptive Statistics

The percentage of male respondents was 98.2% of the total, while the percentage of female respondents was 1.8%. This is as a result of the fact that women are permitted to work in the majority of occupations, with the exception of those that are regarded as "unsuitable for their gender," such as construction or garbage collection. Unfortunately, the employment rate for Saudi women is only 22%, which results in an average salary that is 56% lower than that of men. There is a significant gender gap in Saudi Arabia. When it comes to senior-level positions in the Kingdom, the percentage of women who hold those positions is 1.27 percent.

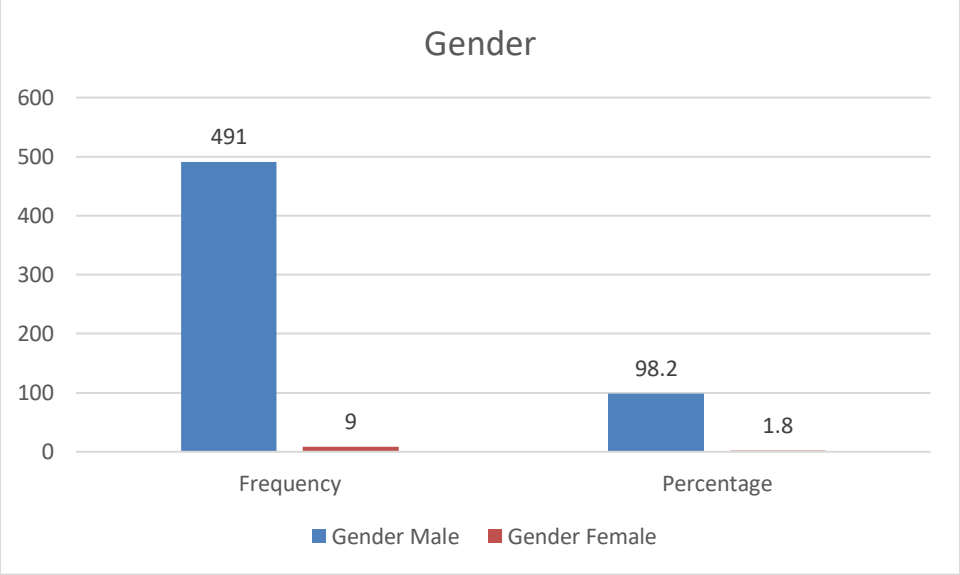


Figure 2: Gender

Most of the participants were married as 69%, 21% participants were unmarried, 6% were divorced while 4% were widow.

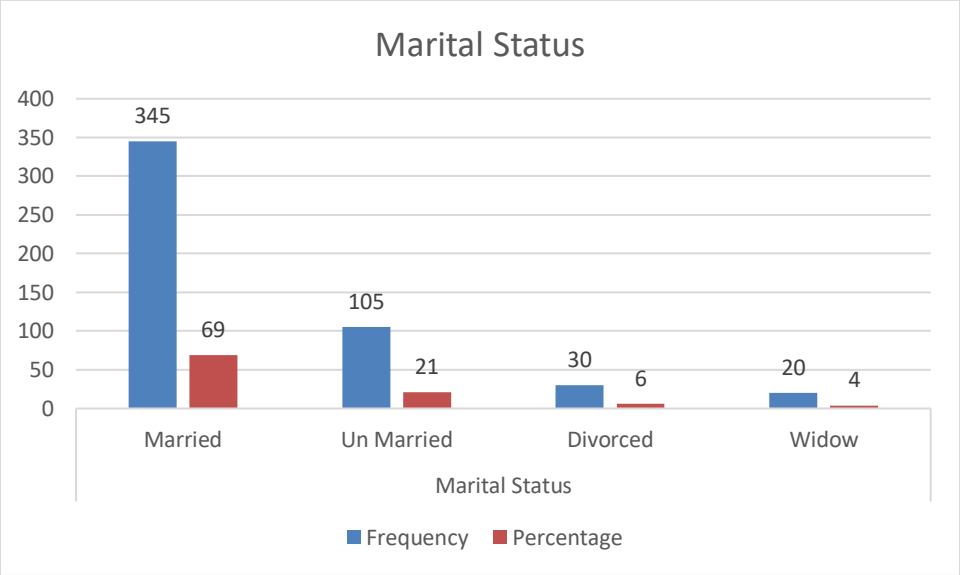


Figure 3: Marital Status

Most of the participants were age from 18 to 30 as 39%, 29% participants were 31 to 40, 19.4% were 40 to 50 while 12% were above 50.

