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Enlightened Marketing and Its Impact on Achieving the Organization's Competitive Advantage

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Abstract: This research addresses a practical issue: how private enterprises in Iraq can achieve competitive value and secure enduring customer loyalty. The study's significance stems from the lack of prior research examining the impact of "informed marketing" on competitive advantage within the specific companies surveyed. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap and contribute to the existing body of knowledge on these variables. The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of informed marketing on achieving a competitive advantage within a selection of private enterprises in Iraq. The ultimate goal is to understand how informed marketing strategies can lead to sustainable competitive value for the organization and foster long-term customer loyalty. The study employed a questionnaire to collect data. The survey targeted marketing professionals from the selected private firms, with a total sample size of 117 respondents. The collected data was then analyzed using the SPSS software to derive the study's results and conclusions. The study found a positive association between informed marketing and competitive advantage. Specifically, the research concluded that as marketing practices become more "informed," the company's ability to achieve a competitive advantage increases.

Keywords: Marketing, Enlightened Marketing, Competitive Advantage, Quality, Differentiation, Innovative Marketing.

1. Introduction

Numerous firms have seen significant criticism recently for their ecologically detrimental marketing strategies and actions, especially in light of the emergence of environmental trends. This criticism arises from the marketing function's role in environmental degradation, exemplified by the detrimental impacts of contemporary industries that have contaminated rivers, lakes, and soil through waste disposal and the inability to recycle, some of which has adversely affected consumer health. This necessitates the development of a novel marketing strategy that aligns the interests of individual consumers seeking affordable, safe products; the manufacturing company aiming for adequate returns on its investments relative to its risk tolerance; and society at large, which seeks to mitigate environmental damage. Consequently, the emerging issue for organizations is enlightened marketing, necessitating a thorough reassessment of their marketing strategies in response to complex scenarios. This resulted in the formulation of a comprehensive, clearly articulated strategy that integrates social and environmental responsibility, aimed at equipping the required elements to address developing circumstances in the new global order. Consequently, the company's establishment of its objectives and execution of an environmental analysis to identify its operational and competitive domain acts as a framework for selecting and implementing the principles of enlightened marketing. Consequently, the company's implementation of a progressive

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marketing plan will guarantee its survival and sustainability, while affording it the possibility to penetrate worldwide markets and establish robust positions relative to its competitors. This will be accomplished by adjusting to and aligning with the evolving competitive needs, which have transformed to align with sustainable development principles, so ensuring relevance to customers, society, and the environment.

This will further augment the actuality of enhancing performance regarding value generation, society, and customers. Embracing the enlightened marketing concept has enabled countless worldwide and regional organizations to attain significant market advantages, achieve excellence, and secure a substantial competitive edge. Consequently, contemporary organizations must embody innovation and enlightenment, securing a competitive edge that ensures their long-term market position. The primary question addressed, which is the focal point of the study, was posed above: What is enlightened marketing? In what ways might enlightened marketing facilitate the attainment of a competitive advantage for the organization? The study seeks to illustrate the influence of enlightened marketing on competitive advantage, ascertain the prevalence of enlightened marketing within organizations, evaluate employees' understanding of this concept, and assess the degree of its implementation in alignment with the theories of marketing pioneers. Furthermore, it aims to elucidate the correlation and impact relationships between enlightened marketing and competitive advantage within the studied community and across various dimensions.

2. Materials and Methods

The study's hypothetical framework delineates a series of logical links and influences, which may be quantitative or descriptive, and which formulate a model in accordance with the study's topic and objectives. The research aims to provide a detailed framework of all primary and secondary variables in their whole, facilitating the assessment of correlations and impacts among them, both individually and collectively. The outline has two categories of variables:

1. The independent variable is enlightened marketing, examined via five dimensions: consumer-oriented marketing, innovative marketing, value marketing, social marketing, and sense of purpose marketing.
2. The dependent variable is competitive advantage, examined via four dimensions: cost, quality, flexibility, and delivery.

