

Enhancing Jordan's Tourism Sector Through E-Marketing: Strategies and Implementation

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Abstract**Original Research Article**

The competitiveness of tourism in Jordan is vulnerable to reputational risks, uneven service delivery across destinations, and weak digital execution in an industry that has become increasingly dependent on online search, reviews, and digital reservation platforms. The role of e-marketing in enhancing the competitiveness and performance of Jordan's tourism industry is examined in this study. It further identified the organisational, technological, and institutional considerations that led to successful application. It was a mixed-method study, which included a questionnaire to 81 tourism-related Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and a set of nine semi-structured interviews with small, medium, and large tourism enterprises. The questionnaire items were appropriate and demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.951$). Results showed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the frequency of mobile marketing and the preference for using e-marketing compared with traditional strategy, $r_{SP} (81) = .31, p = .005$. Search Engine Optimization SEO emerged as the leading approach, and mobile marketing (mean = 3.74) and SEO (mean = 3.70) were found to be most effective for communication. The study recommends mobile-first, SEO-based solutions through stronger coordination, dedicated budgets, and advanced analytics.

Keywords: E-marketing, SEO, mobile marketing, tourism competitiveness, Jordan.

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INTRODUCTION

Jordan is located at the intersection of continents, religions, and cultures; however, tourism potential is frequently framed primarily through one dimension, which is perception. As the country boasts globally recognised heritage, health and wellness, and nature experiences, the development of the tourism industry is still vulnerable to the regional instability narrative, lack of consistency in service delivery across locations, and a marketing strategy that does not consistently translate the rich on-the-ground experience of Jordan into credible and easily accessible online trips. The core issue is that the Jordanian tourism industry should improve its competitiveness and performance, as travelling customers are increasingly turning to online information exchange, reviews, and digital booking platforms to make their decisions about the destination to visit, products to buy, and people to trust.

In the Jordanian economy, one of the important strategic aspects is tourism, which is a key source of national revenues and jobs. As of 2018, travel and tourism accounted for approximately 19.2% of the Gross

Domestic Product GDP in Jordan, several US 8.4 billion, a long-term increase since the figure was US 1.7 billion in 1999 (Knoema, 2020). This expansion is an indicator of the economic importance of the sector and its capacity to sustain multiplier impacts in the other sectors. Tourism has been characterised as a pillar of the Jordanian economy, and tourism businesses and activities are among the top employers of the various sectors in the economy, including food, health, sports, and handicraft sectors, through demand connections (Al-Haija, 2011). The inclusion of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Jordan Tourism Board, the Jordan Hotel Association, and destination authorities in the sector governance suggests that performance in tourism requires the coordination of policies and institutional alignment between firms, not individual firms (ALHAWAMDEH, 2021).

Despite this importance, tourism development in Jordan is influenced by external shocks and internal structural imperatives. The national planning processes, including the 2011/2015 National Tourism Strategy, sought to establish a more robust base for long-term growth and also promoted investment in marketing

capacities to enhance competitiveness (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2018). However, Jordan is a destination in one of the areas where political turbulence can easily affect destination image. The presence of conflicts in the vicinity of a stable country can make the international perceptions of the country distorted, thus minimising arrivals and increasing competition with the established destination (Alsarayreh and Salt, 2018; Knoema, 2020). Such a challenge is even more critical due to the growing mediation of destination choice by digital content and social narratives, which have the potential to increase risk perceptions. Jordan is no exception since it has not focused tourism on one market segment. Rather, the destination has created a wide range of tourism brands that would attract tourists of various interests (Al-Majali, 2012). This strategy has six categories: history and culture, religious tourism, leisure and wellness, nature and ecology, conferences and events, and adventure tourism (Jordan Tourism Board, 2005). This breadth of the portfolio is an opportunity, but it also increases the strategic need to have a clear positioning and a differentiated digital communication to make the breadth turn into a rational brand promise.

The competitive edge of Jordan is based on the iconic sites and symbolic experiences, especially heritage and religious tourism. Petra and Jerash are still regarded as two of the most popular places in the kingdom and are mostly linked with archaeological and cultural characteristics that have a great appeal to foreign tourists (Alomari and Al Omari, 2018). Religious tourism is also a niche that can be used to enhance demand and international recognition, such as short pilgrimage itineraries related to the Holy Land (Haddad *et al.*, 2014). The visitor experience is, however, not the same throughout the country. It has been observed that some of the historical destinations have certain disadvantages in terms of infrastructure and quality of services that can compromise the satisfaction and destination image (Al-Majali, 2012; Chuang, 2018). In Jordan, tourism development and investment have also been uneven, with less focus and fewer facilities in some cities compared to the more popular destinations of Amman, Aqaba, and the Dead Sea (Haddad *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, economic and development contributions of tourism have been skewed in specific destinations, instead of being allocated equally nationwide (Jordan Tourism Board, 2009).

These differences are important since digital platforms have the capacity to rapidly disseminate bad service experiences into reputational threats, as well as constraining the capability of less well-developed destinations to operate digitally to be competitive in terms of good product wrapping and professionalised e-service.

