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STRATEGIC PREDICTION USING MARKETING INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN AL-BAWADI AND AL-MARA'I COMPANIES WITHIN THE FOOD PRODUCTS SECTOR IN IRAQ

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Abstract
This study aims to explore how marketing intelligence systems can enhance strategic predictions within the food products sector in Iraq, focusing specifically on these two companies. By employing a quantitative approach, data collection is carried out by following the Stratified Sampling Method. This method can be defined as a probability sampling method applicable in quantitative research, where the population is divided into well-defined groups called strata such that within each stratum, individuals share some common characteristics, and then researchers take a random sample from each stratum. The sample size comprises 90 marketing managers and experienced employees from Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i Food Products Companies in Iraq (45 managers and employees from Al-Bawadi Company and 45 managers and employees from Al-Mara'i Company). For the sake of implementing this quantitative study, the researcher built a questionnaire of 11 items depending on this research question. It was judged by a group of assistants and associate professors who have the same major. The questionnaire items are filled in by the participants. Their responses are carefully studied and analyzed statistically. Likert's three-point scale frames their responses as: agree, neutral, or disagree. The results show that the use of the marketing intelligence system by Al-Mara'I Company adds a lot to the quality of strategic decisions. The system works effectively in Al-Mara'i to help it understand the likes of customers. The marketing strategies of Al-Mara'i Company are more data-oriented compared to Al-Bawadi Company. Workers at Al-Mara'i have received enough training to use the systems of marketing information effectively.

Keywords: Marketing strategies, marketing intelligence systems, food sector.

Introduction

Marketing intelligence (MI) plays an important role in business. Lackman et al. (2000) indicate that MI, in coordination with the marketing function of a firm, gives direction to the allocation and utilization of resources and activities. It is used to provide continuingly strategic marketing plans for firms to evaluate marketing positions for firms to develop competitive advantage and fulfill goals to the maximum. Afzal and Shah (2016) note that marketing intelligence systems (MIS) are certain instruments that collect, process, and interpret market trend data consumer behavior data, and competitive activities data. It helps an organization make real-time informed decisions, which, of course, is the need of the hour for fast-changing enterprises. This involves data coming from different sources like web analytics, customer feedback, and sales reports. According to Carson et al. (2020), marketing intelligence systems enable firms to comprehend their target audience and anticipate market trends while fine-tuning marketing strategies. This aids in better strategic planning while also aiding in everyday decisions at different business levels. Therefore, a firm can improve its positioning in the market increase customer retention, and perform better than its competitors based on information attained from analyzing diverse data sets. This study is set to discover the contribution of marketing intelligence systems in improving strategic forecasting and competitive positioning of companies. In particular, it studies the two major Iraqi corporations, Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i. According to Davenport et al. (2007), such advanced insight is becoming progressively more important for organizations, particularly those in the dynamic food products arena, to prosper successfully in a highly competitive world. Businesses face many intricacies in today's fickle consumer preferences and economic oscillations in well-navigated conditions. Thus, effective marketing intelligence has become critical for them to understand trends in the markets and among competitors.

The strategic prediction in the food product industry through the implementation of marketing intelligence tools and techniques can lead the sector from the work of inductive, and ad-hoc adoption to well-informed consumption and production based on informed decision-making processes. Maccoby (2015) suggests that the role of strategic prediction is to enable firms to better understand the divergent nature of consumer preference, market conditions, and challenging elements of competition. Some firms are gravitating more towards perceiving continuous alteration in consumer behavior by collecting and analyzing related data systematically. For instance, information derived from market intelligence can be leveraged to develop new products and innovate in response to health or sustainability trends. This will in turn support effective predictive analytic usage, which, according to Jayakrishnan et al. (2018), will also optimize and enhance the value addition in the food supply chain and the accessibility of their marketers, thereby ensuring competition within an ever-changing market, thus enhancing the drive for data-informed strategic prediction.

The term "strategic prediction" plays a major role in the arena of the market. According to Seebacher (2021), strategic prediction means the systematic data-driven analysis of information gathered from diverse sources to predict future market movements and consumer actions. It thereby combines the tenets of strategic forecasting and marketing intelligence in assisting corporates to make informed decisions and chalk out strategies. Strategic prediction was based, as Titova and Shutov (2014) noted, on historical and current market data. This

means that organizations continuously carry out back performance and trend analyses to adjust their strategies with what is expected to happen in the future. Dam et al. (2019) state that market intelligence systems collect detailed information on the state of markets, consumer tastes, and the competitive situation. It is important for making the type of predictions that can make informed guesses about how things will turn out in the future; therefore, strategic forecasting is a structured exercise in forecasting that uses market intelligence to enable the organization to become more adaptive and competitive in dynamic markets.

