

# COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE, DIGITAL MARKETING AND OMAN RECOVERY TOURISM PERFORMANCE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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**Abstract:** *Due to covid-19 pandemic as like as other countries the Sultanate of Oman tourism also faced similar challenges to recovery and prosperity of domestic as well as international tourism. Once, it was being observed that its tourism potential, biological diversity, variation in weather from one governorate to another, throughout the year, and the presence of beautiful nature, golden sands, green mountains, clean beaches, quiet pristine areas, beautiful oases, castles, forts, and other components are quite reputed and attractive attractions for tourism in Sultanate of Oman. Therefore, the present study examined the existing available literature resources to develop the best conceptual model to justify the mediating effect of competitive advantage on the relationship between digital marketing dimensions (content, email, social media, search engine optimization (SEO) pay-per-click (PPC) advertising) and recovery performance Tourism in Oman. The summary review findings revealed the gaps of knowledge through the course of the relationship between Digital marketing and recovery tourism performance recovery as well as competitive advantage as a mediating means. The study also identified based on previous studies on the performance, competitiveness, and orientation of companies as we the researchers have seen from modern e-marketing according to the unbound theory, Porter's concept of comparative advantage, the theories of institutional and organizational culture based on services, tourism theory and behavior theory. Based on above findings, the present study develops a conceptual framework to justify the mediating effect of competitive advantage on the relationship between digital marketing dimensions (content, email, social media, search engine optimization (SEO) pay-per-click (PPC) advertising) and Recovery Performance Tourism (RTP) in Oman. The study recommends to justify this conceptual framework by empirical data from the tourism sectors and draw a policy guideline for ensuring for Recovery Performance Tourism (RTP) in Oman.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Marketing, Competitive Advantage and Recovery Tourism Performance*

## Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the biggest challenge for the industry in the era of global mass tourism. While the number of inbound flight arrivals has fallen 90% for more than a year from 2019 levels, hotel occupancy is well below normal and the industry is completely shut down (Nagaj & Žuromskaitė, 2021). Moreover, it is therefore not surprising that statistics show that the tourism industry, aviation, maritime, travel agencies, accommodation, rail and entertainment around the world have been completely closed. The Omani tourism industry is no exception. COVID-19 has orchestrated the decline in performance of the tourism industry in Oman. Unemployment rose, incomes fell, and consumers' purchasing power declined. Consequently, the tourism sector in Oman suffers losses of \$1.3 billion due to the Corona pandemic. In particular, these losses include the direct impact on the sector consisting of visa revenue, tourism-related goods and products, local market tourism expenditure, industry-related taxes, programs and tours operations of the national airline (Oman Air) respectively. Moreover, Statistics from the GCC Statistics Center in 2019 show that the number of tourists fluctuates from year to year. There was an increase in 2015, the overall index saw a decline from 2016 to 2020 in overall tourism receipts. According to a report by the World Travel and Tourism Organization in 2020 there is a real problem here, the total turnover of the hotel business was 6,276 million Omani riyals in 2019, a decrease by 5.6% compared to 2018. Five-star hotels contributed 54.7% of total hotel revenue, operating revenue up to 5,131 million Omanis. The total number of hotel guests reached 9.3 million in 2018, compared to 1.3 million in 2019, a significant decrease of 8.10%. In recent years, the occupancy rate in hotels in Muscat governorate has fallen from 3.57% in 2016 to 1.53% in 2020. The number of Omani employees in the hotel business has decreased by 7.7% to 557.20 employees in 2020, compared to up to 675.18 employees in 2019, and the annual decline in the number of employees in this activity over the past four years is 7.66% (National Statistics Center, 2020).

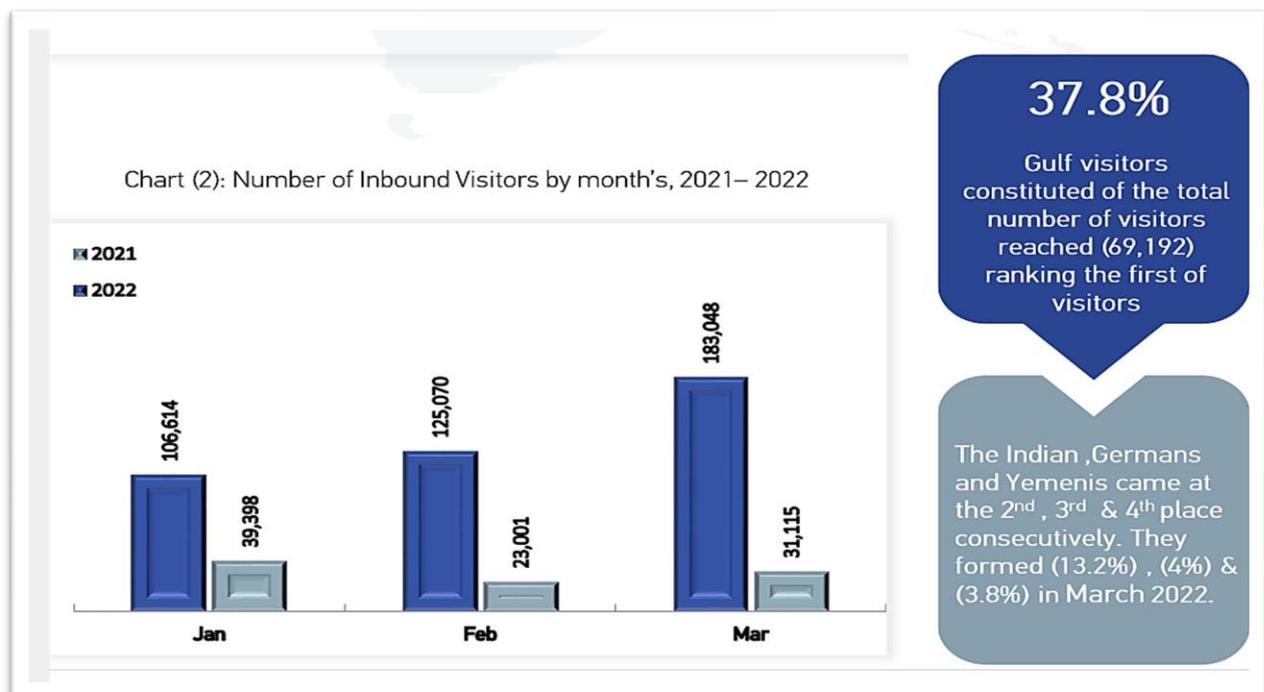


Figure 1: Number of Inbound Visitors by months 2021-2022

Due to the decrease in tourist traffic in Oman, airlines carrying tourists to the Middle East have also been supported, as in the case of Gulf Air's permanent withdrawal from Oman after it had been the official carrier for departures and tourist travelers arriving in Oman, so losses were recorded in the last three months of 2017. \$13.51 million and profits for the same period in 2016 were approximately \$18 million. Oman Air said the company expects an increase in profit volume of about 13.8 million Omanis this year. It ranked first in supporting tourism in the Middle East and then struggled with debt problems due to the crisis (Douglas, 2019).

