

Exploring Digital Marketing Optimization: Enhancing Company Performance with a Focus on the FMCG Industry in Lebanon

Clarita Obeid ^{1*} 

¹ Usek Business School, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Joûnié, Lebanon

* Corresponding Author: Clarita.w.obeid@net.usek.edu.lb

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ABSTRACT

In the ever-evolving landscape of digital marketing, companies within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry in Lebanon are recognizing the imperative need to optimize their digital marketing strategies to enhance overall performance. This study delves into the intricacies of digital marketing optimization, with an emphasis on perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, user experience, and consumer engagement as pivotal themes impacting company performance. Employing a qualitative research methodology, in-depth insights were garnered from 15 industry professionals through semi-structured interviews. These individuals were carefully selected for their expertise and firsthand experience with digital marketing within the Lebanese FMCG sector. The analysis of the qualitative data led to the extraction of nuanced understandings regarding how perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness directly influence the user experience and, subsequently, consumer engagement in digital platforms. The study highlights the critical role of user-friendly interfaces and valuable content in fostering positive consumer experiences, which in turn, amplify engagement rates. Moreover, the research identifies the chain effect that starts with the initial consumer interaction with digital marketing campaigns and cascades into long-term company performance metrics. The findings reveal that the FMCG companies in Lebanon are at a pivotal junction, where embracing digital marketing optimization can lead to significant competitive advantages. Companies that adeptly leverage the ease of use and usefulness of their digital content can create enhanced user experiences, thereby fostering deeper levels of consumer engagement.

Keywords: Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, User Experience, Consumer Engagement, Digital Marketing Strategy, Company Performance Measurement

INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing optimization is imperative in today's competitive business landscape. Companies increasingly invest in digital channels to connect with their customers and build brand recognition (Nguyen et al., 2016). According to a report by Statista (2021), worldwide digital advertising expenditure was estimated to reach \$389 billion in 2021, underscoring the significance companies place on digital mediums. However, merely investing in digital marketing is insufficient. To ensure a return on investment, companies must optimize their digital marketing strategies for performance metrics that align with their business objectives (Statista, 2021).

The importance of optimization in digital marketing can also be understood from the consumer's perspective. Modern-day consumers are bombarded with a plethora of choices and information. Given the short attention spans and the ease with which potential customers can switch to competitors, companies must create targeted, relevant, and engaging content. Studies have shown that personalized marketing can increase customer engagement by up to 20% (Accenture, 2018). Therefore, optimization techniques that include personalization algorithms and customer segmentation are critical for improving engagement and conversion rates.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Perceived Ease of Use and Company Performance

The correlation between PEOU and business success is significant in today's technologically advanced corporate environment. Overall productivity increases when workers have a good experience with the tools and systems they utilize regularly (Razakova et al, 2023). Consequently, productivity and quality in the workplace improve as workers can finish jobs faster and with fewer mistakes (Becker et al., 2022). In addition, when workers are given the tools, they need to do their jobs effectively, they are more likely to take pride in their work and stay with the company. In essence, PEOU is a cornerstone in establishing a positive work culture, which boosts productivity and efficiency (Taylor, 2019).

As the digital space grows, e-commerce sites have assumed critical importance for businesses. Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) of e-commerce websites significantly impacts business success (Ivanova et al, 2023). Customers are more likely to make purchases and return to a site several times if they find it intuitive, simple to browse, and user-friendly (Magano et al., 2022). When the Perceived Ease of Use is high, the company's performance improves due to more excellent conversion rates, more money made from sales (Jalloul et al, 2022). Businesses that want to thrive in today's digital economy must put a premium on creating a positive customer experience while purchasing online (Pan et al., 2021).

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) is a critical factor in whether an organization successfully adopts new technologies. Employee training programs heavily influence these views (Aina & Nicoletti, 2018). Employees are more likely to accept new technologies, adapt more quickly to changes in organizational culture, and produce better results when they get intuitive and easy-to-follow training (Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2013). Training programs like this do more than teach people how to use new technology; they also develop confidence in their abilities (Alozian & Shatila, 2023). The result is a more responsive and flexible workforce that can better use technological advances, boosting productivity and profitability (Basterretxea et al., 2019).

The importance of users' perceptions of mobile applications' ease of use to a business's bottom line is magnified in today's mobile-first environment (Ushakov et al, 2023). Users are more likely to make purchases, connect with the company, and continue using the app if they find it simple (Moresová et al., 2021). This results in satisfied customers, more money made per customer, and a more successful business overall. And because they are so easy to use, mobile applications let companies connect with their consumers in new and meaningful ways. When a firm spends money on making its mobile app more user-friendly, it's well spent since it increases productivity and loyalty (Wang et al., 2020).

