



**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MOBILE MARKETING AND BRAND RECOGNITION
IN SAUDI ARABIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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Abstract

Information Technology sector is indeed very rapidly growing within KSA. Sales of internet and computers are highest in the country as compared to other nations in the region. Saudi Arabia is the second big market for the mobile phone in the Middle East. The country has specific rules and regulations to regulate and monitor the working of the mobile phone operators in the market. Saudi Telecom market also has grown tremendously over the past 4-5 years, and this is due to the result of the liberalization of the society and its thinking. This article describes the existing knowledge of how mobile marketing can increase value for consumers and retailers in the region. Mobile marketing and its activities are shown to be both an extension of consumers' shopping behaviours in Saudi Arabia. The article focuses on to know how mobile marketing creates value for consumers and retailers, enabling research that is more precise and development of managerial theories and tools while presenting both managers and academics with increased understanding of mobile purchasing and its value outcomes for retailers. For this study, an exploratory research has been taken, also more than hundreds of related articles have been reviewed, and outcome of this has been discussed.

Keywords: Mobile Market, value creation, mobile marketing, Saudi Arabia

I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of mobile marketing within Saudi Arabia has received increased attention in recent years, due to the growing potential which is represented by the country's consumer market. Indeed, the mobile market within Saudi Arabia is currently the largest within the countries which comprise the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regarding its service revenue and its



number of subscribers (Yaici, 2013). It has 38.8 million active mobile users with a 132 per cent mobile penetration rate, resulting in a total of SAR 47 billion ion service revenue (Whitfield, 2012). The high level of mobile phone ownership within the country makes it ripe for the application of mobile marketing methods, although closer research suggests that there is fragmentation in this market, which may pose challenges for mobile marketers. In particular, the mobile base among consumers is split, consisting of 33 million smartphones and 24 million non-smartphones, with statistics suggesting that the number of non-smartphones will decline to approximately 11 million towards the end of 2016 (Yaici, 2013). Consequently, the mobile market is likely to become more homogeneous in the future, with the number of installed smartphones among the Saudi Arabian population reaching 40 million at the end of 2013 and approaching 55 million towards the end of 2016 (Whitfield, 2012). This increase in smartphone subscribers is representative of 16 per cent CAGR from 2011 to 2016. Statistics suggest that mobile marketing is highly effective in general at engaging customers, although few of these statistics have focused in particular on the impact that mobile marketing has on brand awareness. Smartphones are now growing an essential part of the lives of Saudi people (Alotaibi, 2015). The market remains significantly underexploited, with the levels of mobile marketing in the country being considerably lower than in the developed West (Euromonitor International, 2013). There is also less literature on the topic in the region compared to more developed regions, doing research targeting the area significant in this regard.

The objective of this research is to explain existing information on how mobile marketing can increase advantage for buyers and retailers. Power for customers is assumed to drive choice, use, and loyalty to retailers' firm and mobile marketing applications, etc. Also, the main research seeks to address the issue by asking, "To what extent is mobile marketing effective in Saudi Arabia, considering strengthening brand awareness in comparison to other forms of marketing?" Here mobile marketing is defined as "the distribution of any promotional or advertising messages to customers through wireless networks" (Heiki and Matti, 2005, p. 198). As These factors, create the foundation of competitiveness for retailers with cultural differences (Porter, 1985). The article will proceed as follows: the methodology of the literature search is represented followed by the literature review. Next, the findings of the review are considered. Finally, conclusions, managerial implications and implications for further research are conferred.

1.2. Objectives of Study

The main aims of the suggested research are to:

- To explore the information about mobile marketing and brand awareness
- To understand the forms of non-mobile marketing and brand awareness
- To determine the extent to which the specific cultural characteristics of Saudi Arabian consumers may affect the relationship between mobile marketing and brand awareness
- To formulate recommendations as to how the effectiveness of mobile marketing in Saudi Arabia can be increased to improve influence on the strength of brand awareness



II. METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The subjective nature of the research question has led the researcher to utilize a phenomenological research philosophy, although the researcher wishes to adopt the best practices of a qualitative approach (Saunders et al., 2009). This was selected as it prioritizes the interpretation that different parties place on the research topic, and therefore is particularly useful in gaining a holistic perspective (Fisher & Stenner, 2011). Furthermore, as Saunders et al. (2009) explained, while the qualitative research provides a framework for existing theoretical constructs to be modified or expanded according to conceptual demands, aspects, and variables. The researcher assumes the perspective and feedback will lead to legitimately relevant and potentially useful recommendations regarding approaches to beneficial mobile marketing strategies.

