

A Proposed Plan For The Viral Marketing Of Sporting Products And Services To Social Media Users In The Arab World

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Abstract— Viral marketing has resulted recently in a lot of excitement as a novel technology in the field of marketing. The need of sporting institutions to attract new customers for sporting products and services has increased, especially as many international and Arab clubs rely on them for most of their funding. These institutions, especially clubs, have outlets for selling their products and services. Therefore they are in need for new approaches that are related to modern communication and innovative distribution methods that can depend on their current audience in conveying e-ads to other users in light of the increase in social media users in the Arab world. This study aims at developing a marketing plan for sporting products and services through viral marketing with social media users. The researcher used the descriptive method. The sample consisted of 1070 social media users in 13 Arab countries. He used a questionnaire composed of five themes and 42 items as a data collecting tool. Allan Dib's "one-page marketing plan" was used to develop the marketing plan of sporting products and services. The study found that participants reported watching e-ads of sporting products and services that appeared during browsing social media pages; Facebook was the most used medium for receiving ads about sporting products and services; sharing the product's ad depended on the availability of incentives; purchasing sporting products and services took place after a recommendation by a relative or a friend; and their evaluation of sporting products and services depended on the experiences of other people. The study recommends that the proposed plan should be used in marketing sporting products and services.

Keywords— Arab world, social media, sporting products, viral marketing.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE innovation of the internet has been the most important event in this era. Social media are a great challenge for business corporations, as conventional means of communications can no longer satisfy customers' needs, who wants to communicate with the institution directly and constantly. Social media have moved beyond the traditional tasks relying on posting, browsing, and exchanging information. They represent a new power that may contribute in forming the marketing strategy as a whole. We can also say that social media affected the used mechanisms and approaches followed in marketing business [11].

Viral marketing is a modern and growing approach that falls within the e-marketing philosophy. It is an innovative concept in the field of marketing, and is largely applied via the internet. Business organizations, especially in developed countries, have started to endorse and apply it by sending messages and information via the internet to its users encouraging them to buy their products as well as sending this information to other users to persuade them to deal with the given organization in exchange for a particular prize or reward. The term "viral marketing" has emerged as a modern concept expressing modern marketing philosophy. It is a strategy that express the personal communications about a certain commodity or service that happen naturally between consumers via mail, text messages, or the internet and the social media [10]. Viral marketing has resulted in a great deal of excitement recently as a novel technology in the field of marketing, due to being almost free or has quite low marketing expenses compared to conventional marketing approaches. This approach allows any marketer to select a small number of persons via social media or websites to instill an idea, product, or service in the form of a viral message then let it spread among customers without any effort to reach an endless number of receivers who continuously post it [5]. One of the most famous viral marketing campaigns of a sporting product is the Adidas campaign Unleash the Beast "unleash predator lethal zones", targeting Arab football fans and taking advantage of the media coverage of the Europe football cup 2012 to successfully launch the most creative shoes ever in the various media platforms. The campaign details include Adidas' pursuit to launch the most creative shoes ever during the EURO 2012 championship. To promote the shoes announcement, Starcom media group (SMG) launched an extremely creative media strategy titled: "every touch counts", focusing on the five lethal zones of the shoes relying on the international football star Xavi Hernandez. SMG also promoted the shoes through competitions, ads, etc., and also the different media platforms including digital, print, and radio channels. The campaign helped Adidas win first prize in the Sport Industry Awards (SPIA) 2013, and won the gold prize in the best sporting brand category. The campaign also won the silver prize in the category of sporting marketing in the Middle East (Effies 2012). The ad had the highest view rate on social media. Moreover, one of the most successful viral marketing campaigns was that of Burger King in 2010. The company relies on humor in its advertisement through the interaction between the consumer and the marketer, since humor is essential in communication and the long term recalling of the brand. The company created a character in a chicken uniform that talked to people and did what it was told. The ad was then posted on the company's website and the idea became popular among social media users [18].

