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The impact of E-marketing practices on market performance of small business enterprises. An empirical investigation.

Item Type	Thesis
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Download date	2026-03-09 18:57:25
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10454/4308

Chapter 1

Introduction and Overview of the Study

1.1 Introduction:-

As small business enterprises (SBEs) are considered to be the economic engine leading worldwide economic development, they have attracted substantial consideration from researchers, academics and practitioners in the last three decades. A great deal of this interest derives from the belief that innovation, especially in information technology, is crucially dependent on the potential of entrepreneurial small business enterprises. However, the recent revolution in computer science, the Internet, information technology (IT), media and communications has changed the nature of business and marketing practices. A growing numbers of companies and enterprises use the Internet and other electronic tools to communicate with suppliers, business customers and end users of their products and services. New forms of marketing have presented an opportunity for small businesses to grow in a dramatic and dynamic way.

This research argues that the adoption of Electronic Marketing (E-Marketing) by small business enterprise can change the shape and nature of its business all over the world. The fast propagation of the Internet, the World Wide Web (WWW), information technologies (IT), communication technologies and computer sciences has created dynamic new electronic channels for marketing, and most companies today find it essential to have an online presence (Liang and Huang, 1998). But alongside these opportunities there are problems associated with the dynamics of this new interactive media. These problems are exacerbated by the fact that much previous research has focussed on the use of E-Marketing tools (e.g. the Internet) by large companies with the resources to adopt new technology to their specific needs rather than small business enterprises (SBEs) that have limited budgets and resources. Consequently, this research aims to add to the accumulative body of knowledge in the fields of E-Marketing and

small business enterprises by focussing on investigating the impact of E-Marketing adoption on marketing performance in the small business enterprises sector.

Originally, the research plan was to conduct a comparative study between Egyptian and British SBEs to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and the SBEs role in developing countries, since they are less well represented in the literature. However, following an exploratory study of Egyptian small business enterprises it was found that E-Marketing practices by Egyptian SBEs is less developed than those in the UK, making a like for like comparison very difficult. Therefore, it was to decide to focus on UK SBEs with some reference to the Egyptian exploratory study as an emerging economy. This approach is likely to generate more reliable and generaliseable results (the Egyptian exploratory study will be discussed in detail in chapter five). Accordingly, the domain of the research population will be industrial and trading small business enterprises within the UK.

This research overall aim is to understand how the dynamics of E-Marketing have changed SBEs marketing practices and influenced their marketing performance. Following a literature review to establish the key issues in the field as well as the research gaps, this research will develop a conceptual framework. The research will then adopt a triangulation approach in which quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to address different levels of the study and to answer the ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions of the research. Within this triangulation approach survey and semi-structured interviews research strategies will be combined in order to conduct the research. Structured mailed questionnaires, electronic questionnaires and interviews are the primary data collection methods to test the research hypotheses and are used to answer the research questions.

1.2 Background:-

1.2.1 Small Business Enterprises:-

Small business enterprises play a very important social and economic role in the UK, as they do in any other country all over the world. According to the statistics of the UK Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform - BERR (2009), the

total number of registered business organisations in the UK at the beginning of 2007 (excluding Government and non-profit organisations) was 4.7 million businesses, while almost all of these organisations (99.3 %) being small (0 to 49 employees). Moreover, according to BERR (2009), small business enterprises accounted for 47.5 % of employment and for 37.4 % of the total turnover within the UK.

Regardless of the dominant position held by small business enterprises in today's economy, defining it has been a complicated task. There is very little agreement on what defines a small business enterprise because the term covers a wide range of elements. Clearly, that there is no single unique definition of a small enterprise and this could be mainly because of their wide diversity. As a result small businesses have been defined in a mystifying number of dissimilar ways according to the national and local needs of each country (Theng and Boon 1996; Watson and Everett 1996). This research has adopted the European definition for SBEs because it is relevant for this research; it is the legal definition in force within EU countries and it is an up-to-date definition that can take the dynamics of new technology into account. The definition was adopted by the European Commission in its Recommendation 2003/361/EC of the sixth of May 2003 and was addressed to Member states, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF) (European Commission, 2009). The definition is made according to specific criteria which are: number of employees, annual turnover (or: global Balance) and independence. Table 1-1 illustrates this definition, which came into force from the 1st of January 2005.

