THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING TRANSFORMATION IN ACHIEVING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE OPINIONS OF A SAMPLE OF FACULTY MEMBERS AT AL-NOUR UNIVERSITY

Jarjees Omair Abbas, Sara Azzam Saadi

Al-Noor University, Mosul, Nineveh Governorate, Iraq
*Corresponding author, email: Jarjees.Omair@alnoor.edu.iq

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Abstract
The research aims to determine the role of digital transformation in marketing in regarding to attaining the competitive edge for the educational institution. This research was carried out at Al-Nour University. At the current pace of technological advancements, it is required that the education sector, especially Al-Noor University, keeps up with technological and digital advancements along with utilizing them in its scientific, administrative, and technical functions in order to attain competitive advantage. To achieve the goals of the study, the analytical method was employed to obtain findings and relied on data sources, by circulating questionnaires, which included sample of (100) members of Al-Noor University. The analysis was done by the researchers based on statistical analysis program (SPSS v25) and (Smart PLS) program. Results indicated that there has been a highly meaningful positive connection and impact of digital marketing transformation in regards to attaining a competitive edge for Al-Noor University. The research has come to a conclusion that the shift towards digital marketing contributes to the better responsiveness of educational institutions to changes in the market and enhances their innovativeness and ability to provide great services for their clients, thus contributing to gaining competitive edge for the Al-Noor University.

1. Introduction

Considering the fast-paced advancements the world is experiencing in digital technology, digital transformation is becoming more and more crucial in helping educational organizations get ready for unexpected changes in the higher education sector. Education is seen as one of the key sectors of information technology advancement, in particular for public universities, which are some of the most negatively affected sectors due to these digital changes. Therefore, it is extremely important to create modern digital applications that will help boost productivity and help Al-Noor University's successful development without losing effectiveness. Digital transformation in marketing is viewed as one of the key factors contributing to increasing the communication level with students, forming a positive image for targeted universities and expanding the group of people benefiting from the academic offers of Al-Noor University through providing high-quality services based on the usage of digital technologies.

In accordance with the aforementioned, the present research attempts to address a question related to the influence of digital transformation in marketing on the establishment of competitive advantages in Al-Noor University, investigating the ways of using its dimensions in order to determine their impact on the attraction of students and the strengthening of the university's image as well as the effectiveness of Al-Noor University in the modern global educational system.

As the above-mentioned background depicts, digital transformation in marketing is identified as a beneficial technique for universities that helps them achieve their goals and acquire

competitive advantages. Al-Noor University symbolizes a university that strives for excellence in organizations and outstanding education in a highly competitive local and regional ambiance, which requires the adoption of modern digital innovations in its marketing efforts to strengthen its ability to attract students and offer them quality education. The study is divided into 5 major parts. The first part covers research methodology. The second part covers definition of digital marketing transformation. The third part covers the notion of competitive advantage. The fourth part includes statistical analysis while the fifth part presents conclusions and recommendations.

1.1. Research Problem

The modern world is experiencing swift advancement related to the use of digital technology in many areas of Iraqi universities, particularly in the field of marketing since today marketing began to depend on using mainly digital channels to strengthen communication with receivers of educational services as well as strengthening universities' competitive position. However, a number of educational institutions, especially private ones, do not succeed in using digital marketing transformation to strengthen their position in the sphere of higher education. Nowadays, universities are in a difficult situation, and are obliged to modernize their technology and attract students and academic potential. However, there is not enough general awareness of the significance of digital marketing transformation in universities, as well as a lack of clarity of the impact of the digital marketing transformation and its aspects (transforming leadership, organizational capabilities, conditions of work, marketing culture) on competitive advantage with its aspects (cost, quality, responsiveness to customers, creativity) in universities according to the view of academics.

Consequently, the research issue is defined as follows: What is the contribution of digital marketing transformation to the competitive advantage from the standpoint of the professors of Al-Noor University? To address this issue, the main research question is divided into the following minor questions: To what extent does Al-Noor University utilize the dimensions of digital marketing transformation according to its professors? To what level has Al-Noor University achieved its competitive advantage in its dimensions according to its professors? Is there a relationship between digital marketing transformation and the achievement of competitive advantage? Finally, is there a causal relationship of digital marketing transformation regarding the gaining of competitive advantage?

