

FACTORS AFFECTING APPLICATION OF E-MARKETING AT PROPRIETORSHIPS AND THE IMPACT OF E-MARKETING USE ON PROPRIETORSHIPS' MARKETING SUCCESS

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Abstract: *In the past decade, the emergence of the Internet has been growing considerably along with the role of information technology (IT) in business. The application of the Internet, IT, media and computer science help enterprises gain more achievements and positively change their business marketing performance. However, E-Marketing (EM) is quite a fresh perception, particularly for organizations in developing countries that are hesitating to apply this term in practical business environment. Therefore, this paper is in an attempt to investigate the impact of EM use on proprietorships' marketing success in Ho Chi Minh City. The study seeks for effective methods to enable proprietorships to implement their business better by reinforcing a thorough understanding about various factors affecting EM applications. The data collected with the participation of 299 respondents gave out statistical evidences showing that EM use has an impact on marketing success of small enterprises. This provides a reference for firms to minimize possible faults in implementing EM as well as an exceptional experience for application, based on which the marketing strategy could be built to perform accordingly; thereby indirectly increasing business efficiency. Implications on marketing success and suggested tools are expected to give proprietorships a more practical look at Vietnamese emerging market.*

Keywords: *e-marketing, adoption, Vietnam, proprietorship, marketing success*

1. INTRODUCTION

Information technology brings a bundle of benefits, creating competitive advantages and chances as a result of globalization (Levitt, 1983). Nowadays, small firms have opportunities to utilize their competitive advantages offered by technology for promoting the international market integration as well as enhancing domestic market performance (Coviello and McAuley, 1999). However, E-Marketing (EM) is quite a fresh perception, particularly for organizations in developing countries facing many

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obstacles: poor infrastructure, lack of abundant resources (labor and capital), and so forth. Meanwhile, electronic tools and the Internet are being widely implemented in doing business to communicate with customers, establish supply-chain systems, which is mainly to save costs and operation time. This new form of marketing opens potential chances for organizations currently in stable and robust development. In Vietnam – a developing country, conditions for launching advance technology is restrained by many difficulties. In reality, EM is a strong strategic tool in medium/large corporations but not for small-size ones, especially in the current situation of the country when there exists the significant lack of available resources. The rapid appearance of IT, the Internet, communication technologies, the World Wide Web (WWW) and computer science have provided dynamic media channels for marketing, offering an online attendance at most business organizations (Liang & Huang, 1998).

Proprietorships are crucial in creating new jobs in private sectors for Vietnam. In the rural area, the growth of proprietorships from 2006 to 2011 is 11.5 percent compared to 5.38 percent in the period of 2001 to 2005 (Xuan & Hien, 2013). Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), the biggest city in Vietnam, has been the most attracting place for business development throughout the country, accounts for the largest share of total proprietorships in Vietnam. The growth of proprietorships has increased rapidly in both urban and rural areas contributing to poverty reduction, job creation, and living standard improvement. Although the contribution level of proprietorship kind business form is not as huge as large enterprises, the great number of proprietorship considerably contributes to the overall GDP.

In small business organizations, products and services sold via the Internet tend to be major in service digitization, community possibility, niche position and entrepreneurial start-up (Drew, 2003), which raises the need of EM. However, implementation process is still slow due to insufficient capital, limited resources or low-quality infrastructure. Although the rapid expansion of the Internet was already recognized, the actual outcomes receiving are still questionable.

The number of researches concentrates on EM implementation by small proprietorships are limited though there are a lot of studies doing research about medium and large ones before. Therefore, an investigation on the impact of EM applications on proprietorships' marketing strategies is important to the development of Vietnam's economy due to the fact that gaining a better understanding of important determinants influencing EM usage will help small businesses facilitate suitable EM strategy to maximize their business performance. On the other hand, having knowledge in factors of EM adoption and the impact of EM on marketing success will help proprietorships leverage their revenue and increase customers' satisfaction.