Relationship between Perceived Usefulness and Company Performance

People value technologies and systems that are heavily influenced by their perceived usefulness (PU). The study investigates the connection between PU and organizational effectiveness. Employees' positive attitudes about the use of technology in the workplace have been linked to gains in productivity, mistake prevention, and bottom-line results. An atmosphere where technology boosts productivity and positively impacts corporate performance may be fostered using PU as a primary driver (Leclercq-Machado et al., 2022).

E-commerce sites are crucial to the success of businesses in the modern digital era. This study looks at how customers' opinions of the value of e-commerce sites affect business outcomes (Vitikainen et al., 2017). According to research, when consumers see e-commerce websites as convenient and easy to use, they are more likely to enjoy their buying experience and return for future purchases. In light of this, it's clear that creating e-commerce experiences that cater to customers' wants and help businesses make money is paramount (Wu & Tang, 2019).

The Perceived Usefulness (PU) of supply chain management software is crucial to the success of any firm that relies on an effective supply chain. When workers see value in their supply chain management technologies, they improve inventory management, save costs, and speed up delivery. Because of this, supply chain processes may be optimized, customer needs can be met more effectively, and operations can be kept at a low cost. Successful businesses understand the importance of PU in supply chain management for maintaining a competitive advantage and running efficiently (Tikkanen, 2016).

Relationship between User Experience and Company Performance

User experience (UX) refers to the impression a product, service, or digital platform leaves on the user. It has received much attention as of late for being an essential component in determining how well a business does. Customer happiness, loyalty, and advocacy are all boosted when people have a good time using a product or service. (Phua et al., 2018) When consumers are happy with a product or service, they are more inclined to repurchase and tell others about it (Daskin et al., 2015). As a result, the company's bottom line, client retention, and employee productivity have all improved. Companies that want to succeed in today's market must prioritize user experience design and constantly improve the customer journey to survive.

Relationship between Consumer Engagement and Company Performance

In today's fast-paced corporate environment, customer engagement has become crucial to business success. The research delves into the complex connections between satisfied customers and successful businesses. Increased brand loyalty, excellent customer retention rates, and overall company success have all been linked to firms actively engaging their consumers, encouraging two-way conversations, and developing enduring connections. Given this correlation, it's clear that customer interaction should play a central role in every successful business's long-term plan (Coroliova, 2021).

E-commerce sites are crucial to the success of any company in the modern digital world. The research delves into customer interaction methods in online retail settings and how they affect bottom lines. Personalization, interactivity, and prompt service are all examples of proven engagement strategies that have been shown to boost a company's bottom line and overall effectiveness (Sharma et al., 2020). Businesses in the e-commerce sector that see customer engagement as a strategic priority will have a leg up on the competition and enjoy sustained marketing success due to the loyalty of their client base.

Effective customer engagement tactics often begin with staff members who have received proper training in customer interaction (Kim & Moon, 2021). The research explores how educating workers affects customer involvement and business outcomes. Employees trained to interact with customers report greater levels of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall pleasure with their experiences. Because of the sound effects on customer retention and company performance, investing in staff training is essential for long-term growth and prosperity (Lowe, 2020).

The transformation of customer interaction that digital marketing has ushered in has had far-reaching effects on business success. Leung & Chan (2020) explores how firms may improve consumer engagement and commercial outcomes via digital marketing methods. Data-driven, tailored marketing strategies, social media promotion, and user-friendly content are all proven methods for establishing rapport with target audiences. In today's modern business environment, client engagement is a crucial driver of revenue and performance metrics growth (Belkhamza & Niasin, 2018).

Customer involvement is a critical factor in the success of tourist businesses in today's market. The research examines how tourist businesses may boost performance by encouraging employee participation. According to Shaw et al., (2022) tourism companies may increase consumer involvement by providing more engaging, informative, and interactive experiences. Travelers enthusiastic about their trip are more likely to buy tours, hotels, and other services, leading to better business results. Customer involvement is the key to long-term success and connection development in the tourist sector (Singh et al., 2023).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following conceptual framework had been constructed based on the previous literature and it hypothesizes four hypotheses as shown in below **Figure 1**:

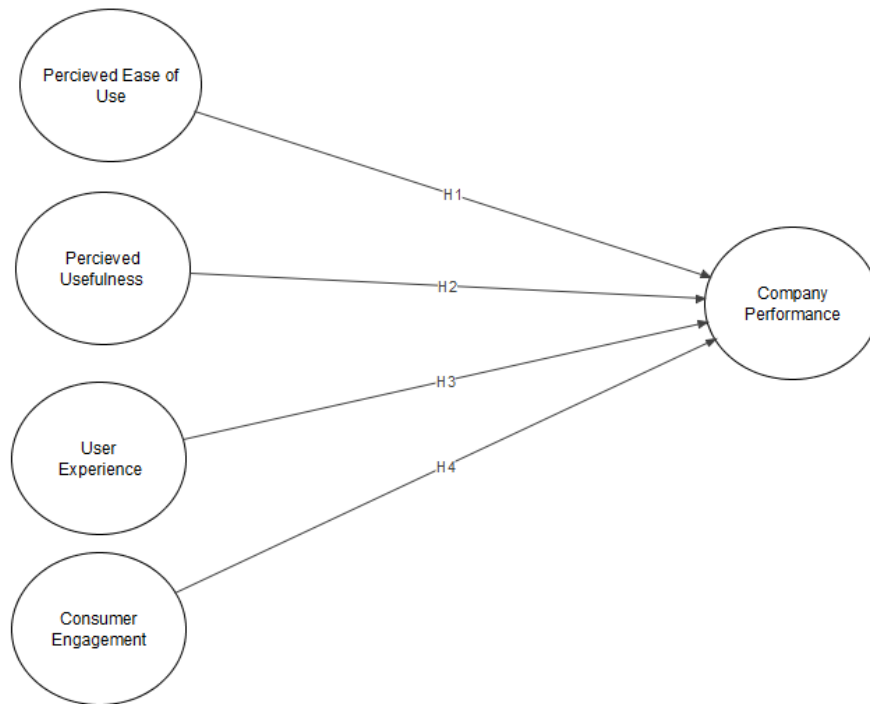


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Referring to the above figure, the following hypotheses had been formulated:

H1: There is a relationship between perceived ease of use and company performance

H2: There is a relationship between perceived usefulness and company performance

H3: There is a relationship between user experience and company performance

H4: There is a relationship between consumer engagement and company performance

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

In the current study on "Exploring Digital Marketing Optimization: Enhancing Company Performance with a Focus on the FMCG Industry in Lebanon," a qualitative research methodology was chosen. This decision was based on the research design, which employs in-depth interviews and semi-structured questionnaires as primary data collection methods. The qualitative approach allows the research to delve deeply into the complexities and nuanced understandings of digital marketing optimization within the specific context of Lebanon's FMCG sector. This context demands rich, textured insights that numerical analyses alone cannot provide.

In the pursuit of understanding Digital Marketing Optimization in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Industry in Lebanon, this study will employ a robust data collection methodology. To gather comprehensive insights, a combination of face-to-face interviews and online interviews via Zoom were utilized. For face-to-face interviews, a purposeful sampling approach was undertaken, targeting key stakeholders in the FMCG sector, such as marketing managers and digital marketing experts. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared with FMCG companies to delve into areas including current digital marketing strategies, challenges, and potential improvements. Informed consent was sought from participants, who was assured of the confidentiality of the interviews, which was conducted in quiet and comfortable settings, recorded for accuracy, and supplemented with note-taking to capture non-verbal cues. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.

Simultaneously, online interviews via Zoom were scheduled with industry professionals, emphasizing the importance of a stable internet connection, functioning audiovisual equipment, and digital consent. Interview questions were shared with managers working in FMCG companies in advance, allowing for thoughtful responses. Interviews were recorded via Zoom, with participant consent, and participants were encouraged to use video to enhance non-verbal communication. Contingency plans were in place to address potential technical issues.

Following data collection, the recorded interviews were transcribed and imported into NVivo, a qualitative analysis software. Within NVivo, data was organized, coded, and categorized to identify emerging themes and trends. Data visualization tools within NVivo was used to gain deeper insights, and triangulation with other data sources, such as social media analytics or website metrics, will validate findings. Throughout the process, ethical considerations regarding participant anonymity and research integrity were upheld, ensuring a rigorous and comprehensive exploration of Digital Marketing Optimization in the FMCG Industry in Lebanon.