It is suggested in research best practices that a study with such theoretical aims towards conceptual constructs be undertaken using a qualitative research design (Thomas, 2010). As mentioned, this qualitative approach considers the case of Saudi Arabia. The study was firstly approached through undertaking a more thorough review of more than hundreds literature about mobile marketing, its effectiveness and the use, and effectiveness, as well as mobile marketing in Saudi Arabia. Once the background literature review has been undertaken, then a quantitative study will be explored further. This instrument is believed to be effective as it allows targeted information to be recorded across a broad cross-section within a shorter period, compared to the other commonly used instrument (interviews) (Yin, 2008).

The literature review had been taken by selecting a series of keywords and key terms and then utilizing the keywords mentioned and key terms to search the relevant bibliographic databases to locate relevant research into this specific subject area. It aimed to elucidate the impact that forms of non-mobile marketing have on the strength of brand awareness, to provide a point of contrast to the findings of the primary research. The researcher suggested that a brainstorming or mind mapping process be used to determine the keywords and key terms that to be utilized, as a method such as this would allow all relevant keywords and key terms to be identified (Buzan, 2009). The relevant bibliographic databases that be searched include Science Direct, Emerald Insight, and Web of Science, along with the online portals of journal publishers such as Taylor and Francis, Wiley and Oxford Journals. Once the keywords, key terms, and the bibliographic databases had been selected, the keywords and key terms were entered into the databases. This allows all the relevant research papers to be identified, with those that are deemed most being selected and then used to build the literature review and then constructed using the information in these research papers.

Regarding the data analysis, the selected literature has been read thoroughly, and any relevant sections of the investigation found related to the topic have been saved for inclusion in the review of the literature. The literature review then is constructed using the information, that is utilized from other sources being cited and referenced correctly in-text too (or "intending to") avoiding plagiarism. The method used for this literature study is the Systematic Literature Review in which extensive literature study has been done to investigate the mobile market in the past and to analyze the current trend in the domain and how culture affects the mobile marketing.



III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1.1. Hofstede's cultural framework

One of the conceptual frameworks, which will be utilized in the proposed thesis, is Hofstede's framework of national culture. As argued by Kolb (2013), one of the key factors, which determine the effectiveness of marketing strategies, is the cultural characteristics of the consumer and given the difference, which exists between the Saudi Arabian cultural context and the Western context. Considering several studies outlined by Kolb (2013), it was decided that it would be necessary to examine these cultural differences within a formal framework. These communicational norms are affected by the interpersonal communicational styles of people and include both verbal and non-verbal cues (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1998).

Geert Hofstede finds the cultural difference across different countries. The study of the different cultures developed four-dimensional model for the intra-country cultural domain. Though he developed the fifth element into the model as well, the four fundamental elements have received more value and importance in the business circles. The culture of any country can be ranked in following dimensions according to Hofstede:

3.1.2. Power Distance Index

This dimension focuses on influence/wealth/power inequalities among people within a culture. Those countries who are ranked high on this dimension show some hidden system of caste that by large differentiate among the poor and rich as well as among the disadvantaged and privileged people within the country. Poor get poorer, are not able to improve their condition, and hence are blocked at different levels by the wealthy and powerful people.

3.1.3. Individualism

At the individualistic level, it can be observed that there are loose ties among the individuals within a group. Every individual looks after his/her desires. Moreover, form a shape of extended families who become protective for the family and the bonds among them. For example, the German culture is considered as individualistic while Guatemala is considered as the high collectivistic culture.

3.1.4. Masculinity

This dimension mainly focuses on the extent by which some society stresses the nature or achievement. Masculinity is a trait, which emphasizes genders' role, differentiation, wealth acquisition, and ambition. Different cultures give different importance to the role of the male regarding their ambition and achievement. Those cultures are having a high score of masculinity, are those who pay more importance to male workers at the workplace as compared to working women.