Table 1-1: Criteria of defining SBEs adapted by the EC

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Small Business Enterprises (SBEs)</i>
Number of employees	< 50
Annual turnover or global balance	< 10 million Euros < 10 million Euros
Independence	Not exceeding 25% of the capital or voting rights withheld by one or more companies which are not SMEs

Source: European Commission (2009)

The most common definitions of small business enterprises used around the world, as well as the key issues related to them will be discussed in detail in chapter two (section 2.3).

1.2.2 E-Marketing:-

Electronic marketing can be viewed as a new modern business practice and philosophy associated with buying and selling goods, services, information and ideas via the Internet and other electronic means. A review of relevant literature and published research revealed that the definitions of Electronic Marketing vary according to each researcher's point of view, background and specialisation. The most commonly used definitions of E-Marketing, as well as the key issues related to it, will be discussed in detail in chapter two (section 2.2).

For the purpose of conducting this research, the Strauss and Frost (2001) definition will be used to define E-Marketing. According to Strauss and Frost (2001) E-Marketing is defined as: *“The use of electronic data and applications for planning and executing the conception, distribution and pricing of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational objectives”* (Strauss and Frost, 2001, p: 454). The main reasons for depending on this definition are: it takes into consideration the main elements of E-Marketing as well as all types of products; it illustrates the main objectives of E-marketing which is mainly related to creating the exchanges that satisfy both the individuals and organisational needs; and it is the definition adopted by the American E-Marketing Association (eMA).

Based on this definition, E-Marketing includes any use of electronic data or electronic applications for conducting company marketing activities. As a result, E-Marketing includes Internet Marketing, E-Mail marketing, Intranet Marketing, Extranet Marketing, Mobile Marketing, Tele Marketing, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) for marketing activities, Customer relationship management (CRM) and more. But for the purpose of conducting this research, and based on the results of reviewing the relevant literature, the most commonly used tools of E-Marketing are: Internet Marketing, E-Mail marketing, Intranet Marketing, Extranet Marketing and Mobile Marketing (El-Gohary et

al., 2008a and 2008b; Paul, 1996; Hofacker, 1999 and 2001; Evans and King, 1999; Eid 2003; Eid and Trueman, 2004 and Chaffey et al., 2006). The five main tools of E-Marketing adopted by this study are illustrated in figure 1-1.