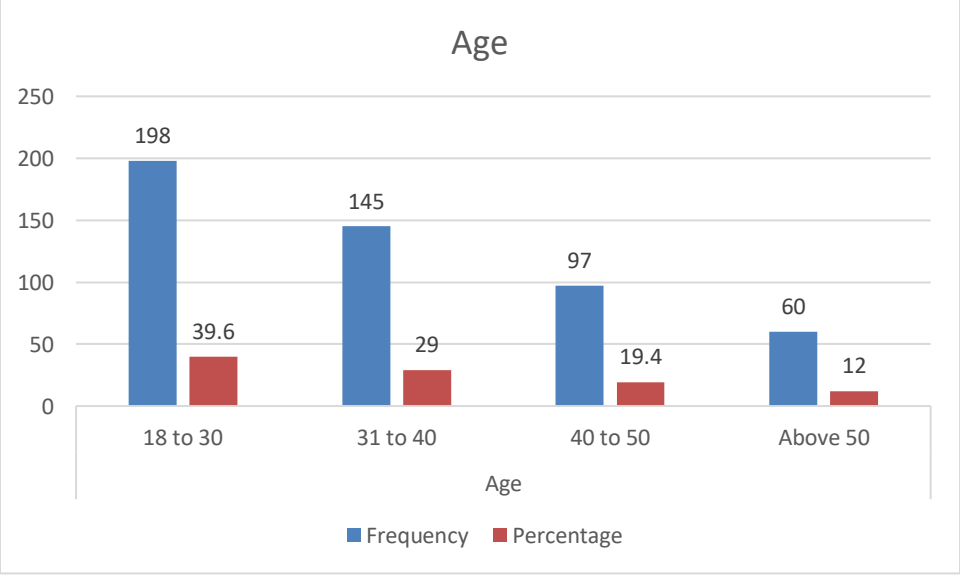


Figure 4: Age

Most of the participants were intermediate as 36%, 35.6% participants were Masters, 30.6 were graduation while 17.4% were under matric. It shows most of the participants were educated.