This study is expected to support proprietorships performing its business better by reinforcing deeper perception about various factors affecting EM application. This does not only act as an academic reference for related topics but could also perceived as a hint for EM adoption in the real business operation. With the response rate of 299

over 427 proprietorships who use at least one EM tool, the findings indicate that Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) factors have a positive influence on EM adoption; EM usage also leave a positive effect on marketing success. The findings are intended to play a part in helping minimizing possible faults in implementing EM, which may give an appropriate direction for proprietorships to set up suitable marketing strategies for a higher business efficiency. The literature is reviewed in the next section, followed by methods and data analysis parts, which are to assess the statistical evidence for discussion and implication.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

The Technology Acceptance Model projected by Davis (1989) is in an attempt to set up a basic foundation about acceptance and application of new technologies. This model has been investigated for more than 25 years with a variety of technologies and approved as a prominent model in forecasting and illustrating behavior usage across abundant domains (Abbasi *et al.*, 2011). Taylor and Strutton (2010), Ha and Stoel (2009), Vijayasathy (2004) are more likely to be leading-edge researches in this field. Specifically, Vijayasathy (2004) implemented a research on online shopping in which the original TAM model is expanded by combining other components in a bid to forecast the adoption and usage of technical innovations as well as, in this case, EM. He showed that compatibility, relative advantage, ease of use and security are the crucial determinants of intention towards online shopping. Within this respect, Ha and Stoel (2009) conducted a study illustrating that college students' intention to shopping online was considerably affected by perceived ease of use, compatibility, and attitude towards e-shopping. These findings are also reinforced by Taylor and Strutton (2010) who proved that perceived ease of use and usefulness strongly influenced buying intention in the post-adoption online context.

Furthermore, the application of EM in business practice also positions a firm's operation. Specifically, proprietorships deploying the new technologies of EM in operating have the ability to boost their competitive ability, marketing performance, and sales efficiency. Implementing EM has generated benefits in improving the effectiveness of the relationship between organizations and customers (Tapp and Hughes, 2004). Thanks to its advantages, the impact of EM adoption on marketing success has been a favorite topic for researchers (Wu, Mahajan & Balasubramanian, 2003; Eid & El-Gohary, 2011).

This study focus on perceived ease of use, relative advantage, compatibility, and EM tools as key factors that could have an influence on EM application and marketing success of proprietorships. From that, this paper could examine the conceptual model under the view of business practices.

2.1. Proprietorships

This research follows the legal term of the Article 49 (Decree 43/2010 ND-CP), in which a proprietorship is owned by a Vietnamese citizen, group or family; the number

of employees in such organizations must not exceed ten people. This modification proceeds appropriately to proper regulations such as the quantity of employees, capital requirements or taxation.

Proprietorship contains distinguished significations separating in terms of size with large, medium and other kinds of enterprises. It is not a firm but has one same character with a micro enterprise about the allowed number of employees. While a micro enterprise has business status and must be registered with the charter capital, proprietorships do not have this status as well as charter capital. Proprietorship owns itself or its ownership structure is independently exercised, closely managed by owner and financially relied on that person. Thus, small business organizations called proprietorships are managed by an owner considered as a skilled artist or craftsman mainly drawing the business strategy by himself, taking liable for both quality and fame of his business (Deeks, 1976). In fact, although proprietorships play a significant role in the economic and social development of Vietnam, they have not received enough consideration and support. According to governmental statistics, there have been over 4.6 million of proprietorships until July 1st, 2013, creating more than 7.9 million jobs and contributing significantly in unemployment and poverty reduction.

2.2. EM usage

Nowadays, although technology development has already jumped far compared to last decades, EM is still considered relatively a new business practice for developing countries. In the view of Frost and Strauss (2001), EM is defined as the use of electronic applications to conduct the conception, distribution, price of ideas, commodities and services to create transactions that can satisfy both individual and organizational goals. Avlonitis and Karayanni (2000) indicated that EM use is expressed by EM tools. Through EM, consumers can order, exchange, buy, and sell goods and services via the Internet by different digital means (Eid & El-Gohary, 2011). Currently, EM is widely adopted dynamically by increasing number of enterprises, ranging from small to large companies, in order to spread their business scope. This enables the kind of resource distribution that seeks to deploy the optimal selection between marketing resources and marketing activities to generate profit at maximum level (Albadvi & Koosha, 2011). In addition, EM tools also involve the adoption of digital applications so as to perform business practice and marketing activities. Specifically, EM tools encompass Internet marketing, e-mail marketing, mobile marketing, telemarketing, intranet marketing, extranet marketing, electronic data exchange for marketing performance, customer relationship management and so forth. In the scope of this study, the concentration is put on Internet marketing, e-mail marketing and mobile marketing (Chaffey & Ellis, 2006).