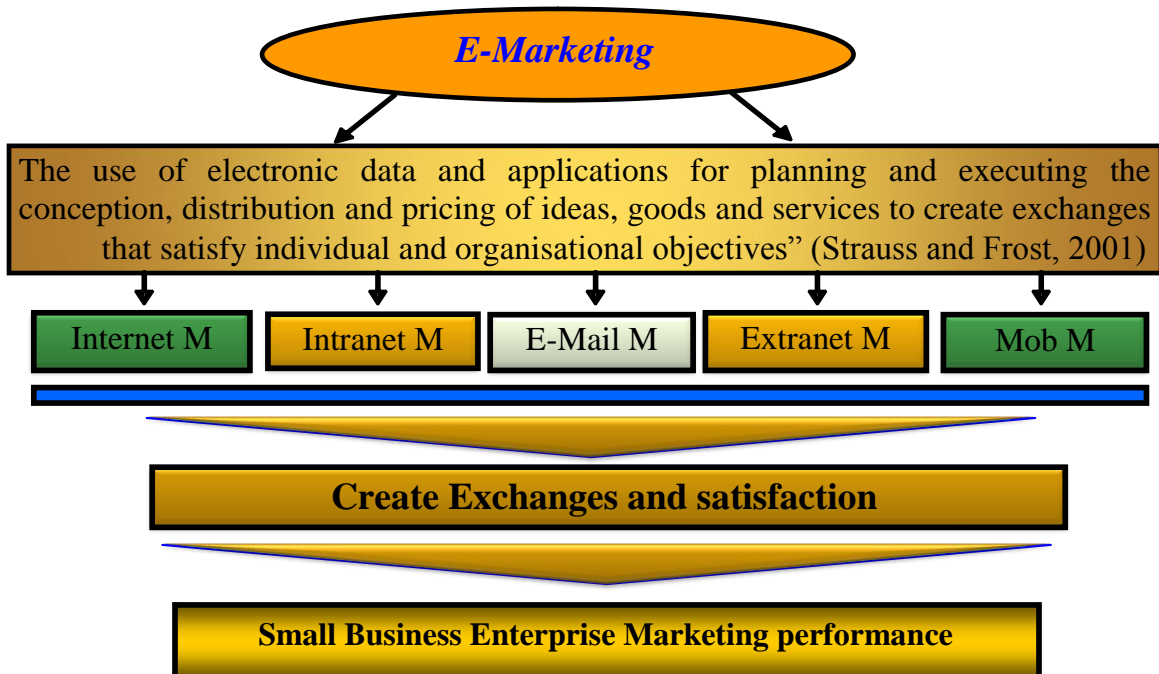


Figure 1-1: E-Marketing Concept

Source: Definition adopted from Strauss and Frost (2001)

1.2.3 The research context (E-Marketing – Marketing Performance):-

The opportunities presented by E-Marketing for SBEs are considerable as the Internet and other electronic media are now playing a vital role in the conducting of marketing activities by SBEs due to its unique characteristics both as a market and as a medium. A web site or a web page can have the potential to directly reach a large number of markets in a fast and economical way. With relatively low investments almost any person who can read and write can have access to the World Wide Web. Nowadays, millions of people are connected to the Internet to get the latest news from around the world, search for information and purchase goods. Consequently the nature of business in all countries is changing not only fast but also dramatically, and developing countries (such as Egypt) are upgrading their infrastructure and harnessing the Internet. This phenomenon is very dynamic and is changing the shape of business communications,

trade and marketing practices. Electronic Marketing will provide SBEs with the opportunity of developing successful economic businesses in ways that have never been available to them before. It will put these entrepreneurs in touch with previously unavailable global resources and opportunities so that they can communicate and conduct business with new and existing customers in an integrated and easy way.

On the other hand, there are problems associated with the dynamics of this new interactive media such as security and privacy issues, cultural problems, technological problems, lack of trust, lack of face-to-face communications, limited opportunity for negotiation on price as well as differences in languages. Moreover, the changing dynamics can mean that SBEs may not fully understand the potentials of a digital marketplace since the Internet and electronic communication is rapidly changing traditional marketing practices and techniques (Hoffman and Novak, 1997, 1996; Kiani, 1999 and Quelch and Klein 1996). In other words, there is an urgent need to understand the impact of E-Marketing on customer and business market behaviours. Consequently, the majority of business enterprises have started to develop their own E-Marketing strategies and tactics for the Web. In turn this will raise the competence and effectiveness of the usual standard marketing functions, so that SBEs have the potential to add customer value and/or increase company profitability (Strauss and Frost, 2001). Moreover, this research argues that the “E” before the word marketing indicates a philosophy that must be followed by enterprises that want to keep their competitiveness, efficiency and effectiveness.

To this end, this research examines three domains that relate and combine the literatures and theories of information technology (IT), E-Marketing and small business enterprises (as illustrated in figure 1-2). This approach is likely to provide a sound platform to investigate the different factors affecting the adoption of E-Marketing by SBEs as well as the impact of this adoption on the marketing performance of these small enterprises.

