

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL SHOPPING ON INCREASING SALES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the impact of digital shopping on sales growth in small enterprises, within the framework of the rapid development witnessed in the field of e-commerce and the increasing reliance of businesses on modern technologies in managing their marketing and sales operations. The research adopted a descriptive-analytical approach through a field study conducted at Al-Ittihad Company, employing a questionnaire distributed to a sample of employees to measure the relationship between digital shopping and sales performance. The study results demonstrated a significantly positive relationship between the use of digital shopping tools and increased sales volume, revealing that reliance on digital platforms and social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram substantially contributes to expanding the customer base and enhancing sales opportunities. The findings also indicated that improving user experience, developing electronic payment systems, and activating logistics services play a pivotal role in enhancing customer satisfaction and increasing purchase rates. The study further confirmed that digital data analytics assists small enterprises in understanding consumer behavior and making more accurate and effective marketing decisions. The research concluded that digital shopping is no longer a secondary option but has become a strategic necessity for achieving growth and sustainability in a competitive market. Accordingly, the research recommends enhancing the use of digital tools and developing the marketing skills of employees in small enterprises, thereby contributing to sustained performance improvement and sales growth.

Keywords: Digital Shopping, Small Enterprises, Sales, E-commerce, Social Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is currently witnessing rapid advancements in digital technologies that have significantly impacted various economic sectors, particularly in the field of e-commerce, which has become one of the fundamental pillars of the modern economy. The proliferation of the internet and smartphones has led to a radical transformation in consumer behavior, as digital shopping has become a preferred choice for many due to the ease, speed, and flexibility it offers in completing purchase transactions. In light of this transformation, small enterprises find themselves facing a significant opportunity to enhance their market presence and increase sales by adopting digital shopping strategies. These businesses no longer require substantial investments to open traditional stores; rather, they can now reach a broad segment of customers through electronic platforms. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have also contributed to supporting this trend by providing effective marketing tools that help promote products and services directly and swiftly. Digital shopping is a crucial factor in improving the competitive ability of small

enterprises, enabling them to present their products attractively and offer deals and discounts targeting diverse customer needs. Furthermore, this type of shopping allows for the collection and analysis of data related to consumer behavior, helping businesses make precise marketing decisions that contribute to increased sales volume. The evolution of electronic payment methods and delivery services has also strengthened consumer confidence in online shopping, which has positively reflected on the growing demand for digital products. However, the adoption of digital shopping by small enterprises is not without challenges, such as intense competition, cybersecurity requirements, and the need to develop technical and managerial skills to keep pace with this transformation. Hence, the importance of studying the impact of digital shopping on sales growth in small enterprises lies in its role in supporting economic growth and achieving sustainability. This topic is significant as it highlights how small enterprises can benefit from modern technologies to improve their performance and increase profits. This research also seeks to clarify the relationship between the use of digital shopping tools and sales levels, and to analyze the factors influencing this relationship, thereby providing practical recommendations that can help small enterprises maximize the benefits of this accelerating digital transformation.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Problem

In light of the extensive expansion in the use of e-commerce technologies, small enterprises face multiple challenges related to their ability to effectively utilize digital shopping tools to increase their sales. Despite the availability of numerous digital platforms that facilitate access to markets, there is a clear disparity in performance levels among these enterprises: some succeed in achieving notable sales growth, while others suffer from poor results. The core problem lies in the lack of clarity regarding the direct impact of digital shopping on sales growth, in addition to the weak technical expertise among some business owners, limited awareness of how to use digital tools efficiently, and challenges related to customer trust and cyber security. Therefore, this research seeks to address this issue by scientifically and analytically studying the relationship between digital shopping and sales growth in small enterprises.

2. Research Hypotheses

Main Hypothesis:

There is a statistically significant relationship between the use of digital shopping and increased sales in small enterprises.

Sub-Hypotheses:

1. There is a statistically significant relationship between the use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram and increased sales volume.
2. There is a statistically significant relationship between the quality of website design, user experience improvement, and increased sales.
3. There is a statistically significant relationship between the use of digital analytics tools, understanding consumer behavior, and increased effectiveness of marketing decisions.
4. There is a statistically significant relationship between the use of electronic payment systems and delivery services, increased customer trust, and consequently higher sales.