These pressures are intensifying as tourism undergoes a rapid digital transformation. With travellers moving towards online search, comparison, booking and

peer-to-peer review, e-marketing will be a key mechanism that determines the level of demand, trust, and competitiveness. E-marketing in tourism facilitates sustained contact with specific groups via websites and social media, lessens its reliance on expensive physical marketing, and enables firms to offer value propositions and create online selling and recommendations (Conversion Pipeline, 2021). The tourism value chain is also restructured through digitalisation, as service provision allows travellers and service providers to communicate with each other directly, and packages can be tailored, affecting the pre-trip planning and on-site experience (Chuang, 2018; Énalán and Soteriades, 2012; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2018). The emergence of internet connectivity, which is the result of the expansion of the use of the Internet worldwide, has enhanced the influence of consumer-to-consumer interactions, in the sense that reviews, comments, and experiences can have a strong influence on the appeal of destinations and tourism companies (Castro *et al.*, 2017). Promotion is not the only way to appreciate the strategic value of e-marketing in the context of Jordan; it can also enhance the accessibility of services, decrease the information asymmetry, and build trust due to responsive communication, ease of use, and customer service tools, including live chat support and customised content (Basheer *et al.*, 2020).

However, effective implementation depends on enabling conditions, which are not limited to individual firms. Policy and institutional constraints that influence development and innovation are sector-level barriers, which encompass access to air, conditions of a weak business environment to develop products and provide excellent services, fragmented institutional coordination, constraints of price competitiveness along the value chain, and skills gaps in education and vocational training in line with market needs (Shahateet and Partale, 2019). These constraints also intersect with sustainability pressures, especially in a water-scarce setting and the necessity to balance the development and the preservation of the local culture, environment, and the priorities of the residents (Shahateet and Partale, 2019). Also, there may be social and cultural tensions between large local populations in constant contact with tourists in major sites, which can bring conflicts that can ruin tourism improvement efforts unless dealt with through the inclusive approach of stakeholders (Al-Haija, 2011; Al-Weshah, 2020). For these reasons, e-marketing is conceptualised as one of the components of a broader system, which presupposes organisational preparation, technological commitment, and institutional alignment in its transformation of digital communication into sustainable competitiveness (Beritelli, 2009; Alsarayreh and Salt, 2018).

Based on that, this study is aimed at analysing the role of e-marketing in enhancing the competitiveness and performance of the tourism industry in Jordan and to determine the organisational, technological, and

institutional factors that inform the process of successful implementation of e-marketing. The study addresses a practical gap between the established significance of e-marketing in tourism and the ongoing structural hindrances that limit its success in Jordan, which include weaknesses in coordination, destination imbalance, and the lack of capability that helps to improve service quality and digital implementation (Basheer *et al.*, 2020; Shahateet and Partale, 2019). The study can provide a more specific foundation on which tourism companies and policymakers can structure the evidence-based approach to digital marketing, enhance the image and trust of the destination, and contribute to a more consistent and sustainable development of the sector. The research questions, which lead the study, are (1) how e-marketing strategies can be leveraged to build competitiveness and performance and (2) what organisational, technological, and institutional considerations enable implementation to gain actionable insight to enhance the competitiveness and performance of the Jordan tourism sector in an increasingly digital and reputation-driven global market.

Problem, Research Focus, and Significance

Nevertheless, in the rapidly becoming digital world, tourism remains a strategically significant part of the Jordanian economy, and the industry is still experiencing competitiveness and sustainability issues. Fragmented e-marketing activities hamper the opportunity to turn the various tourism resources of Jordan into simple, credibility-enhancing digital storytelling, lowering visibility, tourist flows, and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (Al-Hajja, 2011; Alsarayreh and Salt, 2018; Shahateet and Partale, 2019). Against effective implementation, organisational, technological, and institutional constraints further have an impact, including limited digital capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and poor policy coordination (Beritelli, 2009; Al-Majali, 2012; Haddad *et al.*, 2014; Chuang, 2018). This paper explores the effectiveness of e-marketing strategies in enhancing the performance of tourism and the attributes that can facilitate or restrain the success of such strategies. The results can be used to influence the practical policies in tourism enterprises and policymakers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is well-known that the tourism sector is a multidimensional industry, the level of which competitiveness depends on the mutual interaction of the institutional governance, marketing strategies, service quality, infrastructure, and technological innovation. The institutional framework regulating tourism development in Jordan consists of a complex institutional structure with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) at the centre and the National Tourism Council (NTC) and the Jordan Tourism Board, as well as the partnership between the state and the business, at the periphery. This structure demonstrates the government's key contribution to the regulation, coordination, and

marketing of tourism based on the national strategies, legal tools, and inter-ministerial cooperation. But even after the introduction of the Tourism Law No. 20 (1988) and a series of National Tourism Strategies, there are still gaps in coordination, regulatory fragmentation, and limited effectiveness of the enforcement mechanisms that still restrict the performance and the innovative part of the sector, especially in terms of marketing and digital transformation.