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

There is an increasing need to satisfy current customers and attract new ones to the sporting products and services, as numerous Arab and international clubs rely heavily on these goods and services for their funding. Sporting institutions, especially clubs, have their own outlets to sell their products (players' T-shirts, trophy medals, coins and banknotes, club logo pin, scarf, flag, wristband, headband, signed players' photos, match tickets, TV streaming rights, organizing major championships). Therefore, they are in critical need for new approaches that are related to the modern communications processes and innovative distribution methods that depend on the current audience in transmitting e-ads via e-mail, social media, or other online media to other users, as well as encouraging contact and communication among them in order to achieve the process of transmitting the ad among them. Sporting institutions are in critical need for performing scientifically-based sports marketing, since the majority of these institutions rely on some inconsistent marketing activities in drawing the necessary funding for performing their sporting activities. Given that the growth of using the internet in the Arab world was approximately 400 percent in 2014 compared to the previous decade. The number of users in 2004 was about 28 million users, whereas it became 128 million users in 2014. This is a four-fold increase. The volume of e-commerce in the Arab world was about \$15 trillion in 2015 and increased to \$23 trillion in 2016. The website of Souq.com receives around 8 million visitors from the Arab world daily. On the other hand, it has about 3.5 million subscribers every month. In the last decade, the Arab use of the internet increased by 2500 percent, the number of Arab internet users increased to 72 million. Saudi Arabia and Egypt are on top of the list of Arab states in terms of e-commerce, followed by the U.A.E. Data show that about 60 percent of the internet users in Saudi Arabia do online purchasing, and 40 percent of these purchases are mainly mobile phones and accessories. In the Egyptian sporting field, the amount of online financial transactions are very low due to the lack of prevalence of its conception, even though it is the future of financial transactions in the field of sport. Therefore, the e-marketing, online selling and purchasing of sports equipment and devices should proliferate; the capacity of paying clubs' annual subscription fees via websites should be expanded; the volume of online reservation and sales of match tickets especially in football should be increased; and the increase in internet users in the Arab region should be invested. Additionally, the processes of searching the Egyptian sporting product in Google search engine should be developed so that they occupy a good ranking within the 100 million daily search processes about commercial products including sporting products, and especially with the increase in the rate of using the Arabic language on the internet, which occupies the fourth position among other languages on the web as well as the increase in using smart devices anticipated to reach about 48.63 percent of internet users in 2020 (Farouk, 2017). The 2017 statistics reveal that social media users in the world reached 2.6 billion, almost 70 percent of total internet users in the world (3.4 billion users). Facebook users in the Arab region reached 156 million users, compared to 115 million users last year; and active Twitter users reached 11.1 million in the Arab region at the beginning of 2017, compared to 5.8 million three years ago. A report revealed that LinkedIn users would reach 16.6 million in 2017, with a 22 percent increase in comparison to the previous year. Active Instagram users in the region reached 7.1 million. Moreover, the relevance of online marketing the number of its users are increasing. Despite the advances in technology and the emergence of social media platforms and their easy use by individuals, companies, and sporting institutions in promoting and advertising their products, the attempt to reach the highest possible number of consumers remains a paramount and difficult goal. How can sporting institutions display their goods and services in the light of the availability of millions of goods and services and the continuous change in the consumers' purchasing tastes. This created a big challenge that requires exerting more effort. With the emergence of the concept of viral marketing, more attention should be paid to this concept that has the ability to change the consumer's purchasing habits in the direction targeted by the sporting institution. Thus, the present study was necessary to identify the potential of using one of the most recent modern marketing trends, namely viral marketing, in marketing the products of sporting institutions, especially to the users of social media.

III. RELEVANCE OF THIS RESEARCH

The importance of the research is its attempt to identify the concepts of modern marketing trends and apply them to the marketing of sporting goods and services.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims at:

- Identifying the concept of viral marketing in marketing sporting goods and services.

- Developing a proposed viral marketing plan of sporting products and services to social media users in the Arab world.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are viral marketing campaigns and what is their role in marketing sporting goods and services?
- What is the proposed marketing plan of sporting goods and services during viral marketing campaigns?

VI. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

A. Research Method

The researcher used the descriptive method as it is compatible with the nature of the research problem.

B. Research Population

The research population consists of social media users who are interested in purchasing sporting products and services in the Arab world.

C. Research Sample

The research sample was randomly selected from the research population. It consisted of 1070 social media users who are interested in purchasing sporting products and services. Participants came from 13 Arab countries as follows: Saudi Arabia (168 participants), U.A.E. (33 participants), Kuwait (14 participants), Qatar (9 participants), Oman (211 participants), Syria (55 participants), Iraq (87 participants), Palestine (9 participants), Jordan (9 participants), Egypt (378 participants), Morocco (44 participants), Tunisia (20 participants), and Sudan (19 participants).