1.2. Research Importance

This study has a significant import owing to the fact that it is associated with a novel concept in marketing, which is digital marketing transformation. This study also deals with another important concept, competitive advantage, especially for those private universities where competition is fierce and changes occur within a short span of time. Therefore, this study will certainly contribute to the widening of the scholarly literature in connection with digital marketing transformation as a significant variable for higher educational establishments since it presents a scientific framework explaining the essence of the relationship between digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage at Al-Noor University, as well as providing a valuable cognitive aspect for scholars. This study reveals the influence of digital marketing transformation on various aspects of marketing strategies used for attaining competitive advantage by Al-Noor University, and opens up the way for further scientific research. The rapid evolution of technologies creates a rather competitive environment for institutions where not only private universities are involved in gaining students and collaborating with the society. Digital marketing transformation is one of the factors allowing institutions to adjust to digital transformation because it has been proved that such transformation is conducive to better responsiveness to changes on the market. Competitive advantage is an important goal for any educational institution because it enables the institution to outperform its rivals in terms of efficacy and prestige since the connection between digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage is an addition to scholars' understanding.

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are to provide a detailed theoretical framework regarding the transformation of digital marketing and the competitive edge, assess how much Al-Noor University is aware of the different research variables, that is, digital marketing transformation and

competitive advantage, identify the relationship between digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage as well as the nature of the effect, and finally reach a series of conclusions and recommendations that can be useful for the case of the university under study.

1.4. The Hypothetical Scheme of the Research

Addressing the research problem requires assuming a hypothetical scheme that clarifies the logical relationship of the research variables, as shown in Figure 1 [Digital Marketing Transformation → Competitive Advantage].

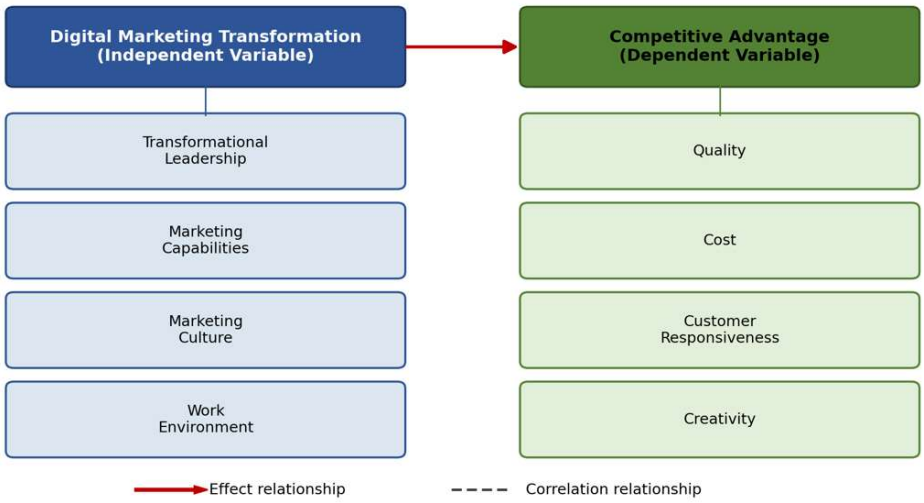


Figure 1. Logical relationship of the research variables

1.5. Research Hypotheses

To address the research issues, a series of hypotheses has been developed. The first hypothesis proposes that the correlation between digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage is substantial, giving rise to sub-hypotheses that deal with the correlation between the elements of digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage. Furthermore, the second hypothesis proposes that the influence of digital marketing transformation on competitive advantage is evidenced with respect to greater sub-hypotheses that deal with the influence of the elements of digital marketing transformation on competitive advantage.

1.6. The Concept of Digital Marketing Transformation

1.6.1. Concept of Digital Marketing Transformation

Digital marketing transformation is regarded by some researchers (Feroz & Chiravuri, 2021) as the process that derives from the implementation of digital and information technologies where changes happen in the educational institution, affecting its organizational assessment immensely through IoT, big data analytics, cloud computing, mobile technologies, and artificial intelligence, enabling the educational institution to reach its clients' satisfaction level with the digital services provided by such institutions. In addition to that, the authors explain that it is a transition from traditional to smart e-systems in all operations of the educational institutions and plays an important role in realizing the competitive advantage of educational institutions. Czerska (2023) highlight that it is one of the essential points of the significance of digital marketing transformation in the educational institution, and they mean that it means anticipating customer needs in an optimal way and forming customer communities contributing to the transfer of value to customers and society. In general, digital transformation plays an important role in social and economic development, leading to the competitive advantage of educational institutions as well (Wang, 2024).