The study is limited in a few respects, which speaks to caution in interpreting its results. The first limitation is that the study was conducted in Iraq and thus the results may not be generalizable to other regions or markets that have different regulations and consumer behaviors. Another limitation is the use of case studies from two companies only, which may narrow the coverage of the wide sector of food products, leading to biased findings. Such research could face validity issues in terms of data accuracy and reliability, especially when using self-reported measures or information collected from various sources that may not be consistent. Second, it was comparative, which implies that some highly influential strategic forecast determinants were left out, rendering the findings skewed and less generalizable to a broader context that might have borne some relevance.

The problem statement for this study will be to determine the challenges that hinder food companies in Iraq from effectively using marketing intelligence systems in their strategic predictions. The role that data-driven decision-making plays in the food industry is rapidly increasing, but most companies are not quick to implement such systems due to limited access to reliable data, inadequate technological infrastructure, and insufficiently skilled staff, among others. Improvements in regulations and changes in consumer behavior make it very difficult to plan strategies in a dynamic environment. The study helps us find out whether or not Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i can use marketing intelligence to improve their strategic forecast abilities so that they can become more competitive and adaptive in the dynamic environment of the market. This research provides answers as to what the food companies in Iraq should do, specifically running into the present barriers to effective strategic forecasting.

The study is guided by the following **research question:** To what extent does the marketing intelligence system affect strategic foresight and competitive positioning at Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i companies operating in the food products sector in Iraq? **The main objective** of this research is to assess how marketing intelligence systems affect the strategic prediction potential and competitive place of the Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i firms in the food products industry. Moreover, this study seeks to find out those critical factors that improve the decision support process and market competition. This objective is set to determine whether the use of marketing intelligence will enhance improved forecasting and strategic advantages for these firms in their markets.

Literature Review: It includes theoretical framework and empirical studies.

Theoretical Framework: The theoretical framework of this research is based on marketing intelligence and strategic prediction. The different aspects of market intelligence, product intelligence, customer intelligence, and competitor intelligence are considered, and they guide the organization's strategic decision processes. According to Dos Santos Guarda's (2015)

study, it is possible to acquire interpretative models through data mining that will empower food companies to allow important information to be extracted from raw data in support of improved predictive capabilities. This helps in gaining a better understanding of market dynamics, therefore predicting consumer behavior and the government's moves, and improving firms' competitive positions in a hostile setting. Ma and Zhang (2021) describe predictive intelligence as one of the types of business intelligence and analytics used to predict prospect and buyer behavior. A core feature of predictive sales intelligence, it enables organizations to predict what buyers want and when they want it. Normally, predictive intelligence systems combine existing information such as buyer details and facts surrounding their purchasing processes with current market triggers such as intent information, rule filings, and confidential studies to indicate suitable leads for go-to-market squads. Potla and Pottla (2024) state that predictive intelligence indicates the leads most likely to convert for sales, improves lead scoring and personalizes outreach to drive higher engagement. Marketing teams should apply predictive intelligence for message campaigns and channel personalization, audience segmentation efficiency, and spending optimization for all channels with the best ROI. Predictive intelligence, with a good strategy, helps the sales and marketing teams spot the customer pain point and deliver the right solution to the qualified customer at the right time, saving everyone time and money while reducing dissatisfaction, churn, and brand damage.

The three types of data are fit, opportunity, and intent. Achieving an understanding of these types of data is a prerequisite for realizing predictive intelligence in full. According to Hussein (2020), the effective use of marketing intelligence systems enables firms to take advantage of data-informed insights that may help in their strategic decision-making. Through the structured analysis of information coming from internal and external sources, such firms can spot trend patterns, appraise risks, and take advantage of opportunities in the food products sector. This paper will enrich the academic debate on marketing intelligence and provide useful advice for practitioners willing to improve their abilities to forecast strategically in a rather complicated market.