D. The Questionnaire

After reviewing the relevant literature and previous studies, the researcher developed a questionnaire to achieve the research objectives. The questionnaire consisted of 5 themes and 42 items. The researcher presented the questionnaire form to five experts. After asking the experts for their opinions and suggestions, they expressed their approval that the questionnaire is valid and reliable for measuring the given case. The questionnaire was applied to a sample of 46 participants not included in the research sample. This resulted in the approval of all items of the questionnaire. The researcher calculated the questionnaire's reliability by test-retest method. The test was administered to a pool of 46 persons randomly selected and not included in the research sample. Two weeks later, a re-test was administered to the same sample. The reliability rate was 91%, a high reliability coefficient. The researcher also used Allan Dib's "My one-page marketing plan" in developing the proposed plan.

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE I(a)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

	State	Total	Percentage
1	Saudi Arabia	168	15.7
2	U.A.E.	33	3.08
3	Kuwait	14	1.31
4	Qatar	9	0.84
5	Oman	211	19.72
6	Syria	55	5.14
7	Iraq	87	8.13
8	Palestine	23	2.15
9	Jordan	9	0.84
10	Egypt	378	35.33
11	Morocco	44	4.11
12	Tunisia	20	1.87
13	Sudan	19	1.78
	Total	1070	100

Table I(a) shows the description of the research sample. The sample consisted of 1070 participants from 13 Arab countries. Egypt had the greatest share of participants (35.33%), followed by Oman (19.72%), then Saudi Arabia came third (15.7%).

TABLE I(b)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

		Gender			
		Male	%	Female	%
1	Saudi Arabia	141	13.18	27	2.52
2	U.A.E.	19	0.93	17	1.31
3	Kuwait	8	0.75	6	0.56
4	Qatar	8	0.75	1	0.09
5	Oman	89	8.32	122	11.40
6	Syria	34	3.18	21	1.96
7	Iraq	49	4.58	38	3.55
8	Palestine	11	1.03	12	1.12
9	Jordan	7	0.65	2	0.19
10	Egypt	195	18.22	183	17.10
11	Morocco	32	2.99	12	1.12
12	Tunisia	16	1.50	4	0.37
13	Sudan	16	1.50	3	0.28
Total		625	58.41	445	41.59

The previous table shows the description of the research sample. The total number of male participants was 625 participants (58.41%), and total number of female participants was 445 participants (41.59%).

TABLE I(c)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

		Age in years			
		<30	percentage	>30	percentage
1	Saudi Arabia	100	9.35	68	6.36
2	U.A.E.	22	2.06	11	1.03
3	Kuwait	5	0.47	9	0.84
4	Qatar	5	0.47	4	0.37
5	Oman	190	17.76	21	1.96
6	Syria	35	3.27	20	1.87
7	Iraq	50	4.67	37	3.46
8	Palestine	8	0.75	15	1.40
9	Jordan	3	0.28	6	0.56
10	Egypt	277	25.89	101	9.44
11	Morocco	32	2.99	12	1.12
12	Tunisia	15	1.40	5	0.47
13	Sudan	13	1.21	6	0.56
Total		755	70.56	315	29.44

This table shows that participants below 30 years of age were 755 participants (70.56%), whereas those over 30 were 315 participants (29.44%).

TABLE I(d)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

		Using social media			
		Daily	percentage	Weekly	percentage
1	Saudi Arabia	160	14.95	8	0.75
2	U.A.E.	32	2.99	1	0.09
3	Kuwait	14	1.31	0	0
4	Qatar	9	0.84	0	0
5	Oman	211	19.72	0	0
6	Syria	55	5.14	0	0
7	Iraq	87	8.13	0	0
8	Palestine	23	2.15	0	0
9	Jordan	8	0.75	1	0.09
10	Egypt	325	30.37	53	4.95
11	Morocco	20	1.87	24	2.24
12	Tunisia	20	1.87	2	0.19
13	Sudan	15	1.40	2	0.19
Total		979	91.50	91	8.5

The previous table demonstrates that participants who used the internet on a daily basis were 979 participants (91.50%) and those who used it on a weekly basis were 91 participants (8.50%).