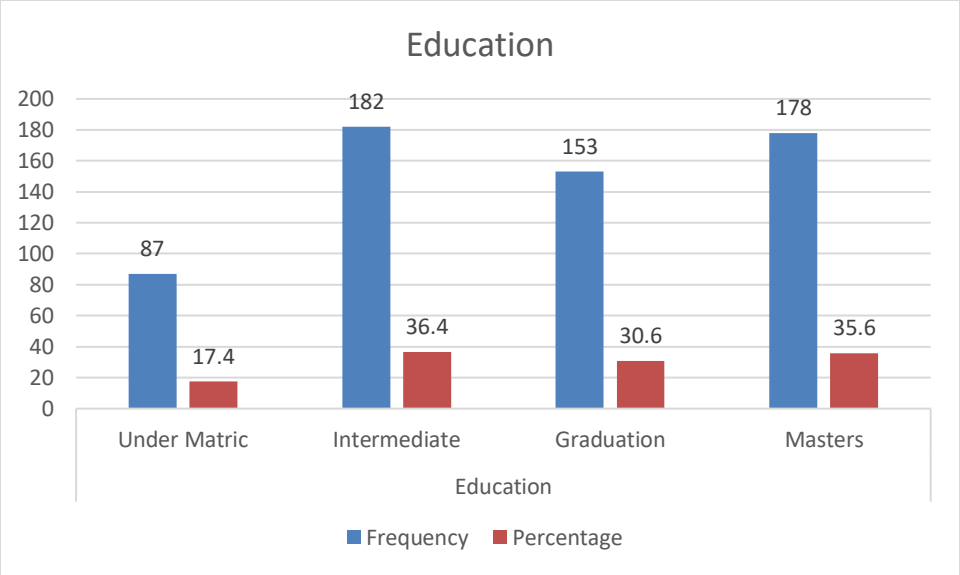


Figure 5: Education

Business Details

The business background information revealed that most of the respondents (49%) were engaged in manufacturing, 24.2% were in the service industry, 17.2% were in the retail, 9.6% were involved in education.

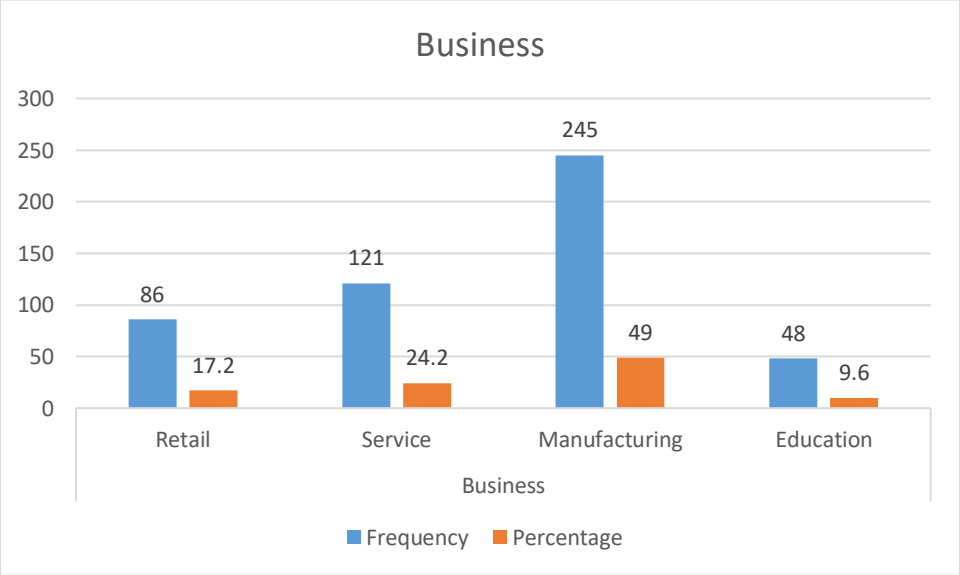


Figure 6: Business

The business performance information shows that most of the respondents 48.6%were engaged in growing business, 29.8% were in the break even, 18% were in the declining, 3.6% were in loss but improving.