3.1.5. Uncertainty Avoidance

It focuses on the adaptability of any culture to changes and how it copes with the uncertainty. The emphasis is to what extent a culture feel threatened or anxious about the ambiguities. Risk taking and uncertainty tolerance different among the various societies and cultures. Those



cultures where this index is high, this shows that entrepreneur activities are mostly widespread across the country.

3.1.6. Long Term Orientation

This dimension highlights the differences between the East and West. It focuses on the degree a society embraces or ignores the forward-thinking ambition. Higher on this dimension means society is committed in its long-term commitments with its tradition and respects it.

3.1.7. Applying the Hofstede Model to Saudi Arabian Culture

The Hofstede analysis to Saudi Arabia is almost similar to any other Arab country. The Muslim trust show business a substantial role in the lives of people in these societies. Large Power Distance is 80 and Uncertainty Avoidance is 68 for countries in Arabic region. Saudi culture is more likely to openly follow the caste system, which does not help in the upward movement of the citizens. People there is quite a rule oriented with the regulations and laws of the country and have proper control which helps in avoidance of the uncertainty. However, there is a huge difference in the wealth and power distribution, and this trend is growing still in the culture. There is high uncertainty avoidance index in the country, which is recorded as 68 shows that the culture has a low tolerance for the uncertainty.

There is a subtle and rigid hierarchy in the society having a little scope, especially for the people to avoid the designated roles as well as status in their lives. People also accept these roles as part of the cultural heritage. Masculinity score in the country is though not very high than average as compared to the world. There are extensive rules and etiquettes in the business meeting both among men also among men and women. Males due to religious obligations to avoid most of the hostile acts give women there. Individualism score in the country is similar to what has been observed among the developing nations of the world, which show that Saudi culture is very communistic having a long desire of maintaining the traditional tribal as well as family loyalties. This shows why the country is long-term oriented culture actually (Joshi, 2014). The proposed thesis will utilize Hofstede's framework to focus in particular on the difference in communicational styles between the two cultures. An example of the difference in communicational styles can be gauged from the existing literature that divides the verbal communications into two categories - verbal personal and oral contextual, where the *personal* style is person-centred (such as 'I'), and *contextual* style is role-centred or identity-centred (such as 'Japanese or Taiwanese'). These communication norms vary according to cultural dimensions such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism as highlighted by Hofstede (2001). For instance, verbal personal style of communication is used in individualistic cultures with low power distance (such as the UK and the US), whereas contextual communication style is more prevalent in culture with higher power distance and collectivism orientation such as Saudi Arabia, Japan, etc. Furthermore, the distinction can be made among elegant, exacting and succinct communicational styles. Cultures with moderate to high uncertainty avoidance prefer elaborate communications that are comprised of rich and expressive messages. "Arab cultures, for example, show this refined style of verbal communication, using metaphors, long arrays of adjectives, flowery expressions, and proverbs. Low-context cultures of weak uncertainty avoidance...tend to use the exacting style. The short



style is found in high-context cultures” (Marieke, 2013, p. 166). Based on cultural dimensions and communicational norms, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1998) have categorized various countries in clusters that prefer similar communications styles, as seen in Figure 1.