Strategic intelligence comprises market analysis, insights into consumer behavior, supply chain optimization, and finally benchmarking the competition. Boyer et al. (2010) argue that with ways to use such intelligence and apply it, firms can identify major growth opportunities, reduce and eliminate risks, and swiftly adapt to changes in the market, a very valuable method for it. Investing in strategic competitive intelligence is an expenditure in more ways than one and, in the long run, becomes an investment that brings back good monetary returns. Most of the companies that apply these services increase their product development, marketing on target, and resource allocation efficiency. Hadi and Halouani (2024) contend that the choice of strategic solution adopted should be intelligent and most importantly serve to satisfy the objectives of the enterprise by fitting well into the company's present systems. Increasing the adoption of leading strategic intelligence solutions for the industry. A market that is growing solidly right now is the global market for strategic intelligence solutions. This is at least in part caused by a need for making decisions based on data as well as by the adoption of advanced analytics. Since the food industry has become more interlinked, there is a rising need for comprehensive intelligence that can track international marketplaces and regulations.

The Resource-Based View Theory (RBVT) is applied to this study. It was largely formulated by Barney in 1991, although it had other influencers too, such as Birger Wernerfelt, Jay B. Barney, George S. Day, Gary Hamel, Shelby D. Hunt, G. Hooley, and C.K. Prahalad, between 1930 and 1959. Such development led to the rise of RBV in the 1990s as the major paradigm in strategic management (Barney, and Arikan, 2005). The Resource-Based View theory argues that the competitive advantage of the firm is achieved by having valuable resources and capabilities, which are also unique. Barney, and Ketchen (2021), say that resources must satisfy VRIN criteria to enable a firm to maintain a sustained competitive advantage. Internal resources within the firm are stressed by RBV as being more critical than external market forces for the attainment and sustenance of competitive advantage. These can be seen as assets, processes, capabilities, information, and knowledge controlled by the firm to improve efficiency and effectiveness (Kozlenkova, et al., 2014).

The theory of RBV is appropriate for this study because it posits a competitive advantage. It indicates to a significant positive relationship between effective marketing intelligence systems and strategic predictions as contributors to a competitive advantage. RBVT concurs with this because it posits that the long-run competitive advantage of a firm can be derived from its unique resources. That theory argues that if rare valuable (i.e., resources that are costly and difficult to imitate) resources are temporarily controlled by several firms, the firms that control these resources can attain a temporary competitive advantage. Applying RBV to this study, marketing intelligence systems would be viewed as a resource that would aid Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i in making better strategic predictions to gain a competitive advantage. The theory supports an examination of how such systems, as internal resources, influence the firm's performance in a fast-changing market.

Advantage can be attained by firms through the continuous recombination or reconfiguration of different types of resources and the creation of new applications that meet market demand. This RBV model has been applied to support the research on marketing innovation with different market-based resources like technology and innovation to detect changes in the business environment and respond to them.

Empirical Studies: The following empirical studies aim to clarify the strategic prediction using marketing intelligence systems. It is a comparative study between Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i Companies within the food products sector in Iraq. The study by Khamoushi (2024) focuses on the importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in predicting consumer behavior. Recently, AI has transformed food marketing due to modern personalized recommendation approaches, and behavior prediction among consumers as well as optimal campaigning. The current paper discusses this change from the use of traditional advertising like TV, radio, and print, to the use of AI approaches. Through the use of data made possible by the internet, AI never-before-seen tracks the histories of purchases by consumers browsing behaviors, and social media activities to make very personalized marketing campaigns. Such campaigns allow for more accurate product recommendations based on consumer needs and satisfaction of their desires; hence, ensuring customer satisfaction. There will be an enhancement in the marketing process with the involvement of labor-intensive activities. This will save on costs as messages can be changed continuously over time, especially since customer preference

keeps changing. While AI offers great advantages in terms of personalization and efficiency, it also comes with challenges, in this case, enormous costs of technology and skilled professionals. The paper compares the strengths and weaknesses of traditional and AI techniques in food marketing. This can provide valuable insight to a marketer on how he/she may use AI to create much more effective and targeted marketing strategies for the changing digital environment.