After exiting Gulf Air of Oman due to economic losses in the region, the Swiss company's CEO André Dose said on April 17 that the company was losing more than \$1 million a day in all Gulf states following the withdrawal of Saudi Arabia. In the same way, the Digital marketing widely used for fluent communication (including the Internet and interactive channels), means social communication to develop methods of marketing activities through this type of communication and exchanges with customers to attract new customers and retain professional customers, build a brand image, improve and increase sales. Thus, digital marketing can be an effective system are for the creation of information. Much depends on the objective of the researchers and the economic particularities of each country studied (Patruti, 2016). The study also exploration that the competitive advantage of digital marketing demonstrates the development of tourism in Oman. It is necessary to study the effect of the interaction between the development and performance of tourism and digital marketing and the process of competitive advantage for the development of tourism internally in Oman. Research on this issue is still lacking, as previous studies confirmed the interaction between tourism development and the characteristics of the promotional mix, driven by the urgent need to explore this issue. The study is to contribute to the debate on the impacts of tourism development, the characteristics of digital marketing, and the competitive advantage as a mediator (Schonfeld, 2019). The tourism infrastructure in the Sultanate has been formed in a way that promotes economic diversification, preserves the country's culture, and contributes to preserving the environment. Asas company seeks to achieve the value of the tourism sector, which is estimated at 20 billion US dollars. Work is also underway to develop this sector into a sustainable economic and social sector in a way that reflects the cultural heritage of the Sultanate and the spirit of traditional hospitality (Schonfeld, 2018).

Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a survey on the development of tourism and digital marketing in the Sultanate of Oman. Previous studies focus on the direct impact of influencing factors on tourism development. However, there are still few studies on competitive advantage and the relationship with digital marketing for tourism development in the Sultanate of Oman (Gupta, 2019). Under such circumstances, this study aims to examine the relationship between tourism recovery performance in Oman and digital marketing as experienced by tourists and how this is mediated by tourists' competitive advantage. The focus on digital marketing is valid as today's competitive tourism environment dictates the need for tourism guidance to be more creative in developing attraction initiatives in Oman.

This study also focuses on the relationship between recovery tourism performance and digital marketing as a competitive advantage in Oman. In particular, research focuses on the factors that support and enhance the relationship between the two, and this is studied by evaluating the mediating effects of recovery tourism performance and digital marketing. Therefore, the present study will examine the mediating effect of competitive advantage on the relationship between digital marketing dimensions (content, email, social media, search engine optimization (SEO) pay-per-click (PPC) advertising) and Recovery Performance Tourism in Oman.

## Background of The Study

### Issues for the Development of the Tourism Sector in Oman

Tourism industries around the world are suffering and the sharp decline in the hotel operating rate during the holiday months of 2020 has not exceeded 10%, after it was around 27% in 2019, and in the years the most stable, hotel reservations exceeded 85% of their capacity, due to the Corona pandemic, many sources in the tourism sector were affected. The losses of the tourism sector were revealed by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in the last press conference (alharthy, 2018), with some details on the Omani workers in this sector who lost their jobs, and that the relevant ministry managed to keep, i.e. 5,700 workers out of a total of 11,376 workers in the tourism sector (National Center for Statistics, 2020).

Awadallah (2020) added that Oman has proven during the past period its distinction and its worth in terms of taking all preventive measures and precautionary measures, which placed it at the forefront of the world's countries that ble to confront the pandemic, noting that this distinction encourages many tourists and enhances their confidence in traveling again in Oman (Atef, 2018). In turn, the general manager of the Ramada Downtown Hotel in Muscat, Ismail Ibrahim, said that one of these factors is the improvement that has begun to be noticed in the indicators of tourism at the level of the capital and the level of the state as a whole, and this confirms that the future is better for the sector amid expectations of growth in the traffic of visitors to Oman as a whole by a percentage approximately 15% during the winter season this year (Alsawafi, 2016).

The main pillars of recovery for the sector is to strengthen the position of countries in the list of the most attractive countries for visitors in the world in light of political stability and the provision of global services, especially in light of the pandemic and since the announcement on September 15, 2020, of the resumption of business activities and local exhibitions in Muscat, hopes are rising for us as tourism companies for an expected return to the wheel of tourism work, as The return of these activities is of great importance, as these activities constitute a process of connecting the various sectors (Holleman, 2018). (Seraphin and Dosquet, 2020). The study explained that the global Corona crisis has changed the concepts and standards of travel globally, as the element of safety and public health has become the most important element that controls the tourist's decision about the destination he will go to and taking the location of this element into account and its work to provide all elements of health security that guarantee the tourist full protection and the application of strict requirements For public and health safety in all hotel, service and tourist facilities and facilities, post-Corona tourism promotions have greatly facilitated us (Baum and Hai, 2020).

Statistics stated that Oman was the most attractive to museum visitors, with 1.535 million visitors in 2019, and Oman came in second place, while Tire exceeded one million visitors last year, Sohar 30.76 thousand visitors, Nizwa 15.78 thousand visitors, Salalah 14.68 thousand visitors, and Al Buraimi 4.39 thousand visitors. According to data from the Statistics Center, the number of museums in the country increased from 30 in 2017, to 33 in 2018, and 34 in 2019, and the number of archaeological and historical sites reached 340 at the end of 2019. Oman pays great attention to the development of the aviation sector, given its importance in the future of tourism and other fields. Therefore, decision-makers were keen on building international airports, establishing the largest and most modern airlines in the world, so that Muscat International Airport became the fastest growing in the number of passengers, as well as linking the country's airports. Hundreds of cities around the world, through Oman Air. In

2020, the country's airports received 128 million passengers, while August recorded the highest number of passengers, compared to other months, and national carriers operate flights to more than 220 cities (Pauceanu, 2014).

### **Concept of The Recovery Tourism Performance**

During the recent period, the recovery and prosperity of domestic tourism in the Sultanate has been observed, and this is a good indicator of economic growth and the beginning of a gradual and cautious return to normal life after more than a year and nine months of economic stagnation due to the Corona epidemic. Domestic tourism ensures the circulation of funds at home, in addition to the fact that domestic tourism contributes to the prosperity of other economic sectors such as trade, industry, transportation, the hotel sector, and others (Al-Badi et al., 2017).