2.3. EM use and Marketing Activities

Obviously, technology integration is an essential foundation of an enterprises' success (Ho, Fang & Lin, 2011). EM generates huge chances for proprietorships as the Internet

and other electronic techniques play an important role in performing marketing activities currently. A large number of markets or users can be directly approached throughout a web site or a web page in a quick and economical manner. EM supports proprietorships an abundant source of opportunities in developing business economically in ways that have never been appeared to them previously. Moreover, EM also helps the entrepreneurs communicate and execute commercial practices with the new and current customers in an integrated and flexible way.

2.4. EM Success

Actually, the definition about the success of EM performance is still vaguely identified. EM success is known as the success of one business practice and can be evaluated by different indicators. Regarding to how this factors can be identified and measured, Davidson (1999) showed ten essential measures; Clark (1998) examined sixteen ones or Ambler and Riley (2000) investigated 38 measures.

EM performance is perceived successful when it helps attain the defined business goals. The remarkable objectives can be listed as sales increase, customers’ satisfaction, revenue augmentation and overhead costs reduction. After reviewing the literature to investigate the important factors having impact on EM implementation (1) and the effect of EM use on marketing success (2) by proprietorships in HCMC, Vietnam, a new conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

As a description to the conceptual framework, the hypotheses are stated in Table 1.

Figure 1: The Research Conceptual Framework

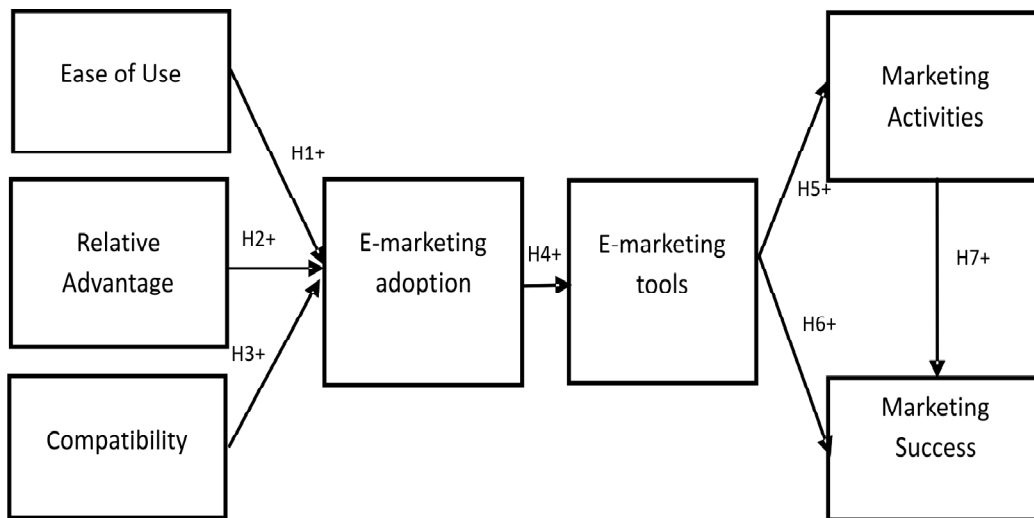


Table 1
List of Hypotheses

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Content</i>
Hypothesis 1	E-Marketing ease of use perception has a positive effect on E-Marketing implementation.
Hypothesis 2	E-Marketing relative advantage perception has a positive effect on E-Marketing application.
Hypothesis 3	E-Marketing compatibility perception has a positive effect on E-Marketing application.
Hypothesis 4	E-Marketing adoption affects how a proprietorship use E-Marketing tools.
Hypothesis 5	The use of E-Marketing tools has a positive effect on marketing activities.
Hypothesis 6	The use of E-Marketing has a positive effect on marketing success.
Hypothesis 7	Marketing activities have a positive impact on marketing success.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sampling and Data Collection