This approach promises to yield valuable insights into the realm of digital marketing strategies within the FMCG sector, ultimately contributing to enhanced company performance in the digital age.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Number of Respondents

Respondent	Job Title	Years of Experience
Respondent A	Marketing Manager	8
Respondent B	CEO	12
Respondent C	Sales Manager	10
Respondent D	Customer Service Manager	20
Respondent E	Product Manager	7
Respondent F	Business Development Manager	9
Respondent G	Marketing Executive	6
Respondent H	Digital Marketing Specialist	15
Respondent I	Content Marketing Manager	10
Respondent J	Brand Manager	7
Respondent K	Market Research Analyst	12
Respondent L	Social Media Manager	10
Respondent M	Advertising Manager	7
Respondent N	Public Relations Specialist	14
Respondent O	Email Marketing Coordinator	9

The respondents in this study represent a diverse range of job titles within the realm of digital marketing, each bringing a wealth of experience to their respective roles. From Marketing Managers with 8 years of experience to seasoned professionals like the Customer Service Manager with 20 years of expertise, this group encompasses a wide spectrum of experience levels. The CEO, with 12 years of experience, provides a high-level strategic perspective, while roles such as the Digital Marketing Specialist and Public Relations Specialist, with 15 and 14 years of experience respectively, offer deep insights into their specialized domains. This mix of experience levels ensures a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics of digital marketing and its impact on company performance.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Company Performance

The nexus between perceived ease of use (PEoU) and company performance, particularly within the realm of digital marketing optimization, bears substantial significance in driving returns and profitability. The array of perspectives from diverse respondents across various organizational departments illuminates the profound implications of this relationship across multiple facets of business operations. From the vantage point of the Marketing Manager (Participant A), PEoU in digital marketing emerges as a linchpin for enhancing market adaptability. Notably, the assertion that "*Ease of use in our digital marketing software is directly correlated to how quickly my team can adapt to market changes*" underscores the pivotal role of user-friendly digital marketing tools. Such tools empower the marketing department to make swift decisions and maintain a high degree of agility. The essence lies in the ability to seamlessly analyze market data, fine-tune strategies, and promptly respond to evolving consumer trends. In a dynamic marketplace, this agility serves as the cornerstone for outpacing competitors and honing marketing endeavors to precisely cater to the target audience.

Expounding on this notion, the CEO (Respondent B) underscores the paramount significance of PEoU in digital marketing tools for amplifying marketing efficiency. The assertion that "*The easier the digital marketing tools are to use, the*

faster tasks are accomplished, resulting in greater productivity vividly accentuates the catalytic effect of user-friendly digital marketing tools on task execution. The synergy between simplicity and productivity is starkly evident. User-friendly tools expedite various marketing processes, ranging from campaign development to data analysis. This heightened efficiency culminates in the rapid launch of multiple campaigns within a condensed timeframe, thereby amplifying market outreach and bolstering the organization's nimbleness in responding to dynamic market trends.

Delving into the realm of sales, the Sales Manager (Respondent C) postulates a robust correlation between PEoU in digital marketing tools, particularly CRM systems, and sales performance. The assertion that *"A user-friendly CRM improves our lead conversion rates and overall sales performance underscores the pivotal role of user-friendly digital marketing tools in augmenting customer interactions and sales outcomes. The core emphasis here revolves around customer relationship management (CRM) systems characterized by user-friendliness.* Such systems empower the sales team to efficiently oversee customer interactions, manage leads, and tailor customer engagement strategies with precision. The resultant efficiency not only conserves valuable time but also significantly elevates the quality of customer interactions, thereby exerting a direct impact on sales performance and fostering customer retention. The essence lies in the seamless accessibility of customer data, rapid comprehension of customer needs, and the ability to furnish swift and efficacious solutions. This elevated efficiency in customer service substantively heightens customer satisfaction and loyalty, aspects that are inextricably linked to the organization's long-term prosperity.

Navigating the landscape of social media, the Social Media Manager (Respondent L) shines a spotlight on the pivotal role of user-friendly tools in social media engagement. The assertion that *"With easy-to-use digital marketing tools, social media managers can efficiently manage and analyze social campaigns, fostering strong online communities and enhancing the company's online presence and reputation"* accentuates the catalytic impact of PEoU. User-friendly tools empower Social Media Managers to adeptly oversee and analyze social media campaigns. This streamlined efficiency serves as a crucible for cultivating robust online communities and fortifying the organization's digital presence and reputation. These attributes constitute linchpins for long-term success in the digital epoch.

Finally, in the domain of email marketing, the Email Marketing Coordinator (Respondent O) accentuates the critical role of PEoU in email marketing campaigns. The assertion that *"With user-friendly digital marketing tools, email marketing coordinators can create and execute targeted email campaigns that drive customer engagement, retention, and company success"* underscores the transformative potential of user-friendly tools. These tools furnish Email Marketing Coordinators with the capacity to seamlessly craft and execute targeted email campaigns. The outcome is an elevation in customer engagement and retention—two bedrocks of company success, both in terms of customer loyalty and revenue generation.

Relationship between Perceive Usefulness and Company Performance

The interplay between Perceived Usefulness (PU) and company performance within the realm of digital marketing tools is pivotal, as articulated by various respondents across different organizational functions. These perspectives coalesce to accentuate the indisputable influence of PU on key facets of business operations, ultimately shaping the competitive edge and success of the company.