Soltani-Fesaghandis and Pooya (2018) carried out a study about designing an artificial intelligence system meant for predicting the success seen in new product development and choosing the right market-product strategy. Issues involving the prediction of new product development and the selection of a strategy in cases where there is a failure in the new product development have attracted the attention of many managers. Therefore, the present study aimed to design an integrated system of prediction of the success of product development. The type of market-product strategy relevant to the use of artificial intelligence at work in a food company. The study group comprised 250 food companies in Iran. The information for measuring the success of new product development was gathered from existing studies. In addition, the Ansoff matrix was used to choose the market-product strategy. A questionnaire served as the data collection tool in this study. Accommodation of the adaptive neural-fuzzy network method and fuzzy inference system Data is studied. Results indicate that Heads of firms dealing with food can take steps to forecast the success of new product development before creating it and applying other plans if necessary. Results showed that FIS can be formed from either expert knowledge or data. It suggested developing the subsequent team rules fuzzy inference system of the approach based on data rather than expert judgment and other researchers use other artificial intelligence methods, for example, artificial neural networks, to predict new product development success, choose the proper market product strategies, and compare the results to those obtained in this research study.

Al-Saqqa and Wady (2017) conducted a case study. Therefore, the study attempts to evaluate how Marketing Intelligence contributes to companies' competitive advantages as ISPs within the Gaza Strip. This study involves the entire set of marketing employees at ISPs in the Gaza Strip. While describing this particular phenomenon, the researcher employed a descriptive-analytical method and primary and secondary sources for data collection. 69 of the 80 distributed questionnaires were collected, forming a recovery percentage of 86.25%. The results of the study show a relationship of statistical significance between marketing intelligence with its four components (competitor intelligence, product intelligence, market intelligence, and customer intelligence) and achieving competitive advantage. Also, the study results showed that there is no statistically significant difference between the answers of the respondents about marketing intelligence and the competitive. The Internet service provider companies in the Gaza Strip have a gender advantage due to scientific qualifications, years of experience, job titles, and income levels. Therefore, the internet service provider companies in Gaza Strip should source information about and from the customers, market, services, and competitors to attain competitive preeminence.

Ladhar et al. (2023) have done a study on AI-based market intelligence systems for farmer collectives. Market participation is impeded by many challenges; hence small and marginal farmers usually do not fetch a fair price for their produce. Farmer cooperative aggregation of

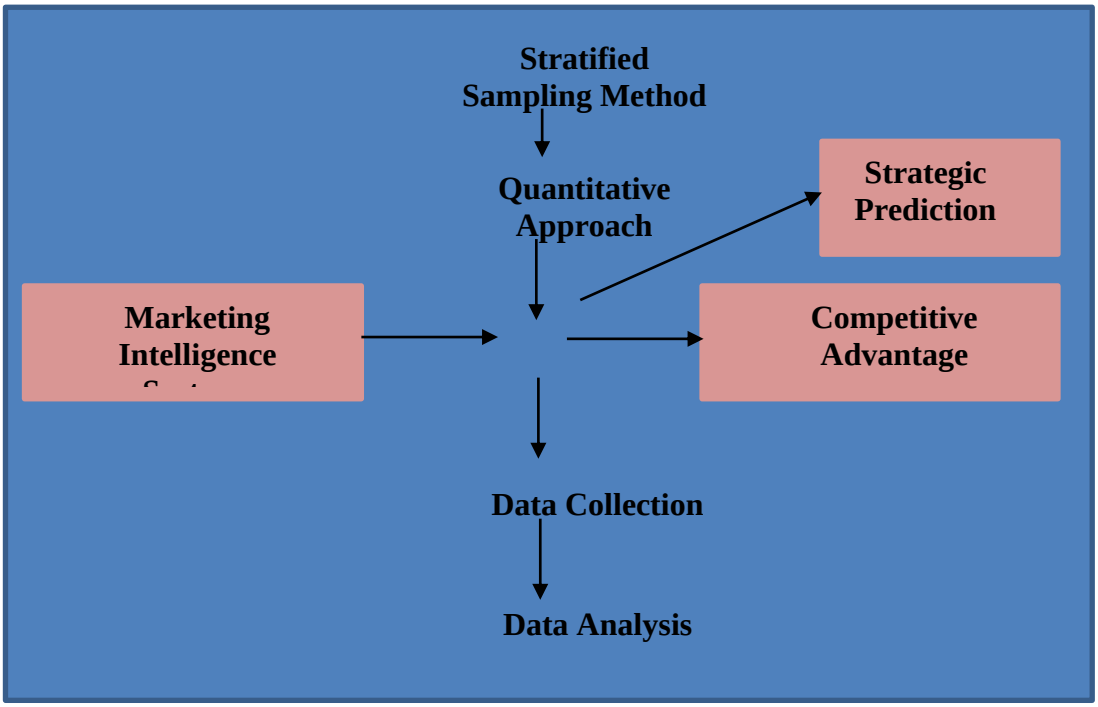
produce and the possibility to delay sales in the case of crops that are not perishable has since become a useful strategy for enhancing farmer incomes. We are associated with a network of farmer cooperatives in India producing soybeans and wish to explore the feasibility of developing an ML-based price-forecasting-and-sales-recommendation system that generates advice on the optimal dates when harvested soybeans should be sold—whether to sell immediately (if it is to push future) or to wait (if it is to rise). We present an appraisal of varied techniques in price projection and a sales advice generation approach based on prospect theory. Observations on historical data portray that we can deliver humble profits to farmers, upon which we develop and execute trials on an Android application. The early results show positive responses. Our techniques can be extended to various other agricultural products that can be stored for several months and assist farmer cooperatives to compete effectively in those markets.

