

SECTION: MANAGERIAL SCIENCES.

SEKCJA: NAUKI O ZARZĄDZANIU.

How to cite: Al-Hakeem, L. M. H., Al-Hasnawi, S. M. M., Mohammed, I. Z., Amanah, A. A., & Sultan, S. J. (2024). The Mediating Role Of E-Marketing In Enhancing The Relationship Between Strategic Foresight And Digital Service Delivery. *International Conference on Science, Innovations and Global Solutions*. (pp. 554-562). Futurity Research Publishing. <https://futuraity-publishing.com/international-conference-on-science-innovations-and-global-solutions-archive/>

The Mediating Role Of E-Marketing In Enhancing The Relationship Between Strategic Foresight And Digital Service Delivery

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Accepted: July 25, 2024 | **Published:** July 31, 2024 | **Language:** English

Abstract: This study aims to discover the mediating role of e-marketing in enhancing the relationship between strategic foresight in its dimensions and the provision of technical services. The study focuses on evaluating the methods used in collecting and analyzing data to identify challenges and opportunities in the Iraqi tourism environment. The study relied on environmental scanning to collect data on the

problems facing the tourism sector in Iraq and analyze them to determine future trends. Advanced techniques and programs were used to collect and analyze information in line with the objectives, problem and questions of the study. The questionnaire was used as a means of obtaining information from the sample of (226) individuals in Iraqi tourism companies. The data were analyzed using statistical programs (Amos V.23), (SPSS V: 26). The study concluded that there is a direct impact of strategic foresight in providing technical services, and an indirect impact of strategic foresight in providing digital services through adopting e-marketing. While the study reached a set of recommendations, the most important of which is that companies should use advanced analysis tools to collect and analyze data on markets, customers and competitors on a regular basis and train employees to use and benefit from them in making strategic decisions.

Keywords: Strategic Foresight, E-Marketing, Technical Services, Tourism Companies, Iraq.

Introduction

Tourism services continue to evolve rapidly and are increasingly innovative and adaptable. With the spread of digital technologies, e-banking has emerged as a key element in providing modern services. This has radically changed how customers interact with the sector. However, the competitive nature of the tourism sector forces companies to continuously study ways to enhance their electronic offerings.

This study explores the impact of strategic foresight in providing technical services through the application of e-marketing. The study focuses on three main variables: Strategic foresight is an early detection tool to identify challenges and threats that may disrupt the sustainability of services. The second variable (mediator) in this study is e-marketing, which is the use of a set of unconventional (electronic) marketing strategies and methods that use social media platforms to indirectly influence consumer behavior, as strategic foresight is linked to the provision of technical services electronically. While the third variable (dependent) in this study is technical services, which are conducting operations in innovative ways through electronic communication networks, whether related to traditional or new tourism businesses, which have become a major role in modern services. This variable consists of three dimensions (cost, speed, quality). The main problem of the study was represented in the main question (How does strategic foresight affect the provision of technical tourism services through e-marketing?) To answer this question, the study sample was adopted from a group of tourism companies in the Middle Euphrates region. This sample includes a group of **226** respondents. The interaction between strategic foresight, e-marketing, and technical services constitutes the main focus of this study. However, through strategic foresight, management of the company can anticipate and get ready for future trends in a way that guarantees a sufficient understanding of the demands of the tourism environment to reap the benefits of e-marketing and improves the affordability, speed, and quality of technical services. Businesses may get a competitive edge and sustainability in serving the various demands of their clients by comprehending and strengthening these partnerships.

Literature Review

Strategic Foresight (SF)

The definition of SF can be stated as: The ability to comprehend and predict present and future trends and the opportunities to advise decision-makers and mold organizational strategies while being a proactive strategy which supports firms in advancing within intricate and quickly evolving settings. SF, by examining various futures and alternative scenarios, enables companies to be more flexible, adaptive, and prepared for new possibilities and problems (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020). Still, it is also not only an