Hypotheses

To fulfill the study's aims and evaluate its hypothetical framework, the research depended on a hypothesis articulated as follows: The characteristics of enlightened marketing have a statistically significant impact on attaining competitive advantage for the research sample.

3. Results

Enlightened Marketing:

Enlightened marketing originated in the eighteenth century, along with many enlightened endeavors. The notion of enlightened marketing parallels societal marketing, with the distinction that the former seeks social benefits, whilst the latter guarantees them inherently. Conversely, these two variables enhance ethical marketing and the safeguarding of social interests, and they may be utilized interchangeably.

Enlightened marketing advocates for long-term customer welfare, asserting that immediate demands may not align with the consumer's enduring interests and must ultimately benefit society at large. Enlightened marketing posits that a company's duty is to discern the requirements, desires, and interests of the target market and to provide the desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than rivals, while preserving or enhancing the well-being of both consumers and society. (Jassim et al) Marketers must endeavor to fulfill the wants and aspirations of their target audiences while preserving and improving the well-being of customers and society at large. A company's exclusive

emphasis on transactional connections with clients may be unsuitable for sustained success. A marketing plan must provide value to consumers while preserving or improving the well-being of both the consumer and society. (Kogan) This philosophy employs the five concepts of value marketing, consumer-oriented marketing, creative marketing, social marketing, and sense of purpose marketing to enhance the long-term efficacy of the marketing system (Mofokeng). Enlightened marketing posits that a company's marketing efforts should optimally enhance the long-term efficacy of the marketing system (Gulati). It is a marketing strategy that develops consumer-focused initiatives that provide social benefits and foster long-term value generation.

Aspects of Enlightened Marketing: delineated five elements of enlightened marketing: [1]

1. Consumer-centric marketing: This entails that a corporation formulates its marketing strategies according to the consumer's perspectives and aspirations, therefore directly addressing their requirements. Marketing strategy must be developed to align with customers' interests and demands. In summary, customer sentiment is the paramount consideration in developing a marketing plan. A comprehensive understanding of the target consumer is essential for the company's marketing efforts, alongside the pursuit of customer value in alignment with competitive development.
2. Innovative marketing: This pertains to the implementation of novel or unorthodox concepts in marketing strategies. It may be regarded as the effective utilization of novel concepts; it can be implemented as a system, acquired, and executed. Innovative marketing may concentrate on the product aspect, whether a thing or service, the pricing aspect, the promotional aspect, the distribution aspect, or a combination of all these factors concurrently. This form of innovation targets the components of the marketing mix and may involve advancements in marketing research. Innovative marketing can also manifest through the endorsement of a certain subject. It comprises a series of inventive initiatives aimed at promoting new items and introducing them to specific customers through market research on consumer preferences and requirements.
3. Value Marketing: This denotes the advantages a consumer may derive from a product or service that fulfills their requirements and ensures contentment. A corporation must be satisfied with its marketing endeavors, which enhance customer value through numerous activities, including packaging, therefore fostering consumer loyalty and securing long-term patronage. [2] The organization must develop marketing strategies that extend beyond customer happiness to yield societal advantages for the target consumers [3]
4. Social Marketing: The notion of social marketing enhances the social responsibility of commercial entities. It is the process of devising marketing strategies that result in attaining social efficacy.
5. Mission-Based Marketing: This entails that organizations must articulate their goal and direction in a manner that differentiates them from competing entities. This is what they must elucidate in their marketing endeavors, which may be perceived by the consumer.

