The Impact of the Time of Selling of the Agricultural Products in Achieving the Competitive Advantage

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at clarifying the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage. It is an applied study on intermediary organizations operating in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products. This study deals with the issue of the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products, shows the importance of making a perfect use of time by the organization and identifies the impact of the time of selling in achieving the competitive advantage. The study also rises a question which is whether there is there a statistically significant effect for the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage or not. It concludes that there is a statistically significant effect of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving a competitive advantage and recommends paying attention to the time of selling the agricultural products and display the products in certain period of time.

KEYWORDS: the time of selling, agricultural products, the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products, competitive advantage

Introduction

All organizations of different types and sizes need to achieve competitive advantage in light of the intensity of competition between similar competing organizations, as it enables the organization to defend its position in the market, preserve its competitive position, and maintain its market share. Therefore, the organizations cannot remain and continue without achieving competitive advantage. In order for the organizations to achieve the competitive advantage, they must make the best use of human and financial resources and time.

Time is one of the most important sources of competitive advantage. It meets the needs and desires of customers, increases productivity, and reduces costs. In addition, all sources of competitive advantage depend on time.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to clarify the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage. It is also an applied study on intermediary organizations operating in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

The importance of the study

This study presents its importance from the following aspects:

1- This study deals with the issue of the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products, which is one of the important issues.
2- This study seeks to highlight the importance of making a perfect use of time by the organization.
3- This study seeks to identify the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage.

The objectives of the study

This study seeks to identify the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage in the central wholesale market for Jordanian agricultural products. Therefore, this study has the following objectives:

1 - Identifying the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products in responding to the needs of customers in the Jordanian central wholesale market of agricultural products.

2 - Identifying the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products on the integration of the selling activities and operations in the central wholesale market for Jordanian agricultural products.

3- Identifying the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products in maintaining the market share in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

The problem and the questions of the study

The importance of the competitive advantage has emerged in light of the age of technology and the spread of knowledge. The organizations, with their different activities, have realized that they cannot achieve survival, continuity and growth without achieving the competitive advantage, especially if the organizations work next to each other within a specific market prepared for them as a "dedicated geographical area". In order to achieve a competitive advantage, organizations must make the best use of financial and human resources and time. Therefore, the study problem can be formulated in the following main question:

Is there a statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products?

The hypotheses of the study

In light of the question of the study, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

The main hypothesis of the study

(H0) There is no statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

The sub-hypotheses of the study

(H01) - There is no statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in response to the needs of customers in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

(H02) - There is no statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in the integration of the selling activities and operations in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

(H03) - There is no statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in maintaining the market share in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

The methodology of the study

The study has adopted the descriptive analytical approach, which depends on the study of the current reality of the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage. The information has been obtained through a special questionnaire designed for this purpose. It has also been distributed to the sample of the study, and then these data and information have been processed and statistically analyzed for the purpose of testing the hypotheses of the study and answering its question according to the proposed model of the study.

The model of the study

The model of study has included a structural detail of the study variables, which consistent of the objectives and hypotheses of the study. It has included (the time of the selling of the agricultural products) as an independent variable, and some dimensions of the competitive advantage (responding to the customer needs, the integration of the selling activities and operations, maintaining the market share) as a dependent variable. It is shown in the following figure No. (1).
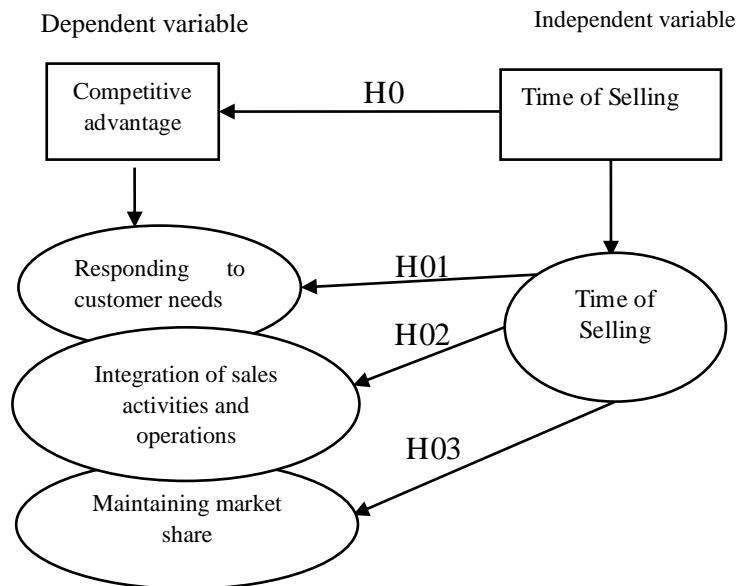
Figure No. 1 Study model