The Sultanate, as everyone knows, is an attractive country for tourism because of its tourism potential, biological diversity, variation in weather from one governorate to another, throughout the year, and the presence of beautiful nature. There are golden sands, green mountains, clean beaches, quiet pristine areas, beautiful oases, castles, forts, and other components. The number of hotels, hostels, resorts, and tourist rest houses increased, especially in the main cities. After the Supreme Committee in charge of examining the mechanism of dealing with developments resulting from the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid 19) to gradually open most sectors and economic activities, the recovery of domestic tourism activity was noted, and this is the result of several factors and reasons, perhaps the most important of which was the long period that lasted more than six months, which was accompanied by the survival of most Families are in their homes for a long time and only go out for necessity, and therefore they are thirsty for their daily lives and to go out and enjoy nature with their families and friends while taking the necessary precautions. The closure of the borders and the inability of people or families who are accustomed to traveling and tourism outside the Sultanate to enjoy their summer vacations, in addition to the mild weather in some areas due to rainfall and flowing valleys, were also among the reasons for the revival of domestic tourism. Jabal Shams, the Wilayat of Rustaq, Al Hoqain, and Wadi Bani Hani witnessed an active tourist movement, and many coastal areas in the central region, Qurayat, Sur, and Al Batinah witnessed a remarkable tourist movement Bakar, N. A., & Rosbi, S. (2020).

More importantly, the prices of accommodation in hotels and tourist resorts, where prices per night have decreased by more than double, and this is happening for the first time. A four- or five-star tourist category for less than 80 to 100 Omani riyals. In some areas, such as Jabal Al-Akhdar, the price reaches 300 Omani riyals per room. Today, prices have dropped dramatically, and you can rent a room in some resorts in the capital, Muscat, for 40 riyals. For one night, perhaps less, and an apartment in the resort itself, the price has now reached 60 riyals, which was more than 170 riyals (Khalfan, 2019). Some travel and tourism offices that were promoting tourism abroad are currently offering tour packages for local tourism, here, the local tourist found an opportunity to spend a night or more in hotels and resorts located in some tourist sites that were mainly suffering from stagnation due to the closure and the occupancy decreased to more from 50% due to the almost complete cessation of global tourism (Omari, 2019). Future studies to consider different approaches including a collection of data during the peak season, using qualitative method, and conducting studies in other parts of the country to explore demographic factors and travel motivations of tourists. Practical implications to assist tourism stakeholders in their design of promotional tools to market tourism products/services to different tourists as opposed to homogeneous marketing campaigns.

### **Linkage between Digital Marketing and Recovery Tourism Performance**

Digital marketing refers to any attempt at marketing through digital means such as blogs or Social Networking Sites, to promote brand awareness, and enhance or develop customer relationships through digital means (Todor, 2016). Over the past 15 years, completely new strategies of how to market products and services have been realized. Digital, social media, and mobile marketing have continuously grown bigger with technological innovations like affordable high-speed broadband connections, widespread consumer adoption of smart mobile devices, and the development of social media platforms like Facebook. With these innovations, consumers' behaviors in different types of markets have changed as well. One example is social media, which has altered the way buyers interact with brands and share information with other consumers. Hence, new technologies have facilitated market behaviors, interactions, and experiences, but have also transformed traditional marketing into digital form (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Smith (2012) defines digital marketing as the practice of promoting products and services using digital distribution channels via computers, mobile phones, smartphones, or other digital devices. However, Bourliataux-Lajoine, S., et al. in 2019 design is based on secondary data (literature and online reviews) and a case study of Barcelona. The most significant aspect is the rapid spread of comments and reviews about attractions and venues. Despite the interest in Information and communication technology ICT generalization, these new technologies have a dark side. Closely linked to fashion trends, some tourist destinations find themselves rapidly overbooked. This paper reveals the dark side of technology and attempts to use technology to mitigate the impacts of over tourism in Oman (Bregoli, Hingley, Del Chiappa, & Sodano, 2016).

Filter (2021) explore the characteristics of tourism start-ups, the AI technological domains the AI technology that received more funding from Voluntary and Community Sector VCs were Learning, Communication, and Services (i.e. big data, machine learning, and natural language processing), indicating a strong interest in AI solutions enabling marketing automation, segmentation, and customization. Furthermore, VC-backed AI solutions focus on the pre-trip and post-trip (Filieri, D'Amico, Destefanis, Paolucci, & Raguseo, 2021). Kapoor and Kapoor (2021) analyzed the adoption and preference of E-Marketing tools in five-star hotels in India. The industry explore and enhance its digital presence by suggesting the appropriate mix of both traditional and digital approaches and can be used as a good source for further exploring the perspective of digitalization by academicians as well (R. Kapoor & Kapoor, 2021). Kaur (2017) examined the superior Internet technologies, newer avenues for reaching out to target audiences have evolved. Digital marketing today has become an indispensable part of every business irrespective of its size and type. The increasing role of digital marketing has affected the way businesses promote their offerings to existing as well as new customers. The need for digital marketing has been felt like never before in the tourism industry wherein customers have instant access to all kinds of information on the latest offers and best prices. Today digital marketing plays a critical role in the success of each business that exists in the tourism industry.

### **Digital Marketing and Recovery Tourism Performance**

There are many study examined the insights into the technological changes affecting our cities and urban tourism destinations and explored avenues for further research and practice in the context of smart tourism destinations. The literature on smart cities and smart tourism destinations is analyzed in view of delivering a research agenda for a new generation of post-smart tourism destinations, beyond existing paradigms in this field. Findings Smart tourism research to date is found to be lacking in terms of addressing emerging social issues increasingly faced by global tourism cities, such as growing inequalities between host communities and

visitors, wellness (e.g. slow tourism and slow cities), and resilience and mental health, among others (Coca-Stefaniak, 2021).

Chiang (2020) contributes to research and practice by providing a visual digital knowledge map for tourism and hospitality, and seven research hotspots were identified from the results of the keyword analysis. The parsimonious e-Marketing model for tourism and hospitality is proposed to direct future studies concerning these themes and guide practitioners in allocating the appropriate resources for IT investment. This map not only identifies seven themes that explain, which and how IT-related factors influence tourism and hospitality but also demonstrates the patterns and intellectual structure of the related body of knowledge. The trend analysis indicates how IT transforms the tourism and hospitality industries in terms of mode and scope (Chiang, 2020). Moreover, McNaughton (2020) propose a framework approach for implementing smart community initiatives within a community tourism context. The human-centered, participatory framework approach described in this research can help to empower community tourism by providing increased visibility and enhanced service delivery for small operators. These outcomes can become important contributions to enhancing inclusive and sustainable development and capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable local communities a key outcome for sustainable development goal 11 sustainable cities and communities. The practical implications Beyond the emerging research insights, the project produced specific digital artifacts such as geospatial data and technology platforms; and process outcomes such as training, capacity-building, and empowerment of community members (McNaughton, Rao, & Verma, 2020).