The definition of the term "digital marketing transformation" thus may be interpreted as the steps undertaken by universities in order to use digital technology for achieving educational objectives, namely, in the presence of the electronic availability of programs and refusal from paper bureaucracy, the manufacturing of which leads to the development of the concept of digital marketing transformation within educational establishments, hence ensuring considerable competitive advantages of the educational organization.

1.6.2. Importance of Digital Marketing Transformation

The shift to digital marketing is vital since it anticipates needs and builds communities of consumers who communicate market value. The digital marketing shift has given its impact on social and economic recovery as well as provided a way to gain competitive advantages with the help of digital tools and means by a school, which in turn results in the satisfaction of the clients of the educational institution's e-service. The essence of the digital marketing shift is presented in the following words (Czerska, 2023): 1) It is imperative for educational institutions to reevaluate their function and principles. 2) This signifies a crucial transformation of the fundamental structure through which organizations create value. 3) The process of digital transformation brings about a groundbreaking change in the way of thinking and utilizing the existing systems and tools, providing part or all of the educational institution with a new position in terms of value to it, which contributes significantly to achieving a competitive advantage for the educational institution thanks to its services. 4) The transformation of digital marketing enables the educational institution to involve customers in the process of creating educational services and at the same time helps the creation process of the institution itself.

Komninos et al. (2024) also believe that the importance of digital marketing transformation has a great impact on developing the quality of life for the educational institution through several channels, for example: 1) Quick Access to Information: digital technology allows customers to access information on a multitude of subjects pertaining to the education and employment sectors, which in turn increases individual's abilities to make more informed choices and take more control over their lives, making them live a better life. 2) To improve digital services means to change the whole sector of services and make them more effective in practice; digital transformation results in better outputs. 3) It is easier to receive educational services and research services; the required processes have become easier thanks to the development of electronic marketing as well as the appearance of electronic portals, which allow customers to pay bills or get permits anytime and anywhere. 4) Strengthening of social ties: digital technology allows people to improve communication and connect with each other at great distances.

1.6.3. Dimensions of Digital Marketing Transformation

According to the study conducted by Nadkarni and Prügl (2021), dimensions of digital change in the area of marketing consist of (transformational leadership, work environment, organizational capabilities, marketing capabilities and marketing culture). For this study, research works of Nadkarni and Prügl (2021) are adopted and considered suitable for further analysis as it is discussed in the following sections:

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has a favorable influence on the usage of digital marketing, as it is an approach that involves motivating and encouraging people to perform at their best. Transformational leadership behavior is associated with technology adoption, as transformational leaders help employees see the advantages of digital marketing, thus giving their institution a competitive edge through innovations. Moreover, some research suggested that transformational leadership can positively impact the adoption of technology by creating a culture of creativity and motivating people to implement it; transformational leaders try to prompt the employees to look for new approaches instead of getting lost in bureaucracy when providing services (Akram et al., 2023)

Marketing Capabilities

According to Hokmabadi et al. (2024), the emphasis on organizational capabilities, especially flexibility and adaptability, is evident when it comes to overcoming interruptions. They also discuss organizational capabilities in relation to digital transition and continuation of business as well as

the task of identifying prospective opportunities against the background of capitalizing on existing abilities. Thus, based on the recognized definition of dynamic capability as the capacity to navigate towards change and transformation, it is stated that educational establishments having the ability to balance exploitation and exploration have the competence to withstand changes and transformations.

Marketing Culture

When computing strategies used in digital marketing for the education sector, the process of transition refers to the transition of individuals, employees, teams, and cultures. The essential marketing abilities can be changed into total inclusion of sustainability into every stage of the marketing-process, whereby the transition is ensured with aid of digital marketing tools which help teach the staff and management how to develop new technologies that are impossible to copy. An excellent example of the data management tools can be seen in the beginning of the process of transformation of the educational institution based on digital improvement, as the data management tools helps the institutions to become competitive in the modern market (Apasrawirote et al, 2022).