The operational definitions of the study

The time of the selling: It is the time during which the seller can offer certain goods at a certain price in the market.

Competitive advantage: It is the company's ability to position itself in the market and confront competitors by providing better and more appropriate performance than competitors.

Responding to the needs of customers: It means satisfying the needs and desires of customers of a specific commodity by providing the qualities and advantages in this commodity.

Integration of sales activities and processes: It is a set of integrated activities and processes related to the sales process, which would end the selling process in the desired manner for the seller and buyer.

Market share: the ratio of sales of a particular company to the total market sales of a particular commodity.

Theoretical framework

The time of the selling

The time of selling is different from a commodity that follows a specific sector to another one. There are commodities that can be purchased by consumers or traders at any time, and there are commodities that have specific purchase times that consumers or traders desire. The agricultural products have specific time for buying and selling. This may be attributed to the desire of buyers and consumers, according to the nature of the product.

The concept of the time of selling

It is the time during which the seller can offer certain goods at a certain price in the market.

The concept of Agricultural product

It is the product that we obtain from agricultural production, and it varies in production from one season to another, depending on the nature of the product, and it can be fruits, vegetables or herbs.

The characteristics of agricultural product

The characteristics of the agricultural product can be summarized in the following points:

1 - The product has a very short shelf life.

2 - Some of them can be stored for a short period of time, while others cannot be stored.

3- Storage is very expensive for the products that can be stored.

4- It has a high risk of spoilage in storage.

5- Consumers and buyers prefer these products to be fresh.

The competitive advantage

The concept of competitive advantage

It is the company's ability to position itself in the market and confront competitors by providing better and more appropriate performance than competitors.

The characteristics of the competitive advantage

The competitive advantage leads to achieving superiority over competitors, achieves value for the organization, and reflects the efficiency of the organization's performance of its activities, which leads to influencing the buyers and their realization of the preference for what the organization offers and motivating them to buy. It can be renewed and developed over time. (Al-Atoum, 2009, 38)

The central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products

The central wholesale market was established in Amman in 1995 to market Jordanian agricultural products as a starting point for service to the Jordanian farmer in particular and the citizen (the consumer) in general. Its goal was to serve producers, traders, intermediaries and consumers, and it is located on important and international roads, which facilitates the smooth delivery of local and imported agricultural products within the market. (http://www.awm.gov.jo/dotnet/aboutus.aspx)

Method and Procedure

Introduction

The method and procedure that are used to reach the objectives of the study, which are to identify the impact of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving competitive advantage, will be presented. It is an applied study on intermediary organizations operating in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

The methodology of the study

The study has adopted the descriptive analytical approach as it is an appropriate approach to the nature of the study. The questionnaires were distributed to the study sample and then collected to obtain the required information.

The population and sample of the study

The population of the study consists of intermediary traders who are working in the central wholesale market of agricultural products, whose number is (252) retailers. The researcher has distributed (63) questionnaires to the sample of the study, which are approximately (25%) of the population of the study. About (51) questionnaires were retrieved. After checking the retrieved questionnaires, (3) questionnaires were excluded because they were not suitable for statistical analysis due to the failure to answer some of the questions contained therein. Therefore, the number of retrieved and valid questionnaires for statistical analysis have reached to (48) questionnaires.