As Singleton and Bruce (1999) stated, research problems could be solved by different approaches. Thus, with the illustrated research objectives, a questionnaire is designed with thirty questions, including these factors: ease of use, relative advantage, compatibility, EM adoption, EM tools, marketing activities and marketing success. Each factor is composed of representative indicators. The sample size was designed based on the requirements of minimum sample size by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996): $N \geq 8M + 50$, where N is the sample size, and M is the number of items in the model. In this study, thirty items are employed; therefore, the sample size of 299 valid observations out of 427 respondents applying EM tools for doing their business in HCMC, particularly in ten districts, met the condition of the data analysis by structural equation modeling. Additionally, Hair *et al.* (1998) stated that a sample size is less than 100 considered as a small one. Additionally, the medium size falls into the category ranging from 100 to 200; the large size is greater than 200. Moreover, Garson (2009) also proposed that an appropriate sample size needs to be larger than 100. In the case of this study, since the sample size is approximately 300, it is suitable for executing structural equation model. Respondents were well supported and clearly explained while taking the survey, to avoid data bias in their answers. Their demographic information is described in Table 2.

Over 60% the owner of proprietorships are female with the majority age ranging from 20 to 40 years old. This implies a gender tendency in online business. In terms of education, the majority of respondents has college degree and has been working for 2 to 5 years in businesses applying EM tools, with the percentage of 27.4 and 38.8, respectively. From this data, the researchers could conclude that proprietorships involved in EM varies in their educational levels. Due to the development of technology, education levels may influence how proprietorships' use of modern communication methods.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Male	115	38.5
	Female	184	61.5
Age (years)	< 20	16	5.4
	20-25	69	23.1
	25-30	81	27.1
	30-40	90	30.1
	>40	43	14.4
Education	University	62	20.7
	High school	76	25.4
	College	82	27.4
	Vocational school	79	26.4
Duration (years)	1- year	99	33.1
	2-5 years	116	38.8
	5-8 years	61	20.4
	>8 years	23	7.7

Source: Data. Sample size= 299.

The duration for applying EM tools in business mostly falls into the period of 2 to 5 years, followed is the period of 1 to 2 years. This information creates a belief that online business is still a new perception in a developing country like Vietnam. With the explosion of technology, especially the Internet and social networks recently, the adoption of EM tools is expanding to business and consumers widely with a fast pace.

3.2. Variable Measurement

Within this paper, closed-ended questions with Likert rating scale - the most common pattern for multi-item scales, are used. The respondents are required to demonstrate the level of agreement or disagreement they perceive about each item described in the surveys. Normally, the respondents are given five-point scale questionnaires ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for each statement; 5 expressing the highest level of satisfaction and 1 showing the lowest. Table 3 summarizes the measurement scales and sources.

3.3. Data analysis

At the beginning stage, pilot tests are conducted several times with the number of respondents approximately 60 proprietorships to test the validity and reliability of used research scales. Particularly, they helped us to clarify the meaning questionnaire in the Vietnamese context and language. The higher of coefficient that the homogeneous of variables indicates, the greater level of measurement of associated variable is. Following Nunnally and Burnstein (1994), the scale is accepted when coefficients of Cronbach's alpha is larger than 0.6 and corrected item-total correlation is greater than 0.3, to avoid disqualified problem. The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is then performed to assess the dimensions of each construct. The unidimensionality of the

Table 3
Construct, Scale Items and Sources

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Measures used to capture constructs</i>	<i>Source</i>
TAM factors		
Perceived ease of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy to learn - Easy to use - Easy to become skillful - Clear and understandable 	Adopted from Moore & Benbasat (1991), Davis (1989).
Perceived relative advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work more quickly - Improve job performance - Increase productivity - Enhance effectiveness 	Adopted from Moore & Benbasat (1991)
Perceived compatibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compatible with system - Fit into working style - Flexible to interact with - Doesn't affect to previous business - Compatible with the current operating system and web browser 	Adopted from Moore & Benbasat (1991)
E-Marketing adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E-Marketing adoption planning - E-Marketing resources usage - Systematic and regular updates for web site - Website connection to customer database - Interacting with customers 	New scale based on Watson, Kenedy, Nwoham, & Rea (2007), El-Gohary (2010)
E-Marketing tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internet marketing - E-mail marketing - Mobile marketing - Intranet marketing - Extranet marketing 	Adopted from El-Gohary (2009)
Marketing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faster discovery of customer needs - Faster communication with customers - Faster adaptability of customer needs - Providing better service quality - Developing new products - Increasing customers' satisfaction 	Adopted from Daniel & Wilson (2002), Chen & Hwang (2001)
Marketing success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New sales - New customers - Cost reduction - Profit increase 	Adopted from Avlonitis & Karayanni (2000) New scale based on Eid & Trueman (2004), El-Gohary <i>et al.</i> (2008a, 2008b)