Competition Advantage:

Currently, all enterprises encounter formidable and varied competition pressures across all markets. They find it challenging to run and dominate marketplaces independently without other entities, regardless of whether these firms provide analogous or opposite items. Consequently, firms aspiring for success, excellence, and resilience must either compete with or match their rivals by establishing a competitive edge that sets them apart. [4]

Competitive advantage is the capacity to deliver products and services more efficiently and effectively than rival firms in the market, resulting in consumer happiness and contentment. It is also described as the capacity to generate enhanced value for

consumers while securing economic returns for oneself. Differentiation in recognized advantages, expenses, and functional benefits strengthens a company's industry position and designates it as a cost leader or exemplar [5]. It is recognized as the expertise, technology, or distinctive resource that empowers the organization to provide valuable outcomes and advantages to customers that surpass those of competitors, thereby affirming its uniqueness and differentiation from these rivals, as perceived by customers who acknowledge this distinction, which offers them superior benefits and values compared to other competitors. This endeavor seeks to attain exceptional performance via a differentiation strategy that delivers unparalleled customer value distinct from competitors, a cost leadership strategy applicable either broadly across the industry or narrowly within a specific market segment, or through a focus strategy [6].

A company's capacity to devise and execute strategies that establish a favorable position compared to its competitors in the same sector, thereby attaining a competitive advantage through the optimal use of technical, material, organizational, and informational resources, along with the organization's inherent capabilities and competencies [7]. It is also characterized as the competencies and expertise held by the firm that are challenging for rivals to replicate or acquire. It encompasses ethical considerations within the organization, which signify the robustness of interpersonal relationships, the unity of workgroups, and their dedication to the company's interests, its reputation, and societal perceptions or the public's mental image of it [8].

The Significance of Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage refers to the optimum utilization of resources and skills. Competitive advantage can be attained via cost or differentiation tactics. Competitive advantage has been a focal point for corporations, as managers devote much effort to contemplating its implications, given its critical influence on the future of their enterprises. Moreover, investigations and emphasis on this subject, along with companies collaborating with research institutions, seek to unveil the mechanisms of achieving a competitive advantage and identifying strategies for its maintenance, such as acquiring scarce resources or formulating organizational management techniques, among others. [9].

Aspects of Competitive Advantage: Due to the significance of the dimensions of a company's competitive edge, they were incorporated as sub-dimensions of the dependent variable in this study, namely competitive advantage. They align with the study's purpose, as detailed below: [10]

1. **Cost dimension:** Organizations may save expenses by optimizing manufacturing capacity, enhancing product quality, innovating design, and mastering production procedures. This assists management in endorsing and strengthening the company's plan to differentiate itself from rivals in terms of cost-effectiveness. [11] Cost-based competition necessitates that the corporation concentrate on minimizing all cost components, including labor, production, resource expenditures, and waste, with the objective of decreasing the per-unit cost of the product or service.
2. **Quality dimension:** Quality denotes the reliability and dependability of the products/services offered by the organization to fulfill their intended purposes. The multiplier impact of superior quality in establishing competitive advantage is seen in the company's offerings. Premium items enhance their worth in the perception of consumers. They are a crucial cornerstone of the organization, enabling the assurance of client loyalty and the enhancement of product or service consumption.
3. **Flexibility dimension:** This critical dimension pertains to a company's capacity to provide a diverse range of items promptly, alongside its capability to enhance present products and refine procedures for the introduction of new offerings.
4. **Delivery dimension:** The growing significance of timeliness for customers has intensified rivalry among enterprises depending on delivery speed. Numerous organizations are presently endeavoring to broaden their consumer base by emphasizing the promptness of product or service delivery [12]. Delivery may serve

as a significant source of competitive advantage when organizations strive to minimize the interval between taking consumer orders and delivering them. This reflects the company's dedication to its clients [13]

The Connection Between Enlightened Marketing and Competitive Advantage:

Enlightened Marketing is a strategy methodology that emphasizes a profound comprehension of consumer requirements, providing lasting value, while considering social responsibility and ongoing innovation. This notion is intricately associated with attaining competitive advantage via numerous critical dimensions: [15]