In the literature on tourism marketing, it is stressed that the competitiveness of destinations is closely connected with the efficiency of marketing strategies followed by destination management organisations and tourism companies. The tourism marketing strategy can be referred to as a combination of instruments and operations that aim at realising the goals of destinations in competitive and seasonal markets (Choo, 1999; Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Tourism destinations exist within very competitive environments where the achievement of success relies on the similarity between internal resources and external opportunities, as well as market prospects (Evans *et al.*, 1995; De Wit and Meyer, 2010). Marketing here is not only limited to promotion but also destination positioning, branding, communication, and value creation. The scholars also differentiate two levels of operation: the national or regional operation, where tourism organisations create destination image and awareness, and the firm operation, where individual tourism enterprises reinforce the operations by creating customised products and services (Bhaita, 2002).

Tourism marketing in Jordan has been developed based on consecutive National Tourism Strategies, especially the 20042010 and 20112015 frameworks, which focused on marketing and promotion, product development, strengthening of human resources, and institutional reform. Such efforts led to more tourist traffic and improved contribution of tourism to GDP, which argues that organised policy and marketing models enable a country to become more competitive (Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities, 2015). However, it is noted in the literature that there are still some challenges that need to be tackled, such as inadequate infrastructure development, destination branding, constraints in price competitiveness, and digital visibility availability relative to the other competitors in the region. The restrictions illustrate the necessity of better and more integrated e-marketing tools that will be able to convey the various tourism products available in Jordan to the international market (Alkhawaldeh, 2026).

The advent of e-marketing has revolutionised the world of tourism marketing by changing the communication aspect from one-way promotion to interactive and data-based marketing. Businesses that utilise websites and social media in their e-marketing practices, as well as search engine optimisation (SEO),

content marketing, and e-mail marketing, aid in the creation of a two-way conversation and the Internet-mediated transaction in the tourism industry. Tourism is broadly termed as an information-intensive business where consumer decision-making relies on access to information which is timely and credible (Buhalis, 1998). Online platforms lower the perceived risk of intangible tourism products by offering visual, written, and experiential data that influences destination image and travel intentions.

Empirical research in the Jordanian setting is continually showing that e-marketing strategies boost tourism performance by means of communication enhancement, market penetration, and customer interaction. Al-Weshah (2020) discovered that promotional material that is conveyed via digital platforms has a significant role in creating trust-oriented relationships between tourism companies and customers. Equally, Al-Dajani (2011) and Alwan (2016) established that online marketing tools are more effective in promoting Jordan as a tourist destination, especially using social media, including Facebook and Instagram. Such platforms allow tourism companies to transcend geographic boundaries, make their services personal, and communicate with potential tourists directly, therefore enhancing competitiveness.

Content marketing and user-generated content are another significant factor of destination image and consumer behaviour that the literature lends high significance. The tourism industry is especially interested in content marketing due to the characteristics of the tourism product, which is both tangible and immaterial (Rancati, 2014; Pulizzi, 2015). The impact of user-created content on blogs, review sites, and social media sites on tourists, their perceptions, and travel choices has proved to be strong and, in most cases, has overshadowed conventional advertising (Gretzel *et al.*, 2011). Online stories and the presence of visuals of a destination like Petra and the Dead Sea in the Jordanian context are crucial in destination image creation and motivation to travel.

The online visibility and search engine optimisation also define tourism competitiveness since they define the presence and accessibility of tourism destinations in the online environment. It is found that travellers are highly dependent on search engines during destination planning, and they tend to pay attention to the first page of search engines and destination-based search (Xiang *et al.*, 2008; Pan *et al.*, 2007). It has been shown in research on Jordan that the visibility of websites and low search results reduce the availability of official destination information, which encourages greater reliance on third-party and user-generated information. This highlights the importance of SEO and site quality in creating the initial impressions and influencing travel intentions.

The services and infrastructure are also related directly to the effectiveness of e-marketing strategies. Although digital marketing is able to generate tourists' interest and expectations, the reality of tourism is based on service delivery and facilities. The quality of the services, which is conceptualised in terms of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility, directly influences the destination image, satisfaction, and word-of-mouth communication (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). The differences in the development of infrastructure, especially the heritage of Jerash and Um Qais in Jordan, can harm the correspondence between the Internet promotion and the on-site experience, which undermines the credibility of e-marketing activities.

Institutional, organisational and technological factors are the factors that strongly influence the application of e-marketing strategies. The antecedents to effective digital acquisition are organisational readiness, human resources competency, and managerial commitment. The challenges involving small and medium-sized enterprises are the lack of technical skills, financial resources, and overall strategic orientation to digital transformation, which many Jordanian tourism companies must cope with (Alsarayreh and Salt, 2018). Fragmented governance systems and poor alignment among tourism bodies at the institutional level also limit digital integration in the sector.

Comprehensively, it can be noted that the literature shows that there is a high level of agreement that e-marketing strategies are instrumental in improving tourism competitiveness through improved communication, destination image, and consumer engagement. Nevertheless, the Jordanian situation indicates that the disconnect between identified digital potential and its working application is recurring because of organisational, technological, and institutional factors. This research gap illustrates that there is a need to conduct an empirical study that will explore how e-marketing strategies enhance competitiveness in the tourism sector in Jordan and determine the circumstances under which they can effectively be adopted by broader policy and governance frames.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research design is a mixed-methods research design, which involves the integration of quantitative and qualitative designs to conduct in-depth research on the role of e-marketing strategies in improving the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Jordan. The quantitative element is a descriptive-analytical design, and it is suitable for the identification of patterns, associations, and quantifiable impacts among the variables concerning e-marketing practices and tourism competitiveness. This design will enable the researcher to narrate the current status and examine the relationship between e-marketing strategies and the

subsequent results of the research, including competitiveness, communication, and consumerism.