However, Mkwizu (2020) explored digital marketing and tourism with a focus on opportunities with a case study of Africa, motivated by developments in tourism particularly the increase in tourist arrivals and the growth of digital statistics in the digital era. The findings of this paper reveal that digital media, content, and mobile advertising are among the trends in digital marketing and, thus, affords Africa the opportunity to market its attractions to tourists in this digital era. Practical implications Other countries within Africa to adopt similar digital marketing such as digital media and creative content in order to manage the digitization of marketing activities in the tourism sector. This study explores digital marketing and tourism with a focus on opportunities for Africa as a case study by specifically examining social media marketing in relation to tourist arrivals using integrative literature review and content analysis methods (Mkwizu, 2020). In the same way, Dabas, S., et al. in 2021 aims to explore the experience of adoption of digital marketing and related tools by restaurant entrepreneurs or owners of restaurants in the UK and India and found the major changes in consumer behavior and the readiness of restaurant owners to adopt digital tools for marketing restaurant businesses. The study also probes restaurant owners' apprehensions in the process with the objective of retaining customers for a longer period. This research can potentially form the basis of further research in terms of using technology and digital tools to reach customers and create a more personalized experience for them (Dabas, Sharma, & Manaktola, 2021).

Furthermore, Foroudi, P., et al. in 2017 evaluated the relationships between digital technology, tangible/intangible assets, and marketing capabilities to gain more insight into the factors related to small- and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs') growth in the UK and identifies the two key components of digital technology as information quality and service convenience. This study identifies the main impacts of digital technology on intellectual/physical assets. While managers and employees have specified that marketing capability is significant for organizations, there are a few other areas of concern with regard to consequences related to a

company's growth, competence, and core competence, particularly in an SME's setting (Foroudi, Gupta, Nazarian, & Duda, 2017). Moreover, Greenwood, C. and M. Quinn in 2017 examined the phenomenon of digital amnesia and its influence on future tourists and findings of the phenomena of digital amnesia are established. The growth of digital platforms and the consumer's reliance is exponential. The implications for the future tourist in terms of decision making, the influence of marketing messaging, and potentially the recall and reimagining of authentic experience will be significant in the future. Subject to the signals of change, should consumer's reliance on digital platforms for the storing of information and memories continue to grow this has implications on how tourism businesses engage with their customers, influence and inform their marketing and how destinations would be reimagined based on the recall of their visitors. The trend of digital amnesia is an established and well-documented phenomenon. The development of the trend to consider the implications for the future tourism industry based on a growing dependence on digital platforms is the focus of this paper (Greenwood & Quinn, 2017). Even Hasan, M. R., et al. in 2021 examined the insights into digital consumer behavior related to Chinese restaurants by examining visual content on the TripAdvisor platform. This study contributes to culinary marketing development by introducing a new analysis methodology and demonstrating its application by exploring a wide range of keywords and visual images published on the internet. Originality/value This research extends and contributes to the literature regarding visual user-generated content in culinary tourism (Hasan, Abdunurova, Wang, Zheng, & Shams, 2021).

Summary of digital Marketing that take into account cultural norms, and which employ competitive advantage as mediator for recovery of performance tourism. The Digital Marketing studies focused on the internal and external strength in doing business and tourism e.g., literature summarized technology with infrastructure, business and environmental regulations, inadequate technology and infrastructure, has positively access to international markets and financial support, (TIWARI, P. K. (2020) Khan, S. F., Rehman, S., Khan, M. K., & Khan, M. A. (2016) Alghizzawi, M. (2019), Samuel, B. S., & Sarprasatha, J. (2016) Sayyad, S., Mohammed, A., Shaga, V., Kumar, A., & Vengatesan, K. (2018, December). The studies identified that Digital Marketing dimensions positively effects on used financial, marketing, operations, and human resource management as variables in the growth of tourism in Oman instead of DM variables (Kannan, P. K. (2017) Ransbotham, S. (2015) Alghizzawi, M. (2019), Al Balushi (2017), Bilal and Al Mqbali (2016)

### **Email and Social Media Marketing and Recovery Tourism Performance**

Social media emerged through Web 2.0 and it is completely different from traditional mass media. Traditional media services distribute content from professionals to a passive audience, whereas social media creates networks of active users who share their content with each other (Kilian, Hennigs, and Langner, 2012). Social media refers to Information Communication Technology (ICT) channels (Duffett, 2017) based on mobile and web technologies (Ahmadinejad and Asli, 2017) and can specifically be defined as: "an electronic service through which Internet users be able to create and share a variety of contents over the Internet" (PrakashYadav and Rai, 2017). Web 2.0 was introduced as a new world with new opportunities, consisting of blogs, virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds, content communities, and social networking sites (Sepp, Liljander and Gummerus, 2011). Whilst it has turned out to still be a minority activity, the part of Web 2.0 revolving around social networking sites (SNS) like social media has increased significantly over the recent years (Joiner et al., 2013). Photo sharing sites such as Instagram, social networks such as Facebook, microblogging tools like Twitter, and

video creating and sharing services like YouTube (Akar and Topcu, 2011) are just some of all social media sites available for users to create their pages, communicate with friends, and exchange information they have created themselves or information found from brand-related sources (Duffett, 2017).

According to recent research conducted by Brailovskaia and Margraf (2016), over 1.5 billion people use Facebook globally, meaning that this social networking sites (SNS) has seen tremendous growth since its inception only a little more than a decade ago. With so many users all in one digital location, the implications that Facebook use suggests for sole proprietors looking to market their services is potentially monumental. The popularity of Facebook implicitly suggests influence in a variety of venues, which are so diverse that they need to be split into categories to properly address all the methods through which Facebook has the potential for influencing the digital marketing strategies of sole proprietors. Moreover, Facebook helps to engage consumers and create brand awareness, whilst blogging is considered a good relationship tool for both marketing and PR. With high company control, if the ability to express it is right, blogging is a good way to provide important thoughts. Furthermore, the company can control their blog to a quite high level as it is usually integrated into the company's website, which makes the content easy to edit as well as enables comments to be filtered. Lastly, communities are formed with help from social media where customers become engaged and build strong relationships through brands' communities. It is also known that customers who are committed to the company through social media are more profitable than those who are not (Taiminen and Karjaluoto, 2015).