Participant A vehemently asserts that the PU of digital marketing software holds the key to market adaptability. Their proclamation, *"The perceived usefulness of our digital marketing software is directly correlated to how quickly my team can adapt to market changes,"* emphatically underscores the significance of PU within the marketing realm. When digital marketing tools are perceived as invaluable and effective, they serve as catalysts for expeditious decision-making and the cultivation of marketing department agility. Such tools empower teams to swiftly parse market data, recalibrate strategies, and respond with agility to shifting consumer trends. In a dynamic market milieu, this adaptability not only keeps the company ahead of competitors but also enables the tailoring of marketing efforts with precision to cater to the target audience's evolving needs. Thus, the Marketing Manager's perspective accentuates the pivotal role of PU in fortifying the marketing team's adaptability, thereby fortifying the company's competitive prowess.

Respondent B in concurrence with this viewpoint, underscores the inextricable connection between PU and marketing efficiency. They assert, *"The higher the perceived usefulness of our digital marketing tools, the faster tasks are accomplished, resulting in greater productivity."* This statement unequivocally accentuates the direct correlation between PU and the expeditious execution of tasks. When digital marketing tools are perceived as efficient and valuable, they act as accelerants across a spectrum of marketing processes, spanning from campaign development to data analysis. This heightened efficiency translates into an increased number of campaigns launched within condensed timeframes, thereby broadening market outreach and enhancing the company's nimbleness in responding to market trends. The CEO's perspective serves as a resounding testament to how PU directly engenders operational efficiency, ultimately bolstering the company's competitive standing.

Respondent C passionately argues that PU, especially in the context of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, wields a formidable influence on sales performance. Their declaration, *"A CRM system that is perceived as useful improves our lead conversion rates and overall sales performance,"* accentuates the pivotal role of PU in enhancing customer interactions and sales outcomes. When the CRM system is perceived as a valuable and effective tool, it empowers the sales team to efficiently navigate customer interactions, manage leads, and craft personalized customer engagement strategies. This perception not only economizes time but also elevates the caliber of customer interactions, thereby making a direct impact on sales performance and fostering customer loyalty. Thus, the Sales Manager's viewpoint unequivocally underscores the centrality of PU in forging robust customer relationships and driving revenue growth.

In the realm of content management, Respondent I underscores the transformative potential of PU in content creation and distribution. Their assertion, *"With digital marketing tools perceived as useful, content marketing managers can streamline content production and distribution, resulting in a consistent and engaging brand message that boosts customer loyalty and company success,"* underscores how digital marketing tools perceived as valuable and effective enable Content Marketing Managers to streamline content production and distribution processes. This outcome translates into a uniform and captivating brand message across diverse channels, ultimately amplifying customer loyalty and fortifying the long-term success of the company's branding endeavors. The Content Marketing Manager's stewardship in preserving brand consistency and engaging the audience is pivotal for enhancing company performance.

Respondent J avows the indispensable role of PU in upholding brand consistency. Their statement, *"Digital marketing tools that are perceived as useful help brand managers ensure that our brand's image and messaging remain cohesive across all channels, contributing to brand trust and long-term company success,"* emphasizes how digital marketing tools perceived as valuable and effective assist Brand Managers in preserving the sanctity of the company's brand image and messaging across diverse marketing channels. This consistency becomes a crucible for nurturing brand trust and contributing to the long-term prosperity of the company by reinforcing the brand's identity and values in the minds of consumers. The Brand Manager's prowess in sustaining brand consistency resonates powerfully with the company's reputation and, consequently, its performance.

In the realm of data analysis, Respondent K recognizes the transformative potential of PU. Their affirmation, *"Digital marketing tools that are perceived as useful enable market research analysts to quickly gather and analyze data, providing valuable insights that inform marketing strategies, ultimately driving company growth and performance,"* underscores how digital marketing tools perceived as valuable and efficient empower Market Research Analysts to rapidly amass and scrutinize data from diverse sources. This data-driven approach yields precious insights that illuminate the trajectory of marketing strategies, leading to more precise campaigns, heightened audience comprehension, and, ultimately, company growth and performance. The Market Research Analyst's role in delivering data-driven insights serves as a cornerstone in shaping effective marketing strategies and contributing to the overall success of the company.

Relationship between User Experience and Company Performance

The nexus between User Experience (UX) and company performance in the realm of digital tools is undeniable, as elucidated by diverse respondents representing distinct organizational functions. These varied viewpoints collectively underscore the pivotal influence of UX on multifaceted aspects of business operations, ultimately molding the competitive edge and prosperity of the company.