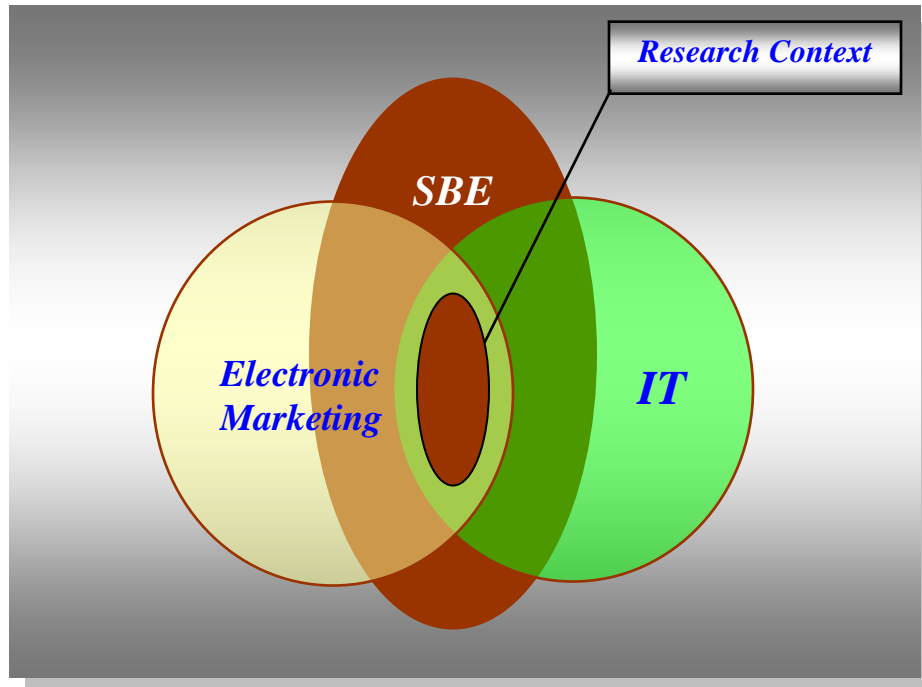


Figure 1-2: The research context

As there is a noticeable shortage in the literature related to E-Marketing, the investigation is expanded to include the theories of new technology adoption as well as its influence and potential for E-Marketing adoption in a small business enterprise context. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) will be used to identify the variables that might influence the adoption of Electronic Marketing by SBEs alongside previous studies and theories within the field.

Although these two models are well established in the field they suffer from some drawbacks. They ignore some important factors both within and outside the organisation that may have an impact on new technology acceptance, diffusion, adoption as well as marketing performance (Chau, 1996; Igarria, et al, 1995; Jie, Peiji and Jiaming, 2007; Yi et al, 2006; Chen, Gillenson and Sherrell, 2002; Wu and Wang, 2005; Looi, 2004; Gefen and Straub, 1997; Eid 2003 and Vijayasathy, 2004). Therefore, this research will expand the two models to gain a deeper understanding of E-Marketing practices by SBEs in line with the findings of Chau (1996); Igarria, et al (1995), Gefen and Straub (1997), Eid (2003) and Vijayasathy (2004) and aims to strengthen the two models in an E-Marketing context for SBEs.

The research framework will then be constructed, the research hypotheses will be developed and the research framework will be examined to test the research hypotheses depending on the chosen research methodology and appropriate statistics tools.

1.3 Research Problem and questions:-

*"We most often go astray on a well trodden and
much frequented road."*

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (5 BC - 65 AD)

Having Internet presence is not a luxury any more. It has become a matter of survival for companies regardless of size. Those who are reluctant for to go on line are risking not only losing customers but also competitive advantage. According to Kotabe and Helsen (2000), a company that does not develop a website presence risk loosing its customers who will then browse competitors' sites for information and products. However, having Internet presence does not guarantee success since any potential advantage can only be gained by strategic planning and skills (Samiee, 1998). In other words, absence from the Internet may lead to competitive disadvantage, but Internet presence does not automatically provide a competitive advantage.

The critical questions that concern most companies today (regardless of its size) are: how to acquire a skilful use of the Internet? and: what should be done to find leverage points in the corporate strategy to combine virtual and physical marketing activities (Avlonitis and Karayanni, 2000; Chan and Swatman, 2000; Gurau et al., 2001; Perry and Bodkin, 2002 and Porter, 2001). To address their competitive needs, companies today need to carry out systematic research to investigate the antecedents for successful implementation of E-Marketing. However, research in the field of E-Marketing is still in its infancy and investigation of the literature demonstrates that the majority of research in the field of E-Marketing has been either descriptive or theoretical and there is a lack of robust research models to guide future research in this area of the field. Although several attempts have been made by some researchers and scholars to identify the nature and use of E-Marketing (Gilmore, Gallagher and Henry, 2007; Krishnamurthy and Singh, 2005; White and Daniel, 2004; Leverin and Liljander, 2006; Rohm et al, 2004; Salcedo, Henry

and Rubio, 2003; Stockdale and Standing, 2004a and 2004b; Truong and Jitpaiboon, 2008; Bui, et al, 2006; Chaston and Mangles, 2003; Sheth and Sharma, 2005; Krishnamurthy and Singh, 2005; Harridge-March, 2004; Pattinson and Brown, 1996; DeTienne and Thompson, 1996; Bloch, 1996; Schoenbachler et al, 1997; Kuhlen, 1997; Grönroos, 1997; Hyams, 1995; Sussmann and Baker, 1996 and O'Connor and O'Keefe, 1997), only few researchers provide strong theoretical or statistical support for their studies often because of the exploratory nature of their work or because they focus on one industry that may not be applicable to another industries. In such a case, they deal more with the potential rather than the reality of an E-Marketing impact. Hence, there is a need for full-scale research that is statistically significant. On the other hand, as the theory in the field of E-Marketing is still in its infancy stage and not yet well established there is a need for having more well-established studies that can be considered as a step toward theory building in the field of E-Marketing

Consequently, this research aims to carry out a full scale study that is statistically significant and will answer the following main question: “What is the relationship between E-Marketing adoption and marketing performance of industrial and trading small business enterprises?”