However, Digital natives were raised when the Internet already existed and they are considered to be highly experienced users of social media as they constantly gather and spread information through videos and links online (Desai and Lele, 2017). The virtual social society is strongly desired by digital natives, which uses different social networking platforms to socialize. Digital natives form their characters through what they post themselves online, but also what others assess and post about them. Identification, image formation, maintenance, and boosting up young members' social assets are constantly created through social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (PrakashYadav and Rai, 2017). Nusair, K. in 2020 provided a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the current state of social media literature by examining co-word network analysis and thematic keyword analysis of both scholars and hospitality and tourism journals in three sub-periods (2002-2006, 2007-2012, and 2013-2018). This research used a bibliometric analysis of social media literature in the field of hospitality and tourism by synthesizing the literature of a large sample of 601 studies over an extended period (2002-2018). Findings examined contexts, platforms, methodological approaches, and research implications during 2007-2012 has marked the start of social media as a new phenomenon in hospitality and tourism research. Interestingly, the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management was a leading contributor to social media research between 2017 and 2018. The period 2013-2018 has witnessed newly emerging trends such as big data, e-tourism, green experience, and smart tourism. This study's analysis indicated that few keywords in social media appeared in the maturity stage. New platforms such as Expedia, Foursquare, Flickr, Pinterest, Couchsurfing, and Twitter appeared between 2013 and 2018. Finally, this paper concluded with the proposal of a knowledge-based life cycle framework that identifies key themes related to social media research. This framework provided insights into what has been addressed in previous literature (maturity and decline stages) and reported the topics that have been under-researched (introduction and growth stages) (Nusair, 2020).

In the same way, Garcia Hence, B. in 2018 analyzed markets as a resource of experiential tourism and communication strategies and the use of social media by the markets of Madrid to interact with the new experiential consumer. Accordingly, an analysis is carried out of a specific product/resource, such as the food markets of Madrid as resources or experiential leisure centers, and a study on product strategies (offer of experiences) and communication strategies on their experiential tourism offer fundamentally based on social media and websites. The present paper contributes to the literature on experiential tourism, including new communication strategies as a tool to contact experiential tourists (Garcia Henche, 2018). Furthermore, Lin, H.-C., et al. in 2020 examined tourism and hospitality industry marketing has identified many highly effective applications of social media. However, studies in the existing literature do not enable a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon because they lack a theoretical foundation. Findings of the analysis suggest that to understand social media use in tourism marketing, researchers and practitioners in the industry must clarify the following four issues: the control variables, longitudinal analyses, and TTF concepts that should be used in future studies; the fitness of social media platforms for tourism marketing; how various social media platforms differ in terms of performance outcome; and the digital divide in the use of social media for tourism. An integrated framework was developed to identify constructs and to understand their relationships. Recent studies in this domain are discussed; theoretical and practical suggestions and implications for future research are given (Lin et al., 2020).

Even, Tiago, F., et al. in 2018 examined three cruise lines' social media strategies over a three-year period, analyzing the network structures involved and demonstrating the value of the STAR (storytelling, triggers, amusement, and reaction) model for enhancing social media activity. Findings Digital activity was found to vary significantly between the three cruise lines' websites and Facebook and Twitter accounts, with the companies adopting different approaches and obtaining different results. Each company tended to have its base of fans and followers, who shared a common language, reflected in the hashtags they used. The results show that cruise lines wishing to develop a content-oriented strategy that maximizes engagement in social media should share rich multimedia content that supports storytelling values and can be used on multiple platforms (Tiago, Couto, Faria, & Borges-Tiago, 2018). Finally, Sotiriadis, M. D. in 2017 summarized the academic research published between 2009 and 2016 regarding the changes in tourism consumer behavior brought about by the use of social media (SM); and suggest a set of strategies for tourism businesses to seize opportunities and deal with resulting challenges. Findings The content analysis identified three main research themes that were investigated by scholars and classified into two major categories, namely, consumer perspective and provider perspective: the antecedents (factors motivating and influencing tourists); the influence of online reviews on consumer behavior; and the impact of these reviews on tourism businesses (providers' perspective). Research limitations/implications This study is based on a literature review and outcomes reported by previous studies; hence, the suggestions are indicative rather than conclusive. Some publication sources were not included. Practical implications This paper suggests a range of adequate strategies, along with operational actions, formulated for industry practitioners in the fields of management and marketing (Sotiriadis, 2017).

### **Search Engine Optimization and Recovery Tourism Performance:**

Although relatively new, digital marketing has branched into a few different directions, from blogging, posting content on SNSs, traditional websites creation, and SEO (Buchanan, Kelly & Yeatman, 2017). Carroll (2014), has found that each type of digital marketing is important for

individuals or businesses looking to be found through digital means, though SEO used together with SNS marketing is a popular method for ranking in search results currently. Research by Zhang and Cabage (2017), found that search engines, like Yahoo, Bing, or Google search have taken on an assumed role of importance regarding digital marketing as a means of ensuring product and business exposure on the web. Moreover, according to research by Carroll (2014), SEO is essentially a set of techniques that individuals can manually control to help ensure that content produced on websites, SNS accounts, or blogs, attached to their name or business display in the first few slots in search engine results. Typically, SEO occurs through the placement of keywords associated with a website or SNS post (Qiao, Zhang, Wei & Chen, 2017). Research by Kopliku, Pinel-Sauvagnat, and Boughanem (2014), has found that search engines have been developing in recent years to include images as well as video content and can help as a stand-alone method, or in-tandem with social media marketing to ensure that specific content is placed before the largest amount of potential online consumers. However, when it comes to search engine advertising and SEO, Google search is the largest and most popular engine in use today, making Google Adwords the most likely place for businesses to seek regarding their digital marketing needs (Joyce, 2016). Therefore, as research by Mccollough (2013), has shown, Google's popularity and marketing power make Google Adwords relatively important regarding parties interested in SEO and advertising-related features to grow a practice and gain exposure in the online community.