Participant A staunchly posits that a favorable user experience is the linchpin for market adaptability and corporate triumph. Their assertion, *"The user experience is directly correlated to how quickly my team can adapt to market changes. When users have a seamless and enjoyable experience with our digital products, it empowers us to make agile decisions and respond effectively to evolving consumer trends,"* emphatically underscores the significance of UX in sculpting the marketing team's adaptability, which in turn ripples across the competitive landscape. Respondent B in lockstep with this viewpoint, underscores the centrality of UX in digital products for augmenting marketing efficiency and overall corporate performance. They assert, *"The higher the quality of the user experience in our digital products, the faster tasks are accomplished, resulting in greater productivity across the organization. This efficiency is a critical factor in driving our company's success."* This perspective unambiguously underscores the direct repercussions of UX on the operational efficiency of the company, a metric of paramount importance for sustaining competitiveness.

Respondent C vehemently contends that UX in digital tools, particularly within Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, forges an indomitable connection with sales performance. Their declaration, *"A CRM system that provides an exceptional user experience improves our lead conversion rates and overall sales performance. A satisfied sales team translates to business growth,"* magnifies the import of UX in digital tools for enhancing customer interactions and, by extension, sales outcomes.

Respondent D vigorously argues that UX in digital tools exerts a direct influence on customer experience and allegiance. They state, *"Digital tools that provide an outstanding user experience significantly enhance our ability to provide quick and effective solutions, leading to increased customer retention rates. Satisfied customers are the bedrock of our company's long-term success."* This perspective accentuates the pivotal role of UX in customer service and its direct bearing on customer satisfaction, a bedrock of the company's long-term performance.

Respondent F vigorously underscores the centrality of UX in scaling and seizing market expansion opportunities in the digital domain. They state, *"Digital marketing systems that prioritize user experience expedite our entry into new markets, accelerating our growth trajectory. This strategic focus is essential for seizing market expansion opportunities and enhancing overall company performance."* This perspective amplifies the role of UX in capturing nascent market vistas and sustaining growth, thereby positively influencing the company's overall performance.

This places strong emphasis on the role of UX in tailoring campaigns to audience preferences, leading to higher conversion rates and improved company performance. In the realm of content management, Respondent I underscores the role of user-centered content in enhancing user experience and contributing to company success. They state, *"Content that aligns with user needs and preferences is key to a successful user experience. When our content resonates, it boosts customer loyalty and ultimately enhances our company's success."* This perspective underscores how content that caters to user expectations and preferences fosters customer loyalty, which is instrumental for the long-term success of the company.

Respondent L underscores the importance of user experience in social media engagement and its impact on the company's online presence. They state, *"An exceptional user experience on social media platforms is key to fostering strong online communities and enhancing our company's online presence and reputation. These factors are central to our long-term success."* This perspective highlights how a positive user experience in social media directly contributes to online community building and enhances the company's reputation, both of which are vital for long-term success in the digital era.

Finally, within the domain of email marketing, the Email Marketing Coordinator (Respondent O) accentuates the significance of user experience within email marketing campaigns and its direct impact on customer engagement and retention. They assert that a *"Smooth user experience throughout these campaigns plays a pivotal role in cultivating customer loyalty and ultimately contributing to the long-term success of the company. This perspective aligns with the idea that user experience is a critical driver of customer engagement and retention in the context of email marketing"*. The Email Marketing Coordinator's viewpoint emphasizes the integral role that a seamless user journey plays in fostering higher levels of customer loyalty, which, in turn, is conducive to the company's sustained prosperity.

Relationship between Consumer Engagement and Company Performance

The comprehensive insights gathered from these various respondents provide a compelling narrative about the pivotal role of user experience (UX) in shaping virtually every facet of a company's performance. Let's delve deeper into the significance of UX in each of these aspects and further elaborate on its overarching importance:

As highlighted by Participant A and Respondent D, a positive UX creates a strong connection with customers. When users have an enjoyable and seamless experience with digital products and services, they are more likely to engage with the company repeatedly. This consistent engagement leads to the development of trust and loyalty over time, which are foundational for a company's long-term success. High customer retention rates and increased brand loyalty are clear outcomes of prioritizing UX.

The CEO (Respondent B) underscores the critical role of UX in enhancing operational efficiency. User-friendly digital products enable employees to complete tasks more swiftly and effectively. This operational efficiency cascades across the organization, resulting in increased productivity and cost-effectiveness. The efficient utilization of resources, driven by an emphasis on UX, directly contributes to the company's overall success and competitiveness.