Beside this main question the study also attempts to answer the following sub – questions:-

1. What are the different factors affecting the adoption of E-Marketing by industrial and trading small business enterprises?
2. What are the different forms, tools and levels of implementation of E-Marketing by industrial and trading small business enterprises?

To address these questions, a series of objectives are now presented.

1.4. Research Objectives:-

The major objectives of this research are to develop a theoretical framework to understand and interpret the adoption of E-Marketing by SBEs, to explore and analyse the different factors affecting this adoption; to explore the different forms,

implementation levels and tools of E-Marketing used by SBEs; and finally to understand the impact of E-Marketing adoption on SBEs' marketing performance. To this end, the research will adapt an interdisciplinary approach that integrates traditional SBE marketing, E-Marketing, IT, and information systems literature. This is in line with Gatticker et al. (2000) who confirmed the need for an interdisciplinary approach when investigating the opportunities offered by the Internet and new technologies. At the same time, because E-Marketing makes use of IT and IS, this research will consider the advantages and disadvantages of different theories in the field.

Consequently, the objectives of this research are as follows:-

1. To explore the different factors affecting the adoption of E-Marketing by industrial and trading small business enterprises
2. To explore the different forms, implementation levels and tools of E-Marketing used by SBEs
3. To explore the relationship between E-Marketing adoption and industrial and trading SBEs marketing performance
4. To develop and clarify a theoretical model that will help to understand and interpret the relationship between E-Marketing adoption and small business enterprises marketing performance.
5. To use this model to evaluate the potential of E-Marketing for SBEs in developed countries (UK) and developing countries (Egypt).

1.5 Contribution to Knowledge:-

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give”
Sir Winston Churchill

The main benefit of this study is to contribute to the current knowledge in the fields of small business enterprises and E-Marketing. The study will add to the relatively limited empirical research that has been conducted on E-Marketing. Furthermore, it adds to the extremely limited number of empirical studies by exploring the impact of E-Marketing adoption on the marketing performance of small business enterprises. Many

researchers (Sheth and Sharma, 2005; Krishnamurthy and Singh, 2005; Adam, et al., 2002; Teo and Tan, 2002; Darby, Jones and Al Madani, 2003 and Goldsmith and Lafferty, 2002) have suggested the need for such kind of research. These researchers concur that marketing practitioners and academic researchers are now aware that more systematic research is required to reveal the true nature of E-Marketing.

To illustrate the contribution of this research study to the accumulative knowledge in the field, based on the review of the related literature it is noticed that while small business enterprises management research has progressed a great deal over the past 50 years, the current literature reveals that there are many shortcomings in what has been researched to date in relation to E-Marketing. These shortcomings include:-

- The literature is concentrated only on limited research areas such as World Wide Web and Internet usage in conducting marketing activities (e.g. McCole and Ramsey, 2004; Chaffey et al., 2006; Oliva, 2004; Chaston and Mangles, 2003; Siddiqui et al. 2003; Martin and Matlay, 2003; Collins, et al, 2003; Adam and Deans, 2001 and Wilson and Abel, 2002), issues related to E-mail marketing (e.g. Baggott, 2007; Hughes, 2005; Jackson, 2001; Saint, 2001; Harper, 2002; Heneroty, 2002; Isaacson, 2002; and Robinson, 2002), the benefits of using the Internet in Marketing (e.g. Greene, 2009; Epsilon, 2009; Ghosh, 1998; Skinner, 2000 and Lancioni, 2000), the usage of the Internet as a marketing channel and E-marketplace and the adoption of the internet as a business tool. Accordingly there are a lot of research gaps in the field and one of these gaps is related to the adoption of E-Marketing by small business enterprises and the impact of this adoption on marketing performance.
- With regards to the adoption and/or use of Intranet Marketing, Mobile Marketing and Extranet Marketing by small business enterprises, it was found (based on the literature) that there is no single study that had been conducted to investigate the adoption and usage of Intranet Marketing, Mobile Marketing or Extranet Marketing by small business enterprises. Moreover, the review of the literature failed to find any studies that examined or investigated the impact of Intranet Marketing, Mobile Marketing or Extranet Marketing adoption and usage by small

