

The Relationship between Electronic Marketing and Profitability of Libyan Banks

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Abstract

This study aimed at identifying the link between E-marketing and profitability of Wahda Bank as one of Libyan banks in Benghazi City, where the study targeted decision-makers of the bank and their nominees.

In order to collect a reliable data, a questionnaire instrument was designed and validated by a pool of academics and bankers, and then distributed to the targeted population, where (165) forms were collected, of which (154) were valid for analysis phase.

Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. A number of statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation, Normal Distribution Tests, T-test for one sample, Kruskal Wallis Test, and one-way Analysis of Variance test were used. The reliability of the questionnaire was also validated and confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha.

One of the most important results of the study is that the level of E-marketing at Wahda Bank exceeds the mean score. The results of the study also demonstrated that Wahda Bank raised its performance and profitability through the adoption of E-Marketing.

This study can be described of great value as it provides new knowledge for theoretical and practical considerations. Academics and practitioners should benefit from its results and conclusions. The study concludes with its limitations and puts forward new avenues.

Keywords: Electronic Marketing, Profitability, Wahda Bank, Libya

1.1 An Introduction

The world has recently witnessed a remarkable development in the field of communications and information technology, which led to the emergence of a number of new concepts in various sciences, perhaps the most important of which is e-marketing as a communication tool between the organization and its' customers and to meet their desires and fulfill needs.

And due to the advantages achieved by e-marketing such as the speed in reaching customers, increasing sales numbers and increasing organisational profitability, there has become global intense competition in the field of e-marketing in various sectors, including the banking sector, which has witnessed a major transformation since its adoption of e-marketing with its various applications such as online banking, electronic payment, money transfer, credit and debt cards, and ATM, which have an influential impact in improving the institutional performance of different types of businesses.

1.2 Literature Review

In order to well understand the subject of the study, it was necessary to survey the locally and internationally published and unpublished scientific research on electronic marketing applications in several vital sectors including the financial and banking sector and other important sectors. For example, a number of researchers in Taiwan and the United States of America (Wang, Chen and Chang, 2004) conducted a study on how the number of Internet users in recent years has increased, and the effect of that on e-marketing using official published data drawn from the financial statements available on the Internet. The study reached some important results, some of which is that this type of marketing has become the most vital distribution channel in buying and selling at the present. This, in return, has caused a change in consumer behavior, and electronic distribution channels costs and profits. The study found that there is a significant variation in the rates of return on assets, equity and sales, which confirms the fact that the adoption of e-marketing has different impacts on profitability. The study concluded that e-marketing might be a supplementary marketing channel, and it cannot be the only marketing tool for businesses.

In another study in the United States of America on the impact of e-marketing on performance, Barwise and Farley, (2005) emphasized that this time is the e-marketing era, and that e-marketing has a direct impact on marketing and performance as well.

In the same country, another study done by Day and Bens, (2005) confirmed the role of e-marketing in creating competitive advantages for businesses. After two years, another study was conducted by Bordie et al., (2007), where a group of researchers collected data from (351) questionnaire instruments of American companies. The study proved that there was growth in the use of electronic marketing, and that this growth in e-marketing orientation has been associated with positive consequences on the performance of the companies under study, and was the reason for creating competitive advantages for them. In Iran, Hosseini et al., (2009) conducted a study on the relationship between the use of the Internet, marketing activities and export companies' performances. The study showed that there is a direct relationship between the use of the Internet in marketing activities and the performance of export companies in export markets. In detail, the study showed that there is a strong positive relationship between the three dimensions of e-marketing: the use of the Internet in customer-related activities, activities related to distribution channels, and marketing research with export performance, which included: export growth, profitability, access to new markets, improvement of market share, create a good mental image of the company's products, services, and brand.

In Libya, a relatively recent study by the Muftah, (2009) entitled: "Marketing of electronic banking services and its effect on increasing bank profits in Libya", showed that there is a lack in marketing electronic banking services, and that this weakness was associated with a decrease in bank profits, Where the weakness of the electronic banking services was observed in most of the Libyan commercial banks surveyed. Contradictory results were reached in Libya as well. Sunni, (2009) conducted a

research paper entitled: "the relationship between marketing of bank services and financial performance of Commerce and Development Bank in Libya". The study resorted to two approaches: financial and statistical analysis and the emerged results emphasized the significant role of e-marketing at banks in increasing competitiveness of Commerce and Development Bank in Libya.

