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## **Electronic Marketing & Its Impact on Market Share: An Empirical Study among Managers at Travel & Tourism Agencies in Sudan**

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### **Abstract:**

*This study aims to identify the managers at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan view about electronic marketing factors (Electronic sale, After –Sales service & Marketing research) & Its impact on Market Share, The general objective of this study is to investigate the effect of electronic marketing on market share at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan, The results of study showed there is statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing variables (Electronic sale, After–Sales service & Marketing Research) and market Share (significant > 0.05). So the managers at travel & tourism Agencies in Sudan is recommended to understand customer information satisfaction is a critical factor in the web set.*

**Keywords:** *Electronic marketing, market share*

### **1. Introduction**

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide and, in general, the Internet continues to gain importance in the tourism sector [8]. Use of the Internet by travelers to plan and book their trips continues to grow at a rapid rate in Sudan, many travel agencies have developed an Internet presence by posting a website, with detailed travel information. Full travel booking sites are often complex, and require the assistance of outside travel technology solutions providers such as Travelocity. More and more tourists use the Internet websites to book and/or get useful information [9], Travel agencies exist primarily as intermediaries between suppliers of travel services, such as airlines and hotels, and customers. Travel agent is defined as a person who undertakes a job for another person, who is the principal. The principal in such a relationship not only sets the goals of the job, such as selling tickets, but may also control the means and manner in which the job is done. The fundamental role of a travel agency can be broadly summarized as: information, distribution, reservation and services [6]. Whereas (Bruni 2014) revealed that Leading tourism firms are currently making strong efforts to design Marketing Performance Measurement Systems (MPMSs) that can provide them with timely feedback on marketing strategy implementation [3]. Some studies like (Alia 2012) (Elastal 2009) (Ismeil 2007) concentrated on customers behavior and electronic marketing of service [2] [5] [11], But the studies in electronic marketing on market Share at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan is limited. So the main objective of the study is to investigate the effect of electronic marketing variables (Electronic sale, After–Sales service & Marketing Research) on market Share at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan, On the other hand the study is limited because it concentrated only to the managers at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan, despite Sudan is one of the countries showing strong international travel & tourism growth (49.8) from 2010 -2016 [20], Our main question of this study is: What is the impact of electronic marketing on market Share at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan

### **2. Electronic Marketing**

There is no single definition of the concept of e-marketing. Kaur (2017) defines it as an all-inclusive term for marketing products and/or services online – and like many all-inclusive terms, internet marketing means different things to different people [18], but Some authors emphasize the role of the Internet in the application of e-marketing, while others perceive that term broadly, including the application of other information-communication technology (ICT) solutions. For example, speaking about e-marketing activities in tourism, Andrić and Ružić (2010) consider the concept of e-marketing as a means of moving products or services from producers to tourists, and using the internet as a means of promotion and a sales channel. Strauss and Frost describe e-marketing as “the use of electronic data and applications for planning and executing the conception, distribution and pricing of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals” (Strauss, Frost, 2001: 454, Further, El-Gohary defines it as “a new philosophy and a modern business practice involved

with the marketing of goods, services, information and ideas via the Internet and other electronic means" (El-Gohary, 2012: 1256). According to the World Tourism Institution (2008: 1) "the purpose of e-marketing is to exploit the Internet and other forms of electronic communication to communicate with target markets in the most cost-effective ways, and to enable joint working with partner organizations with which there is a common interest." Therefore, it can be concluded that e-marketing involves interactions with customers and delivers them value through the use of the Internet and other forms of ICT [4]. E-marketing joins creative and technical aspects of the Internet, including: design, development, advertising and sales. It includes the use of a website in combination with online promotional techniques such as search engine marketing (SEM), social medial marketing, interactive online ads, online directories, e-mail marketing, affiliate marketing, viral marketing and so on [1].

### 3. Electronic Sales

Electronic sales mean the process of buy and sale of services and exchange of information among sellers and buyers on internet, some buyers pay their bills and gain services. There are different forms of electronic sales like sale on internet, sale from points of sale, sale from interactive phone & sale from mobile phone. [17]. It's obvious that now it's much harder, but not impossible, for travel agencies to sell and compete. Tour operators and other players at the wholesale level in markets that traditionally rely heavily on retail sales through independent travel agents will start launching websites offering the possibility of direct bookings, thus bypassing the travel agents. For example, airlines are increasing their percentage of direct sales that bypass the travel agents. Thus, the survival of threatened intermediaries depends on their ability to differentiate themselves in areas other than those in which economies of scale are the sole distinguishing feature [15].