Consequently, chapter 2 explains the basis from which marketing intelligence systems can strategically predict competitive advantage in the Iraqi food sector. The resource-based view theory detail shows that marketing intelligence which involves market, product, customer, and competitor intelligence is a major resource and capability for companies such as Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i. The chapter further discusses how those components, in association with data mining models and techniques, enable companies to approach potential markets, competitors, products, and customers as well as improve them further in the pursuit of competitive advantage in the market. It deals with how a marketing intelligence system can improve strategic decision-making and competitors' activities and thus help management to identify market opportunities for the best positive effect. Thus, this forms the conceptual framework and the empirical background of the study under consideration.

Research Methodology

Mainly includes research design, data collection, research tool, and data analysis by using SPSS program. This study aims to investigate the strategic prediction using marketing intelligence systems. It is a comparative study between Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i Companies within the food products sector in Iraq. The study employs a quantitative approach. Kolmogorov (1965) defined quantitative methodology as an approach that has not yet been subjective, deductive, and based on the measure and numerical representation of the degree of generality of the results. The test of theory that quantifies the pre-specified concepts, constructs, and hypotheses is tested by using a quantitative method. According to Kas et al. (2019), quantitative research is defined as that research can answer numeric, objective WH-questions of when and where. In all other respects, of course, it cannot be measured in that way.

This study includes an **independent variable**: Marketing Intelligence Systems. This embodies several aspects such as Customer Understanding Market Analysis and competitor analysis product intelligence. **The dependent variables** are:



1. Strategic Prediction: The readiness of firms to predict market trends and consumer actions based on information gathered from marketing intelligence systems.
2. Competitive Advantage: Measures how positively an organization can use marketing information to be better than the opposition in the food products area**.** Below is the research design figure:

The population of this study includes all managers and experienced employees who are currently working at Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i companies in Iraq. **The sample size** comprises 90 marketing managers and experienced employees from Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i Food Products Companies in Iraq (45 managers and employees from Al-Bawadi Company and 45 managers and employees from Al-Mara'i Company). This study aims to explore how marketing intelligence systems can enhance strategic predictions within the food products sector in Iraq, focusing specifically on these two companies. By employing a quantitative approach, **data collection** is carried out by following the Stratified Sampling Method. This method can be defined as a probability sampling method applicable in quantitative research, where the population is divided into well-defined groups called strata such that within each stratum, individuals share some common characteristics, and then researchers take a random sample from each stratum. It helps ensure that particular subgroups will be present in the sample. The aim is to have a sample that properly represents the population to enable subgroup research (Tong, 2006).

The sample size selected for the study is adequate to ensure statistical validity and reliability. Employing this method ensures some representation across different levels of business model innovations implemented within the business companies. This stratification helps capture diverse perspectives on studying strategic prediction using marketing intelligence systems in Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i Companies within the food products sector in Iraq. After developing and validating the scale, it was administered to the sample of this study by filling

on a social media platform, especially WhatsApp, and the participants' e-mails. Then the data collected was analyzed using the software program SPSS. To elicit the results, different statistical tests are required to be conducted such as the Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency Test, 2-tailed Significance Test, and One-Sample T-Test. The previous statistical tests are required to answer the research question. After eliciting the results, an analysis was done to get the final results. A few recommendations are stated for conducting new research in the future.