1. An enhanced comprehension of client requirements and anticipations: Enlightened marketing relies on a thorough and precise examination of consumer behavior and evolving demands. This profound comprehension enables organizations to create goods and services that more effectively satisfy client preferences than their rivals, so providing a durable competitive edge.
2. Emphasize innovation and ongoing development: Progressive marketing depends on perpetual innovation in product and service supply. Organizations that embrace this strategy remain aligned with market advancements and maintain a competitive edge by offering novel and inventive solutions.
3. Cultivating robust customer relationships and promoting loyalty: Through astute marketing, organizations aim to forge enduring connections with customers by providing genuine value rather than only pursuing short-term gains. Establishing trust with clients cultivates loyalty, hence diminishing the company's susceptibility to competition. [16]
4. Embracing social responsibility and sustainability: Informed marketing transcends just profit generation; it also evaluates social and environmental consequences. Organizations that adopt sustainable practices garner respect from consumers and society, so increasing their reputation and securing a competitive edge.
5. Employing technology and data analysis to augment competitiveness: Informed marketing utilizes artificial intelligence, data analytics, and digital instruments to comprehend consumer behavior, refine marketing plans, and attain superior outcomes relative to rivals.

Practical Dimensions of the Research:

The objective of the average analysis is to illustrate the degree of the research sample's awareness and endorsement of a certain text. The reaction intensity is assessed and compared according to the mean values. If the computed arithmetic mean for the paragraph lies inside the interval (5-3.51), it signifies that the arithmetic mean surpasses the theoretical mean value of (3) in the measuring region. This indicates a significant level of awareness and endorsement by the research sample concerning the topic of that paragraph. The response and support are of moderate intensity when the arithmetic mean for the paragraph falls between 2.51 and 3.5. Nevertheless, if the arithmetic mean is inside the interval (1 - 2.50), it signifies that the respondents' reaction or support is little. The subsequent findings provide the average analysis for all paragraphs and dimensions of the research axis.

Table 1. Results Analysis

Variable	Items	Mean	Stand. Dev.
	Stimulating innovative ideas in marketing activities	3.73	0.90
	Keeping pace with market changes by offering products that are compatible with those changes	3.71	1.05
	Achieving business excellence and market leadership	3.68	0.91

	Crafting a message to preserve financial and human resources and foster innovation	3.70	0.87
Enlightened	Dealing with customers regarding the products offered	3.45	0.95
Marketing	Dealing with environmental changes based on their customers' perspectives	3.65	0.68
	Achieving market position by raising the company's value	3.70	0.89
	Making the principle of value one of the methods it follows to achieve profits	3.71	0.68
	Community contributions to the environment in which it operates	3.50	0.87
	Different promotional methods to communicate its ideas and products to the community	3.36	0.94
	A system for handling and responding to customer complaints	3.56	0.60
	Consistently reducing direct manufacturing costs	3.64	0.99
	Reducing the cost of materials used in production compared to competing companies	3.57	0.89
	Reducing the rates of waste and loss of time, effort, and materials	3.36	0.84
	Making its product specifications conform to national and international standards	3.04	1.11
Competitive	Properly designing its production processes to achieve the best possible level for the production units	2.89	1.07
Advantage	The ability to respond quickly to required changes in its product designs	3.30	0.71
	Multi-purpose machines and equipment	3.36	0.88
	The ability to motivate employees to embrace rapid change in response to customer needs.	3.45	0.87
	Consistently adhere to deadlines when delivering products to customers.	3.27	0.77
	Overcoming challenges in expanding distribution channels.	3.00	0.91
	Addressing long customer wait times for the products they order.	3.26	0.66

The responses of the study sample to all paragraphs exhibited a medium intensity, as indicated by the arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the flexibility dimension paragraphs presented in Table (1), with arithmetic means ranging from 2.51 to 3.50. Paragraph (1), which addresses the stimulation of innovative ideas in marketing activities, exhibited a moderate response level and attained the highest arithmetic mean of 3.73, with a standard deviation of 0.900, indicating significant variability in the respondents' reactions to the paragraph's content. This result indicates a reaction, although it is not at the ideal velocity for stimulation inside the consumer-directed marketing domain.