Simultaneously, the qualitative component utilises exploratory and explanatory aspects by using semi-structured interviews, which allowed going further to understand how organisational, technological, and institutional aspects determine the implementation of e-marketing. This combination of both techniques aids in strengthening the research results in both the aspect of statistical generalisation and, at the same time, the contextual and experiential aspect of e-marketing application in Jordanian tourism SMEs (Omrani, 2012).

Research Philosophy

The pragmatic research philosophy guides the research and focuses on the application of the most appropriate methods to address the research questions, rather than a particular orientation to epistemology. Pragmatism favours the use of quantification and qualification simultaneously, since it recognises that complex data like tourism marketing efficacy needs quantitative data as well as a qualitative description.

In this philosophical orientation, reality is considered to be both objective and socially constructed in the sense that although objective attributes like competitiveness and Return on Investment ROI are measurable, there is it is interpreted based on organisational experiences, managerial perceptions, and institutional constraints. The given philosophical approach fits the field of tourism research especially well, as performance and consumer behaviour within the market meet policy, culture, and technological change.

Sample of the Study

The target population of the study will include small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in Jordan's tourism sector. These companies have been chosen due to the fact that they reflect the prevailing format of the tourism sector in Jordan and are core in terms of destination marketing and service provision. The sample of the study was diverse based on the research tool to be used.

In the quantitative stage, 81 tourism-related SMEs were sampled based on the list of companies registered on official resources and registries related to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA). These respondents were first-hand information sources on the marketing practices, customer interaction, and operational issues. In the qualitative part, 9 employees in three tourism firms were picked randomly and interviewed to give detailed thinking on the implementation of e-marketing as well as strategic decision-making.

Instruments of the Study

Two main instruments were used to collect the data. The first one was a structured questionnaire, which

was aimed at gauging the perceptions and practices regarding e-marketing strategies, and their effects on competitiveness, communication, and consumerism. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, whereby the respondents were able to provide the level of agreement or frequency of use.

The second tool was a semi-structured interview guide, which was employed in gathering qualitative data from tourism professionals. The interviews were centred on organisational preparedness, technological consciousness, strategic priorities, and the perceived obstacles to effective implementation of e-marketing. This method was coupled with the two-instrument methodological triangulation approach, which made the study analysis as deep as possible.

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire was validated by the use of content and face validity processes. The instrument was formulated after scanning a wide range of tourism and e-marketing literature, which would be applicable in the Jordanian context. It was further examined by academic scholars of universities in Jordan as a way of gauging clarity, relevance, linguistic validity, and connection to the study objectives.

In the case of the qualitative instrument, both descriptive and theoretical validity were used to validate it, taking the criteria of Maxwell (1992). This was done by making sure the views of the participants were well represented; there was internal consistency in the empirical data and theoretical interpretations, as well as rich responses. Reviews were done according to the comments of experts before the final data collection.

Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, in that the internal consistency among items was measured. The analysis produced a coefficient of 0.951, and this means that the level of reliability is very high, and it confirms that the instrument is consistently used to measure the desired constructs. This degree of trustworthiness justifies the extent to which the quantitative results can be generalised to the overall population of tourism SMEs in Jordan.

The qualitative component was strengthened with reliability by ensuring that the procedures of interviews were well documented, the questioning was consistent, and proper coding was used under the grounded theory approach.

Data Collection

Online questionnaires were used to collect primary data through digital platforms (e.g., email, WhatsApp, Facebook). Electronic distribution is consistent with the nature of the study that concerns digital interaction and easy access to geographically

distant SMEs. The questionnaire contained an introduction that described the objective of the research and the ethical issues.

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather qualitative data, which were carried out among the employees of tourism companies. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed to determine the recurrent themes in relation to e-marketing adoption, challenges, and strategic results. To facilitate contextual analysis, secondary data were accessed through academic literature, official reports, and tourism policy documents.

Data Analysis

Frequency distributions, means, and correlations were applied as quantitative statistical methods to analyse quantitative data in order to determine the relationships between e-marketing strategies and competitiveness indicators. The relationship between mobile e-marketing usage, traditional marketing, and return on investment was tested to establish the significance of the relationship.

Both the grounded theory and constant comparative methods were used to analyse qualitative data, which allowed the concepts and themes to develop inductively based on the data. The method helped to identify organisational, technological, and institutional dimensions of the applicability of e-marketing and was

used to supplement the findings of the quantitative research.

Findings

This section gives the results of the research and explains them with regard to the two primary research questions. Analysis is based on quantitative data, which was collected through questionnaires sent to 81 tourism-related SMEs in Jordan, and qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured interviews with the employees working in small, medium, and large tourism companies. The results are structured in themes so as to show how e-marketing strategies can help in boosting tourism competitiveness and performance, and what organisational, technological, and institutional factors can affect the successful execution of these strategies. The combination of the two sets of data increases the explanatory capacity of the results, and it guarantees that the results are consistent with the study objectives.

Findings Related to First Research Question:
How do e-marketing strategies contribute to enhancing the competitiveness and performance of Jordan's tourism sector?