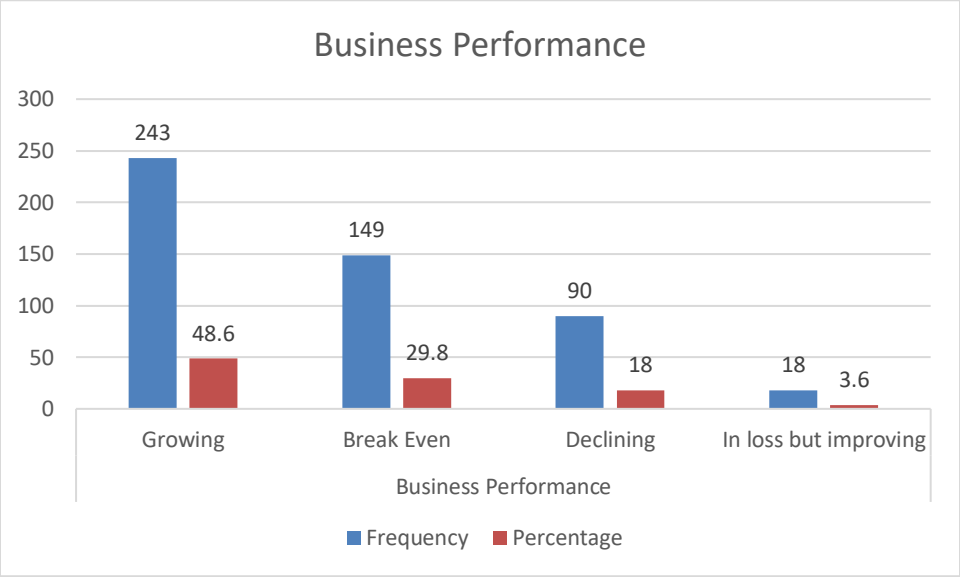


Figure 7: Business Performance

Questionnaire statistics

Following question was the part of the questionnaire:

Q1: Digital marketing allows organizations to increase sales.

Q2: Digital marketing is helpful to enhance customers reach.

Q3: Digital marketing is helpful to gain competitive advantage in business.

Q4: Digital marketing improve the financial performance of an organization.

Q5: Digital Marketing is helpful to enhance profitability of organization.

Q6: Your firm has spent a lot on digital marketing in recent years.

Q7: Impact of digital marketing is positive on overall business performance.

Table 1: Mean and SD

Item and Total Statistics

Variable	Total Count	Mean	StDev
Q1	500	4.600	0.597
Q2	500	4.712	0.553
Q3	500	4.666	0.599
Q4	500	4.668	0.554
Q5	500	4.642	0.605
Q6	500	4.688	0.525
Q7	500	4.636	0.525
Total	500	32.612	2.400

The participants were given the task of evaluating the impact that digital marketing has had on the sales of their respective companies by providing their responses to a series of statements using a Likert scale with five points: 1 (indicating strong disagreement), 2 (indicating strong disagreement), 3 (indicating neutrality), 4 (indicating agreement), and 5 (indicating strong concurrence). There is a full summary of their responses provided in the table that is located above. The fact that all of the mean values obtained were greater than 4.0 indicates that the respondents' evaluations of the criteria used to evaluate the effectiveness of SMEs and digital marketing were relatively consistent. The subsequent standard deviations of half of the means were used to determine the factors that contributed to the insignificant variances in the responses that were provided. The majority of respondents had a mean score of 4.6 and a standard deviation of 0.597, indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the assertions that were made regarding the impact that digital marketing has on the performance of their respective companies. The current situation is comparable to inquiries that have been conducted in the past.

ANOVA

An analysis of variance is referred to by its abbreviation, (ANOVA). This statistical method is utilized in order to carry out an investigation of the differences that exist between the means of a number of different groups or treatments. In order to ascertain whether or not there is a statistically significant difference between the means of several groups, statistical analysis is frequently utilized.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) looks at the differences between the means of several groups as well as the differences that exist within each particular group. When the variation between the means of various groups is much higher than the variance within the means of different groups, this indicates that there is a significant difference between the means of the groups.

Table 2: ANOVA

Analysis of Variance for Performance

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Digital Marketing	2	26.05	13.0274	57.97	0.000
Error	497	111.70	0.2247		
Total	499	137.75			

For the purpose of carrying out the linearity test, the investigation utilized scatter plots as a means of visual representation and ANOVA output tables as a mechanism for statistical analysis. As can be seen in the accompanying graphic, the linearity test that was carried out on digital marketing produced F values that were statistically significant (F=57.97, P=0.000 0.05). A positive linear association was found to exist between performance and digital marketing as a result of this observation.

Factor Analysis

Through the utilization of factor analysis, it is possible to reduce a substantial number of variables to a set of components that are easier to handle. Because of the use of this strategy, the maximum shared variance is obtained from each variable, and then it is consolidated into a single score. The aforementioned score has the potential to serve as an all-encompassing measurement for all of the criteria, which will allow for subsequent research. The following are the assumptions that are made by factor analysis, which is a component of the general linear model (GLM): a linear relationship, the absence of multi collinearity, the inclusion of important variables in the analysis, and a true correlation which exists between the factors and the variables. (Melo, 2020) The technique known as principal component analysis is the one that is utilized the most frequently among the several possibilities that are available.