research scales is examined by the analysis of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). In this analysis, fit statistics are generated in order to assess the acceptability and suitability of factors correlated in the model. Finally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used for investigating the relationships existing in the research model.

4. RESULTS

The statistical tools used to analyze data are SPSS and AMOS (version 21). The aim of EFA is to determine how, and to what extent, the observed variables are linked to their underlying factors. Quintessentially, the researchers expect to identify the minimal number of factor that underlie (or account for) co-variation among the observed variables. In contrast to EFA, CFA is rational for known underlying latent variable structure. This analysis is used to postulate relations between the observed measures and the underlying factors statistically. In short words, the factor analytic model (EFA or CFA) focuses solely on how, and to which, the observed variables are linked to their underlying latent factors (Byrne, 2013). Our data analysis process includes Cronbach's alpha analysis, EFA and CFA, and SEM, which represents casual processes generating observations on multiple variables. The casual processes are represented by a series of structural equations, which can be modeled pictorially to enable a clearer conceptualization of the theory under study (Byrne, 2013).

Nunnally (1978) expresses that a coefficient alpha should be 0.6 at the beginning of the study and higher than 0.7 for most scientific studies. Besides, items with item-total correlation less than 0.3 is going to be removed to enhance the reliability and validity of the research. Table 5 illustrates the testing results of Cronbach's alpha.

Table 5
Cronbach's Alpha

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Loading Range</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>
Perceived ease of use (EA)	4.2174-4.4548	0.73092-0.89531	0.699-0.908	0.719-0.888	0.884
Perceived relative advantage (RA)	3.5786-3.8896	0.73936-0.82952	0.622-0.896	0.628-0.874	0.836
Perceived compatibility (CO)	4.0000-4.4114	0.68640-0.81384	0.587-0.963	0.576-0.866	0.869
E-Marketing adoption (ED)	3.5084-4.3813	0.79117-0.97101	0.667-0.816	0.73-0.907	0.861
E-Marketing tools (EMT)	0.933-4.4013	0.58541-0.71019	0.593-0.593	0.515-0.805	0.693
Marketing activities (EMA)	4.0569-4.3177	0.74819-0.85941	0.522-0.732	0.618-0.899	0.790
Marketing success (RE)	3.8161-4.0401	0.83231-0.91020	0.817-0.963	0.772-0.933	0.852

Source: Data

All scales achieves reliability coefficient ranging from 0.693 to 884 and do not have any items deleted. EFA is performed to analyze the relationship among each variable that leads to final rotated component matrix with all factors qualify the initial conditions for basic research. One indicator of the variable marketing success was eliminated

from EFA due to low loading. According to Hair (2010), independent and dependent constructs are analyzed further if they exceed cut-off level of KMO greater than 0.5. The result shows statistical evidence indicating that KMO and Bartlett's Test records a high value of 0.86 with high significance (0.000).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is utilized to investigate the unidimensionality of the research scales. There are some considerable statistics expressed to assess the acceptability of each research factors. All standards for statistical fit are accepted by Hair (2010). To achieve these suitable model fit indexes, one item from the factor perceived compatibility, two from E-Marketing adoption, two from E-Marketing activities, and one from marketing success were eliminated in CFA. Moreover, as recommended by Hair (2010), multiple fit indices should be measured to confirm the CFA's goodness of fit. He also suggested to calculate CFI, RMSEA, and the χ^2 value and the associated df compared with recommended criteria. The indices enable to evaluate the model fit. Table 6 demonstrates the fit indices values which satisfied the minimum requirements suggested by Hair (2010). Therefore, the results confirm that constructs used in this study satisfy the reliability and validity criteria.