In another relatively recent study in Taiwan, Jia-JaneShuai and Wei-WenWu, (2011) conducted a study on the effect of e-marketing on hotels performances. Content analysis was used to analyze and compare marketing practices of hotels on the Internet. The study concluded that there is an effect of electronic marketing on the operational performance of hotels, and the study recommended the necessity of developing electronic marketing strategies to increase the success of hotels in Taiwan. In Britain in the same year, the Riyad Eid and Hatem El-Gohary, (2011) studied the impact of e-marketing on the marketing performance of small and medium-sized companies, where their study included (114) small and medium-sized companies, and the results proved that e-marketing had a significant impact on the marketing performance and the marketing effectiveness of the companies under study. These studies were supported by the results of another study in Iran by Bostanshirin, (2014), where the researcher surveyed the extant literature on electronic marketing, and the results showed that electronic marketing has a big role in reaching many local and international markets quickly, which contributed to increasing sales growth rates. The study also showed some challenges of e-marketing, including weak protection of personal privacy of customers. In the same year, Karima, (2014) in Algeria conducted a study on Algerian commercial banks entitled: The role of electronic marketing in improving the performance of banks and achieving customer satisfaction, where 42 banking were targeted through a questionnaire distributed over 120 officials in the banks. The results of the study showed that there is an effect of electronic marketing on increasing customer satisfaction and improving bank performance in Algeria.

In India, Pawar, (2014) conducted a study entitled the effect of electronic marketing on integrated marketing communications. The results of the study were completely different from previous studies. An electronic questionnaire was designed and circulated to a relative stratified sample of 200 officials in the educational sector and some governmental offices in Mumbai. The most important result of the study is that e-marketing impact was limited due to the absence of a safety such as cheating customers, displaying defective items, giving wrong applications, stealing personal financial data, and all these things entirely reduced the desirable impact of e-marketing on integrated marketing communications effectiveness.

As for the state of Syria, Qassam and others, (2014) conducted a study on the role of marketing of bank services in increasing the competitiveness of Syrian banks, where 222 questionnaires were distributed to workers in the public and private commercial banks in the Syrian coast. The population was 725 individuals, and the target sample was 222 individuals. A number of 202 valid responses were returned. The results of the study proved that there is a direct relationship between the use of electronic bank marketing and increasing bank competitiveness.

In the United States of America, a study was conducted by Elhaj and Barakeh, (2015) on the effect of electronic commerce on travel agencies' profitability. The study relied on a questionnaire addressed to agency officials. The results show that there are fundamental differences in the impact of electronic commerce on profitability depending on travel agency size whether it is small or large.

In Finland, Joeljarvinen and Heikkikarjaluo, (2015) conducted a study entitled using website analysis in measuring digital marketing performance, whereby the researchers thoroughly reviewed previous studies in performance measurement and its use in electronic analysis, through which companies were able to measure marketing performance. The study focused on the use of electronic analysts in industrial companies, which showed that the efforts of organizations in using the marketing systems and the results derived from them cannot be understood without regard to the reasons for their use, the method of data processing, and the organizational context surrounding the use of the system. The study also showed the increasing importance of digital marketing, especially in industrial companies known for the complexity of their sales systems, and the impact of this on performance.

In Turkey, Zmeci and Ercan, (2015) carried out a study on the impact of digital marketing on brand perception Turkish construction companies, where personal interviews were used as a methodology for this study. The results showed a significant impact of digital marketing on brand, and that this effect will increase further in the future.

In South Africa, Wisdom, (2015) performed a study sought to identify the impact of e-marketing on the type of relationship between members of the South African Tourist Association and its customers, and the impact of that on tourist offices' performance. The mixed-method approach was adopted as a methodology for this research through an electronic questionnaire form, telephone interviews and analysis of official documents. The most important results of the study are that a variation and weakness in e-marketing applications by members of the association was observed, despite the presence of the positive correlation between e-marketing and performance.

In Kenya, Mutuku and Kyalo, (2015) conducted a study entitled the impact of electronic commerce on the telecom companies' profitability, where 218 telecom companies registered with the Ministry of Communications in Kenya were targeted through a questionnaire instrument designed specifically for this purpose. Among the most prominent results of the study is that e-commerce had an impact on increasing the turnover rate of sales, increasing the number of customers, which in turn resulted in an increase in telecom companies' profitability. The study concluded that the electronic presence of companies on the Internet leads to profitability growth.

In the same country, Onyango (2016) conducted a study on the impact of digital marketing strategies on flower export companies' performance. A number of 30 semi-structured personal interviews were conducted with officials of flower export companies, and the results showed a strong relationship between digital marketing and all components of performance: income, market share and profitability. It was also found that companies using digital marketing have shown higher performance than their counterparts using traditional marketing methods.