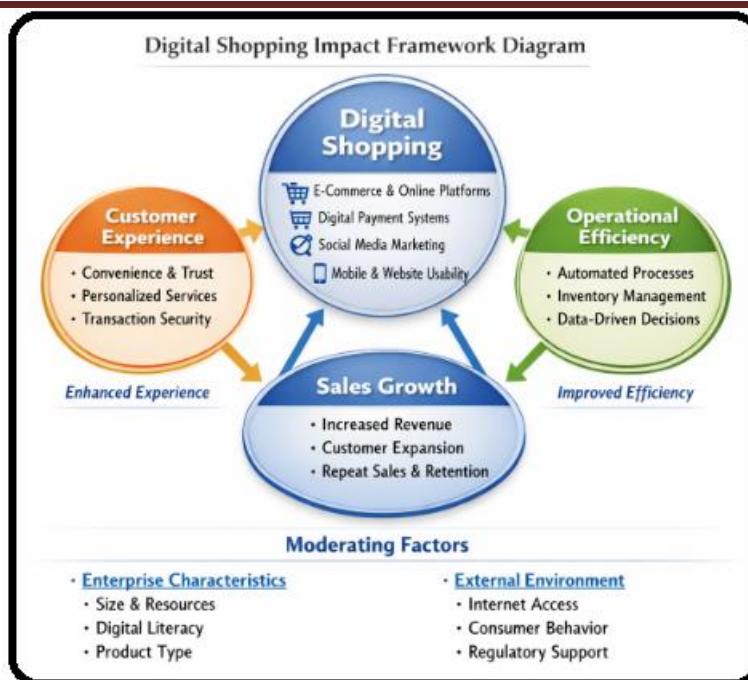


Figure (1) Digital Shopping Impact Framework Diagram

3. Significance of the Research

The significance of this research stems from its focus on a contemporary and vital topic: the role of digital shopping in supporting the growth of small enterprises and enhancing their competitiveness. It also contributes to clarifying how to exploit digital tools to improve sales performance and provides a scientific framework from which businesses and entrepreneurs can benefit in developing their marketing strategies. Additionally, the research helps bridge the knowledge gap concerning the impact of digital shopping on sales in the local business environment and offers results and recommendations that can be applied practically.

4. Research Objectives

This research aims to achieve a set of objectives, most notably analyzing the impact of digital shopping on sales growth in small enterprises and clarifying the nature of the relationship between the use of digital tools and sales performance. It also seeks to identify the most important factors influencing the success of digital shopping, such as social media marketing, user experience, and electronic payment methods. Furthermore, the research aims to provide practical recommendations that help small enterprises improve their performance and increase sales through the optimal use of digital technologies.

5. Temporal and Spatial Boundaries of the Research

The temporal boundaries of the research are the period from 2018 to 2025, a period that witnessed notable development in the use of digital technologies and e-shopping. The spatial boundaries consist of a study of a sample of small enterprises in the local environment (Babylon Governorate), with the possibility of generalizing the results to similar enterprises in other environments with comparable characteristics.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

First: Digital Shopping

Digital shopping is one of the most prominent manifestations of transformation in the field of e-commerce, representing a qualitative shift in how businesses interact with markets and customers. Digital shopping is defined as the process through which products and services are displayed, marketed, and sold using electronic means via the internet, allowing purchase transactions to be completed without the need for physical presence at a specific location (Kotler, 2019:45). Chaffey (2020:62) indicated that digital shopping is not limited to the sales process alone but encompasses an integrated chain of activities ranging from customer attraction to after-sales service.

Digital shopping is characterized by several features that make it an effective tool for small enterprises, most notably flexibility, low costs, and the ability to reach a large number of customers in a short time. The use of modern technologies has also facilitated interaction between businesses and customers, as companies can present their products attractively and provide detailed information that helps consumers make purchasing decisions (Laudon & Traver, 2021:88).

The importance of digital shopping lies in its contribution to enhancing the competitiveness of small enterprises, enabling them to enter markets easily and compete with large companies by offering distinguished products and innovative services. It also helps improve the efficiency of marketing operations through the use of digital analytics tools that provide accurate data on customer behavior, such as number of visits, click-through rates, and purchasing patterns (Ryan, 2020:145).