Table 6
Measure of the Model Fit

<i>Fit index</i>	<i>Recommended value</i>	<i>CFA model</i>	<i>SEM Model</i>
CMIN/DF	< 5	1.687**	2.191**
CFI	≥ 0.9	0.956**	0.920**
RMSEA	≤ 0,08	0.048**	0.063**

*acceptable **good

Table 7 shows the estimated results of SEM model. We find that perceived ease of use, relative advantage and perceived compatibility all have positive effects on the EM adoption by proprietorships. Specifically, ease of use perception impacts positively at the significant level of 0.05 with the Standardized Estimate (SE) of 0.103, relative

Table 7
Regression Weight Results

	<i>Path</i>		<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Perceived compatibility	→	E-Marketing adoption	0.862***	Supported
Perceived ease of use	→	E-Marketing adoption	0.127**	Supported
Perceived relative advantage	→	E-Marketing adoption	0.126**	Supported
E-Marketing adoption	→	E-Marketing tools	0.129***	Supported
E-Marketing tools	→	E-Marketing activities	0.346***	Supported
E-Marketing activities	→	Marketing success	0.494***	Supported
E-Marketing tools	→	Marketing success	0.501***	Supported

Source: Data;

***significant at 0.001($p < 0.001$), ** significant at 0.01($p < 0.01$), * significant at 0.05($p < 0.05$)

advantage with SE of 0.105 at the level of 0.05 and compatibility perception with SE of 0.643 at level of 0.001. Within this regard, the highest impact on EM implementation is compatibility and the lowest influence is ease of use perception. It also indicates that H1, H2 and H3 are supported.

Moreover, the use of EM tools positively impacts both marketing activities and marketing success of proprietorships with the value of SE 0.237 and 0.318 respectively at the same significant level of 0.001. Thus, H5 and H6 are accepted. With respect to marketing success, marketing activities impacts a relatively high effect with 0.459 of SE at level of 0.001 and so, H7 is supported.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research is conducted not only by TAM model to measure the importance of each factor that affect to EM adoption, but also evaluates the impact of EM use on marketing success. All the relationships mentioned in the hypotheses are confirmed in this study. The whole model shows the importance of each factor to the application of EM. The highest influence of compatibility on EM implementation implies that businesses are better focus on compatibility during their interactions with customers. The results are consistent with previous researches for the same topic. As compatibility is one of the internal factors affecting EM adoption, this proves that in the process of bringing EM into the business and getting customers familiar with this new kind of marketing method, internal factors should be carefully considered. This decides whether a proprietorship achieve successful outcomes after implementing EM. On the other hand, this finding reveals the information about customer behaviors when interacting with a firm's Internet marketing approaches. They tend to prefer a good or service over the Internet if the marketing tools bring them familiar feelings, which should be similar to what they have experienced before, with the traditional marketing methods. In the society of Vietnamese, this is especially true due to the high level of collectivism. Ease of use has impact of EM, but the significance level is not strong. Together with the demographic information about respondents' education, the researchers believe that users do not find technology barriers as the main obstacles preventing them from using EM. However, EM tools should be easier for users to experience if there is a need in increasing EM adoption to increase business performance.

This study confirms that EM use has a positive effect on marketing success of proprietorships. While people are considering between using traditional marketing and EM as the trend in using high technology is yet completed, this conclusion, which has been proven by the analysis of data in the context of Vietnam, could make people realize that EM could have more advantages in the success of marketing strategies in the modern society. Effective EM tools include two main channels, which are Internet marketing and Mobile marketing, since people are easy to get access to the Internet with the development of network facility regardless of time and place. These findings are useful for proprietorships in building marketing plans and expanding their scope of business.

Considering limitation, the data collected for this research are limited within HCMC, Vietnam. Sample limitation could result in data bias; therefore, a broader scope of data collection is suggested for later researches. Additionally, sensitive data could not be completely collected, especially in terms of revenue, costs, and the number of customers. In addition, the investigation in marketing success may need wider measurements and constructs that could involve marketing efficiency (Eid & Elbeltagi, 2005), customer satisfaction (Eid & Trueman, 2004) and brand equity stated as examples.

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