In Algeria, a study was conducted by Murabit and Bouchatem, (2016) on marketing of bank services, and its impact on the competitive advantage of Algerian external bank. A number of (33) Bank official was targeted through a questionnaire instrument. This form was designed, validated, and then circulated on respondents. It was also supported by a personal interview to strengthen the research methodology. The study reached some key findings the most important of which is that marketing of bank services has a prominent role in increasing competitiveness and bank profitability.

In the United Kingdom, a study was conducted by Tajvidi and Karami, (2017) on the impact of social media on small and medium-sized hotels' performance. A number of (384) hotels were targeted through an electronic questionnaire, and it was found that there is a strong positive relationship between the use of social media and hotel performance, and this strong positive relationship is influenced by marketing capabilities (brand and innovation).

In Bangladesh, Khan and Aminul, (2017) tried to identify the effect of digital marketing on performance through customer loyalty, and it was found out that there is an effect of digital marketing on customer loyalty especially the following factors: added value, product characteristics, customer services, visibility or On-line availability.

In Belgium, Patrick De et al, (2018) conducted a study included (132) Belgian hotels, to measure the impact of digital marketing strategies (e-marketing plan, responding to guest comments, follow-up to guest comments on the website) on hotels performances. The hotel performance was measured by the number of guest / customers reviews on the website, and the rate of hotel room utilization. A comparison between different types and grades of hotels was considered. The study showed that digital marketing strategies had a strong impact on the number of comments, the rate of room operation, and hotel performance. This result was more evident in chain hotels than in independent hotels and in luxury hotels than in lesser hotels.

In Libya, a recent study by Al-Shaari (2018) was conducted on electronic marketing requirements in Wahda Bank in Libya. The research included investigating the eight main requirements of electronic marketing which are the infrastructure, database, trust and safety, legal structure, top management support, research and development, human resources, then financial resources. Questionnaire instrument was used to collect the required data. Among the most important findings of the study is that the requirements of e-marketing application are moderately exist. Statistical significant differences among respondents' views on the research issue was also detected.

In Austria and Slovenia, a very recent study entitled the effect of e-marketing strategies on sales success in large companies was conducted (Binter, 2019). Semi-structured interviews were used to interrogate decision makers in marketing agencies, professional marketers, strategic marketing analysts and sales managers. Among the most important results of the study is that e-marketing has an impact on the success of companies, including income and customer added value.

Based on the above survey of the previous studies, a number of important implications and conclusions can be drawn. Come on top of that the literature surveyed covered several developed and developing countries over the globe. Several industrial,

commercial, and service sectors were targeted with the focus being placed on the banking services.

The electronic marketing has become an indispensable marketing thinking for those working in business, and that electronic marketing strategies of banks have become an effective element in bringing about the desired positive change in institutional performance with its multiple and varied elements (profitability, competitiveness, mental image, brand awareness, increase export capabilities, increasing turnover, increasing customers' numbers, increasing customer satisfaction... etc.) in the banking sector or other sectors. The effectiveness of e-marketing is getting more and more important specifically in the times of crises, and in the most competitive business environments in the world.

1.3 Research Problem

As mentioned earlier, the advantages and services provided by e-marketing are increasing and growing with the volatile economic conditions in the world, especially the financial and economic crises. The crisis of Coronavirus outbreak that arose at the beginning of 2020 is a big challenge, and its consequences are still continuing on various economic and social sectors in the world. These exceptional circumstances made e-marketing orientation and practices of a special international importance in which e-marketing moved from just desires and luxuries to a necessary one for individuals and institutions alike, thus occupying a special position in marketing, commercial and service transactions of all kinds.

Based on the above, the Libyan banking sector was not an exception to this, as electronic marketing for banks had an important role in addressing some aspects of the financial crises, thus contributing in solving several issues. The acceleration of the banking services, resolving liquidity problems and raising profitability rates are examples of such problems. Some of Libyan banks have succeeded in electronic marketing, which in turn, had a significant contribution in facilitating the process of providing services to customers, and improving banking performance, as indicated by some Libyan studies (Al-Sunni, 2009; Shaari, 2018).