The Sources of the Data

The study relies on two types of data sources:

Secondary data: It is based on a review of the various information related to the subject of the study, which are published in books and letters of the Arab and foreign universities, in addition to specialized websites.

Primary data: Questionnaires are developed as an appropriate study tool to obtain the primary data in order to answer the study questions. The questionnaire referred to consisted of two parts. The first part includes obtaining identification data from the sample of the study in terms of the products have been sold in the stores, and the time of selling. The second part of the questionnaire has included the impact of the time of selling of agricultural products on achieving competitive advantage.

Demographic variables:

This is an illustration of the personal characteristics of the study sample:

1 - Distribution of the respondents according to the variables of the products that are sold in the stores.

The data related to the variable products that are sold in the store mentioned in Table (1-3), show that all stores sell vegetables and fruits.

Table (1-3): Distribution of individuals by products sold in the store

personal characteristic	products	Repetition	Percentage %
Products that are sold in the stores	vegetable	0	0
	Fruits	0	0
	fruits and vegetables	48	100
	Total	48	%100

2- Distribution of respondents according to the preferred time of selling.

The data of the following table (2-3), which is related to the preferred time of selling variable, shows that the majority of the study sample prefers to sell in the morning period.

Table (2-3): Distribution of individuals according to the preferred time of selling variable

Personal characteristic	Period	Repetition	Percentage %
the preferred time of selling	Morning period 5-10 am	48	100
	Evening period 10-5 pm	0	0
	Total	48	%100

The results of Table (2-3) indicate that the question of the study:" Is there a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products?" is answered as in the following.

To answer this question, the arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and ranks of practice scores have been calculated to show the impact of the time of selling of agricultural products in achieving competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of

agricultural products, as shown in the following table   (3-3):

Table (3-3)

	The field	Arithmetic average	standard deviation	degree of practice	Rank
1	Responding to customer needs	3.7498	1.3175	High	3
2	Integration of selling activities and operations	3.7917	1.4982	High	2
3	Maintaining market share	3.8021	1.2458	High	1
	overall average	3.7812	1.3538	High	-

The results of Table (3-3) indicate that the answers of the sample of the study to the statements that explain the impact of the time of selling of agricultural products in achieving competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

The arithmetic averages of the areas of competitive advantage ranged between (3.7498-3.8021) and according to the approved scale. In this study, the degree of agreement of the study sample with the question statements, all of them were high, the general average was (3.7812) and standard deviation (1.3538), which is a high level according to the scale.

According to the above table, it is concluded that there is an impact on the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of agricultural products in Jordan.

The field of responding to the customer needs

To answer this question, the arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and the degree of practice scores have been calculated for the field of responding to customer needs, as shown in the following table (3-4):

Table (3-4)

	Responding to customer needs	Arithmetic average	standard deviation	degree of practice	Rank
1	Realise the importance of time for competitive advantage	3.6458	1.45119	medium	3
2	The company always seeks to satisfy the needs and desires of customers	3.7500	1.34481	High	2
3	The time of selling helps to satisfy the needs and desires of the customer	4.0417	1.23699	High	1
4	The time of selling is very important to customers	3.5625	1.25319	medium	4
	overall average	3.7498	1.3175	High	-

The results of Table (3-4) indicate that the answers of the sample of the study to the statements that clarify the field of responsing to the needs of customers, have shown that the arithmetic averages ranged between (3.5625 - 4.0417) and the degree of practice is medium and high. According to the scale adopted in this study, the overall average of the field as a whole is (3.7498) and the standard deviation is (1.3175), which is a high level.

According to the above table, it is concluded that there is an impact on the time of selling of the agricultural products in responding to the needs of customers in the central wholesale market of agricultural products.