Another important aspect of digital shopping is its role in building long-term relationships with customers, as businesses can communicate with them continuously through platforms like Facebook and Instagram, thereby enhancing customer loyalty and increasing the likelihood of repeat purchases (Ryan, 2020:103). As for the dimensions of digital shopping, they are multiple and integrated. Digital marketing represents the primary dimension, encompassing online advertising, search engine optimization, and social media marketing, which helps attract customers and increase product awareness (Chaffey, 2020:75). This is followed by user experience, which reflects the ease of using the website or application, browsing speed, and design quality, as these factors directly affect customer satisfaction and their purchasing decision (Kotler, 2019:59). Electronic payment is also an important dimension, providing secure and fast methods to complete purchase transactions, such as bank cards and digital wallets, thereby increasing customer trust and encouraging them to make purchases (Laudon & Traver, 2021:120). The logistical dimension, related to delivery operations, complements this, as the speed and efficiency of product delivery play a significant role in achieving customer satisfaction (Christopher, 2016:134).

The role of digital data analytics cannot be overlooked, as it is one of the most important modern dimensions, enabling businesses to understand consumer behavior and accurately identify their needs, thus helping to improve marketing strategies and increase performance effectiveness (Ryan, 2020:145).

Thus, it is clear that digital shopping represents an integrated system of tools and technologies that work together to achieve company objectives, particularly in the area of increasing sales and improving overall performance.

Second: Sales Growth in Small Enterprises

Increasing sales is one of the most important goals sought by small enterprises, as it represents the primary indicator of the success and sustainability of commercial activity in the market. Increased sales are defined as the growth in the volume or value of products and services offered by the

company over a specific period, reflecting the company's ability to generate revenue and meet customer needs (Kotler & Keller, 2016:211).

Armstrong (2018:97) indicated that increasing sales depends not only on product quality but is also linked to the efficiency of marketing operations and the company's ability to reach customers and persuade them to purchase. In the context of digital development, e-commerce has come to play a significant role in achieving this goal by providing new channels for sales and promotion. The importance of increasing sales lies in its contribution to achieving financial stability for small enterprises and enhancing their capacity for expansion and growth in the market. The higher the sales, the greater the profits, allowing the company to invest in product development and service improvement (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019:156).

Increased sales also reflect the level of customer satisfaction and trust in the company, as repeat purchases indicate the company's success in meeting their needs. This is crucial for building a stable customer base that contributes to long-term sustainability (Kotler, 2019:134).

As for the dimensions of sales growth, they include several key elements, including sales volume, which represents the number of units sold over a specific period and is an important quantitative performance indicator (Kotler & Keller, 2016:215). It also includes sales value, which reflects the financial revenues generated and is an indicator of profitability (Armstrong, 2018:102). Sales growth is also an important dimension, reflecting the change in sales volume over time and is used to assess the evolution of the company's sales performance (Laudon & Traver, 2021:176). Additionally, market share represents the company's sales ratio compared to competitors and is an indicator of competitive strength (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019:162). Customer satisfaction is also an indirect but highly influential dimension, as customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchases and increased demand, which positively impacts sales (Kotler, 2019:134). In light of the increasing reliance on digital shopping, increased sales have become closely linked to the extent of companies' ability to use digital tools efficiently, as this helps improve customer reach, offer appropriate deals, and provide a comfortable and secure shopping experience.

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that the relationship between digital shopping and sales growth is a complementary one, where the effective use of digital technologies contributes to improving sales performance and enhancing the ability of small enterprises to compete and grow in the modern business environment.

4. EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to apply the theoretical framework to practical reality through a field study conducted at Al-Ittihad Company in Babylon Governorate, to analyze the impact of digital shopping on sales growth. A questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool, followed by statistical analysis to reach accurate results supporting the research hypotheses related to the field of e-commerce.

4.2 Research Population and Sample

The research population consisted of employees at Al-Ittihad Company. A random sample of (50) employees from various departments (marketing, sales, management) was selected. The questionnaire was distributed to them, and (45) valid questionnaires were retrieved for analysis, representing a response rate of (90%).

4.3 Research Tool

The questionnaire was designed based on the five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree – Agree – Neutral – Disagree – Strongly Disagree) and included two main axes:

- Digital Shopping

- Sales Growth

4.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

First: Analysis of the Digital Shopping Variable

Table (3-1): Sample Opinions on Digital Shopping

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Response Level
Using social media increases customer reach	4.3	0.72	High
The website facilitates the purchasing process	4.1	0.65	High
Electronic payment enhances customer trust	4.0	0.70	High
Delivery speed affects customer satisfaction	4.4	0.60	High
Data analysis aids in decision-making	4.2	0.68	High
Overall Mean	4.2	0.67	High

The results in the table show that the overall mean was (4.2), which is a high level, indicating employees' awareness of the importance of digital shopping in improving performance. The item "delivery speed" received the highest mean (4.4), indicating the significant role of logistics services in enhancing customer experience. The use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram also clearly contributed to increased customer reach. The results indicate that the company relies well on digital tools, but there is greater scope for development, especially in the areas of electronic payment and data analysis.