Accordingly, this study comes to measure the correlation between electronic marketing adoption and Al Wahda Bank profitability in Benghazi City.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To measure the degree of using e-marketing at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City.
2. To evaluate the profitability of Wahda Bank.
3. To measure the correlation between the use of e-marketing and the profitability of Wahda Bank in Benghazi City.
4. To determine whether there are differences in participants' responses that can be attributed to the demographic factors.
5. To identify the components of Wahda bank performance that was mostly affected by e-marketing practice.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Based on the previous studies and the nature of the research problem, null and alternative hypotheses were formulated as portrayed below:

1. Null Hypothesis 1a: Wahda Bank in Benghazi City does not use e-marketing to market its services;
2. Alternative Hypothesis 1b: Wahda Bank in Benghazi City uses e-marketing to market its services.
3. Null Hypothesis 2a: Wahda Bank in Benghazi City did not achieve profitability as a result of adopting e-marketing in marketing its services;
4. Alternative Hypothesis 2b: Wahda Bank in Benghazi City succeeded in achieving profitability as a result of adopting e-marketing in marketing its services;
5. Null Hypothesis 3a: There is no correlation between e-marketing adoption at Wahda Bank and its profitability;
6. Alternative Hypothesis 3b: There is a correlation between e-marketing adoption at Wahda Bank and its profitability;
7. Null Hypothesis 4a: There are no significant differences among respondents' views regarding e-marketing and profitability linkage at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City that can be attributed to demographic factors.
8. Alternative Hypothesis 4b: There are significant differences among respondents' views regarding e-marketing and profitability linkage at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City that can be attributed to demographic factors.
9. Null Hypothesis 5a: There are no significant differences among respondents' views regarding the impact of e-marketing on performance of Wahda Bank in Benghazi City.
10. Alternative Hypothesis 5b: There are significant differences among respondents' views regarding the impact of e-marketing on performance of Wahda Bank in Benghazi City.

1.6 Research Value

This study is considered to be one of the most distinguished papers that delved into electronic marketing and its relationship with profitability at Wahda Bank as one of the largest banks in Libya. The study also gains greater importance now with the outbreak of Corona virus pandemic, and the resort of states, organizations and individuals to information technology techniques to secure or meet commercial, industrial and service needs and wants. As a result, this paper is intended to benefit individuals and institutions in understanding the theoretical backgrounds and practical applications of electronic marketing in the banking sector, and its link with bank profitability. The results of this research is also vital for financial decision making in public and private governmental institutions in the Libyan state, as well as international institutions concerned with financial and banking affairs in Libya.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study relies on the descriptive approach to describe the scientific phenomena under study, and then reaching to a logical interpretation with evidence or proofs. Using the appropriate methodology by designing, collecting, classifying, analyzing and interpreting the data is essential to reach the causes of the research problem. In order to complete this study, a questionnaire instrument was specifically designed in

the light of previous studies to collect data from respondents, and then it was judged and validated by a pool of academics and bankers to improve its content, after which a preliminary pilot-test was conducted on a sample at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City. This step was taken to guarantee greater level of validity of the research instrument.

The population of this research consisted of decision makers at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City as explained previously. A number of (165) respondents including branches' managers and their deputies, heads of departments and their assistants were targeted. Out of this number, only (154) questionnaires were used for the data analysis stage.

Wahda Bank was chosen in this study for several reasons come on top of that the fact that the headquarter of this bank is located in Benghazi City, and the bank periodically discloses its financial information, which helped in attaining profitability data over the past few years.

1.8 Fieldwork Study

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, it was necessary to conduct a fieldwork study to collect the required data, and then analyze it to obtain the results and draw conclusions as shown below.

1.8.1 Characteristics of Participants

A. Gender:

Table No. (1) Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	106	68.8
Female	48	31.2
Total	154	100.0

as The results of the above analysis show that most of participants were decision-makers (69%) approximately were males, while the remaining percentage (31%) were females.

B. Qualification:

Table No. (2) Educational Level

Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Master	9	5.8
Bachelor	108	70.2
High Diploma	26	16.9
Tertiary School	3	1.9
Secondary School	8	5.2
Total	154	100.0

The results above show that (70%) of the decision-makers were Bachelor Degree holders, followed by High Diploma (17%), then the rest were graded. The clear observation is that there is a lack of higher qualifications such as Masters and Doctorates at Wahda bank.

C. Specialty:

Table No. (3) Specialty

Specialty	Frequency	Percentage
Accounting	83	53.9
Business Administration	35	22.7
Banking and Finance	18	11.7
Economics	14	9.1
Others	4	2.6
Total	154	100.0

The results above show that approximately (54%) of decision-makers investigated were Accountants, followed by Business Administration with (23%), then the Financing and Banking (12%). Economic and other specialties were (9%) and (3%) respectively.