The quantitative study depicts an important statistically significant correlation between the high frequency of mobile e-marketing and the perceived significance of e-marketing relative to traditional marketing strategies, as in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Spearman's Rank Correlation of Mobile Marketing Usage Frequency with Preference for E-Marketing Rather than Traditional Marketing

Correlations			Mobile Marketing Frequency of Use	e-marketing strategies versus traditional strategies
Spearman's rho	Frequency of Use for Mobile Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.312**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.005
		N	81	81

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Spearman's rho indicates a moderate positive association..., $r_s = .31$, $p = .005$. This observation supports the idea that the more tourism firms are dependent on mobile-based marketing solutions, the

more they are likely to attribute more strategic significance to digital marketing compared to traditional marketing. Table 2 below shows the correlation between the frequency of return on investment (ROI) and mobile marketing:

Table 2: Spearman's Rho Correlation Analysis

Variables	Frequency of Use of Mobile Marketing	ROI
Frequency of Use for Mobile Marketing	1.000	0.180
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	0.107
N	81	81

Though the correlation between mobile marketing frequency and ROI was not statistically significant, the positive correlation $r_{SP}(81) = .18$, $p = .107$, indicated that there exists a working trend according to which higher levels of digital engagement are correlated with increased financial returns. These

findings suggest that although the gains of ROI might not be instantaneous and similar across companies, over time, continued digital engagement will help achieve better results. In various dimensions of analysis, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) was found to be the most

powerful e-marketing approach to promoting tourism competitiveness. As shown in Tables (3–7) below:

Table 3: Marketing Channels Used by Tourism Businesses in Jordan

Marketing channel	Frequency of responses	Position
Search engine optimization (SEO)	55	1
Business websites	41	2
Email-based promotion	23	3
Online banner advertising	16	4
Social media platforms	16	5
Television advertising	15	6
Newspaper advertising	11	7
Sponsorship activities	11	8
Promotional posters	10	9
Promotional flyers	6	10
Magazine advertising	4	11
Promotional roadshows	0	12
Radio advertising	0	13

The association between mobile marketing frequency and ROI was positive but not statistically significant ($r_s = .18$, $p = .107$). This implies that there remains a working trend in which higher levels of digital engagement are correlated with increased financial returns. These findings suggest that although the gains of

ROI might not be instantaneous and similar across companies, over time, continued digital engagement will help achieve better results. In various dimensions of analysis, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) was found to be the most powerful e-marketing approach to promoting tourism competitiveness. As shown in Tables (3–7) below:

Table 4L E-Marketing Approaches Used by Tourism Businesses

E-marketing approach	Response frequency	Rank
Search engine optimization (SEO)	62	1
Affiliate websites	19	2
Online marketplaces	18	3
Email marketing	17	4
Electronic newsletters	14	5
Customer profiling	13	6
Company websites	12	7
Online banner advertising	9	8
Other methods	1	9
No previous involvement in an e-marketing campaign	0	10

In Table 4, it is evident that the respondents have varied e-marketing approaches. SEO had the highest number of responses, with 62 responses, indicating that it is way ahead of other methods. This was followed by affiliate websites (19 responses), and next were online marketplaces (18 responses). Email marketing was mentioned 17 times, whereas electronic

newsletters received 14 responses. They were also used less often in customer profiling and websites. There were only nine responses about online banner advertising. In general, the findings indicate that SEO plays a very noticeable role in the e-marketing of the tourism companies considered in the research.

Table 5: E-Marketing Approaches Perceived to Provide the Best Value for Money

E-marketing approach	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Search engine optimization (SEO)	34	42.0	1
Online banner advertising	11	13.6	2
Email marketing	10	12.3	3
Company websites	9	11.1	4
Online marketplaces	6	7.4	5
Electronic newsletters	5	6.2	6
Customer profiling	3	3.7	7
Affiliate websites	3	3.7	8

The same trend is evident when the value of money was taken into account by the respondents. SEO was the most commonly identified technique, with an identification of 34 representing 42.0% of the sample. Online banner advertising came a long way behind with 13.6 percent, and email marketing with 12.3 percent. Of 11.1% respondents, 11.1% picked company websites.

Smaller portions were allocated to online marketplaces, electronic newsletters, customer profiling, and affiliate websites. These results indicate that the respondents not only indicated that they had been heavily using SEO, but they also perceived that SEO gave them better value for money as compared to the other e-marketing services, which were incorporated in the questionnaire.

Table 6: E-Marketing Approaches Considered for Future Campaigns

Planned e-marketing approach	Response frequency	Rank
Search engine optimization (SEO)	31	1
Company websites	29	2
Online banner advertising	25	3
Online marketplaces	25	4
Email marketing	14	5
Electronic newsletters	11	6
Affiliate websites	9	7
Customer profiling	6	8
No intention to engage in an e-marketing campaign	0	9
Other methods	0	10

The respondents were also requested to give the techniques that their companies can employ in their future e-marketing campaigns. The most chosen alternative was SEO with 31 answers. In the second place were company websites with 29 responses. There was a fair interest in online banner advertising and online marketplaces, which were picked 25 times each. Email

marketing received 14 responses, and electronic newsletters as well as affiliate websites and customer profiling were not as frequent. The findings thus indicate that any future e-marketing strategizing might comprise several online channels, even though SEO still holds a very high place.