organizational tool, yet it is a vital practice that guarantees the long-term viability and success of companies. Therefore, to remain ahead of the curve in an increasingly connected and unpredictable world, executives need to adopt a strategic foresight mindset; that is, they can use this strategy to spot environmental risks and chances to deal with uncertainty (Gordon et al., 2020). Moreover, one of SF's main goals is to find hidden patterns and issues which might have an impact on the organization's future through analytical investigation, practitioners of foresight can obtain important insights about new technology, societal changes, and economic fluctuations. Moreover, decision-makers may use this information to make well-informed decisions that support the strategic goals and values of their company (Haarhaus & Lienen, 2020). Besides, creating many future scenarios based on various hypotheses and factors is known as scenario planning, and scenario planning, trend research, and environmental scanning are important ideas in science fiction. With the use of this method, companies may think through potential outcomes and create adaptable plans to deal with them (Burt & Nair, 2020) as some scholars see that strategic finance (SF) is a proactive, structured method of looking beyond an organization's current expectations and considering developments in the political, social, and economic spheres. This, in turn, allows an organization to assess the potential effects of its policies and strategic choices (Lari et al., 2020). Added to what is mentioned above, some contend that the advantages of SF go beyond making decisions right away, particularly when businesses actively engage in foresight activities and generate compelling concepts that highlight flexibility, agility, and adaptation (i.e. concepts enable them to swiftly adapt to unforeseen developments and proactively design their future). Organizations may also take advantage of new possibilities and reduce possible dangers by keeping one step ahead of rivals (Flaih & Chalab, 2022). Panjaitan et al. (2022) see that SF is an early detection tool for spotting obstacles and dangers that might jeopardize an organization's capacity to maintain itself. Depending on the insight that Panjaitan et al. (2022) provide, it can be said that by being able to predict the future, one will be able to develop strategies and tactics to counteract risks and turn them into opportunities that will help the company. However, organizations may get several advantages from SF; that is, it greatly enhances their ability to anticipate and understand future trends, in addition to enabling them to shape and formulate strategies and initiatives that align with their long-term goals and objectives. Moreover, organizations can effectively assess the potential impact, implications, and uncertainties associated with various factors on their operations and markets by carefully considering and analyzing different scenarios. Hence, this comprehensive assessment helps identify potential risks and previously untapped opportunities (Buehring & Bishop, 2020). SF enables organizations to lay the foundation for a successful future and equips them with the tools and knowledge to develop robust contingency plans and strategic options. This preparedness ensures that organizations are well-equipped to overcome potential challenges and unexpected disruptions with resilience and adaptability. By engaging in strategic foresight, organizations can avoid potential problems that may arise, ensuring business continuity and long-term sustainability (Fergnani, 2022). SF encourages a culture of continuous learning, growth, and innovation as it forces individuals at all levels of the organization to actively scan the external environment for emerging trends, shifts in consumer behavior, advances in technology, and other critical factors that may present challenges and opportunities. This increased awareness and vigilance stimulates the discovery of new and promising opportunities for growth and expansion (Sjöholm, 2021); that is, developing tactics that work (Édes, 2021). gaining an edge over competitors (Manu, 2022). Performance enhancement (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020). Increasing the ability to make strategic decisions (Buehring & Bishop, 2020). promoting rejuvenation and innovation (Moqaddamerad & Ali, 2024).

However, one must be aware of the essential factors in determining future tactics and results when trying applying SF successfully. Their ability to predict future consumer demands and market trends makes them able to develop and provide new goods and services, i.e., comprehending these aspects helps firms establish long-term targets and goals that align with their overarching strategic vision (Hamel et al, 2022).

In recent years, SF, in all services and fields, has become more significant. The rapidly evolving technological environment and changing customer expectations added to this significance as it helps businesses foresee changing market conditions and make necessary adjustments to stay ahead of the competition and secure long-term success. However, organizations may efficiently recognize new trends and make decisions to satisfy changing client wants by utilizing SF in services (Nascimento et al. 2021). SF also makes it easier to investigate new ventures and alliances in the services industry. This may increase income sources and forge strong market positions. SF, also, helps businesses find possible partners and projects proactively; that is, partners and projects which can match with their long-term objectives and also increase their profitability and market share. Additionally, in an increasingly unstable financial world, it also helps enterprises to secure the stability and resilience of their operations (while managing possible risks and uncertainties) (Pulsiri & Vatananan-Thesenvitz, 2021). So it can be said that information processing, environmental scanning, networks and individuals, culture, regulation can be considered as the dimensions of SF (Lari et al, 2020).

E-Marketing (EM)

Using social media platforms to indirectly influence consumer can be considered as an unconventional marketing strategy and methods. The main goal of these techniques is to attract the attention of the public and influence their attitudes and purchasing decisions without them feeling that they are being subjected to a marketing process (Ebrahimi et al. 2022). E-marketing tools are defined as a set of different strategic tactics that marketers use to skillfully influence consumer behavior and promote goods and services. This is done by understanding the psychology of customers when marketers skillfully formulate advertising campaigns that integrate seamlessly into the daily lives of customers. And taking advantage of the emotional stimuli of individuals, and creating a sense of desire for a product or service, as psychological manipulation techniques are used to influence consumer decisions and drive purchasing behavior without them feeling it (Rangaswamy & Kumar. 2021). Urdea et al. (2021) argues that as marketing technologies continue to evolve, marketers are constantly finding innovative ways to use their expertise to attract and engage customers, ultimately converting them into loyal brand advocates. By focusing on advertising messages, organizations can influence customer opinions and preferences when marketers strategically partner with individuals who have a strong online presence and have a large following and fan base, using their platforms to promote services (Piriyakul & Piriyakul, 2021). Agrawal (2023) points out that when marketers create content that matches the tone and style of customers' preferences by providing valuable and engaging content that is unlike traditional advertising, marketers can capture and win customers' attention, increasing the likelihood of brand recognition, acquisition, and prominence.