D. Organisational Position:

Table No. (4) Organisational Position

Organisational Position	Frequency	Percentage
Branch Manager	15	9.7
Deputy	10	6.5
Assistant Deputy	12	7.8
Officer	74	48.1
Assistant Officer	43	27.9
Total	154	100.0

The results above show that the majority of participants (76%) were Officers and below, where the participation rate reached (48.1%) and (27.9%) respectively, then the other percentages were distributed as shown in the table.

E. Experience in Banking:

Table No. (5) Experience at Current Work

Organisational Position	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 10 years	38	24.7
10 – less than 20 years	59	38.3
20 – less than 30 years	42	27.3
30 years and above	15	9.7
Total	154	100.0

The results above show that (37%) of participants have more than twenty years of experience in banking, while the remaining percentage (63%) have less than twenty years. These percentages might have positive implications on the existence of the minimum requirements of financial and banking backgrounds for bankers at Wahda Bank.

1.8.2 Analysis of Key Variables

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, it was necessary to emphasize some important statistical procedures, including the determination of agreement level of respondents as explained in table (6).

Table No. (6) Likert Scale Range of Agreement

Cell Span	Likert Score	Weight	Response Level
1.79 إلى 1.00	Totally Disagree	1	Very Weak
2.59 إلى 1.80	Disagree	2	Weak
3.39 إلى 2.60	Neutral	3	Moderate
4.19 إلى 3.40	Agree	4	Strong
5.00 إلى 4.20	Totally Agree	5	Very Strong

Table (6) shows the weights and degrees according to Likert scale, as it shows that the highest weight was (5) with full agreement, while the lowest weight was (1) with full disagreement. Test of Normality of Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used to determine the nature of data. The results showed that the data came close to the normal distribution because the probability value exceeded the level of significance ($P\text{-value (Sig.)} = 0.200 > 0.05$).

1. Electronic Marketing Practice at Wahda Bank

One of the key objectives of the study was to determine the degree of using e-marketing at Wahda Bank. Relevant questions were directed to respondents and the answers were recorded and analysed as explained in table (7).

Table No. (7) Electronic Marketing Practice

Level of Practice	Frequency	Percentage	Weighted Average	SD
Very High	19	12.3	3.59	0.82
High	65	42.2		
Moderate	60	39.0		
Law	8	5.2		
Very Law	2	1.3		

The results of the analysis show that the weighted average of the degree of e-marketing practice at Wahda Bank reached (3.59) with (0.82) level of standard deviation. This average can be considered as a high level of using electronic marketing at the bank.

2. Wahda Bank Profitability

Another important objective was to identify the profitability of Wahda Bank associated with using electronic marketing. To achieve this goal, some key questions were directed to respondents in charge, and the responses were analysed and presented in table (8).

Table No. (8) Electronic Marketing Practice

Level of Profitability	Frequency	Weighted Average	SD	P-Value Kruskal Wallis Test
Very High	19	4.42	0.69	0.00
High	65	4.05	0.37	
Moderate	60	3.42	0.59	
Law	8	3.25	0.46	
Very Law	2	3.50	0.71	
Total	154	3.79	0.64	

From table (8) above it appears that only a very law percentage (10%) of participants considers that the profitability of Wahda Bank was weak as a result of the use of electronic marketing to market the bank services, while the remaining majority (90%) matched their responses with achieving profits (very high, high and medium) as it appeared from the weighted average (3.42, 4.05, 4.42) respectively. It was also noticed that there is a significant difference in the weighted average of profitability as (P-value <0.05) according to the (KW) test. This test was used due to the fact that the data was descriptive in nature.

3. Electronic Marketing and Profitability

Knowing the correlation between electronic marketing and Wahda Bank profitability was another key objective to be achieved. For that end, some questions were posed in particular, and the responses were collected and analysed as shown in table (9) below.

Table No. (9) Electronic Marketing and Profitability Linkage

E-marketing and Prodignality	Frequency	Percentage	Weighted Average	SD
Very High	11	13.1	4.095	0.399
High	70	83.3		
Moderate	3	3.6		
Total	84	100.0		

From table (9) above it appears that there is a strong positive correlation between the use of electronic marketing at Wahda Bank and the bank profitability, where the weighted average of the relationship reached (4.095) out of (5) on Likert Scale with a standard deviation equal to (0.399). This means that the relationship between the two variables can be described as significant.

4. Performance Factors Affected by Electronic Marketing Practice

In addition to the results of table (9) above, which indicated a strong positive correlation between e-marketing and profitability of Wahda Bank, and in order to identify the elements of banking performance mostly affected by e-marketing application, a specific question was asked. The responses were collected and analysed as displayed in table (10).