TABLE I(e)

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

	State	Using social media			
		Day 6a.m.-6p.m.	%	Night 6p.m.-6a.m.	%
1	Saudi Arabia	25	2.34	143	13.36
2	U.A.E.	11	1.03	22	02.06
3	Kuwait	2	0.19	12	01.12
4	Qatar	1	0.09	8	00.75
5	Oman	9	0.84	202	18.88
6	Syria	5	0.47	50	04.67
7	Iraq	7	0.65	80	07.48
8	Palestine	2	0.19	21	01.96
9	Jordan	1	0.09	8	00.75
10	Egypt	121	11.31	257	24.02
11	Morocco	12	1.12	32	02.99
12	Tunisia	15	1.40	7	00.65
13	Sudan	10	0.93	7	00.65
Total		221	20.65	849	79.35

The previous table shows that 221 participants (20.65%) used the internet during the day, and 849 participants (79.35%) used it during the night.

TABLE I(f)
DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

	State	Duration of use in hours			
		5>	%	5<	%
1	Saudi Arabia	25	2.34	143	13.36
2	U.A.E.	13	1.21	20	1.87
3	Kuwait	7	0.65	7	0.65
4	Qatar	1	0.09	8	0.75
5	Oman	34	3.18	177	16.54
6	Syria	5	0.47	50	4.67
7	Iraq	8	0.75	79	7.38
8	Palestine	5	0.47	18	1.68
9	Jordan	2	0.19	7	0.65
10	Egypt	78	7.29	300	28.04
11	Morocco	4	0.37	40	3.74
12	Tunisia	5	0.47	20	1.87
13	Sudan	2	0.19	12	1.12
Total		189	17.66	881	82.34

This table demonstrates that the duration of use of 189 participants (17.66%) was less than five hours, and 881 participants (82.34%) used the internet more than five hours.

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE ACCORDING THE MOST USED SOCIAL MEDIA SITES N=1070

	Medium	Number of users	Percentage	Order
1	Blogs	49	4.57	7
2	Facebook	560	52.42	1
3	Twitter	120	11.20	3
4	YouTube	65	6.06	4
5	WhatsApp	58	5.41	5
6	E-mail	133	12.42	2
7	Websites	35	3.26	8
8	Instagram	50	4.66	6
Total		1070	100	

Table II demonstrates that the order of using social media in viral campaigns as ordered by the sample is as follows: Facebook came first with 560 participants (52.42%), E-mail came second with 133 participants (12.42%), and Twitter came in third place with 120 participants (11.20%), YouTube in fourth place with 65 participants (6.06%), WhatsApp came fifth with 58 participants (5.41%), Instagram came sixth with 50 participants (4.66%), Blogs came seventh with 49 participants (4.57%), and finally websites came eighth with 35 participants (3.26%). This may be due to the fact that 70.56% of the sample are below 30 years of age, 91.50% of the sample use the internet on a daily basis, 79.35% if the sample use the internet between 6p.m. and 6a.m. which

includes the rush hours of internet use from 6p.m. to 12 midnight, and 82.34% of the sample use the internet for more than five hours per day.

TABLE III

ORDER, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND ACCEPTANCE RATES OF THE ITEMS OF THE FIRST THEME: "THE CONCEPT OF VIRAL CAMPAIGNS IN MARKETING THE SPORTING PRODUCT OR SERVICE" N = 1070

Item	Order	Mean	SD	Acceptance rate
1	10	1.88	0.745	62.9%
2	4	2.38	0.671	81.2%
3	8	1.95	0.526	77.5%
4	2	2.48	0.602	82.8%
5	11	1.66	0.678	55.6%
6	7	2.02	0.726	68.0%
7	3	2.45	0.591	81.9%
8	6	2.06	0.577	68.9%
9	9	1.94	0.683	66.6%
10	1	2.77	0.551	88.8%
11	5	2.37	0.569	77.9%