In the same way, Litvin, S. W., et al. in 2018 reviewed the impact electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has had on the hospitality and tourism industry and discussed the changes that will affect its future. The paper summarizes the arguments of the authors' earlier paper, describing ways in which eWOM has evolved into the influential system it has become, with special emphasis on the growth of mobile media as a platform for eWOM dissemination. Findings conclude that eWOM has fulfilled its promise to become a major influence on the hospitality and tourism industry and will continue to play an essential role in hospitality marketing for the foreseeable future. Practical implications The authors provide examples of successful media campaigns and propose strategies for hospitality and tourism businesses. EWOM has emerged to become a highly influential element of modern marketing strategy. This look back at an early eWOM paper, with reflection on changes that have occurred and a view to the future, is of value as validation of an often-cited article that set the stage for much subsequent hospitality research (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2018; Tsourgiannis & Valsamidis, 2019). On the other hand, Carroll (2014), found that search engines are important for a variety of reasons, but mainly because of their size, and when used in tandem with marketing on SNSs can be very effective in helping businesses gain exposure online. Search engines can be used in tandem with SNSs or on their own for obtaining benefits regarding digital marketing. In simpler terms, search engines work by doing exactly as their name implies, essentially searching the Internet for items relevant to a search query entered by a user (Hussain, 2015). For example, if someone was in need of an accountant in a certain city, they wouldn't necessarily have to go to Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram to find one, they would go to a search engine and type in the word 'accountant' which should return a list of relevant results. Technically search engines offer a broader reach regarding digital marketing, as they search the entire web for relevant information in relation to the query entered (Wright, 2014). In other words, a Google search will seek and find relevant information across all websites, blogs, and social networks, contrasting with a search query entered on the Facebook network for example, which would just search relevant results on the Facebook network, limiting the degree from which information is pulled (Wright, 2014).

### **Pay Per Click and Recovery Tourism Performance:**

The digital marketing is being widely employed to efficiently and products/ services to achieve increased effective market and generate higher revenues. The literature on this subject, although limited, has invested considerable efforts in unveiling the pros and cons of employing PPC as a marketing/advertising strategy. The findings and is paper review 50 publications on PPC advertising to arrive at a common ground for understanding the digital presence and impact of this form of marketing. Alongside discussing the findings, observed limitations and opportunities for future research have been identified and reported (K. K. Kapoor, Dwivedi, & Piercy, 2016). Moreover, Kritzinger & Weideman, 2015 examined that how the results of the implementation of a pay-per-click campaign compared to those of a search engine optimization campaign, given the same website and environment. The results indicate that the pay-per-click system did produce favorable results, but on the condition that a monthly fee has to be set aside to guarantee consistent traffic. The implementation of search engine optimization required a relatively large investment at the outset, but it was once-off. After a drop in traffic owing to crawler visitation delays, the website traffic bypassed the average figure achieved during the pay-per-click period after a little over three months, whilst the expenditure crossed over after just six months. Whilst considering the specific parameters of this study, an investment in search engine optimization rather than a pay-per-click campaign appears to produce better results at a lower cost, after a given period of time (Kritzinger & Weideman, 2015). However, Ghose & Yang in 2009 examined the Phenomenon of sponsored search advertising where advertisers pay a fee to Internet search engines. Using a simultaneous equations model, they quantify the relationship between various keyword characteristics, the position of the advertisement, and the landing page quality score on consumer search and purchase behavior as well as on advertiser's cost per click and the search engine's ranking decision. Specifically, they find that the monetary value of a click is not uniform across all positions because conversion rates are highest at the top and decrease with rank as one goes down the search engine results page (Ghose & Yang, 2009).

Castro, Silva, Duarte, & Management in 2017 analyses the digital marketing strategy of Porto City, aiming at providing a theoretical and practical contribution on the importance of digital marketing tools to promote tourist destinations. They found that these are very effective tools when it comes to attracting traffic to the destination websites, and that is likely to successfully explain the efficiency of the online promotion of a place. Another relevant result is the importance of customization, which can be attained through the qualification of users and the collected data on their preferences, through social networks and feedback. The originality of the study stems from the adoption of the theoretical determinants used, the proposed model of analysis, and the different theoretical bodies from where the constructs and relations were pulled out (Castro, Silva, Duarte, & Management, 2017). Furthermore, Dwivedi, Rana, & Alryalat in 2017 review all existing studies on affiliate marketing (i.e., web-based affiliate marketing) to understand the overall development in this area of research. The search results on affiliate marketing and related terminologies found a total of eighteen studies on this topic. The review indicates the lack of research effort in this area. The findings indicate that there has not been any literature review undertaken on this topic. The study also provides its research contribution and limitations and future research directions based on this review (Dwivedi, Rana, & Alryalat, 2017). Even Angeloni, Rossi, & Practice in 2021 examined on digital marketing offers entrepreneurs a variety of alternatives to market globally and generate revenues. Recent studies show that there is a strong research interest in developing analytical models to increase the firms' profit, by considering either key variables of specific advertising forms in isolation or cross-channel effects of online and offline channels. This article proposes a new analytical

model, which assumes a trade-off between concurrent online marketing channels. The proposed model aims at capturing the main parameters a firm should carefully master to assess the effectiveness of alternative online channels in a comparative perspective, by suggesting the maximum cost per click that a firm should pay to benefit from search engine marketing, as much as from e-commerce platform (Angeloni, Rossi, & Practice, 2021).

#### **Pay Per Click and Recovery Tourism Achievement:**

The digital marketing is being widely employed to efficiently and products/ services to achieve increased effective market and generate higher revenues. The findings and is paper review 50 publications on PPC advertising to arrive at a common ground for understanding the digital presence and impact of this form of marketing. Alongside discussing the findings, observed limitations and opportunities for future research have been identified and reported (K. K. Kapoor et al., 2016). Moreover, Kritzinger & Weideman, 2015 examined that how the results of the implementation of a pay-per-click campaign compared to those of a search engine optimization campaign, given the same website and environment. the results indicate that the pay-per-click system did produce favorable results, but on the condition that a monthly fee has to be set aside to guarantee consistent traffic. Whilst considering the specific parameters of this study, an investment in search engine optimization rather than a pay-per-click campaign appears to produce better results at a lower cost, after a given period of time (Kritzinger & Weideman, 2015). In the same way, Ghose & Yang in 2009 examined the Phenomenon of sponsored search advertising where advertisers pay a fee to Internet search engines. Using a simultaneous equations model, they quantify the relationship between various keyword characteristics, the position of the advertisement, and the landing page quality score on consumer search and purchase behavior as well as on advertiser's cost per click and the search engine's ranking decision. Specifically, they find that the monetary value of a click is not uniform across all positions because conversion rates are highest at the top and decrease with rank as one goes down the search engine results page. Though search engines take into account the current period's bid as well as prior click-through rates before deciding the final rank of an advertisement in the current period, the current bid has a larger effect than prior click-through rates. Besides providing managerial insights into search engine advertising, these results shed light on some key assumptions made in the theoretical modeling literature in sponsored search (Ghose & Yang, 2009).