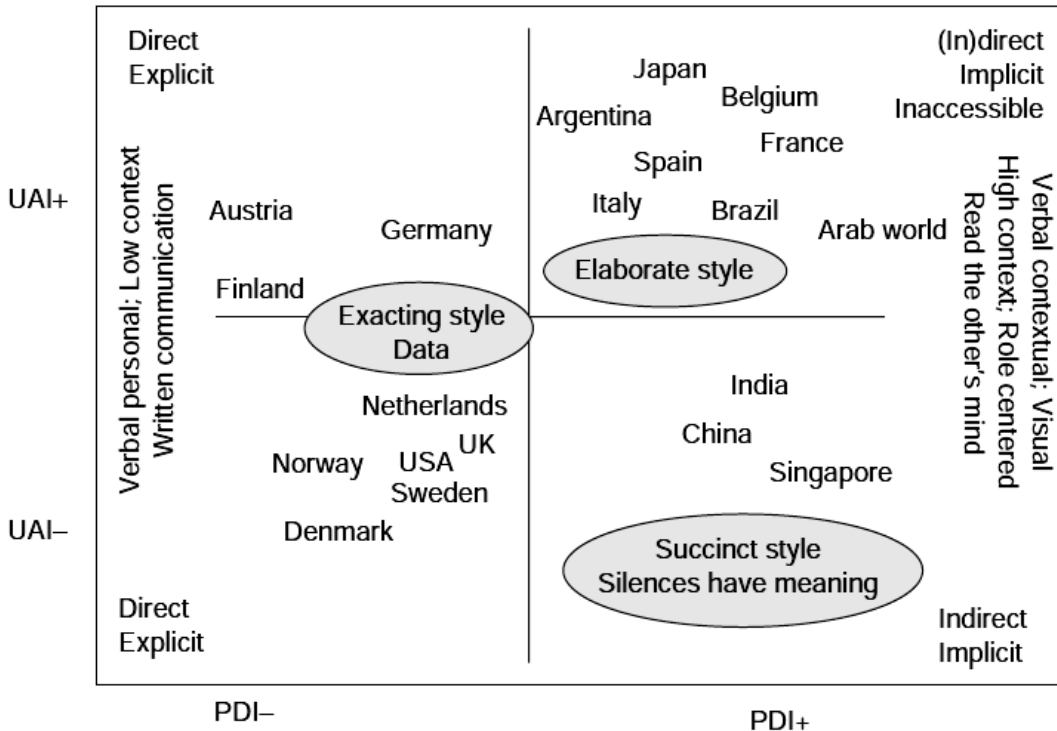


Figure 1: Interpersonal Communicational Styles

Countries in the left two quadrants with lower power distance and exacting style of communications prefer written communications such as email over phone communications, and in these cultures, the sender of information is responsible for the effective communicational message. On the contrary, in collectivist societies such as those in Asia, children are trained to understand the mind-set and messages from their elders, so, the responsibility of effective communication falls on the receiver. Lack of understanding of these cultural influences in marketing communications can result in a marketing and communications disaster, so, to avoid such situations, this study is conducted within the context of the Arab world, as there is a general lack of studies on Arab world on mobile marketing and communications.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned that the variables of interest, in this research, include informativeness, perceived usefulness, perceptions about the entertainment value, and the personalization of the mobile marketing. So, these variables will be explored and validated through the conceptual model (see Figure 2) to assess the effectiveness of the mobile marketing and advertising in Saudi Arabia. The following section discusses essential concepts in brand awareness.