Table III shows the order, Means, standard deviations, and acceptance rates of the items of the first theme titled: "The concept of viral campaigns in marketing the sporting product or service". Item no. 10 which reads: "I watch e-ads of sporting products and services on social media" came first (M= 2.77, and acceptance rate = 88.8%). Item no. 4 which reads: "the advertisement about sporting goods and services using images and videos is more attractive to social media users", came second (M= 2.48, and acceptance rate = 82.8%). Item no. 7 which reads: "viral campaigns with pleasant content are more circulated among social media users", came third (M= 2.45, and acceptance rate = 81.9%). Item no. 2 which reads: "unfamiliar content of viral campaigns is more circulated among individuals browsing social media" came fourth (M= 2.38, and acceptance rate = 81.2%). This may be due to the fact that attraction factors of using graphical forms is the most effective, since some social media users may not read the information if it was written in text form, but perceive it quickly when it is presented as an image. People perceive information better with most senses when it is presented in the form of video clips and interactive ads. This finding is consistent with [13] and [7] which found a positive impact of the properties and medium of advertisement on the purchase decision of consumers. It is also consistent with [4] that emphasized the impact of the type of advertising medium on the purchase decision of consumers. It also agrees in the use of images with [20] who emphasized that entertaining images had a prominent role in the viral message. The sample also stressed their attraction to the unfamiliar content of viral campaigns whose designers use some innovative, rarely-used content such as cartoon characters or science fiction. This is consistent with [12], [14], and [21]. This finding is consistent with [14] which pointed out that special attention should be paid to viral marketing as a new marketing tool; more research should be done about the main factors that play a role in the success of this type of marketing, such as the different social media networks; attention should be paid to the advertising content in viral campaigns; and interesting video clips and images should be streamed in order to ensure the speed of transmitting such message among the audience via social media sites.

TABLE IV

ORDER, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND ACCEPTANCE RATES OF THE ITEMS OF THE SECOND THEME: "THE MOST INFLUENTIAL E-PUBLISHING MEDIA IN MARKETING THE SPORTING PRODUCT OR SERVICE" N = 1070

Item	Order	Mean	SD	Acceptance rate
12	1	2.38	0.659	79.3%
13	8	1.61	0.687	53.6%
14	2	2.09	0.815	69.6%
15	4	1.97	0.809	65.6%
16	5	1.82	0.751	60.6%
17	6	1.81	0.754	60.3%
18	3	2.04	0.661	68%
19	9	1.55	0.617	51.6%
20	7	1.72	0.706	57.3%

Table IV displays the order, means, standard deviations, and acceptance rates of the items of the second theme titled: "the most influential e-publishing media in marketing the sporting product or service". Item no. 12 which reads: "the spreading of smart phones affects following up text messages of sporting products and services" came first (M = 2.38, and acceptance rate = 79.3%). Item no. 14 which reads: "Facebook is the media where I watch advertising campaigns of sporting products and services" came second (M = 2.09, and acceptance rate = 69.6%). Item no. 18 which reads: "E-mail is important in disseminating

advertising campaigns of sporting products and services” came third (M = 2.04, and acceptance rate = 68%). Item no. 15 which reads: “I use Twitter to watch advertising campaigns of sporting products and services” came fourth (M = 1.97, and acceptance rate = 65.6%). Item no. 16 which reads: “YouTube has a prominent role in watching video advertising campaigns of sporting products and services” (M = 1.82, and acceptance rate = 60.6%). Item no. 17 which reads: “WhatsApp has a role in watching all advertising campaigns of sporting products and services” came sixth (M = 1.81, and acceptance rate = 60.3%). This may be due to the high rate of owning a smart phone, as smart phones became the first factor in people’s ability to browse the internet, social media, and watching viral ads of sporting products and services. Facebook came first as it is the most spread among participants because it satisfies a great deal of users’ needs, and can be used to add text, images, send and receive messages, make comments and receive replies to these comments, unlike the e-mail which is considered a mailing tool with longer duration to receive replies; Twitter which limits its users to a certain number of letters; YouTube that is limited to uploading or watching videos; WhatsApp which limits the interaction to two persons or a limited group of people; and Instagram which is limited to photos and very short video clips. This finding is consistent with [12] which found that advertising on Facebook has a great impact on the success of commercial campaigns and their ability to reach the broadest category of consumers. It is consistent with [16] which showed that advertising on Facebook and YouTube was feasible and beneficial. It is also consistent with [19] who noted that viral marketing was not widespread and used in South African companies.