Digital Services (DS)

The concept of technical services has received increasing attention in the previous period due to the increasing desires of customers on the one hand, and the conditions of environmental uncertainty and the vagueness of the future vision on the other hand, each institution aims to achieve the most efficient and effective way to implement its business plan. Digital services refer to the digital platforms provided by financial institutions that allow customers to perform various activities remotely (Zand, 2020). Through the capabilities of digital services, individuals can manage their affairs smoothly, conduct transactions effortlessly, and easily access information from anywhere and at any time, using countless electronic devices such as computers, modern smartphones, advanced tablets, and even wearable technology (Nazaritehrani & Mashali, 2020). These services provided to organizations and individuals are easy to use and save effort, allowing them to focus on more important aspects of their lives. Moreover, they have allowed individuals who may not have been able to access traditional services to participate in economic activity in its various forms (Chaimaa et al, 2021). Ensuring that everyone can manage their financial affairs safely and conveniently. In addition to convenience and accessibility, digital services also provide

enhanced security measures to protect customers' sensitive information. Through advanced encryption technologies, customers can rest assured that their personal data is protected from unauthorized access (Agwu, 2021). Overall, digital services have truly transformed various fields, making them easier, more convenient, and more secure at all levels. Whether in the short term or planning for long-term goals. Therefore, they provide comprehensive services that meet customers' diverse needs and preferences (Vinoth et al., 2022). Organizations must continue to innovate and enhance their digital services to maintain their competitive advantage in the ever-changing digital landscape. Whether it is through introducing new features, using advanced platforms, or highly fortified security measures (Rawwash et al., 2020). There is no doubt that digital services have changed the way individuals interact, moving from the traditional approach to a more efficient and dynamic digital platform, and with the advancement of technology, the world of digital services has expanded further, offering new features to enhance customer service (Falade & Ogundele, 2023). Digital services offer many advantages to customers that greatly enhance their experience and lie in the following main points: Provide convenience by eliminating the need to visit the bank branch in person. (Haralayya, 2021). Provide superior accessibility and flexibility, as these services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (Fiberesima, 2023). Reduce costs (Son et al., 2020). The financial benefits enjoyed by customers, from cash withdrawal benefits on digital transactions to exclusive discounts on various products and services. (Poleshchuk, 2022). Online bill payment options are one of the important services (Nathiya & Janaki Priya, 2023).

Most researchers have agreed that the main dimensions of electronic banking services are three dimensions (Cost, Speed, Quality) (Ibrahim & Saleh, 2018)

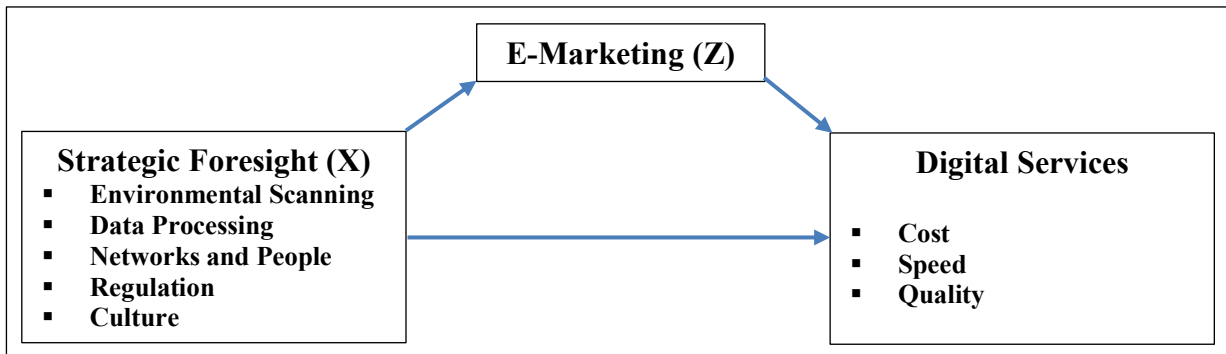
Methodology

Contemporary companies face major challenges in how to sustain their competitive advantage. Strategic foresight, which involves anticipating and preparing for future trends and disruptions, is essential for companies seeking to innovate and enhance their technical services. At the same time, e-marketing such as brand marketing, viral marketing and amplified marketing plays an important role in subtly influencing customer perceptions and behaviors. The mechanisms through which strategic foresight affects the cost, speed and quality of technical services are still new and unexplored. This gap prevents companies from fully benefiting from strategic foresight and marketing innovations to improve their technical services and achieve sustainability. Therefore, the problem of the study lies in the following main question: How does strategic foresight affect the provision of technical services through the adoption of e-marketing tools?