- business enterprises on the marketing performance of these enterprises.
- It was also found that one of the main obstacles in the literature is the unclear way of dealing with the concept and definition of E-Marketing. In this context the majority of researchers within the field misused the term E-Marketing and used the terms E-business, E-Marketing, E-commerce and Internet marketing as equivalents or a different wording for the same meaning, which is incorrect because these terms are different (as discussed in details in section 2.2.3 of chapter two). Accordingly, there is a need to provide and establish clear concepts about E-Marketing in relation to E-business, E-commerce and Internet marketing.
 - Most research is directed at small business enterprises in industrial developed countries. Almost all of the research studies conducted on E-Marketing in SBEs has been conducted in Europe (UK, the Republic of Ireland, Austria and Switzerland), USA, Australia and New Zealand. Only few studies were conducted in developing countries (32 studies with a percentage of 5.9 % of the total number of studies in the literature period). It is also noticed that there is no single study that has been conducted in Egypt or any other Arabic country except for the study of Darby, Jones and Al Madani (2003) which was conducted in the United Arab Emirates, this reflects a gap in the field of E-Marketing in general and E-Marketing in small business enterprises in particular.

Based on the previous discussion, it is noticed that there are major gaps in the contemporary research on SBEs' E-Marketing. Therefore a contribution to the literature is highly needed. This research will contribute to the current accumulative knowledge in the field by filling these research gaps related to E-Marketing adoption by SBEs as well as the effect of this adoption on the SBEs marketing performance.

1.5 .1 Importance of the study:-

- The following elements illustrate the importance of the study:-
- There is no single study that has been conducted to investigate the adoption and usage of E-Marketing (in general) and Intranet Marketing, Mobile Marketing or

- Extranet Marketing (in particular) by SBEs, or the impact of these E-Marketing tools on SBEs marketing performance.
- SBEs are important for modern economy and it is widely recognised that they contribute to economic and employment growth.
 - E-Marketing could be one of the most effective tools to help SBEs to increase their competitive advantages, profit and effectiveness.
 - The study of IT adoption in Egypt or any other developing country is particularly interesting, as the lack of a domestic computer industry resulted in Egyptian firms being late adopters and, consequently, beneficiaries of the experience of others. Moreover, Egypt is an important African country that has very good and advanced IT infrastructure, and an important and strategic economic, political and geographical position which can exaggerate the benefits of E-Marketing adoption by the Egyptian SBEs.

These elements demonstrate that it is both desirable and important to conduct research on SBEs and its E-Marketing adoption.

1.5.2 Significance to Researchers:-

This study is an original attempt - based on the literature review - to establish a conceptual model which outlines the adoption of E-Marketing by industrial and trading SBEs and assesses the impact of this adoption on the SBE marketing performance. It is also an original attempt to study E-Marketing in Egypt. Furthermore, as the theory in the field of E-Marketing is still in the infancy stage and yet not well established this study can be considered as a step toward a theory building in the field of E-Marketing. This work seeks to bring to light all the surrounding concepts and practices of E-Marketing by SBEs.

1.5.3 Significance to practitioners:-

The findings and results of this research study will provide great help and benefit to small business entrepreneurs (owners), marketers, IT practitioners and all other parties that use or are planning to use E-Marketing for conducting marketing activities. The

study intends to help practitioners to gain a better understanding of the usage of E-Marketing by SBEs. On the other hand, this study could be very important and of great help to governmental agencies (not only in the UK but also for all similar countries) dealing with small business enterprises [e.g. The UK Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) in the UK, the Egyptian Social Fund for Development (SFD), Egyptian Small Enterprise Development Organisation (SEDO) and the Arab Union for Small Enterprises (AUSE) in Egypt]. Based on the findings of this research, these governmental agencies will have a better understanding of the different factors affecting the adoption of E-Marketing by SBEs. This in turn can be used in planning and directing future policies, plans and strategies of these agencies which can lead to an increase in the diffusion of E-Marketing by small businesses.