TABLE V
ORDER, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND ACCEPTANCE RATES OF THE ITEMS OF THE THIRD THEME: “THE ROLE OF MATERIAL INCENTIVES IN THE VIRAL MARKETING OF THE SPORTING PRODUCT OR SERVICE” N = 1070

Item	Order	Mean	SD	Acceptance rate
21	3	3.96	0.851	79.2%
22	2	3.99	0.916	79.8%
23	4	3.90	0.957	78%
24	1	4.07	0.775	81.4%

Table V displays the order, means, standard deviations, and acceptance rates of the third theme titled: “the role of material incentives in the viral marketing of sporting product or service”. Item no. 24 which reads: “my loyalty to a certain club drives me to promote its sporting products and services” came first (M = 4.07, and acceptance rate = 81.4%). Item no. 22 which reads: “incentives attract me and make me re-send the ads of sporting products or services to other people” came second (M = 3.99, and acceptance rate = 79.8%). Item no. 21 which reads: “presents are considered an incentive to the audience to interact with marketing campaigns of selling sporting products and services” came third (M = 3.96, and acceptance rate = 79.2%). Item no. 23 which reads: “I had received material incentive for re-sending an ad about sporting products and services to other people” came fourth (M = 3.90, and acceptance rate = 78%). This may be due to the fact that incentives are one of the most successful marketing tools. They encourage customers to circulate the advertising messages with each other and pass them to a number of other users. This finding is consistent with [10] which emphasized that viral marketing is based on material and immaterial incentives; and [2] which confirmed a direct relationship between material incentives and purchasing sporting products and services. Companies always announce drawing lots on presents and prizes after reviewing purchasing processes and sales rates, since the ultimate goal of the promotion process is enhancing the sales processes of a sporting product or service and not only promoting it. Therefore, the gifts are given to persons who make a real purchasing process and not to those who redirect the advertisement or resend the message only. The distribution of gifts is associated in reality with the direct purchasing process, which is associated in turn with the various marketing tools, whether electronic or otherwise. In exchange, there is no direct process that links watching and disseminating the advertisement and deserving the material incentive. These findings are inline with [8] which addressed the importance of material incentives, [1] which noted that incentive presents are one of the most important elements that should be included in viral marketing campaigns; and [15] that emphasized that promotion using search engines attracts customers due to their trust in the research outcome.

TABLE VI
ORDER, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND ACCEPTANCE RATES OF THE ITEMS OF THE FOURTH THEME: “OPINION LEADERS WHO INFLUENCE PURCHASING THE SPORTING PRODUCT OR SERVICE” N = 1070

Item	Order	Mean	SD	Acceptance rate
25	5	1.85	0.354	92.5%
26	4	1.87	0.341	93.5%
27	8	1.79	0.409	89.5%
28	6	1.84	0.362	92%
29	3	1.90	0.303	95%
30	7	1.83	0.376	91.5%

31	9	1.78	0.417	89%
32	1	1.93	0.252	96.5%
33	2	1.91	0.282	95.5%

Table VI displays the order, means, standard deviations, and acceptance rates of the items in the fourth theme titled: “opinion leaders who influence purchasing the sporting product or service”. Item no. 32 which reads: “An ad of sporting product or service presented by sports celebrities drives me to pass it to other people” came first (M = 1.93, and acceptance rate = 96.5%). Item no. 33 which reads: “I think the presence of celebrities in any ad about sporting products or services will influence my purchase decision” came second (M = 1.91, and acceptance rate = 95.5%). Item no. 29 which reads: “I am influence by the opinions of my office mates who exchange advertising messages of sporting products and services among themselves to stimulate purchases” came third (M = 1.90, and acceptance rate = 95%). Item no. 26 which reads: “I made a purchasing process of a sporting product or service after a friend recommended it” came fourth (M = 1.87, and acceptance rate = 93.5%). Item no. 25 which reads: “I trust any content promoting sporting products and services that I receive by e-mail as long as it is from a relative” came fifth (M = 1.85, and acceptance rate = 92.5%). Item 28 which reads: “relatives’ and friends’ opinions reinforce my opinion about purchasing sporting products or services” came sixth (M = 1.84, and acceptance rate = 92%). Item no. 30 which reads: “the person whose opinion about a sporting product or service convinces me has consumer preferences similar to mine” came seventh (M = 1.83, and acceptance rate = 91.5%). Item no. 27 which reads: “I listen to others’ opinions and experiences about purchasing sporting products and services before I perform the purchasing process” came eighth (M = 1.79, and acceptance rate = 89.5%). Finally, item no. 31 which reads: “I am interested in reading comments and e-chat about sporting products or services to learn about others’ previous purchasing experiences” came ninth (M = 1.78, and acceptance rate = 89%). The high percentage of the items in this theme is compatible with the nature of Arab citizens who follow the proverb: “ask the experienced”. Arabs by nature move within a social framework that influence them and makes a reference point to them on many issues. This finding is consistent with [1] and [3] that found that there was a positive impact of social relationships on the purchase decisions related to sporting products and services, that celebrities’ influence is not a prevalent trait in the Arab world especially in light of the political and living difficulties. This result may be due to the fact that about 70.5% of participants are under 30 years of age who are influenced by celebrities, and they include young persons whose understanding of this statement might be different. It may also be due to the fact that asking an experienced person may be an important step before any purchasing process, however direct comparison between goods, identifying their configurations and methods, country of manufacturing, and quality are still indispensable. All these factors contribute to a great extent in the purchase decision. Being influenced by other people’s opinions does not change the fact that personal need of certain elements in the product that achieve personal satisfaction and the fulfillment of consumer’s needs and desires are the main element in any purchasing process of a sporting product or service. This finding is inline with [10] that found that the effect peers and acquaintances on the purchase decision was a moderate effect; and [2] that proved a direct relation between the two variables.