Table 3: Factor Analysis

Unrotated Factor Loadings and Communalities

Variable	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Communality
Q1	0.385	-0.162	-0.822	-0.226	0.902
Q2	0.824	-0.178	0.213	-0.321	0.859
Q3	0.801	0.057	0.228	0.189	0.733
Q4	0.116	-0.876	-0.103	0.377	0.934
Q5	0.754	-0.205	0.260	-0.293	0.764
Q6	0.686	0.298	-0.079	0.545	0.862
Q7	0.550	0.390	-0.312	0.007	0.552
Variance	2.8236	1.1126	0.9549	0.7148	5.6059
% Var	0.403	0.159	0.136	0.102	0.801

For the purpose of the subsequent research, it was discovered that all of the indicators who had successfully completed the factor loadings evaluation for digital marketing had factor loadings that were greater than 0.5.

Digital Marketing Strategy

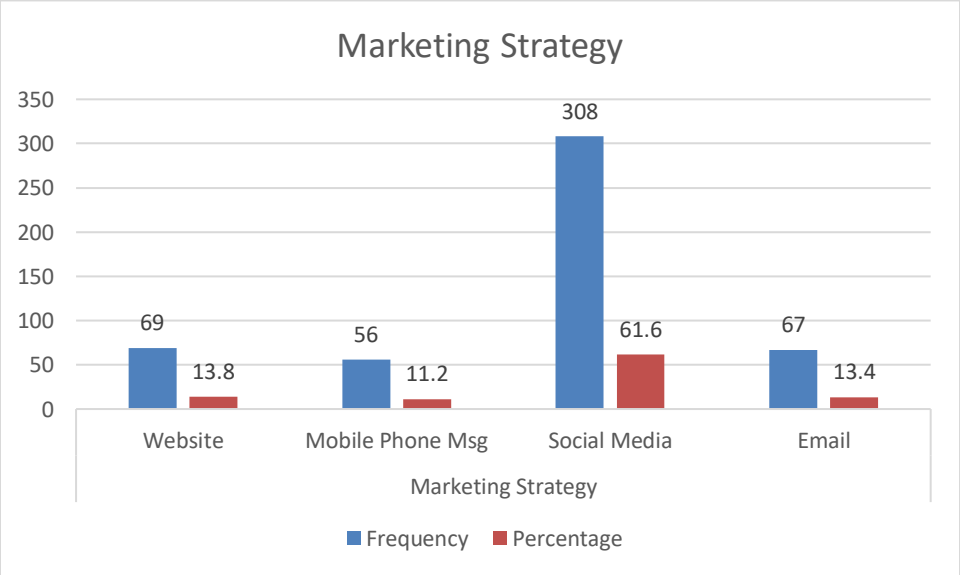


Figure 8: Marketing Strategy

As a further point of interest, the aforementioned findings unambiguously reveal that social media platforms were utilized with a greater frequency (61.2%) for the aim of digital marketing, in contrast to websites and mobile phone platforms. As a result of the widespread use of social media platforms in Saudi Arabia, particularly in rural regions, this problem has become increasingly prevalent.

At the beginning of the year 2023, the total number of people in Saudi Arabia who were using the internet was recorded as 36.31 million, indicating that the country had a penetration rate of 99.0 percent for the internet. (Alhomaidan, 2023) As of the beginning of the year 2023, the population of Saudi Arabia was estimated to be 29.10 million people, which represented around 79.3 percent of the total population of the kingdom. As of the beginning of the year 2023, the total number of cellular mobile connections that were operational in Saudi Arabia was registered at 42.50 million. This number represents 115.9 percent of the total population of the country where we are now located.

6. Recommendations

According to this analysis, digital marketing is a powerful tool that can aid owners and managers of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Saudi Arabia in improving the performance of their organizations. Entrepreneurs operating in Saudi Arabia should consider capitalizing on the country's significant mobile phone adoption, enhanced internet access, and user-friendly social media platforms as effective promotional tools.