Work Environment

In modern times, educational establishments are embracing new digital technologies and platforms in order to utilize all available data, working together with digital technologies and platforms to adjust and support the development of the platform economy and find the potential for growth. Any information about startup programs and accelerators is included here, since digital transformation is considered a kind of entrepreneurial process in which educational establishments that are interested in digital transformation would intentionally destroy the former successful business model. Therefore, educational institutions that leverage the power of digital technology believe that their success greatly depends on the quantity and quality of data that they receive, using this for strategic objectives of digital transformation bringing a competitive advantage to Al-Nour University as an educational service provider (Vaska et al., 2021).

1.7. Competitive Advantage

1.7.1. Concept of Competitive Advantage

The concept of competitive advantage involves the presence of capabilities and resources that set an educational organization apart from its counterparts and allow it to use its technological and human resources in an efficient manner than its rivals, leading to an outstanding performance in the area of education and research services offered. According to both Al-Muhammadi (2019) and Al-Quraishi (2020), competitive advantage comprises characteristics and capabilities that rival educational institutions do not possess, expressed in terms of high-quality educational services provided that add values, and thus help educational institutions to stay competitive in the branch of education, as well as to meet society's and students' needs by improving the quality, flexibility, costs, time, and creativity of the services rendered. In the opinion of Widodo and Hayu (2021), competitive advantage involves the long-term actions of an organization aimed at enhancing the benefits of products or services delivered to clients. Abbas and Yaqoub (2023) defines competitive advantage as the ability of an educational institution to perform activities in an efficient manner that ensures it a lower cost of providing services as compared with its opponents and to carry out these functions in a unique way that gives it the quality advantage in business.

Given the information that has been shared previously, it is possible to note that competitive advantage refers to a number of tools and means owned by an institution that make it possible for it to obtain a distinctive position in the marketplace of higher education. Digital marketing transformation acts as a factor that enhances competitive advantage of the institution through the adoption of advanced digital technologies including electronic platforms, social media, and big-data analytics, which facilitate the effective utilization of available resources, increasing the efficiency of marketing activity, and enhancing the ability to reach students that will ensure competitive advantage in the higher education market.

1.7.2. Importance of Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is crucial for gaining and upholding competitive success since it forms the economic foundation of any economic organization, enabling it to gain above-average profits. At the same time, it facilitates the formation and activation of production management systems for an organization to preserve its cost competitiveness. Competitive advantage has become the main strategic category capable of creating superior economics leading to higher efficiency (Kusuma et al., 2021). The advantages of applying competitive advantage include the fact that it acts as a system allowing the creation of strategic indicators for an economic organization and the use of strategic management methods such as strategic reactiveness and strategic intuition. Moreover, it helps redistribute resources in constantly changing environments, which contributes to improving economic organization's strategic decisions by introducing appropriate changes into them (Heimonen & Takala, 2019).

1.7.3. Dimensions of Competitive Advantage

The educational organization pays attention to these aspects while offering educational services and meeting market demands to gain advantage over competition and create sustainable value for the consumer. In providing explanation on competitive advantage characteristics (Nima et al., 2020; Ali, 2016; Al-Taweel & Al-Abadi, 2014), one can distinguish the following:

Quality

Researchers' opinions differ in reaching a consensus regarding a unified definition of quality. Some described quality in terms of the development of the quality of design so that it meets the needs of students and society. They did this by transforming the social needs into design aims and quality assurance benchmarks, satisfying the beneficiaries by offering educational and research services and gaining competitive advantage in the higher education sector.

Cost

One of the key aspects of how the quality of educational services influences the achievement of competitive advantages of educational establishments is cost. This aspect covers the effects of service quality on competitive advantages, which is linked to the ability of an educational institution to deliver educational services of high quality with additional value that meets the needs of beneficiaries (students and society) and provides a competitive edge based on value perception. In this case, quality improves operational efficiency and reduces the unit cost of educational services because of waste reduction, effective resource use, and improved efficiency of educational and administrative processes; the role of digital marketing transformation in this aspect is significant (Alsaqqa, 2017).

Customer Responsiveness

This refers to educational institutions' delivery capability in responding to emerging needs of consumers by changing certain resources and methods of rendering educational and scientific services. One of conditions of becoming customer-responsive is being able to provide a service in a timely manner, in accordance with a schedule agreed with the customer, and therefore this forms the basis of competition among providers in the market, as they try to minimize any delay and deliver the service as quickly as possible instead (Hassan, Kanani, & Assi, 2018).