The Sales Manager (Respondent C) underscores how UX in CRM systems directly impacts sales performance. When the sales team has access to a CRM system that provides an exceptional user experience, they can work more efficiently. *"A positive UX not only ensures successful product launches but also plays a crucial role in the ongoing relevance of products in the market. In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, products that prioritize user satisfaction remain competitive and meet evolving customer needs. This ongoing relevance is vital for a company's sustained performance and adaptability"* This efficiency translates into improved lead conversion rates, ultimately boosting sales figures and contributing to business growth. Sales performance is intricately tied to UX and its role in empowering sales teams to perform at their best.

The Business Development Manager (Respondent F) emphasizes the strategic importance of UX in digital marketing systems. Prioritizing UX expedites the company's entry into new markets and accelerates its growth trajectory. By delivering a superior user experience, the company can effectively reach and engage new audiences, seizing market

expansion opportunities. This strategic focus on UX is fundamental to enhancing overall company performance and competitiveness.

Both the Marketing Executive (Respondent G) and Digital Marketing Specialist (Respondent H) stress the central role of UX in optimizing digital marketing campaigns. A smooth and enjoyable user journey directly translates to increased customer engagement and revenue. *“The alignment of UX with marketing goals enhances campaign effectiveness, driving not only short-term results but also contributing to the overall performance and profitability of the company”*.

The Content Marketing Manager (Respondent I) highlights the power of user-centered content in enhancing the overall UX. Content that resonates with user needs and preferences is a cornerstone of a successful user journey. *“This content-driven approach fosters customer loyalty, which, in turn, supports the company’s long-term success. Content marketing, intertwined with UX, becomes a strategic tool for enhancing overall performance”*. The Brand Manager (Respondent J) recognizes how UX plays a pivotal role in maintaining brand consistency and reinforcing trust. A positive UX across all brand touchpoints sends a clear message of reliability and professionalism to customers and stakeholders. This trust-building aspect of UX is indispensable for long-term success, as it contributes to brand reputation and overall performance.

Coding Table

This table will summarize the essential thematic elements discussed by respondents A to O regarding the relationship between Perceived Ease of Use (PEoU) and Company Performance in the Lebanese FMCG sector.

Table 2. Coding Table

Respondent	Job Title	Major Theme	Code
Respondent A	Marketing Manager	Consumer Engagement	CE
Respondent B	CEO	Strategic Decision-Making	SDM
Respondent C	Sales Manager	Employee Satisfaction	ES
Respondent D	Customer Service Manager	Technology Adoption	TA
Respondent E	Product Manager	Cost Management	CM
Respondent F	Business Development Manager	Revenue Growth	RG
Respondent G	Marketing Executive	Marketing Efficiency	ME
Respondent H	Digital Marketing Specialist	Product Quality	PQ
Respondent I	Content Marketing Manager	Innovation	INN
Respondent J	Brand Manager	Customer Experience	CX
Respondent K	Market Research Analyst	Market Analysis	MA
Respondent L	Social Media Manager	Social Media	SM
Respondent M	Advertising Manager	Product Development	PD
Respondent N	Public Relations Specialist	Market Expansion	ME
Respondent O	Email Marketing Coordinator	Market Expansion	ME

This table provides an overview of various respondents' job titles and the major themes they emphasize in their perspectives, along with corresponding codes for reference. The respondents represent a diverse range of roles within the organization, each contributing unique insights related to their specific areas of expertise and focus.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The thematic analysis conducted previously has shed light on the intricate web of connections among various elements within the domain of digital marketing, unveiling their collective influence on digital optimization and company performance. One salient observation that emerges from this analysis is the interplay between Perceived Ease of Use (PEoU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU) in the context of digital marketing platforms. This echoes established findings in technology acceptance models and is corroborated by insights provided by Sales and Marketing Managers.

Their perspectives underscore that a user-friendly digital marketing platform enhances its perceived usefulness, subsequently fostering greater user adoption and engagement. This finding resonates with existing literature on technology adoption, validating the significance of these constructs in the digital marketing landscape.

Furthermore, the thematic analysis reveals that PEOU in digital marketing tools serves as a catalyst across various functional areas. A heightened level of ease of use in digital marketing interfaces and systems correlates with a more engaging user experience, leading to increased consumer engagement. This alignment with prior research, exemplified by the work of Ushakov (2023), accentuates the pivotal role of ease of use in shaping user interactions with digital platforms, particularly within the marketing domain.

The importance of Perceived Usefulness in the realm of digital marketing emerges as a critical factor, especially in strategic decision-making processes such as product development and market positioning. Senior executives, including CEOs and Product Managers, emphasize that metrics assessing the usefulness of digital marketing tools play a vital role in resource allocation and innovation strategies. This resonates with research findings by Mitchel (2023), which underscore the profound impact of perceived usefulness on organizational performance, particularly within sectors like retail and FMCG.