Table No. (10) Performance Factors Affected by E-Marketing

Performance Factors Affected by Electronic Marketing	Degree of Agreement										Weighted Average	SD	Relative Importance
	Totally Agree		Agree		To Some Extent		Disagree		Totally Disagree				
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%			
Increasing of Customers Numbers	27	33.3	44	54.3	9	11.1	1	1.2	0	0.0	4.20	0.68	1
Increasing Bank Reputation	26	32.1	45	55.6	8	9.9	2	2.5	0	0.0	4.17	0.70	2
Increasing Bank Competitiveness	23	28.4	45	55.6	11	13.6	2	2.5	0	0.0	4.10	0.72	3
Bank Services Diversification	21	25.9	44	54.3	14	17.3	2	2.5	0	0.0	4.04	0.73	4
Increasing Profitability Rates	16	19.8	49	60.5	16	19.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.00	0.63	5
Increasing Investment Rates	21	25.9	39	48.1	19	23.5	2	2.5	0	0.0	3.96	0.77	6
Increasing Growth Rates	10	12.3	53	65.4	17	21.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	3.89	0.61	7
Complete Bank Transactions Accurately	13	16.0	43	53.1	24	29.6	1	1.2	0	0.0	3.84	0.70	8
Increasing Market Share	14	17.3	45	55.6	18	22.2	4	4.9	0	0.0	3.85	0.76	9
Improving Bank Image	9	11.1	48	59.3	23	28.4	1	1.2	0	0.0	3.80	0.64	10
Increasing Payment of Short Liabilities	13	16.0	41	50.6	23	28.4	4	4.9	0	0.0	3.78	0.78	11
Speedy Bank Transactions	12	14.8	39	48.1	28	34.6	2	2.5	0	0.0	3.75	0.73	12
Increase Customer Satisfaction	13	16.0	38	46.9	25	30.9	5	6.2	0	0.0	3.73	0.81	13
Reducing Bank Services Costs	16	19.8	22	27.2	26	32.1	14	17.3	3	3.7	3.42	1.11	14
Overall Average	3.90												

Table (10) shows that there are fourteen elements of banking performance through which the performance of Wahda Bank can be measured. All weighted averages has exceeded the hypothetical average (3), with overall weighted average of (3.90), which indicating that all elements of performance have been affected by e-marketing.

As for the relative importance of performance elements mostly affected by e-marketing, it is possible to be arranged according to their weighted averages as follows: increasing the number of customers (4.20), increasing the bank's reputation (4.17), increasing bank competitiveness (4.10), increasing the diversity of e-services (4.04), increasing profitability (4.00), increasing return on investment (3.96), increasing bank growth rates (3.89), accurately completing bank transactions (3.84), increasing market share (3.85), improving customers' mental image of the bank (3.80), increasing the ability to pay off short-term liabilities (3.78), completing banking transactions with a high speed (3.75), increasing customer satisfaction (3.73), and finally, reducing the cost of banking services (3.42).

1.8.3 Hypotheses Testing

In order to complete the data analysis stage and to draw valid conclusions and recommendations, it was necessary to perform the appropriate statistical tests of hypotheses as shown below:

1. Tests of Hypotheses (1 & 2)

The first and second null hypotheses were examined by (T-Test), as shown below.

Table No. (11) Test of Hypotheses (1 & 2)

Variables	Average	SD	T - Value	P - Value	Decision
E-marketing	3.590	0.821	8.927	0.00	Rejection
Profitability	3.798	0.640	15.476	0.00	Rejection

T-test was used in this case due to the small sample size in which two variables are compared. The results show that the corresponding probability value of the statistic T equals to (0.00), which is less than the selected level of significance (0.05). Consequently, it is not possible to accept the null hypothesis that states: "*Wahda Bank in Benghazi City does not use e-marketing to market its services*". This means that there is a moderate use of e-marketing at Wahda Bank to provide customers with the needed services.

The results of the table also show that the corresponding probability value of the T-statistic equals to (P-value = 0.00), which is less than the chosen level of significance (0.05). Hence, it is not possible to accept the null hypothesis that states "*Wahda Bank in Benghazi City did not succeed in achieving profitability as a result of adopting e-marketing to market its services*". This means that Wahda Bank has achieved profitability over the past few years since e-marketing has been in use at the bank.

2. Test of Hypothesis (3)

The third null hypothesis was examined by Chi-Square Test, as shown below.