1.6 The Research Process:-

The research process will be conducted through five basic stages which are; identification of the research problem and objectives; research methodology; the exploratory studies and the development of the research framework; quantitative and qualitative data analysis; and finally discussion and conclusion.

Within this research, all possible efforts were made to organise of the research study in such a way that allows readers to follow the process easily and smoothly. Figure 1-3 illustrates the research process.

1.7 Structure of this thesis:-

The thesis is structured in eleven chapters; each chapter provides an introduction to the chapter contents and brief description to set the context, as well as how it relates to other parts of the research, and a summary of the main points. These chapters are:-

Chapter 1: Introduction and overview of the study:

This chapter provides an overview of the motivation for this research as well as the research problem, context, objectives and importance.

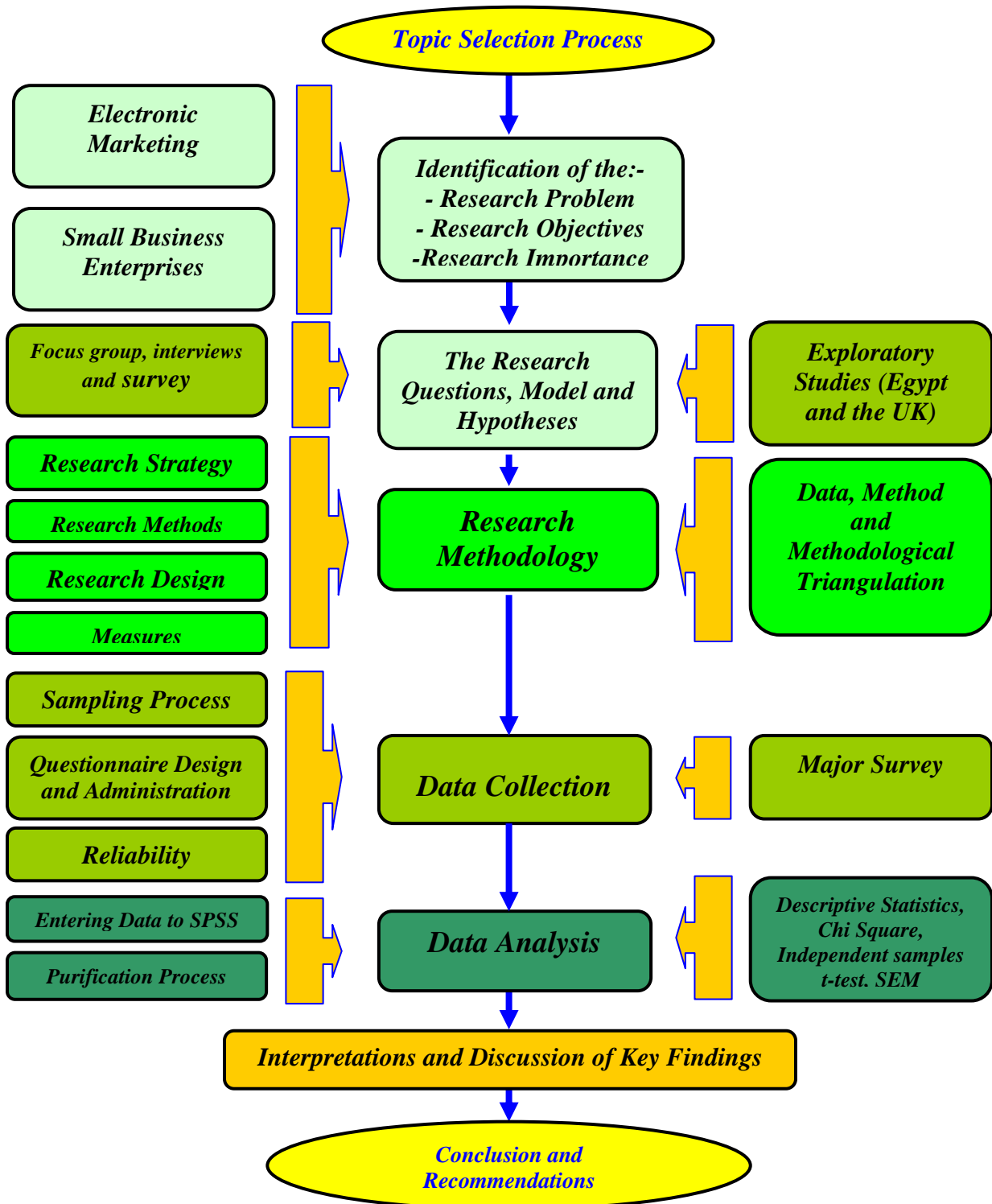


Figure 1-3: The research process

Chapter 2: E- Marketing and small business enterprises: definitions and a review of the literature