Table 7: Comparison of Findings Across E-Marketing Measures

No.	E-marketing approach	Use for tourism promotion	Planned future use	Best value for money	Current engagement
1	Search engine optimization (SEO)	55	31	34	62
2	Company websites	41	29	9	12
3	Email marketing	23	14	10	17
4	Online banner advertising	16	25	11	9
5	Online marketplaces	0	25	6	18
6	Electronic newsletters	11	11	5	14
	Arithmetic mean	4.90	4.18	4.01	4.00
	Standard deviation	1.449	2.332	1.820	0.000

To identify the e-marketing techniques that were deemed to be useful in attracting tourists to Jordan, questions were posed on the methods of promoting tourism. The research anticipated that SEO would be given more attention as compared to the other e-marketing tools. Table 7 presents the results on the frequency of the Table 4 measures, and it indicates that the frequency of SEO is the highest among the four measures. It got 55 responses regarding tourism promotion, 31 responses regarding planned future use, 34 responses regarding value for money, and 62 responses regarding the present involvement.

The trend is especially evident in light of the findings being taken into account in Tables 3-7. The most common promotional strategy and most engaged approach was SEO. It also happened to be the most preferred campaign to be chosen in the future. On the

value-to-money matters, 34 participants or 42.0% of them chose SEO. The results thus do support H1 among the surveyed sample since SEO was the most frequent in terms of responses among the measures employed to evaluate e-marketing.

This finding can be significant to tourism companies since search engines tend to be among the places where potential tourists seek information about destinations, accommodation, attractions, and travel services. Greater visibility in search can thus advance the visibility of tourism companies on the Internet, and access to relevant information can be easier to find by potential visitors. The fact that the respondents repeatedly choose SEO in current and prospective practices and perceived value indicates that search visibility is the perceived role that respondents play in augmenting the tourism sector in Jordan.

Table 8: Factors Associated with Tourists' Preference to Visit Jordan

Reason for visiting Jordan	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Visiting the Dead Sea, Petra, or Jerash	11	13.6
Visiting religious sites representing religious coexistence	37	45.7
Experiencing Jordanian culture, hospitality, and food	10	12.3
Exploring sites connected with ancient civilizations	12	14.8
Attending exhibitions and conventions	5	6.2
Experiencing wellness and medical spa tourism	6	7.4
Other	0	0.0
Total	81	100.0

According to the results in Table 8, the most common reason why Jordan was chosen was related to religious sites and the coexistence of religions, with up to 45.7% of the survey participants answering the question. Focus on ancient normal civilization trails at 14.8 per cent, and one out of three cited major sites like Petra and the Dead Sea. Another 12.3 was comprised of Jordanian culture, hospitality, and food. Smaller proportions of the respondents picked wellness and medical spa tourism, and visiting exhibitions and conventions.

These results indicate that the religious nature of Jordan is also perceived by its respondents as a significant element of its tourism value. In the case of e-marketing, this offers a basis on which to sell religious sites, pilgrimage paths, and other heritage to interested audiences in this type of tourism. Meanwhile, the outcomes cannot be confined to religious tourism only. Tourism in the country also consists of historical sites, cultural experiences, wellness tourism, as well as major attractions. Digital promotion can thus market Jordan based on various information about visitor experience instead of a single tourism segment.

Table 9: Factors Supporting Tourism Competitiveness in Jordan

No.	Factor	Mean	SD	Rank	Level
1	Hotel prices and service quality	3.69	0.970	1	High
2	Government vocational education and training policies for SMEs	3.44	1.294	2	High
3	Jordan Tourism Board public-private cooperation in branding, positioning, and promoting Jordan's tourism products	3.26	1.181	3	High
4	Air access and the attraction of low-cost carriers	3.23	1.197	4	High
5	Ticket taxes and airport charges affecting tourists	3.22	1.387	5	High
6	Protection and development of hotels toward international standards through the Jordan Hotel Association	3.15	1.246	6	High
7	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities policies for tourism-sector development	3.025	1.3036	7	High

Hotel prices and the quality of services have the highest mean score ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.970$) as indicated in Table 9. This was followed by government policies that promote SMEs' vocational education and training ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.294$). The cooperation between the government and the tourism sector, i.e., the Jordan Tourism Board, was rated at 3.26 on average, and the air access and the attraction of low-cost carriers were ranked

at 3.23 (M). The mean of ticket taxes and airport charges was the same, at 3.22. The other two factors were also in the high category, as reported in the table. These findings indicate that respondents relate tourism competitiveness to several problems that are beyond marketing as such, especially the prices, service quality, training, accessibility to transport, and support on the part of the institutions.

Table 10: Importance of Trip Cost When Comparing Jordan with Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria

Perceived importance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not at all important	0	0.0
Slightly important	1	1.2
Moderately important	18	22.2
Very important	29	35.8
Extremely important	33	40.7
Mean		4.16
SD		0.813

As indicated in Table 10, the cost of a tourism trip was a strong consideration that the respondents put in Jordan in comparison to Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. The greatest proportion, 40.7%, rated cost as of extreme

importance, and 35.8 per cent. very important. Another 22.2% found it moderately significant, and 1.2% thought it to be slightly significant. None of the respondents answered not at all important. The total mean score of

4.16 (SD = 0.813) also indicates that the cost of the trip held high levels of perceived importance to the respondents.