Creativity

Creativity is defined as the emergence of novel ideas in educational services that drive educational organizations to develop their processes. With regard to gaining competitive advantage, creativity is understood as the ability of educational institutions to create new services and service-providing methods and goals to gain an advantage over their competitors

2. Method

2.1. Data Collection Method

For theoretical issues, the findings from scholars obtained from many scientific publications were utilized.

In the field aspect, the questionnaire was used as the primary means of gathering primary data. The questionnaire was designed based on the accessibility of language and the completeness of all research indicators included in the measurement. It utilized a five-point Likert Scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) with a scoring system ranging from 5 to 1 and an expected average of 3.

2.2. Description of the Research Population and Sample

Selecting the research population is one of the key cornerstones that determine whether a field study will succeed or fail. This process calls for caution in terms of the selection process. Al-Nour University staff members formed the population of the research, and (125) questionnaires were circulated among selected faculty members of Al-Nour University. The two researchers monitored the circulation and collection of the forms where applicable forms for analysis were (100) and the rest were rejected due to incomplete responses.

In reference to the sample used for research, as seen in Table 1, an appropriate sample selection has importance and necessity in ensuring the relevant findings reflecting the problem at hand, for describing and diagnosing the individuals of the sample under study leads to facts clarifying their suitability for research execution.

Table 1. Description and Diagnosis of the Sample Individuals Studied

Variable	Category	Count	%
Gender	Male	60	60%
Gender	Female	40	40%
Age Group	28–38 years	10	10%
Age Group	39–49 years	30	30%
Age Group	50–59 years	25	25%
Age Group	60 years and above	35	35%
Academic Title	Assistant Lecturer	15	15%
Academic Title	Lecturer	30	30%
Academic Title	Assistant Professor	35	35%
Academic Title	Professor	20	20%

Source: Prepared by the authors.

It is evident from Table 1 that:

With respect to gender, the overwhelming majority of the respondents were male, accounting for (60%) of the total sample which is expected because male faculty make up for the largest portion of composition of faculty.

People belonging to the age category of above (60 years) represented the highest share of the sample proportioning at (35%), implying that most of the age group belongs to the experience category and close to retirement, whereas individuals from the group of (39-49 years) came second with (30%) of the total sample, followed by (50-59 years) accounting for (25%) of the sample and then the least group comprised of (28-38 years) of the sample

2.3. Educational Attainment

At the outset of the study, it can be seen from above that majority of the members being studied hold the title of assistant professor (35%) while the ones Who hold the title of lecturer constitute (30%) while those who possess the designation of professor are (20%). On the other hand, people with the assistant lecturer title are the least in numbers constituting (15%).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Analysis of Correlation Relationships between Research Variables

3.1.1. Examination of the Relationship of Correlation at the General Level

The Initial Hypothesis: A correlation exists between the aspect of digital marketing transformation and competitive edge:

According to the findings of Table 2, it can be seen that there is a strong and positive correlation between the variable (digital marketing transformation and dependent variable competitive advantage), as the value of the correlation coefficient is (0.687). It has been noted that this value is statistically significant based on the value of probability (P-value), which has been found equal to (0.000), and is less than (0.05). Thus, the obtained result supports the hypothesis declaring the existence of a statistically significant relationship of correlation between the digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage.

Table 2. Value of the Correlation Coefficient between Digital Marketing Transformation and Marketing Decisions

Variable 1	Relationship Direction	Variable 2	Correlation Value	P-value
Digital Marketing Transformation	<-->	Competitive Advantage	0.687	0.000

N = 100

3.1.2. Analysis of the Correlation Relationship at the Partial Level

The results of Table 3 indicate the following:

There exists a statistically significant correlation relationship between the dimension (transformational leadership) and the dependent variable (competitive advantage), evidenced by the correlation coefficient (0.444), significant at (P-value = 0.000 < 0.05); thus, hypothesis about a significant correlation of this dimension with marketing decisions is accepted.

A positive and significant correlation between the dimension (marketing skills) and the dependent variable (competitive advantage) exists, evidenced by the correlation coefficient (0.529), significant at (P-value = 0.000 < 0.05); therefore, the thesis that this dimension is significantly correlation with marketing decisions is accepted.

There is a positive and significant correlation between the dimension of (marketing culture) and the dependent variable of competitive advantage, evidenced by the correlation coefficient of (0.692), significant at (P-value = 0.000 < 0.05); therefore, the thesis about the correlation of this dimension with competitive advantage is accepted.