To answer this question, the study model will be built based on the administrative literature specialized in the fields of (Strategic Management and Marketing Management) and the hypotheses that researchers aim to prove by targeting a sample of tourism companies in the Middle Euphrates region in Iraq, and more specifically those concerned with strategic planning, marketing and providers of electronic banking services. This includes a diverse group of individuals who are the study sample. The questionnaire form was used as a tool for collecting data, and was distributed to a sample of employees in those companies and their customers. The form dealt with two axes, the first axis related to general (personal) data related to the respondent, while the second axis dealt with the study variables and their dimensions. The first independent variable included five dimensions with 20 paragraphs, the second mediating variable included 16 paragraphs, and the third respondent variable included three dimensions with 12 paragraphs, and the total number of paragraphs was 48 paragraphs. The five-point Likert scale was used, in addition to using a set of methods used in statistical analysis and using specialized statistical programs such as SPSS, Amos, as well as structural equation modeling, to analyze the data related to the study and its hypotheses:

Figure 1

Study Model



Results

Testing the main hypothesis H1 (There is a significant indirect effect of strategic insight in digital services through electronic marketing) In order to test the study hypothesis, path analysis was used, the results of which were extracted using the (AMOS V.23) program, as follows:

Figure 2

Paths of direct and indirect influence between the study variables

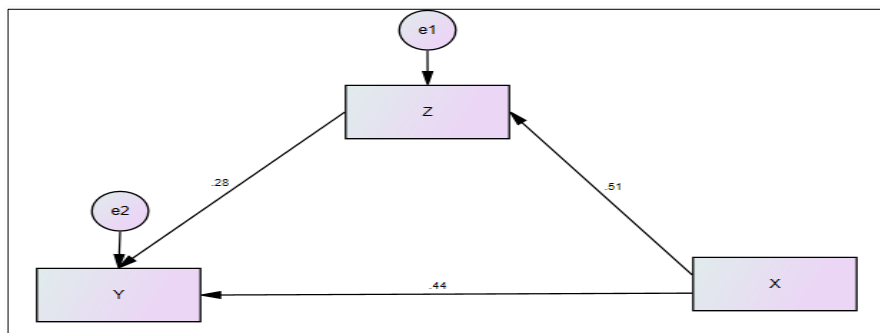


Table 1

Direct and indirect impact paths of strategic insight in digital services via e-marketing

Independent Variable	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable	Type Of Effect	Direct	Indirect	Total	P
Strategic Foresight (X)	Electronic Marketing (Z)	Digital Services (Y)	Direct	0.443	-	0.699	***
			Indirect	-	0.256		***

From Table (1) and Figure (2), we note the following:

- 1) It was found that there is a direct and significant effect of strategic insight (X) in digital services (Y), and the effect between them reached (0.443), which is significant at the level of (1%).

- 2) It was found that there is an indirect effect of strategic insight in digital services through electronic marketing, and the indirect effect between them reached (0.156), which is less than the direct effect, and it is significant at the level of (1%).
- 3) The total effect of strategic foresight (X) in digital services (Y) reached (0.699), which is significant at the level of (1%). From the above results, we conclude that the study hypothesis is achieved.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study succeeded in verifying the main hypothesis test of the study, as the test stages were completed by analyzing the questionnaire data using the path analysis method. The analysis focused on studying the direct and indirect effects and the overall effect between the study variables. The effect of the independent variable, which is strategic foresight, and the e-marketing variable as an intermediary variable were examined in terms of their impact on the responding variable, which is digital services. The relationship between these variables was analyzed and the potential effects were examined using a variety of tests to evaluate a clear and comprehensive picture of these variables and their effects within the work environment within the tourism sector in Iraq. It is inferred from this that e-marketing mediates the relationship between strategic foresight and digital services, thus achieving the study model and its hypothesis, and thus the question of the study problem was answered. Despite the positive results, the Iraqi tourism sector still faces challenges in fully implementing strategic foresight and employing e-marketing tools. There is also a need to increase investment in technology and training to enhance the digital capabilities of these companies.

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