Cost seems to be a significant component of the ways respondents perceive Jordan as a tourism destination to comprehend its competitiveness. It also leads to implications for e-marketing since, through online channels, clear information regarding prices, tourism packages, and accommodation and services that are on offer can be provided to the visitor. Nevertheless, the results do not prove that e-marketing per se lowers the travel costs. Instead, digital marketing may bring the information about prices along with the value represented by tourism services to the potential visitors in a more convenient manner. This can be used together with clear information regarding the quality of services provided in order to enable tourists to compare the available options when travelling.

Findings Related to Second Research Question: What organisational, technological, and institutional factors influence the successful implementation of e-marketing strategies in the Jordanian tourism industry?

The qualitative results indicate substantial organizational awareness regarding e-marketing tools. It

was confirmed that all interviewees (100%) use a combination of e-marketing strategies, though social media, email marketing, and content marketing were most prevalent among the interviewees. Such organisational preparedness is a strategic move towards digital engagement as a business activity and not an additional one.

Yet, the depth of implementation is reported to be uneven according to interview responses. Whilst big businesses shared their systematic digital approaches, small and medium companies focused on incremental improvement, especially when it comes to mobile optimisation and content delivery to individuals. This implies that the success of e-marketing adoption depends on organisational capacity and the availability of resources to a great extent.

Table 11 below indicates technological preparedness as an important enabling factor. The quantitative data demonstrate that the most useful tools to advance communication between tourism providers and potential customers are mobile marketing (mean = 3.74) and SEO (mean = 3.70) (Table 11).

Table 11: E-Marketing Strategies for Enhancing Tourism Communication

No.	Questions	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
1	What's the perception of your company to approach your customers using mobile marketing to increase tourists coming to Jordan?	3.74	0.85	1	High
2	What is your company's perception of using search engine optimisation to increase tourists coming to Jordan?	3.70	0.93	2	High
3	What's the perception of your tour operator regarding using content marketing to increase tourists coming to Jordan?	3.23	1.05	3	High
4	What's the perception of your tour operator regarding using e-mail marketing to increase tourists coming to Jordan?	3.19	1.06	4	High
5	What is your company's perception of using virtual marketing guided tours during the COVID pandemic?	3.10	0.72	5	High
6	What is your company's perception of using e-marketing strategies (social media, SEO)? versus traditional strategies (word of mouth, brochures, flyers).	3.03	1.06	6	High
7	What's the perception of your tour operator regarding using websites to increase the number of tourists coming to Jordan?	2.85	1.42	7	High

This observation is also backed by the interview data, with 77.7% of the respondents having an opinion that their company websites are user-friendly and informative, and 100% affirming that websites are constantly updated.

Nonetheless, it was noted that respondents placed greater emphasis on enhancing mobile responsiveness, incorporating video content, and having interactive attributes like virtual tours. These insights show that even though there is a baseline technological

infrastructure in place, there is a need to continue innovating to keep up with the competition.

Institutional factors are critical to effective e-marketing implementation. The quantitative indicators indicate that the role of the Jordan Tourism Board (mean = 3.26) and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (mean = 3.03) were perceived as being important but ranked lower compared to the price (innovation) and service-related factors. This implies that, as much as institutional frameworks are in place, they may be enhanced to increase their influence on the

implementation of digital marketing. To approach customers with mobile marketing and increase the number of tourists visiting Jordan, the perception of the

company is summarised as shown in the following Table (12).

Table 12: Perceived Effectiveness of Mobile Marketing in Increasing Tourism to Jordan

Level of use	Frequency	Percent	Mean (SD)
Does not use it	0	0.0	3.74 (0.848)
Barely uses it.	2	2.5	
Uses it a little bit.	36	44.4	
Uses it a lot.	24	29.6	
Uses it all the time.	19	23.5	

Table 12 indicates that 44.4% of companies spend only 1-20% of their budget on e-marketing, although 72.3% spend less than 40% of the budget. These statistics suggest that the lack of financial investment can limit the staging and complexity of online campaigns, especially in the case of SMEs.

It also shows that businesses mostly use the number of visits to websites (38.3) and the number of downloads (34.6) as the main measures of e-marketing performance, as illustrated in Table 13 below:

Table 13: Marketing Performance Measurement Methods

Methods	Frequency	Percent
Not measured	2	2.5
Difference in the number of new memberships	6	7.4
Number of visits to a website	31	38.3
Number of downloads	28	34.6
Difference in the number of inquiries	4	4.9
Difference in revenue/ sales	3	3.7
Other	7	8.6
Total	81	100.0

Although these metrics provide useful signals of engagement, they might not fully capture the long-term brand equity or customer loyalty. Table 13 shows that 45.7% of the companies reported an increase in ROI of 5-10 per cent during the last five years, which indicates that the financial results of e-marketing adoption are gradual but positive. Overall, the results indicate that e-marketing practices, especially SEO and mobile marketing, are also critical factors in improving the competitiveness and performance of the tourism industry in Jordan. They are even more effective with the support of organisational readiness, technological infrastructure, and facilitating institutional structures. Meanwhile, shortages in budgetary allocation, sophisticated analytics, and strategic integration point to policy and managerial intervention. Collectively, these results offer a comprehensive evidence-based perspective through which the potential of using e-marketing as a strategic agent of sustainable tourism development in Jordan can be explored.