#### **Digital Marketing (DM) and Competitive Advantage (CA):**

Over the past two decades, digitalization has revolutionized not only consumer marketing but also industrial marketing. Both industrial marketing scholars and industrial marketers seek insights to understand how our knowledge and practice of digital marketing has been structured and configured (Herhausen, Miočević, Morgan, & Kleijnen, 2020). They identify two marketing capabilities gaps: the practice gap which identifies the deficit between managers' 'current' practices and their 'ideal' digital marketing capabilities; and, the knowledge gap which demonstrates a significant divide between the digital marketing transformations in industrial firms and the extant scholarly knowledge that underpins this. Based on these results, we build an agenda for future research on digital marketing capabilities (Herhausen et al., 2020). Moreover, Nuseira & Aljumahb in 2020 examined the digital marketing phenomenon in the tourism industry in the UAE. The study examined the direct and moderating effect of agile marketing between independent and dependent constructs. The results of the study depicted that relative advantage as independent constructs of the study significantly influence the digital marketing adoption but the competitive industry doesn't influence the adoption of digital marketing as it is observed to be insignificant. The moderating effect of agile marketing was

observed in both moderating hypotheses, that agile marketing moderates the relationship between relative advantage, competitive industry, and digital marketing adoption (Nuseira & Aljumahb, 2020). In the same way, Gitahi, in 2020 determines the act of digital marketing strategies on the competitive advantage of transport firms in Kenya. It revealed that only 0.3% of the variance in the competitive advantage of transport firms in Kenya could be credited to content marketing and that a single unit increase in content marketing could increase the competitive advantage of transport firms in Kenya by a mean index of 0.073 (7.3%), which was insignificant. Also, the study revealed that transport firms use online content marketing as a result of its attractive design and interesting content compared to their competitors who facilitate the interaction between existing customers and the company. The study showed that that social media marketing allowed the transport firms to connect with their customers, and has reduced the cost of communication for the firm, thus it is considered as an appealing platform for its internet and online marketing by the firm. It revealed that only 1.2% of the variance in the competitive advantage of transport firms in Kenya could be credited to email marketing and that a single unit increase in email marketing could decrease the competitive advantage of transport firms in Kenya by a mean index of -0.118 (11.8%). In terms of content marketing, the study concludes that Uber uses relevant information to market and educate consumers about their products through a website designed to collect customer feedback. Online marketing has enabled the firm to receive new customers, and enhance brand awareness, and its marketing platform provides high-quality information to consumers. On social media marketing, it can be concluded that Uber uses the social media platform to provide information to its users, such as social media advertisements which are more effective. Facebook has allowed the firm to connect with its customers and has reduced the cost of communication for the firm, thus it is considered as an appealing platform for its Internet and online marketing by the firm. On email marketing, the study concludes that Uber emails to send messages to its potential customers to build trust and loyalty with its current customers (Gitahi, 2020). Summaries of previous studies analyses of Competitive advantage including its effect as dealt more with other religious, ethical and social issues in business enterprises and the influence of the companies in shaping individual endeavor; and phenomenological studies of the behavior of Omani Entrepreneurs Spring, M., Hughes, A., Mason, K., & McCaffrey, P. (2017). Most of the discussion dwelt on the economic cost of Competitive Advantage as practiced in other Arab countries, such as Jordan and the members of GCC; and on cultural comparisons with the Chinese guanxi, the Indonesian koneksi, kolusi, and nepotisme), and the Latin American compadrazo Al-Jabri, H., & Al-Busaidi, K. A. (2018) Al Badi, K. S. (2018) King, K. (2019) Linz, C., Müller-Stewens, G., & Zimmermann, A. (2017).

### **Competitive advantage and digital marketing dimensions:**

Study summarized that there are lack of studies on the performance of Omani Digital Marketing that take into account cultural norms, and which employ competitive advantage as mediator. The Digital Marketing studies focused on the internal and external challenges in doing business and tourism e.g., the gap between technology and tourism; problems with infrastructure, business and environmental regulations, inadequate technology and infrastructure, access to international markets and financial support, Oman is a issues, training support for tourism sector businesses, English proficiency, policy and administrative challenges and marketing and financial issues Al Balushi (2017), Bilal and Al Mqbali (2016), Spring, M., Hughes, A., Mason, K., & McCaffrey, P. (2017)

### Summary of Review Findings

While there is a range of metrics available to measure digital marketing and recovery tourism performance, there is a clear gap in analyses of the impact of one on the other in the context of Omani tourism companies. Special cultural traits such as quality must be taken into account Provide a clearer assessment. In addition, there is a clear gap in the studies that do the analysis Relationship to competitive advantage as a mediating factor. The study also expected that domestic tourism would play a major role in the tourism sector's recovery from the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, as it was noticed during the last period that there was a high demand for hotels and local destinations by residents in Amman, and it is expected that we will witness more movement in the coming months with moderate temperatures in Country. This study identified that there are lack of resources and previous studies were scarce on the development and development of the tourism sector in Oman, in addition to that there is a lack of research that deals with determining the role of competitive advantage and its relationship to digital marketing in. Therefore, this study aims to address that research gap by investigating the impact of independent variables and the increasing influence of tourism companies on Oman's economy. The largely unrealized potential still requires studies that critically analyse its dynamics so that effective measures can be taken. To take care of it and improve it. Specifically, the space that exists for studies exploring the effects of orientation for tourism companies on digital marketing and another important medium influencing a variable in that relationship.