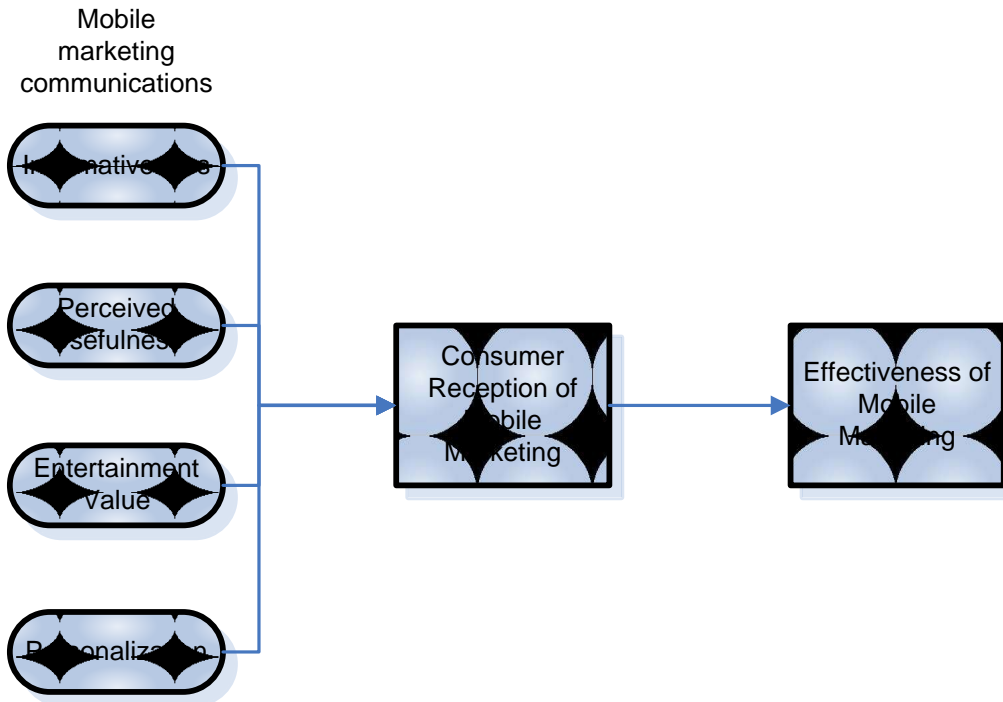


Figure 2: Conceptual Model

3.2.1. Brand Awareness

The proposed thesis will also utilize a conceptual framework to measure the different components of brand awareness, which exist. This will then be used within the research methodology to determine the precise manner in which mobile marketing may affect various elements of brand awareness. Specifically, the conceptual framework is based upon the six branding blocks, which were developed by (R. Anam, 2014); the extent to which mobile marketing contributes to each of these six components will be used to evaluate its overall success at contributing to brand awareness.

3.2.2. BRAND salience

This describes the extent to which a customer notices a brand when he or she is in the position to purchase. This is believed to be related to some factors, such as the strength of the brand of the client association, the extent to which the brand is perceived to be relevant to the customer, and the number of times that the advertising message is seen by the client (Sankaranarayanan, 2012).

3.2.3. Brand performance

This describes the quality of experience which customers have the product, and particularly to the extent to which both their functional needs are met and the type of experience, which they have concerning the economic, aesthetic and utilitarian characteristics of the product (Joshi,



2014). It, therefore, refers to customer attitudes concerning different features of the product, including its primary characteristics, its style and design, the service provided and its pricing.

3.2.4. Brand imagery

This refers to the values and personality, which is, associated with the brand, in particular, the psychological and social needs of customers are such that the product's characteristics are commonly linked to personal characteristics such as excitement, sophistication, and competence (Joshi, 2014). It also can refer to attitudes that the customers have concerning the way that the product is used and purchased, for example, it may be that the clients will experience specific emotions concerning the purchasing channel, which is associated with a particular brand (Joshi, 2014).

3.2.5. Brand judgments

This refers to the judgments made by customers concerning the imagery and performance of the product; it focuses in particular on their opinions considering the product's quality, its credibility, the extent to which they felt that the product's brand was personally relevant to them, and also their opinions of how the brand performed when compared to others on the market (S.-C. Chong, 2013).

3.2.6. Brand feelings

This concerns the feelings, which are experienced by the customers concerning the brand; in particular, as highlighted by (Joshi, 2014), it refers to the security, warmth, self-respect and social approval, which are experienced by the customer concerning the brand.

3.2.7. Brand resonance

This relates to the psychological bond, which customers have with the brand, and the level of their personal identification (Flynn, 2012). The way in which this is tangibly measured usually encompasses an analysis of the emotional terms which are used by customers in referring to the brand, the extent to which the purchase of the product results in an active sense of engagement (such as the degree to which the product encourages brand evangelism), and the level of behavioural loyalty that the customer has as measured in terms of the number of repeat purchases which are carried out (Joshi, 2014).

3.3. What is mobile marketing?

The term 'mobile marketing' covers a variety of different forms, and ways, of advertising via mobile, wireless, devices, such as smartphones, including SMS marketing, push notifications, in-game or in-app marketing, the use of QR codes, and location-based advertising, amongst others (Mengshoel, 2013). SMS messages are one of the main sources of mobile marketing, as they are read within a few minutes and, as such, represent a convertible method of marketing to customers. Research suggests, however, that 'spam' (the receiving of text messages containing advertising that the mobile user has to pay to receive), is unpopular amongst millennial consumers (Zabadi, 2012).



Mobile marketing is one of the 'buzz' concepts in marketing as cell phones are now ubiquitous and people have come to depend on, and rely, on their smartphones (Alotaibi, 2015). The fact that people have an experiential relationship with their mobile devices means that advertising via these mobile devices enables companies to establish an effective bond with the customer (Andrews et al., 2012). As Ting et al. (2011) note, many smartphone users are dependent on their smartphones which mean that, if mobile marketing is promoted in a way that is acceptable to smartphone users, mobile marketing could be very effective regarding building trust and brand loyalty amongst customers. The dependency on smartphones is, therefore, a factor that works to the advantages of companies using mobile marketing: it means that smartphone users are, essentially a captive audience that exists in a world heavily influenced by social media (Suki, 2013). If brands can market via social media, across a variety of mobile marketing platforms, then mobile marketing could be a potentially very powerful way for brands to build trust and loyalty amongst their customers (Ting et al., 2011).