Research Tool:

For the sake of implementing this quantitative study, the researcher built a questionnaire of 11 items depending on this research question. It was judged by a group of assistants and associate professors who have the same major **(See Appendix 1 at the end of this study).** It focuses on studying strategic prediction using marketing intelligence systems in Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i Companies within the food products sector in Iraq. The questionnaire items are filled in by the 90 participants. Their responses are carefully studied and analyzed statistically. Likert's three-point scale frames their responses as: agree, neutral, and disagree. Batterton and Hale (2017) define the Likert scale as a rating system used to measure opinions, attitudes, or behaviors. Normally, a statement is presented, followed by three or five response options.

Research Results:

The research question is: How do marketing intelligence systems affect strategic forecasting and competitive positioning at Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i companies in the food products industry in Iraq? To answer this research question, the following statistical tests are conducted. These tests analyze and compare the participants' responses to the 11 items of this questionnaire (**See Appendix 1 at the end of this study)**. The following table shows Al-Bawadi participants' responses concerning the answers to the above research question. To investigate their responses, Descriptive and Frequency Statistic Tests are conducted below:

Table 1: Descriptive and Frequency Statistic Tests

No. of items	No. of participants	The Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Frequency (00.0 %)	Variance
1.	45	2.4444	0.66386	48.9 %	0.343
2.	45	2.4444	0.67412	44.2 %	0.336
3.	45	2.5333	0.63886	60.0 %	0.391
4.	45	2.5334	0.54286	62.3 %	0.340
5.	45	2.5789	0.66723	57.8 %	0.345
6.	45	2.4004	0.65286	62.5 %	0.340
7.	45	2.4182	0.67498	51.1 %	0.373
8.	45	2.3834	0.65312	48.9 %	0.343
9.	45	2.4298	0.58600	44.5 %	0.427
10.	45	2.7439	0.62527	48.4 %	0.455
11.	45	2.6419	0.57997	51.5 %	0.431

Table 1 shows that the average Mean of the 11 items **(See Appendix 1 at the end of this research)** is 2.6134 with an average Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.65332. The Mean is nearly considered acceptable. Besides, the average percentage of the above 11 items is 52.5 %. The average variance of these items is 0.357. According to the participants' responses, using the marketing intelligence system by Al-Bawadi Company adds some quality to strategic decisions. Data obtained from marketing intelligence systems is dependable in predicting market trends in the food products sector. Al-Bawadi Company has certain abilities when it comes to collecting and studying data on market intelligence. The marketing strategies of Al-Bawadi are somewhat data-oriented. Workers at Al-Bawadi have not enough received training to use the systems of marketing information effectively. The systems of marketing information have been installed at Al-Bawadi with outcomes of customer satisfaction. The system of marketing information at Al-Bawadi gives a competitive edge in the line of food products. The insights obtained from marketing intelligence are not effectively communicated within Al-Bawadi Company to be used for strategic planning.

The following table shows Al-Mara'i participants' responses regarding the answers to the above research question. To investigate their responses, Descriptive and Frequency Statistic Tests are conducted below:

Table 2: Descriptive and Frequency Statistic Tests

No. of items	No. of participants	The Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Frequency (00.0 %)	Variance
1.	45	2.6889	0.66585	71.1 %	0.397
2.	45	2.6667	0.58411	68.9 %	0.428
3.	45	2.6984	0.65884	75.6 %	0.452
4.	45	2.7362	0.58284	82.2 %	0.396
5.	45	2.7728	0.63724	83.3 %	0.439
6.	45	2.7745	0.65831	75.6 %	0.486
7.	45	2.6987	0.68493	71.1 %	0.439
8.	45	2.57784	0.64312	66.7 %	0.451
9.	45	2.7841	0.69606	84.3 %	0.425
10.	45	2.6845	0.68521	80.4 %	0.455
11.	45	2.6598	0.62996	80.8 %	0.435

Table 2 shows that the average Mean of the 11 items is 2.6931 with an average Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.69729. The Mean is considered high. Besides, the average percentage of the above 11 items is 76.4 %. The average variance of these items is 0.451. According to the participants' responses of Al-Mara'I Company, the use of the marketing intelligence system by Al-Mara'I Company adds a lot to the quality of strategic decisions. The system works effectively to help it understand the likes of customers. Data obtained from marketing intelligence systems is dependable in predicting market trends in the food products sector. Al-Mara'i Company has like abilities when it comes to collecting and studying data on market intelligence. Workers at this company have received enough training to use the systems of marketing information effectively. The systems of marketing information have been installed at this company with outcomes of customer satisfaction. The system of marketing information at Al-Mara'I gives a good competitive edge in the line of food products. The use of marketing information and how well the sales do for this company shows a clear connection.