Second: Analysis of the Sales Growth Variable

Table (3-2): Sample Opinions on Sales Growth

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Response Level
Digital shopping has contributed to increased sales	4.3	0.66	High

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Response Level
Customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchases	4.5	0.58	Very High
Digital offers increase demand volume	4.2	0.70	High
Digital expansion increases market share	4.1	0.73	High
Sales have witnessed growth in recent years	4.0	0.75	High
Overall Mean	4.22	0.68	High

The results indicate that the overall mean was (4.22), a high level, reflecting a clear improvement in sales as a result of the company's adoption of digital shopping. The item "customer satisfaction" received the highest mean (4.5), indicating that customer satisfaction is the primary factor in increasing sales. Digital offers and expansion into electronic markets have also contributed to raising demand for products. These results confirm a strong positive relationship between digital shopping and sales growth.

4. 5 Hypothesis Testing

Main Hypothesis:

There is a statistically significant relationship between digital shopping and increased sales. By analyzing the means, it was found that both variables achieved high levels, indicating a strong direct relationship between them. That is, increased reliance on digital shopping leads to increased sales.

Table (3-3): Relationship between Digital Shopping and Sales Growth

First Variable (Digital Shopping)	Second Variable (Sales Growth)	Correlation Value (r)	Significance Level	Type of Relationship
Digital shopping	Sales growth	0.78	0.01	Strong direct

The results show that the correlation coefficient value was (0.78), a high value indicating a strong direct relationship between digital shopping and sales growth. That is, the more the company relies on digital shopping tools, the more significantly sales levels increase, with statistical significance at the (0.01) level, which supports the acceptance of the main research hypothesis.

Table (3-4): Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis Text	Analysis Result	Statistical Decision
There is a statistically significant relationship between digital shopping and sales growth (Main Hypothesis)	Existence of a strong direct relationship ($r = 0.78$)	Hypothesis accepted

The results show that the main hypothesis has been accepted, as the field data demonstrated a strong positive relationship between digital shopping and sales growth at Al-Ittihad Company. This confirms that the shift towards digital marketing is not merely an administrative option but a fundamental factor in enhancing sales performance and achieving growth.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

First: Conclusions

1. The study results showed that digital shopping represents an effective tool in supporting the activities of small enterprises within the e-commerce environment, directly contributing to improving sales performance and increasing growth opportunities.
2. A strong direct relationship was found between the use of digital shopping tools and increased sales, confirming the validity of the main research hypothesis.
3. The study demonstrated that the use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram significantly contributes to expanding the customer base and increasing product awareness.
4. The results showed that user experience (ease of navigation, site speed, attractive design) plays an important role in the purchasing decision, thus directly affecting sales volume.
5. It was found that electronic payment systems enhance customer trust, leading to increased purchase rates and reduced hesitation in completing transactions.
6. The study confirmed that the efficiency of logistics services, especially delivery speed, is a critical factor in achieving customer satisfaction and increasing sales.
7. The results indicated that digital data analytics helps companies understand consumer behavior, contributing to improved marketing strategies and more accurate decision-making.
8. The study concluded that companies that rely more heavily on digital shopping achieve a clear competitive advantage compared to companies that do not use these tools effectively.

Second: Recommendations

1. The necessity of enhancing the adoption of e-commerce tools by small enterprises through the development of integrated digital marketing strategies.
2. Increase attention to marketing via social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram due to their effective role in attracting customers and stimulating sales.
3. Work on improving the design of websites and applications to ensure an easy, fast, and attractive user experience.
4. Develop electronic payment systems and provide multiple and secure options to increase customer trust and encourage purchasing.
5. Improve logistics services by accelerating delivery processes and ensuring products arrive with high quality and on time.
6. Invest in digital data analytics tools to understand customer behavior and identify their needs more accurately.

7. Organize training courses for employees in small enterprises to enhance their efficiency in using digital technologies and e-marketing.
8. Offer continuous digital offers and discounts to attract new customers, retain existing ones, and increase sales volume.

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