TABLE VII

ORDER, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND ACCEPTANCE RATES OF THE ITEMS OF THE FIFTH THEME: “PURCHASE DECISION OF THE SPORTING PRODUCT OR SERVICE” N = 1070

Item	Order	Mean	SD	Acceptance rate
34	7	1.80	0.735	57.6%
35	9	1.71	0.667	57%
36	1	2.40	0.669	79.6%
37	2	2.12	0.826	69.8%
38	6	1.90	0.754	60.8%
39	5	1.92	0.755	60.9%
40	3	2.06	0.666	68.6%
41	7	1.80	0.735	57.6%
42	4	2.00	0.812	65.9%

Table VII shows the order, means, standard deviations, and acceptance rates of the items of the fifth theme titled: “purchase decision of the sporting product or service”. Item no. 36 which reads: “my exposure to viral messages helps me make the purchase decision of the sporting products or services” came first (M = 2.40, and acceptance rate = 79.6%). Item no. 37 which reads: “viral messages help me express my view about purchasing sporting products or services” came second (M = 2.13, and acceptance rate = 69.8%). Item no. 40 which reads: “online ads arouse my need to purchase sporting products or services I had not used before” came third (M = 2.06, and acceptance rate = 68.6%). Item no. 42 which reads: “images and videos in the viral ad help me make the purchase decision of the sporting product or service” came fourth (M = 2.00, and acceptance rate = 65.9%). Item no. 39 which reads: “viral messages stimulate me to take the purchase decision of the sporting product or service” came

fifth ($M = 1.92$, and acceptance rate = 60.9%). Item no. 38 which reads: “viral messages motivate me to take the purchase decision of the sporting product or service” came sixth ($M = 1.90$, and acceptance rate = 60.8%). This may be due to the fact that taking the purchase decision of the sporting product or service is influenced by the positive and negative comments available on social media such as (likes), or consumer rating in stars, or the different rating signs, which represent mostly the tools made available by viral marketing. We also have to keep in mind that the content presented to browsing individuals should be of good quality, the design and implementation of the advertising campaign should be robust, even though the expertise of people working in this area is quite limited in the Arab world and viral marketing mechanisms suffer consequently. Some Arab institutions seek to address these weaknesses in order to ensure the success of the marketing of sporting products and services. This finding is consistent to a great extent with [5] which emphasized the presence of many challenges related to the type of market and type of product. Additionally, the purchase decision of sporting products and services is influenced by viral marketing as the participants confirmed. This is due to the fact that e-marketing approaches are generally successful in influencing the browsing person’s emotion, thinking, and mind. Thus, driving them to make the purchase decision of the sporting product and service by the influence of other people’s opinions; being convinced by the configurations of the displayed product or service in the best way; being emotionally affected by the accompanying music, image, video, or the funny clip; or the incentive to win prizes or enter a lottery of prizes or coupons. Ultimately, all this lead to stimulating the purchase decision of the sporting product or service. This is inline with [8] that noted that companies which employed a viral marketing strategy succeeded in influencing the consumer’s behavior. It is also consistent with [9] which emphasized the presence of a large and positive influence of viral marketing on the consumer’s purchase decision of sporting product or service; [13] and [21] which underscored the positive relationship between the individual’s culture and credibility of the message source, and the success of viral marketing with consumers and using contemporary online incentive tools.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions answering the first question that reads: “what are viral marketing campaigns and what is their role in marketing sporting products and services?”