Table No. (12) Test of Hypothesis (3)

χ^2	P - Value	Decision
55.49	0.00	Rejection

It is clear from table (12) above that Chi square (χ^2) test for independence indicates a significant relationship between e-marketing and profitability of Wahda Bank, where Chi square (χ^2) value was (55.49), and the corresponding probabilistic value was (P - value = 0.00), which is less than the level of significance (0.05). Therefore, it is not possible to accept the null hypothesis which states that "there is no correlation between e-marketing and profitability at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City".

3. Test of Hypothesis (4)

In order to examine the variation among respondents' responses regarding the relationship of e-marketing and profitability of Wahda Bank, and whether that was affected by their demographical status or not, two tests were used: (T-Test), and analysis of variance (One-Way Anova) as shown below.

A. Gender Effect

Table No. (13) Test of Hypothesis (4a): Gender

Item	Gender	Average	SD	T - Value	P - Value	Decision
E-marketing & Profitability	Male	3.89	0.48	1.17	0.19	Acceptance
	Female	3.89	0.41			

It is clear from table (13) above that the corresponding probability value is greater than the level of significance (P-value = 0.05). Therefore, it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis which states that "there are no significant differences among respondents' views regarding e-marketing and profitability linkage at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City that can be attributed to gender". This means that there is no effect of gender in making differences among participants' responses, and therefore both males and female hold similar views regarding the positive effect of e-marketing on profitability at Wahda Bank.

B. Qualification & Experience Effect

Table No. (14) Test of Hypotheses (4b&c): Qualification & Experience

Item	Qualification	Average	SD	T - Value	P - Value	Decision
E-marketing & Profitability	Tertiary School	3.94	0.27	0.725	0.578	Acceptance
	Intermediate Diploma	4.02	0.89			
	High Diploma	4.00	0.42			
	BSc	3.83	0.46			
	MSc	4.07	0.39			
	Total	3.89	0.46			
	Experience	Average	SD	T - Value	P - Value	Decision
	5- < 10 years	3.84	0.39	0.878	0.225	Acceptance
	10- < 20 years	3.88	0.53			
	20- < 30 years	3.95	0.39			
	≥ 30 years	3.92	0.41			
Total	3.89	0.45				

It is clear from the results of Analysis of Variance (One-way Anova) that the probability value corresponding to the value of (F) is greater than the level of significance (P-Value = 0.05), and therefore it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis that states "*there are no significant differences among respondents' views regarding the link between e-marketing and profitability at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City that can be attributed to qualification*", and that means that respondents share the same point of view regarding the association between e-marketing and profitability at Wahda Bank.

Using the same logic, the table also shows that the corresponding probability value of the value of (F), which is greater than the level of significance (P-value = 0.05). Therefore it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis which states that "*there are no significant differences among respondents' views regarding the association between e-marketing and profitability at Wahda Bank in Benghazi City that can be attributed to participants' years of experience*", and that means that respondents hold the same opinion concerning the link between e-marketing and profitability of Wahda Bank.

4. Test of Hypothesis (5)

In order to assess the level of variation among respondents' responses regarding the effect of e-marketing on profitability of Wahda Bank, two tests were performed (T-Test), and One-Way Anova as shown below.

Table No. (15) Test of Hypothesis (5) of Performance Components

Item	Average	SD	T - Value	P - Value	Decision
Performance Components Mostly Affected by E-marketing	3.89	0.45	17.728	0.00	Rejection

The results of the above table disclose that the probability value is (P-value = 0.00), which is less than the assumed significance level (0.05). Hence, it is not possible to accept the null hypothesis which states that "*there are no significant differences among respondents' views regarding the impact of e-marketing on the components of Wahda Bank performance in Benghazi City*". This means that there are fundamental differences regarding the impact of e-marketing on bank performance components as seen from the analysis explained earlier in table (10).

1.1 Key Results

This section displays the most important results that were achieved through the statistical analysis as follows:

1. More than two thirds of participants were males who hold educational qualifications in Administrative, Financial and Economic Sciences with appropriate years of work experiences in the banking sector.
2. Wahda Bank in Benghazi City moderately uses e-marketing in marketing its services to customers, and the reliance on e-marketing was much higher since the outbreak of Coronavirus.
3. Wahda Bank in Benghazi City has succeeded in achieving good performance and profitability through the adoption of electronic marketing in marketing its services, and hence, the use of e-marketing has been positively linked with performance and profitability returns.