DISCUSSION

Discussion Related to First Research Question:

The results demonstrated that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between the frequency of use of mobile marketing and the perception of e-marketing as an important strategy over traditional strategies, $r_{SP}(81) = .31$, $p = .005$. One of the reasons is that tourism companies are clustering more on the mobile

platform to tap digitally adept and time-conscious tourists who search, compare, and make online bookings. With mobile marketing being integrated into the day-to-day running, its strategic value is seen to surpass the traditional channels. This observation is in line with Choo (1999) and Kotler and Gertner (2002), who believe that marketing strategy is dynamic and reacts to new consumer behaviour, and with Buhalis (1998) on the information-heavy nature of tourism. Nonetheless, it is the opposite of Evans et al. (1995), whose strategic models attach less importance to technological interaction.

It was also found that there is a positive but near-zero relationship that exists between the frequency of mobile marketing and ROI, $r_{SP}(81) = .18$, $p = .107$. This can be indicative of late financial payoffs of digital investments, particularly in the case of SMEs with weak analytics. Although the gains are short-term, long-term visibility and trust are increased by maintaining a digital presence. This concurs with Al-Weshah (2020) but differs from Alwan (2016), who cited greater short-term impacts.

SEO was the first in terms of usage, engagement, and value for money and future adoption (55, 62%, and 42%). This indicates the dependency of tourists on search engines in the planning of a trip. The result is consistent with those obtained by Xiang et al.

(2008), Pan et al. (2007), and Gretzel et al. (2011), whereas it contradicts the study of Al-Dajani (2011) that put an emphasis on social media.

The primary reason was religious tourism (45.7%), which is in line with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2015) but opposite to Rancati (2014) and Pulizzi (2015). Hotel prices and service quality were the highest (mean = 3.69), which supports Parasuraman et al. (1988) but not De Wit and Meyer (2010).

Discussion Related to Second Research Question:

Findings indicated that the organisation had an excellent comprehension of the adoption of e-marketing because all the interviewees (100 percent) indicated the use of a mix of strategies, particularly social media, email campaigns, and content marketing. This could be explained by the increased awareness of the fact that online interaction is a fundamental business attribute in information-based tourism markets. The observation agrees with Buhalis (1998) and is in agreement with Kotler and Gertner (2002) and Choo (1999), who view marketing strategy as hypersensitive to dynamic circumstances. However, this is opposite to Alsarayreh and Salt (2018), who determined low organisational preparedness among Jordanian SMEs, which implies that awareness may be good, and implementation is equally good.

The results also found that there was a difference in the level of implementation between big firms and SMEs. It is possible to explain this difference due to differences in financial resources, managerial skills, and qualified human capital. Its findings concur with Evans et al. (1995) and De Wit and Meyer (2010) on internal capabilities in strategic performance and with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2015) on the skewed development in the sector. This does not agree with Alwan (2016), who stated that digital tools decrease competitive differences among companies.

Mobile marketing (mean = 3.74) and SEO (mean = 3.70) were viewed as the best communication means, which is justified by the fact that tourists prefer to use their mobile phones and search engines. This result is in line with that of Xiang et al. (2008), Pan et al. (2007), and Buhalis (1998), but different from that of Al-Dajani (2011), who stressed social media supremacy.

At the institutional level, the Jordan Tourism Board (mean = 3.26) and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (mean = 3.03) were perceived as less significant compared to operational factors, as per the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2015), but contrary to Bhaita (2002). Small ROI returns are also attributed to low budgets and the use of simple metrics, which supports Al-Weshah (2020) but does not support Gretzel et al. (2011).

CONCLUSION

This research was intended to investigate the role of e-marketing in enhancing competitiveness and performance of the tourism industry in Jordan and the emergent factors of successful implementation in organisational, technological, and institutional terms. The results denote that there was a strong positive correlation between the frequency of mobile marketing and the preference towards using e-marketing as opposed to traditional campaigns, $r_{SP}(81) = .31$, $p = .005$, but the correlation between the mobile marketing frequency and ROI was strong yet near the border, $r_{SP}(81) = .18$, $p = .107$. SEO was the prevailing strategy in use and perceived value, and the rating of effectiveness in communication was highest in mobile marketing (mean = 3.74) and SEO (mean = 3.70).

Hotel prices and service had a very close correlation with competitiveness (mean = 3.69), where trip cost was graded as extremely important (40.7%), and religious tourism was perceived to have been the most important (45.7%). Qualitative evidence indicated high awareness at the organisational level (100%) but an inconsistent level of implementation (particularly among SMEs), low budgets, and use of simple metrics (website visits 38.3; downloads 34.6). The constraints are associated with the study of Jordan and the SME-based sample ($N = 81$), nine interviews, and dependency on self-reported perceptions (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.951$). The implications imply focusing more on SEO and mobile-first design and enhancing institutional coordination and capability-building (Buhalis, 1998; Alsarayreh and Salt, 2018; Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2015).

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