To conclude and compare the last result of this research question, One Sample T-Test is important to be conducted. Table (3) clarifies this:

Table 3: One Sample T-Test

Items: 1-11	No. of partici-pants	T	Average Mean	Average Std. Devia-Tion	Sig. (2-tailed)	Average percentage
Al-Bawadi Company	45	21.918	2.6134	0.65332	0.000	52.5 %
Al-Mara'I Company	45	23.416	2.6931	0.69729	0.000	76.4 %
Total	90					

Since the average Mean and the valid percentage of Al-Mara'i Company are higher than of Al-Bawadi Company, it means that the use of the marketing intelligence system by Al-Mara'I Company adds a lot to the quality of strategic decisions. The system works effectively in Al-Mara'i to help it understand the likes of customers. The marketing strategies of Al-Mara'i Company are more data-oriented compared to Al-Bawadi Company. Workers at Al-Mara'i have received enough training to use the systems of marketing information effectively. The systems of marketing information have been installed at Al-Mara'i Company with outcomes of customer satisfaction more than Al-Bawadi. The system of marketing information at Al-Mara'i gives a better competitive edge over Al-Bawadi in the line of food products. The insights obtained from marketing intelligence are effectively communicated within Al-Mara'i Company to be used for strategic planning.

Discussion: The results of this study indicated that marketing intelligence systems had a more positive effect on strategic predictions and competitive positioning in Al-Mara'i Company compared to Al-Bawadi Company in the food products sector in Iraq. It uses marketing intelligence effectively in reading the preferences of customers. The Iraqi food market is growing because it has a large population with increasing food consumption and most of the food is imported. This finding is consistent with that of Al-Rawi (1988), who reported a growing demand for processed foods. The demand was positively driven by increased disposable income as well as changing lifestyles and urbanization. It is also sensitive to various challenges, like health and safety issues supply chain distribution, and economic volatility. The findings of this research are in line with RBV theory, as it suggests that firms such as Al-Bawadi and Al-Mara'i in the Iraqi food industry can attain a competitive advantage through valuable, rare, and inimitable resources by good management that can utilize such resources. This study can be viewed within the paradigm of the Resource-Based View theory because, according to RBV, the internal resources of a firm can result in competitive advantage and better performance. It justifies that Al-Mara'i has a resourceful application of marketing intelligence systems, which enrich its strategic forecasts and position in the market compared to Al-Bawadi. Kozlenkova et al. (2014) support RBV that the firm's competitive advantage results from valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources to capture value. In this case, the marketing intelligence system for Al-Mara'i becomes a source of competitive advantage over Al-Bawadi in the food products sector. This is also supported by

RBV, which argues that certain heterogeneous resources within a firm can sustain a competitive advantage.

The findings indicate that the marketing strategies of Al-Mara'i are more data-focused than Al-Bawadi. This implies that a key aspect of RBV, Al-Mara'i, manages to use its marketing intelligence to discern customer preferences as well as the trend in the market positively. A direct relationship is identified in this study between the application of marketing intelligence and sales results for both companies. More than Al-Bawadi Company, Al-Mara'i's system of marketing intelligence has resulted in enhanced customer satisfaction. This finding corresponds to that of Khamoushi (2024), where it is stated that valuable resources if effectively used, can enhance performance.

Conclusion:

This comparative study in the context of the food products sector in Iraq, Al-Bawadi, and Al-Mara'i Companies indicates that the role of marketing intelligence is crucial to strategic prediction and competitive positioning. From the findings, there is a positive correlation between an effective marketing intelligence system and improved strategic predictions. Al-Mara'i Company is also able to use the system much better than Al-Bawadi to facilitate decision-making, customer satisfaction, and sales performance. This finding emphasizes the fact that there should be investments made in the marketing intelligence system to achieve a competitive advantage in the Iraqi food market. The insights from marketing intelligence are used for strategic purposes in Al-Mara'i Company. The paper, therefore, underscores the fact that Iraqi companies can harness marketing intelligence to improve strategic acumen and attain sustainable growth.

Recommendations:

Artificial intelligence should be adopted by Iraqi food companies because it can give them a lot of help in staying ahead with the use of smart marketing tools and wise investments in predictive analysis and customer interactions. More study needs to look into certain AI uses, like those from Taste wise or Afresh, to make supply chains better, cut down on waste, and lift smart choices in the Iraqi food area.

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