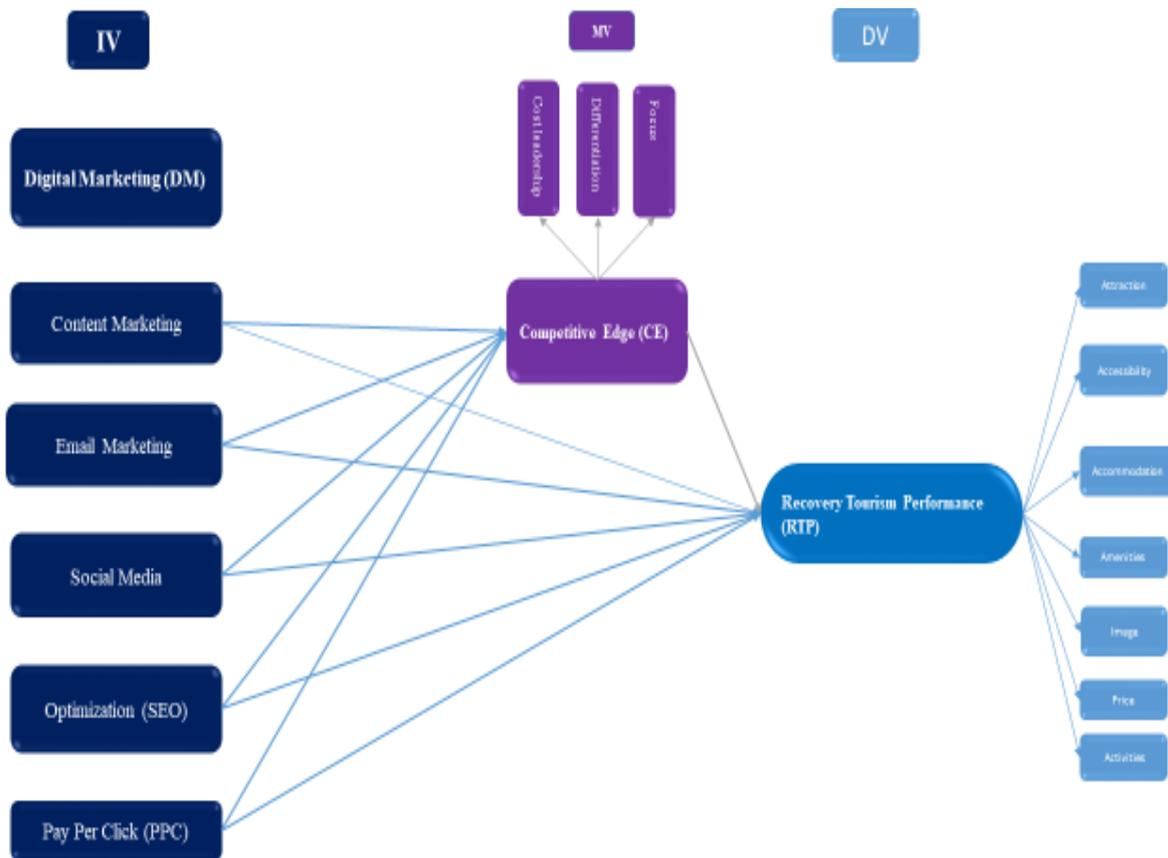
Literature also explored that there is sharp decline in the level of tourism, confirmed by the report, which revealed that the operating percentage of hotels during the month of the holidays of 2020 did not exceed 10%, after it was in 2019 about 27%, and in the most stable years, hotel reservations covered more than 85% of their capacity, Due to the Corona pandemic, many sources of the tourism sector have been affected. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study on the development of tourism and digital marketing in the Sultanate of Oman. Previous studies focused on the direct impact of factors affecting the development of tourism. Therefore, the study is the research and exploration of the competitive advantage of digital marketing in Oman during the period that was set as a time frame for this research and the most important difficulties it faced and prevented from performing its role in the manner required to demonstrate digital marketing for the development of tourism in Oman. Through this research, the paper explains the most important problems coinciding with the development of the implications of digital marketing on the competitive advantage of private marketing companies on tourism development in the Sultanate of Oman according to the Oman Vision 2040 strategy.

Especially, Study summarized that there are lack of studies on the performance of Omani Digital Marketing that take into account cultural norms, and which employ competitive advantage as mediator. The Digital Marketing studies focused on the internal and external challenges in doing business and tourism e.g., the gap between technology and tourism; problems with infrastructure, business and environmental regulations, inadequate technology and infrastructure, access to international markets and financial support, Oman is a issues, training support for tourism sector businesses, English proficiency, policy and administrative challenges and marketing and financial issues. Thus, this study aims to address these gaps through the course of the relationship between digital marketing and recovery tourism performance as two independent variables. And the introduction of competitive advantage as an independent means The variant would be a pioneering step that has not been tried in previous studies. Therefore, the present study will examine the mediating effect of competitive advantage on the relationship between digital marketing dimensions (content, email, social media, search

engine optimization (SEO) pay-per-click (PPC) advertising) and recovery performance. tourism. (RTP) in Oman.

### Development of Conceptual Framework

This study is based on previous studies on the performance, competitiveness, and orientation of companies as we have seen from modern e-marketing according to the unbound theory, Porter's concept of comparative advantage, the theories of institutional and organizational culture based on services, tourism theory and behavior theory. These basic ideas helped shape the builds of this study.



**Figure 2: Development of research framework**

The framework in Figure 2 deals with the main variables in this study, which are the relationship between recovery tourism performance and digital marketing. However, it is hypothesized that competitive advantage is likely to mediate this direct relationship since tourists react to the stimuli to which they are exposed, in many different ways that ultimately influence their travel behavior (Sergey et al., 1991; Kwortnik & Ross, 2000; Duncan & Baumle, 2011; Mathwick et al, 2001; Keng et al, 2007). Therefore, study measure the relationship between recovery tourism performance and digital marketing and how this is mediated through competitive advantage as felt by tourists and how it matches. Besides, the researcher needs to test the presence of statistically significant differences in each variable, namely recovery tourism performance landscape, digital marketing (DM), and competitive advantage (CA), across demographic factors. The main reason for this is the importance that demographics give to tourism companies as the results may become the basis for strategic development. Therefore, the present study drawn guideline to check the mediating effect of competitive advantage on the relationship

between digital marketing dimensions (content, email, social media, search engine optimization (SEO) pay-per-click (PPC) advertising) and recovery performance. tourism. (RTP) in Oman.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

As the present study examined the existing available literature resources to develop the best conceptual model to justify the mediating effect of competitive advantage on the relationship between digital marketing dimensions (content, email, social media, search engine optimization (SEO) pay-per-click (PPC) advertising) and recovery performance Tourism (RTP) in Oman. The literature also explored that there is sharp decline in the level of tourism, confirmed by the report, which revealed that the operating percentage of hotels during the month of the holidays of 2020 did not exceed 10%, after it was in 2019 about 27%, and in the most stable years, hotel reservations covered more than 85% of their capacity, due to the Corona-19 pandemic, many sources of the tourism sector have been affected. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study on the development of tourism and digital marketing in the Sultanate of Oman. Previous studies focused on the direct impact of factors affecting the development of tourism. Therefore, the study is the research and exploration of the competitive advantage of digital marketing in Oman during the period that was set as a time frame for this research and the most important difficulties it faced and prevented from performing its role in the manner required to demonstrate digital marketing for the development of tourism in Oman. Through this research, the paper explains the most important problems coinciding with the development of the implications of digital marketing on the competitive advantage of private marketing companies on tourism development in the Sultanate of Oman according to the Oman Vision 2040 strategy.

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