A. The concept of viral marketing in marketing the sporting product or service

1. Browsing individuals watch e-ads of sporting products and services on social media.
2. The ad of sporting products and services presented using images and videos is more attractive to social media users.
3. Pleasant-content viral campaigns are more widespread among social media users.
4. Unfamiliar content of viral campaigns is more widespread among social media users.
5. Musical viral ads spread more quickly on social media.
6. The content of viral messages motivate many people to pass it on more easily via social media.

B. The most influential e-publishing media in marketing the sporting product or service

1. The spreading of smart phones affects following up text messages of sporting products and services.
2. Facebook is the first medium for users to watch advertising campaigns of sporting products and services.
3. E-mail comes second and is important in disseminating advertising campaigns of sporting products and services.
4. Twitter is the third medium for watching advertising campaigns of sporting products and services.
5. YouTube comes fourth in watching video advertising campaigns of sporting products and services.
6. WhatsApp comes fifth in watching advertising campaigns of sporting products and services.

C. The role of material incentive sin the viral marketing or a sporting product or service

1. Loyalty to a certain club is a motive to promote sporting products and services.
2. Incentives motivate users to re-send the sporting products and services ads to other people.
3. Gifts are incentives to the audience to interact with marketing campaigns selling sporting products and services.
4. The experiences of users in receiving a material incentive motivates them to re-send the sporting products and services ads to other people.

D. Opinion leaders influencing the purchasing of the sporting product or service

1. An ad featuring sports celebrities of a sporting product or service makes me pass it on to other people.

2. The presence of celebrities in any ad about sporting products or services influences the purchase decision of the sporting product or service.
3. The opinion of office mates stimulates the individual to purchase the sporting product or service.
4. Friends' recommendation is a strong stimulation in the purchasing process of sporting product or service.
5. Users trust e-mail messages from relatives regarding the promotion of sporting products and services.
6. The opinion or relatives and friends reinforces the user's opinion about purchasing sporting products or services.
7. The person whose opinion convinces the user about a sporting product or service has the same consumer preferences.
8. The user listens to the opinions and experiences of other people about purchasing sporting products and services before completing the purchasing process.
9. The user is interested in listening to the purchasing experiences of other people and reading comments about sporting products or services.

E. The purchase decision of a sporting product or service

1. Exposure to viral messages helps users make a purchase decision of sporting products or services.
2. Viral messages help users to express their opinion about purchasing sporting products or services.
3. Online ads arouse users' needs to purchase sporting products or services they had not used before.
4. Images and videos in the viral ad help the user make the purchase decision of the sporting product or service.
5. Viral messages stimulate making the purchase decision of the sporting product or service.
6. Viral messages motivate users to make the purchase decision of the sporting product or service.

Conclusions regarding the answers to the second question which reads: "what is the proposed plan for marketing sporting products and services through viral marketing campaigns" are found in the proposed model (Appendix).

APPENDIX

Before (prospect)	1. The target market	2. The Message	3. The media I will use
	- Social media users - Athletes and members of clubs - Sports fans	- Sporting products and services affordable to everyone	- Facebook - E-mail - Twitter - YouTube - WhatsApp
During (Lead)	4. Current incentive mechanisms	5. Influential opinion leaders	6. Purchase decision
	- Loyalty to a particular club is a motive to promote sporting products and services - Incentives motivate users to resend ads about sporting products and services to other people - Gifts are incentives to the audience to interact with marketing campaigns of sporting products and services	- Ads featuring sports celebrities motivates people to pass it on to others. - The presence of celebrities in any ad of sporting products or services affects the purchase decision of this sporting product or service. - The opinion of office mates encourages purchasing this sporting product or service.	- Exposure to viral messages helps users make a purchase decision of sporting products or services. - Viral messages help users express their views about purchasing sporting products or services. - Online ads arouse users' needs to purchase sporting products or services they had not used before.
After	7. Delivering a world-class experience	8. Increasing the customer's lifetime value	9. Tools expected to stimulate performance
	- Identifying digital and electronic marketing platforms	- Reducing the cost of customer's acquisition of the sporting product	- Increasing the users' loyalty to the sporting

<p>in the field of sport - Designing a digital marketing platform of sporting products and services</p>	<p>or service. - Customer insight (having strong relations with customers). - Tracking customers' interaction (tracking customers who had already bought a sporting product or service and tracking future expectations).</p>	<p>product or service. - Instant rewards for resending viral ads. - Weekly, monthly, and yearly presents (points system).</p>
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