### 4. After –Sales Service

After-sales service has emerged as a major source of competitive maneuvering, so firms strive for competitive advantages with their after-sales service portfolio to differentiate offers from competitors [10] also "After-sales services" are often referred to as "product support activities", meaning, all activities that support the product centric transaction. The after-sales service constitutes a means to uncover customer needs and a strategic driver for customer retention. It represents, in fact, "one of the few constant connections that customers have with a brand" (Gallagher et al., 2005), influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Finally, after-sales service are a way to allow a continuous improvement of product design and quality (Armistead and Clark, 1992; Cohen and Whang, 1997; Thoben et al., 2001). The perception of after-sales as a source of competitive advantage and business opportunity requires a shift from a traditional product-centric view, in which after-sales is considered a "necessary evil" (Lele, 1997) to customer-centric view [7].

### 5. Marketing Research

Marketing research often focuses on understanding the "Customer" (purchasers, consumers, influencers), the "Company" (product design, promotion, pricing, placement, service, sales), and can also be expanded toward the environment to include "Competitors" (and how their market offerings interact in the market environment)[18]. Marketing research provides information to gain knowledge in the decision-making process. This knowledge is essential to companies making technological decisions [14]

### 6. Market Share

Market share means the percentage of served market by the company compared with total market. Also, it means total sales of company compared with other companies in the same field on the market [22], the emergence of the major online travel agencies has provided a new form of competition for the travel agencies. The new players have demonstrated a spectacular growth and rapid market place penetration; thus, they have gained a significant market share. As a result, traditional travel agencies are losing their market share, as consumers are moving to on-line intermediaries or suppliers directly [10], The competition in business is necessary because competition makes the market innovative and dynamic, Also Understanding customer information satisfaction is a critical factor in the online world because all the products are delivered and purchased via internet in the forms of information[12]. whereas UNCTAD(2017) showed that the tourism sector play an important role in economic growth, job creation, domestic capacity-building and poverty reduction[19], Salvado (2011) added that The tourism sector is an important engine of the world's economy, generating wealth and creating jobs, crucial to a sustainable growth and development [21].

### 7. Methodology

The researcher adopted hypotheses that clearly explain whether Electronic Marketing factors (Electronic Sale, After-Sales Service & Marketing Research) might affect the market share, so our main hypothesis is: There is statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing and market Share at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan.

The researchers have designed a questionnaire and distributed it to the population of the study are managers at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan. The researcher's select 200 managers in different agencies as a sample of the study, and then the internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire has been extracted using the Cronbach's alpha equation. The stability coefficient reached 78% in order to assure the validity of the questionnaire. The researchers divide the questionnaire into five

main sections containing a set of questions related to the measurement of the impact of electronic marketing and markets Share at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan.

## 8. Results

The researcher received a response to 186 out of 200 questionnaires. 14 questionnaires are also excluded for non-completion of their answers.

### 8.1. Characteristics of the Sample Units

Table 1 illustrates the frequency distribution of the sample features of managers at travel & tourism agencies.

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	152	81.7
	Female	34	18.3
Age	From 18 -25 Years	39	21.0
	From 26-40 Years	74	39.8
	More Than 40 Years	73	39.2
Job	Executive Manager	10	5.4
	Marketing Manager	24	12.9
	Department Manager	104	55.9
	Sales Staff	48	25.8
Educational Level	Higher secondary school	41	22.0
	University Education	82	44.1
	Post-Graduate Studies	18	9.7
	Others	45	24.2
Type of Company	Sudanese	71	38.2
	Foreigners	68	36.6
	Joint	47	25.3
Age of Company	Less than 5 years	121	65.1
	From 5 to 10	24	12.9
	More than 10 years	41	22.0
Type of Service	Air Cargo	24	12.9
	Passengers	146	78.5
	Others	16	8.6

Table 1: Characteristics of the Sample Units (Sample = 186)

### 8.2. The relationship Between Electronic Marketing and Markets Share

The statistical results for the relationship between electronic marketing and market share are studied, the hypothesis to be tested is: There is statistically significant relationship between electronic marketing variables (Electronic sale, After-Sales service & Marketing Research) and market share among managers at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan.

Variables	Beta	Sig
Electronic Sale,	.591***	.000
After-Sales Service	.137*	.028
Marketing Research	.128**	.015
Statistical Percentage		
R <sup>2</sup>	.438	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.432	
Δ R <sup>2</sup>	.438	
F change	71.367	

Table 2: The Relationship between Electronic Marketing and Market Share (Beta Coefficient)

Note: Level of Significant: \*P<0.10, \*\*P<0.05, \*\*\*P<0.01

According to Table 2, there is statistically significant relationship electronic marketing and markets Share at travel & tourism agencies in Sudan. Thus, there are relations between Electronic Marketing variables (Electronic Sale, After-Sales Service & Marketing Research) and market Share (significant > 0.05)

## 9. Conclusions:

The study revealed that electronic marketing variables (Electronic sale, After-Sales service & Marketing research) have affected market Share, so managers of travel & tourism agencies in Sudan should pay more attention to it. Also, they should understand customer information satisfaction is a critical factor in the web set, Researchers recommended to do a comparative study in these fields.

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