There is a positive and significant correlation relationship between the independent variable (work environment) and dependent variable (competitive advantage) exists with a correlation coefficient of (0.514), significant at (P-value = 0.000 < 0.05); hence the hypothesis about the correlation of this dimension with marketing decisions is accepted.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficient Values between the Dimensions of Digital Marketing Transformation and Competitive Advantage

Variable 1	Relationship Direction	Variable 2	Correlation Value	P-value
Transformational Leadership	<-->	Competitive Advantage	0.444	0.000
Marketing Capabilities	<-->	Competitive Advantage	0.529	0.000
Marketing Culture	<-->	Competitive Advantage	0.692	0.000
Work Environment	<-->	Competitive Advantage	0.514	0.000

N = 100

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the statistical analysis.

3.2. Analysis of the Effect Relationship of Digital Marketing Transformation on Competitive Advantage

3.2.1. Assessment of the Impact of Digital Marketing Transformation on Competitive Advantage at the Overall Level

The findings from Table 4 show:

There is a noteworthy positive effect of the independent variable (digital marketing transformation) on the dependent variable (marketing decisions) revealed by a regression coefficient of (0.562) and validated based on the P-value; therefore, the hypothesis stating the effect of digital marketing transformation on competitive advantage is accepted.

The value of the coefficient of determination indicates that (47%) of the changes occurring in competitive advantage can be attributed to the dimensions of digital marketing transformation.

Table 4. Results of the Effect of Digital Marketing Transformation on Competitive Advantage

Independent Variable	B	Std. Error S.e(B)	R^2	F (P-value)	t-calculated	Significance (P-value)
(Constant)	1.903	0.231	0.472	96.579 (0.000)	8.249	0.000
Digital Marketing Transformation	0.562	0.057	-	-	9.827	0.000

Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantage, Source: Prepared by the researchers.

3.2.2. Analysis of Effect Enacted at the Partial Level

Table 5 results indicate:

That there existent are positive and significant effects of both (marketing capabilities) and (working environment) on (competitive advantage) with regression coefficients being (0.107) and (0.317) respectively, significant according to the P-value (both being < 0.05); thus, accepting the sub-hypothesis stating about significant effect of marketing capabilities and working environment on the achievement of competitive advantage by the educational institution.

Furthermore, there is a significant effect of both (transformational leadership) and (marketing culture) on (competitive advantage) with P-values being (0.046) and (0.062) respectively; thus accepting the sub-hypothesis regarding significant effect of transformational leadership and marketing culture on competitive advantage of the educational institution.

Moreover, the coefficient of determination in Table 5 shows that (52%) of the changes occurring to competitive advantage are due to the dimensions of digital marketing transformation.

Table 5. Results of the Effect of Digital Marketing Transformation on Competitive Advantage (Partial level)

Independent Variable	B	Std. Error S.e(B)	t-calculated	Significance (P-value)
(Constant)	2.027	0.447	4.620	0.000
Transformational Leadership	0.046	0.102	0.953	0.344
Marketing Capabilities	0.317	0.126	0.417	0.678
Marketing Culture	0.062	0.101	3.388	0.001
Work Environment	0.107	0.087	2.799	0.007

R^2 = 0.523; F = 28.802 (P-value = 0.000)

Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantage
Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the above sources.

3.2.3. Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The findings indicated that the assessment model satisfied both reliability and validity criteria on the study variables (digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage) since all the coefficient values were greater than (0.70). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are also very high since they exceed the minimum value of (0.70) which provides proof of a strong internal

consistency, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values are again higher than the required value (0.50) which verifies the convergent validity and reliability of the measurement model used in this study.

Table 6. External Loading Indicators, Composite Reliability (CR), and Final Decision on the Sample Used

Indicator	External Loading (^)	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Final Decision
Independent Variable (Digital Marketing Transformation)	-	0.612	0.879	0.901	Accepted
Transformational Leadership	0.813	-	0.841	0.863	Accepted
Marketing Capabilities	0.847	-	0.856	0.878	Accepted
Marketing Culture	0.831	-	0.867	0.889	Accepted
Work Environment	0.798	-	0.833	0.855	Accepted
Dependent Variable (Competitive Advantage)	-	0.589	0.861	0.884	Accepted
Quality	0.791	-	0.845	0.868	Accepted
Cost	0.803	-	0.837	0.859	Accepted
Customer Responsiveness	0.817	-	0.852	0.874	Accepted
Creativity	0.826	-	0.844	0.866	Accepted

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SmartPLS v26.