Persaud and Azhar (2012) discuss the fact that, despite the experiential relationship certain users have with their mobile devices, the degree to which smartphone users are ready and prepared for mobile marketing differs across user types. Undertaking an online survey of smartphone users, Persaud and Azhar (2012) aimed to determine the variables that affect how smartphone users respond to, and with, mobile marketing campaigns. The research found that several key variables impact how consumers interact with mobile marketing, including their shopping style, their level of trust in the particular brand and the value they perceive from the advertising presented to them by the company (Persaud and Azhar, 2012). This means that, as with traditional, non-mobile marketing, marketers need to think carefully about how to use mobile marketing as a tool to build value and to establish relationships with their actual, and potential, customers. Mobile marketing, for example, could be very useful regarding building relationships, encouraging high levels of conversion and building customer loyalty towards a brand (Persaud and Azhar, 2012). It is important to note that marketers are hoping to use mobile marketing as a tool to build relationships with customers. Marketers must listen to their clients and engage in dialogue with them, that helps build trust in the brand; simply bombarding actual and potential customers with mobile-based marketing will be ineffective in generating brand loyalty and trust in the brand (Persaud and Azhar, 2012).

3.3.1. The Effect of Mobile Marketing on Brand Awareness

An assessment of the works proposes that there are only a limited number of studies which have addressed the impact that mobile marketing has on brand awareness. One such study was conducted by Smutkupt, Krairit, and Khang (2012) and focuses on the impact of SMS advertising on the perceptions that consumers have on brand awareness within the Thai hospitality industry. The study, which utilized structural equation modeling for the testing of the research hypotheses, found that SMS marketing had a statistically significant positive effect on perceived equality and brand awareness. In particular, it found that types of mobile marketing which contained messages, which were interactive, personalized and general in nature, are especially effective for the building of brand awareness, while messages which were personalized and general in nature had a positive influence on customers' perceived quality of a brand.



Further statistics suggest that mobile marketing is highly effective in general at engaging customers, although few of these statistics have focused in particular on the impact that mobile marketing has on brand awareness. In particular, (R. Anam, 2014) argues that the response rates which are generated by mobile marketing are higher when applied to certain demographic groups, namely, certain ethnic groups, young people, and women. This demonstrated by the fact that mobile marketing campaigns frequently generate response rates of up to 20 percent when compared to between 3 and 5 percent for static banner ads (S.-C. Chong, 2013). Further empirical studies suggest that there are some factors, which determine the effectiveness of mobile marketing regarding achieving high response rates, which are not applicable to other marketing channels. In particular, (Sankaranarayanan, 2012) argues that the most important utilitarian benefit which results in consumers responding to mobile marketing efforts is credibility, with a smaller emphasis being placed on issues such as content relevance or information (Rau et al., 2011). However, (R. Anam, 2014) demonstrated that while it does not seem to have as significant an impact on response rates, the quality and reliability of the content strongly impacted the loyalty of consumers to marketing.

Also, one study reported that the emotional values which consumers attached to mobile marketing were more important among younger and less experienced consumers. While older and more educated users were significantly more likely to place importance on the utilitarian values which belonged to a product in determining their likelihood of response (Mengshoel, 2013). In particular, younger consumers are more likely to respond to mobile marketing if it is perceived to be entertaining. This is determined by the way in which it is consumed, in other words, if it is consumed in between other activities the design of the mobile marketing campaign, and the ease of use of mobile shopping (Mengshoel, 2013).