The chapter provide in-depth illustration of the theoretical background for E-Marketing and SBEs. Within this context the chapter examines and discuss various definitions of E-Marketing and SBEs; the Internet, its history, origins, growth, use in marketing; the Internet in Egypt and the UK; E-Marketing tools; and the differences between the concepts of E-Marketing, Internet Marketing, E-Commerce and E-Business. The chapter also provide a comprehensive analytical review of the relevant literature related to E-Marketing and SBEs.

Chapter 3: E-Marketing adoption: a review of IT literature

The chapter provide in-depth review of the different theories of new technology adoption as well as the literature related to it in order to develop a better understanding of their influence and potential for E-Marketing adoption in SBEs. The main aim of investigating these theories within this chapter is to identify the variables that might influence the adoption of Electronic Marketing by SBEs, and to show how this research relates to previous studies and theories within the field.

Chapter 4: Research methodology.

This chapter discusses and justifies the research philosophy, the methodology used to conduct this research as well as the issues related to the chosen research methodology. The research population, research sample, data collection methods, stages of collecting the data from the field, the procedures and problems encountered during each stage of the fieldwork as well as the actual data collected, and the methods of analysis are illustrated in the chapter.

Chapter 5: Exploratory phase 1: exploring E-Marketing practices by Egyptian SBEs.

This chapter demonstrates the first stage of the exploratory study devoted to exploring the current status of E-Marketing in Egyptian SBEs. The current circumstances related to SBEs in Egypt, brief background about Egypt, a profile of the Egyptian SBEs, their geographical distribution, the different Egyptian institutions linked to SBEs as well

as a report of the details of the exploratory study and its findings are discussed and presented.

Chapter 6: Exploratory phase 2: exploring E-Marketing practices by UK SBEs

This chapter presents the second stage of the exploratory study related to UK SBEs. The current circumstances related to SBEs in the UK as well as a report of the details of the three phases exploratory study conducted in the UK are discussed and presented. Based on the findings of the exploratory study, the most important factors affecting the adoption of E-Marketing by UK SBEs are discussed in more detail with reference to the literature as a first step towards using these factors to construct the research framework.

Chapter 7: The research framework

This chapter builds on the outcomes and findings of chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6 and aims to outline the research framework for this research. The chapter begins by illustrating the research questions, gives an explanation of their origins and highlights the need for a framework of E-Marketing from a small businesses context. The chapter then presents the research variables, the research framework and the research hypotheses all of which are built into a survey questionnaire that is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Chapter 8: Descriptive statistics

This chapter illustrates and discusses the descriptive analysis of the data collected from the research sample through the research questionnaire. It provides some insights to describe, investigate and discuss the data obtained from the research fieldwork in terms of value and contribution to the research aims, which in turn will lead to greater understanding of the relationship between E-Marketing adoption and SBE performance.

Chapter 9: Reliability analysis and hypotheses testing

This chapter is concerned with the second stage of the data analysis process which is related to analysing the data resulting from the data collection. Inferential statistics are

used for the purpose of hypothesis testing and interpretation of the research findings which in turn will help in achieving the research aims and objectives.

Chapter 10: Interpretation and Discussion of quantitative and qualitative findings.

This chapter is concerned with the interpretation of the research findings as well as relating these findings to the literature and previous work within the field.

Chapter 11: Contributions and Implications

This chapter is concerned with illustrating the research contributions to the accumulative knowledge in the field. The research objectives, findings, the main contributions of the study to research and theory, different academic and managerial implications of the study, different limitations associated to it as well as some suggestions and direction for future research are presented and discussed in detail within the chapter.

1.8 Chapter Summary:-

This chapter has outlined the structure of the research study. It has introduced the background of the study as well as its backbone, and presented the research problem, objectives, methodology and process. Moreover, it has justified the research through showing its significance for both researchers and practitioners.