In Figure 2, marked is the validity and reliability across the dimensions of the variables of digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage. All the values range between the interval of 0.791 to 0.847. The results are of a high standard in scientific research, consequence the fact that these values show high validity with regards to the measurement tool applied together with strong reliability of study variables concerning the aspects of digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage. In the reported figures marketing capabilities ranked highest reporting a correlation of 0.847 which indicates a fairly strong relationship with respect to its effect on the studied variable of competitive advantage. The twos are followed by the marketing culture that reported 0.830 correlation for the variable of digital transformation showing its importance for the process. Quality got reported the lowest score in this measure having the value of 0.791 which is still quite acceptable in scientific terms. The obtained values from both the variables show a considerable overlap meaning that the dimensions of digital marketing transformation in this research can be considered to be scientifically credible and reliable, which means that a positive relationship between the digital marketing transformation and the competitive advantage is observable in the organization under study.

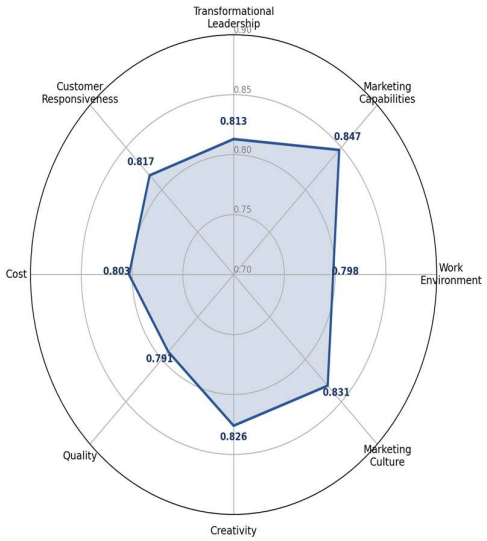


Figure 2. Validity and reliability (external loadings) across the dimensions of digital marketing transformation and competitive advantage, (prepared by the researchers based on SmartPLS v26)

4. Conclusions

The current research arrived at several conclusions, as follows: 1) The research results indicated that universities that employ advanced digital marketing transformation techniques have abilities to innovate more and deliver educational services more efficiently than those institutions that use these techniques only to a limited extent. Furthermore, the use of digital marketing information in making marketing decisions is a major contributor to the efficiency improvement and strategic planning enhancement. 2) The research indicated that transformation of digital marketing is not an organization's decision but rather a strategic need in order to be successful, sustain and gain competitive edge for higher education institutions. By using advanced digital technologies organization can react promptly to beneficiaries' demands and environmental changes, thus boosting its flexibility and competitive advantage over rival organizations. 3) According to the university studied, the role played by transformational leadership has been considered a key success factor in digital marketing transformation in private universities as the university realizes the significance of the transformational leadership behaviors of the leaders who possess the skills to guide the digital vision and follow up changes in the educational sector. 4) The university studied is aware of the importance of digital marketing transformation in enhancing strategic entrepreneurship in the education sector and aims to establish the entrepreneurial culture and motivate the leaders to keep up with digital marketing transformation in universities. 5) The university under research gives importance to the entrepreneurial culture, introducing the innovative values, motivating the out-of-the-box thinking, and raising the level of university performance while paying attention to the effective managerial of the resources. Accordingly, several recommendations are presented as follows: 1) Leaders in administration at Al-Noor University must conduct a series of ongoing educational seminars and workshops where they can teach employees new skills in the area of digital technology inspiring certain behaviors necessary for the implementation of strategic entrepreneurship to reach the set goals. 2) Al-Noor University must follow the trends in the area of digital transformation in the university sector to achieve successful entrepreneurship capability in making successful strategic decisions that connect digital marketing transformation with the institution’s long-term strategic goals. The university leaders must also provide multiple employees with proper awareness concerning digital technology and give them skills and abilities to accomplish their tasks. 3) The first step in the implementation of entrepreneurial leadership model at Al-Noor University is to choose leaders with mission-oriented perspective, who can flexibly respond to the challenges of the environmental and business circumstances. 4) Al-Noor University should focus on reinforcing its positioning as a leader in digital marketing transformation through the use of digital technologies which should work based on its characteristics within the organization. 5) University administration should sponsor creation of the digital culture for staff at all levels that would allow the work in an efficient manner and achieve organizational goals.

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