3.3.2. The Effectiveness of Mobile Marketing in Saudi Arabia

As Whitfield (2012) noted, the Saudi Arabian market for smartphones is highly matured and saturated, with there being two active SIM cards per capita; this means that smartphones are ubiquitous in Saudi Arabia. This also means that mobile marketing could, potentially, be very effective across Saudi Arabia. Lobo and Elaluf-Calderwood (2012) discussed the use of mobile technologies, such as smartphones, in Saudi Arabia, finding that female Saudi Arabians, in particular, have variable opinions, and behaviors, in response to the issues that smartphones present to privacy. It was found that some users, especially female users, have issues with their privacy being invaded, and have issues with being allowed to access certain information via their smartphones (Lobo and Elaluf-Calderwood, 2012). Consequently, mobile marketing is not easy to implement in Saudi Arabia, and not necessarily as effective as it is in other countries, with other types of users, given the premium that is placed on privacy or the general distrust of invasions of privacy. These findings are balanced, however, by the findings from research undertaken by (Alotaibi, 2015). It suggests that there has been an increase in consumerism in Arabic civilizations, particularly in Saudi Arabia, and that, with this increase in consumerism, there has been some degree of opening up to marketing techniques and mobile marketing in particular. As stated, the massive wealth of Saudi Arabia has led to many luxury brands flooding into the Saudi Arabian market, with consumerism being rife in Saudi Arabia because of the convergence of great wealth and the influx of luxury brands to the Saudi Arabian market.



Saudi Arabia has the largest as well as the fastest growing market for the telecommunication products and the services. There is a state entity by the name of Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC), which is responsible for the issuing of the license especially to the private sector operators in the mobile industry. This entity encourages competition among the different operators within the industry by issuing different new mobiles and licenses.

The introduction of television and Internet-based advertising has meant that consumerism has become a norm across Saudi Arabia, with smartphone usage being as ubiquitous in certain sectors of Saudi Arabian society as it is in the West. Mobile marketing, therefore, has the potential to be as successful in Saudi Arabia, brands, as it has proved to be in the West (Alotaibi, 2015). What needs to be taken into consideration by marketers proposing the use of mobile marketing in Saudi Arabia, however, is the issue of privacy and the fact that not all users will respond to such mobile marketing in a positive manner, given the highly private nature of some users' relationships with their smartphone. Anything that interferes with this privacy is likely to be rejected outright (Lobo and Elaluf-Calderwood, 2012). As this research suggests, then, smartphone usage and acceptance of mobile marketing are highly influenced by culture (Wells et al., 2012; Megdadi and Nusair, 2012).

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The review of the research, which has been conducted in this chapter, reveals that there is a significant gap in the literature. This is because very few of the studies, which examine the effectiveness of mobile marketing, have focused in particular on the impact that it has on brand awareness. Indeed, the majority of studies seem to be focused primarily on issues such as the success of mobile marketing in eliciting high customer response rates (Sankaranarayanan, 2012). Saudi Arabia is becoming more open for accommodating mobile marketing, Government is taking particular interest in the telecommunication industry also, and the government is considering telecommunication as the next fastest growing industry after oil. Furthermore, there are very limited studies which have focused on the issue of mobile marketing within Saudi Arabia in particular which represents a significant gap in the literature given that Saudi Arabia currently represents the largest cell phone market in the GCC (Euromonitor International, 2013).

There is a lack of studies measuring the relative consequence worth of free promotion. In general, the lack of relevant results calculating effects of mobile marketing compared to retailers other investment opportunities remains problematic, as evidenced by the improved relative output value of mobile marketing. In the review, it was found that the major factors driving mobile marketing adoption and implementation in organizations. effectiveness To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of mobile advertising practices, more empirically concerned with the investigation is needed to found relevant metrics of mobile marketing, for example, to align mobile marketing investments with overall results.

Finally, most of the studies conducted into mobile marketing have failed to consider the impact of issues such as the age and sex of consumers in the effectiveness of mobile marketing (Mengshoel, 2013). These problems are talked within the proposed thesis, which will be further utilized and recommended to take quantitative research to see the cause and effect of mobile



marketing, brand awareness within customers of different demographic groups within Saudi Arabia. The studied works provide an inadequate input to evidence that customer perceived value of mobile marketing inflated retailers' outcome value, and that mobile marketing increased relative value for retailers and consumers. Several key areas calling for further research have emerged. These are mobile device shopping, the relative outcome value of mobile marketing, mobile marketing value creation, and mobile marketing metrics.

V. LIMITATIONS TO THE RESEARCH

It is significant to highlight the fact that there are time limitations to the research, which may restrict the extent to which the findings of the investigation. The key limitation of the research is the reliance on that it is purely qualitative, and the literature is not very much available in the region to get the proper result.

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