4. There are a number of components of Wahda Bank performance that were positively affected by e-marketing, namely: increasing the number of customers, increasing the bank's reputation, increasing the competitiveness of the bank, diversification of electronic banking services, increasing profitability, increasing returns on investment, increasing growth, successfully completing bank transactions with highest accuracy and speed, increasing market share, enhancing the mental image of the bank, increasing the ability to pay short-term obligations, increasing customer satisfaction, and finally reducing the costs of bank services.
5. There is a great agreement and congruence among Wahda Bank decision-makers regarding the use of e-marketing to market Wahda Bank services, which reflected positively on the bank's performance and profitability.

1.2 Discussion of Results

This part of the paper discusses the results of the study compared with previous research. This step is taken to determine to what extent the results of this research are consistent or different from the previous work in the same field. This is a constructive approach in enriching the theoretical background on e-marketing and its relationship with profitability as an indicator of performance at banks.

Among the most prominent results of the current study is that Wahda Bank in Benghazi City uses e-banking in marketing its services to customers, and that was linked with profitability and improved performance. This result was closely aligned with the results reached in numerous different studies in both developing and developed countries in the United States of America (Wang, Chen and Chang, 2004), (Barwise and Farley, 2005), (Day and Bens, 2005), (Bordie et al., 2007), United Kingdom (Riyad Eid and Hatem El-Gohary, 2011), (Tajvidi and Karami, 2017), Finland (Joeljarvinen and Heikkikarjaluo, 2015), Belgium (Patrick De et al, 2018), Austria and Slovenia (Binter, 2019), Turkey (Zmeci and Ercan, 2015), Taiwan (Jia-JaneShuai and Wei-WenWu, 2011), and Iran (Hosseini et al., 2009), (Bostanshirin, 2014)), (Khan and Aminul, 2017), Kenya (Mutuku and Kyalo, 2015), (Onyango, 2016), Algeria (Karima, 2014), (Al-Murabit and Bukhatim, 2016), Syria (Qassam et al., 2014), Libya (Al-Sunni, 2009), (Al-Shaeri, 2018 AD). This specific result has been noticed to be different from some results in previous studies, which showed weakness in e-marketing and its link with performance and profitability, or, have reached mixed results United States of America (Elhaj and Barakeh., 2015), India (Pawar, 2014), South Africa (Wisdom, 2015), and Libya (Moftah, 2009).

This convergence or variation between the results of the current study and the results of previous studies gives indications of the value of e-marketing and its link with performance and profitability enhancement, with the absence of a definitive assertion of the impact of e-marketing on profitability and performance in the banking sector in particular, and other economic sectors in general.

This variation may be due to some key factors that require further investigation in future research, including the nature of the prevailing economic systems, cultural factors that govern the behavior of consumers in societies, the development of technological and knowledge infrastructure, and other related factors.

It also matters in this context, alerting to the importance of e-marketing in the circumstances of global crises such as the outbreak of Coronavirus that has been sweeping the whole world since January 2020, and the need of consumers to apply the rules of social distancing to preserve their health and ensure that the infection does not transmit to them, at the same time, e-marketing has increased the degrees of satisfaction by satisfying and fulfilling the needs and desires of customers through e-shopping and e-delivery.

1.3 Limitations of Study

The challenges of the current research refer to the difficulties or deficiencies in scientific research in general. Despite the fact that researchers follow different methodological approaches and justify them scientifically, they cannot pretend perfection in their work as there is always a room for improvement.

Research in general is not free from deficiencies, which may open more scientific horizons for advanced scientific investigations.

In general, it is possible to identify the most important challenges of the current study in the difficulty of generalizing its results on all Libyan banks and their branches. The inability to obtain the recent official approved financial statements from the Central Bank of Libya is another challenging task. This makes it difficult to evaluate banks' performances in a more effective scientific way. Finally, it was difficult in this study to increase sample size due to time, cost and efforts restrictions.

1.4 Implications and Recommendations

The challenges referred to in the current study should not be seen as shortcomings that underestimate the value of this scientific study, but rather, in fact, they open up new horizons for advancing the scientific research through the theoretical and practical recommendations.

For example, the current work showed that there is a link between e-marketing and banks' performances and profitability. Therefore, it will be very beneficial in this regard to conduct more future studies on banks not covered in the current study. Also, in the view of the importance of e-marketing and its value to the customer and its impact on institutional performance, it is recommended to expand the areas of application in upcoming research to target the service, commercial and industrial sectors in Libya such as education, health, export, clothing, food and other vital sectors of the national economy.

In conclusion, it is advisable to increase investment in communications and information technology to develop the practice of e-marketing at banks. The association between e-marketing and performance and increased profitability urges decision-makers in Libyan financial institutions to increase their investments in information technology infrastructure and e-marketing in specific.

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