7. Conclusion

According to the research, small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) experienced greater outcomes as a result of implementing digital marketing strategies. Social media platforms, mobile devices, and the Internet are powerful digital marketing tools that have the potential to enhance sales and profitability, attract new clientele, and maintain the loyalty of current ones. In addition, digital marketing tools provide a conveniently accessible and cost-effective alternative to conventional methods of audience engagement, such as print media, which are equally expensive. Therefore, it

is imperative for small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) to strive towards the adoption of digital marketing techniques in order to sustain a competitive advantage and outperform their competitors.

As a result of the small sample size, the research was only able to investigate KSA. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that a significant part of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Saudi Arabian (KSA) nations may encounter comparable difficulties. Consequently, future study may focus on other regions within countries. Furthermore, the study exclusively included assessments that were completed at defined time intervals, as a result of the cross-sectional design. Therefore, it is possible to incorporate longitudinal study in future investigations.

8. References

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9. Appendix

Reflective Essay

With hindsight covering the process of doing research and writing the accompanying paper, I've realized that I'm full of my discoveries that I've done which were full of challenges yet the latter were the points that have formed the vision of myself in the future when all my findings are applied. Here's a deeper look into this experience: Here's a deeper look into this experience:

I maintain that I have gained a really clear understanding of a structured attitude to research-work as one of the most important things in a research process of any kind. The action research iterative process (planning, acting, observing and reflecting) did not only taught me about the importance of adaptability to the world around me but also the implementation of continuous improvement based on the evidence available. The seemingly endless hours of digging into the literature and collecting the data have aided me in a deeper understanding, not just about the topic (perhaps, a feminist approach to conflict resolution) but also the area of research, which underscores the pillars of impactful research.

This project encouraged the same attributes in me, namely resiliency and perseverance, which became vital when facing hardships. In the context of work, I improved my ability with data analysis and critical thinking, also I learnt how to deliver complex ideas in a clear and easy-to-understand manner. The process of working with others, getting feedback and integrating different perspectives assisted in the development of my interpersonal skills, and capsized me to the significance of multidisciplinary research.

One of the serious challenges I struggled with was in the process of data collection where peer's response was less high here than I forecast. I changed my approach by integrating interactive platforms remote surveys and online chats to ensure optimization in the response rates. The topic of time management placed another obstacle in the way calling for more self-management and giving priority to more important tasks in order to keep up the progress and ensure that the deadlines were met.

Now that the action research method has been completed, the future vision will be about putting the ideas and solutions discovered in this study in order to make positive permutation in the place or organization that I focused in this work. Subsequently, I also intend to observe the outcomes of these implementations. Likewise, potential research cycles may come up as we recommend the process of refining and improving the effectiveness of the interventions. Besides disseminating the results to identified relevant players and through academic approaches, the channeling of knowledge into the broader science network and a promotion of the initiative to other places will be targeted.

For students embarking on their action research journey, I would offer the following advice: For students embarking on their action research journey, I would offer the following advice:

Start Early: Be sure to leave yourself enough time for every thrust of research, where you will have to confront unforeseen difficulties and amendments.

Stay Organized: Record keeping is the backbone of a solid research process; thus, be keen to record the process, findings, and reflections. The library is a vital target to reach, because it will help you both with writing the paper and with maintaining the pace of your research.

Seek Feedback: Get hold of conversation partners, mentors and professionals who will guide you throughout the research. Formative feedback can be really helpful to revisit and improve your ideas and methods were you've needed to.

Be Adaptable: Be aware that you may need to change your research questions or hypotheses due to the findings at the research stage. Flexibility is the main strength of the actions research being carried out.

Reflect Regularly: Transforming reflection from an only final activity into a process stage will help you to enhance your professional experience. It will engage you in profound learning and intriguingly, will also make your work more valuable.

The implementation of action research may be viewed as being a path of exploration, discovery, learning professional growth. Embrace the challenges and opportunities that arise, and you will be in a position of discovering the truly deep reward from that experience.