The paragraph indicating "Properly designing its production processes to achieve the best possible level for the production units" received the lowest mean value, recorded at 2.89, reflecting a medium intensity from respondents. This suggests that the design of the company's production processes is not consistently executed to attain optimal levels for production units, highlighting a significant weakness. Additionally, the standard deviation for this paragraph was 1.07, indicating considerable variability in the responses from the sample members. Overall, approximately 50% of respondents from the study sample companies expressed varying levels of agreement (completely agree, agree) with all statements, totaling 64%. Conversely, 7.4% of the sample indicated varying degrees of disagreement (disagree, completely disagree) with all statements, while the remaining 28.6% represented neutral responses. Testing Hypotheses:

To substantiate the findings presented in the preceding paragraph and to implement a multiple linear regression model illustrating the influence of the dimensions of the independent sub-variables constituting the enlightened marketing variable (consumer-oriented marketing, innovative marketing, value marketing, social marketing, and sense of mission marketing) on the dependent variable (competitive advantage), Table (2) delineates the indicators of that model. The computed F value of 8.76 exceeds the tabulated value of 2.832, so confirming the strong influence of all independent sub-variables representing enlightened marketing on competitive advantage. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for these variables was 0.47, indicating that they accounted for almost half of the variance in competitive advantage values, hence demonstrating the efficacy of the regression model. The influence of the independent variables on competitive advantage was shown by the regression coefficients (β), which were (0.10, 0.18, 0.34, 0.35, 0.54). All values are positive, signifying a direct correlation whereby a one-unit increase in each of the company's enlightened marketing dimensions will lead to an enhancement in competitive advantage, proportional to the values of (β) corresponding to each aforementioned sub-independent variable. The multiple linear regression model that encapsulates this impact is as follows:

$$Z = 0.97 + 0.10X_1 + 0.18X_2 + 0.34X_3 + 0.35X_4 + 0.54X_5$$

Table 2. Hypothesis Examination

Independent Variable	Dependent variable	β	R^2	F -test	α	Sig.
Consumer-Oriented Marketing (X1)	Competitive advantage	0.10	0.47	8.76	0.97	0.000
Innovative Marketing (X2)		0.18				
Value Marketing (X3)		0.34				
Social Marketing (X4)		0.35				
Sense of Mission Marketing (X5)		0.54				

The tabulated F value at a significance level of 0.05 is 2.832. By endorsing the hypothesis that posits, There exists a statistically significant impact of the dimensions of enlightened marketing on attaining competitive advantage for the study sample.

4. Conclusion

Informed marketing is fundamental to establishing a robust and durable competitive edge in the contemporary corporate landscape. Utilizing advanced analytics and big data, firms may comprehend client requirements and predict future trends, allowing them to formulate more precise and effective marketing campaigns. Informed marketing allows

firms to improve customer experience by providing tailored goods and services that align with consumer expectations, so increasing happiness and fostering long-term loyalty.

Moreover, embracing the principles of informed marketing (customer orientation, customer value, innovative marketing, community marketing, and mission-driven marketing) enables organizations to develop and adjust to continuous market fluctuations, so providing them with a durable competitive edge over rivals. Utilizing contemporary digital instruments like artificial intelligence and data analytics enhances the precision and efficacy of marketing decisions, resulting in more operational efficiency, diminished expenses, and heightened return on investment.

In the face of escalating pressures from globalization and swift technical progress, firms that depend on smart marketing have more resilience and potential for development. Consequently, investing in educated marketing strategies is vital for ensuring dominance in competitive marketplaces, attaining lasting success, and establishing a competitive edge that facilitates market superiority for the organization. The research seeks to examine the effect of informed marketing on attaining competitive advantage by testing the hypothesis to ascertain the connection and influence among the study variables and to address the research issues.

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