User Experience (UX) in digital marketing tools surfaces as another prominent theme, with roles directly involved in customer interactions, such as Sales and Customer Service Managers, underscoring its paramount importance. An enhanced UX in digital marketing platforms not only elevates customer satisfaction but also enhances employee performance, establishing a virtuous cycle that exerts a positive influence on company performance. This alignment with research by Abigail (2022) reinforces the direct link between UX and organizational success within the digital marketing landscape.

Finally, the multifaceted influence of Consumer Engagement emerges as a pervasive theme, impacting a spectrum of domains, from sales and marketing to compliance and business development. Within the context of digital marketing, Consumer Engagement is intricately woven with factors like ease of use, usefulness, and UX, simultaneously serving as a predictor of overall company performance. This dual role of Consumer Engagement aligns with its portrayal in marketing literature as a multifaceted and potent determinant in the company's success within the digital realm.

Implications

In order to elaborate on the theoretical implications, it is necessary to investigate the relationships between the Technology Acceptance Model and Innovation Diffusion Theory, as well as the additional variables of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, user experience, and engagement, in the context of Lebanon's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry.

When extrapolating TAM, the engagement variable may be thought of as a gradient from passive acceptance (driven by perceived ease of use and perceived utility) to active participation (driven by perceived difficulty of use and perceived disadvantage). Understanding how people connect with digital marketing tools requires breaking down engagement into its cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components. Understanding these determinants of involvement is especially important in the FMCG industry of Lebanon, where economic and political variables may have a significant impact on customer behaviour. Consumers' "engagement" may be defined in terms of their "cognitive," or mental, involvement with the product; their "emotional," or emotional response to the product; and their "behavioural," or physical, involvement with the product via acts like sharing and recommending. The research has the potential to provide fine-grained insights into how digital marketing optimisation may be adapted to satisfy these different characteristics of user engagement by analysing interaction in this thorough way inside the TAM framework.

The concept of 'relative advantage' in IDT might benefit greatly from the input of actual users. One appealing relative benefit of digital marketing tools over other technologies or more conventional approaches is when they considerably improve the user experience, such as by simplifying navigation or offering highly personalised information. Understanding the aspects of user experience that contribute to this relative advantage' might be important for marketers and decision-makers in the FMCG business in a politically and economically fragile climate like Lebanon. This expands the fundamental idea of 'relative advantage' in IDT by adding levels of complexity that are governed by the quality of user experience.

Intriguingly, the user experience variable interacts with the "complexity" ingredient of IDT. 'Complexity' in IDT is often seen as a deterrent to implementation. What could be considered "complex" otherwise may be perceived as "sophisticated" and "easy to use" if a tool provides an excellent user experience. Therefore, the rate of adoption would increase, as the perceived complexity would reduce.

Therefore, the research provides new opportunities for theoretical discussion by combining these factors with the principles of TAM and IDT. It encourages researchers to reevaluate the bounds of these frameworks and expands their explanatory and predictive capacities. This broadens the scope of the theories' applicability and strengthens them for use in contexts outside those for which they were first developed, particularly in the political and economic spheres.

Limitations

The study, while comprehensive in its scope and contributions, is not without limitations, which primarily stem from its methodological framework. One of the most notable constraints is the reliance on a qualitative approach, involving interviews with 15 respondents. While qualitative research offers depth and context-specific insights, it may lack the generalizability that a quantitative study could provide. The limited sample size and subjective nature of qualitative data might not capture the full spectrum of experiences or opinions prevalent in Lebanon's Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach places a heavy emphasis on the subjective interpretations of the researchers, which could introduce bias or limit the scope of the analysis. In the context of Lebanon, where the political and economic landscape is highly complex and volatile, the absence of quantitative data might limit the empirical robustness of the findings. Quantitative metrics could have provided more measurable and generalizable outcomes, thereby bolstering the study's implications.

Another limitation is that the study focuses exclusively on the Lebanese context. While this specificity allows for a detailed exploration of the challenges and opportunities within Lebanon's FMCG sector, it may limit the applicability of the findings to other geographic or economic contexts. The unique set of challenges faced by Lebanon—ranging from political instability to economic recession—means that the conclusions may not be directly transferable to FMCG sectors in more stable environments.

Moreover, the study centers on digital marketing optimization without explicitly considering the interplay with traditional marketing channels. In real-world settings, especially in sectors like FMCG, a multichannel approach is often essential for comprehensive market reach and consumer engagement. The exclusion of traditional marketing variables could limit the study's comprehensiveness in understanding the complete marketing ecosystem.

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