The field of integration of activities and selling operations

To answer this question, the arithmetic averages, standard deviations, degree and practice scores are calculated for the field of integration of selling activities and operations, as shown in the following table (3-5):

Table (3-5)

	The field of integration of selling activities and operations	Arithmetic average	standard deviation	degree of practice	Rank
1	The time helps to complete the selling process as required	3.6667	1.44889	High	4
2	The time helps in securing the product to the customer at the desired time	3.7292	1.36428	High	3
3	The time helps the company to provide all the desired services	3.7917	1.38316	High	2
4	The time helps the company in the integration of its operations and selling activities	3.9792	1.27979	High	1
	overall average	3.7917	1.4982	High	-

The results of Table (3-5) indicate that the answers of the sample of the study to the statements that clarify the field of integration of selling activities and operations, have shown that the arithmetic averages ranged between (3.9792- 3.6667) and the degree of practice is medium and high. According to the scale adopted in this study, the overall average of the field as a whole is (3.7917) and a standard deviation is (1.4982), which is a high level.

Based on the above, it is concluded that there is an impact on the time of selling of the agricultural products in the integration of selling activities and operations in the central wholesale market of agricultural products.

The field of maintaining market share

To answer this question, the arithmetic averages, standard deviations, ranks, and degrees of practice are calculated for the field of maintaining market share, as shown in the following table (3-6):

Table (3-6)

	The field of maintaining market share	Arithmetic average	standard deviation	degree of practice	Rank
1	The company realises the importance of competitive advantage	3.6042	1.42530	High	3
2	The time helps in attracting more customers	3.8750	1.29853	High	2
3	The time helps the company to be distinguished in its services	4.2292	1.05668	High	1
4	The time helps the company to achieve the customer satisfaction	3.5000	1.20283	High	4
	overall average	3.8021	1.2458	High	-

The results of Table (3-6) indicate that the answers of the sample of the study to the statements that explain the field of maintaining the market share, have shown that the arithmetic averages ranged between (229233-3.500), and the degree of practice is medium and high. According to the scale adopted in this study, the overall average of the field as a whole is (3.8021) and a standard deviation is (1.2458), which is a high level.

Based on the above, it is concluded that there is an impact on the time of selling agricultural products in maintaining the market share in the central wholesale market of agricultural products.

Hypotheses Test

The main hypothesis of the study: (H0) There is no statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products. Testing this hypothesis includes the use of statistical methods that appropriate to the nature of this hypothesis and the presentation of the answer and in the following table (3-7):

Table (3-7)

Study hypothesis test results

Significance level Sig	Calculate T	Hypothesis
.000	30.986	H0

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving the competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products. "Calculate T" is (30.986) and with a significant level of significance is (.000), which is less than (0.05).

The sub-hypotheses of the study

The first sub-hypothesis: (H01) - there is no statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in responding to the needs of customers in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

Testing this hypothesis includes the use of statistical methods that appropriate to the nature of this hypothesis and the presentation of the answer and in the following table (3-8):

Table (3-8)

Study hypothesis test results

Significance level Sig	Calculate T	Hypothesis
.000	33.914	H01

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in responding to the needs of customers in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products. "Calculate T" is (33.914) and with a significant level of significance is (.000), which is less than (0.05).

The second sub-hypothesis: (H02) - There is no statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in the integration of selling activities and operations in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

Testing this hypothesis includes the use of statistical methods that appropriate to the nature of this hypothesis and the presentation of the answer, and in the following table (3-9):

Table (3-9)

Study hypothesis test results

Significance level Sig	Calculate T	Hypothesis
.000	28.274	H02

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in the integration of selling activities and operations in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products. "Calculate T" is (28.274) and with a significant level of significance is (.000), which is less than (0.05).

The third sub-hypothesis: (H03) - There is no statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of the agricultural products in maintaining the market share in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

Testing this hypothesis includes the use of statistical methods that appropriate to the nature of this hypothesis and the presentation of the answer, and in the following table (3-10):

Table (3-10)

Study hypothesis test results

Significance level Sig	Calculate T	Hypothesis
.000	34.715	H03

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the time of selling of agricultural products in maintaining the market share in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products. "Calculate T" is (34.715) and with a significant level of significance is (.000), which is less than (0.05).

Findings and Recommendations

The results of the study

The study has found the following:

1. There is a statistically significant effect of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving a competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.
2. Intermediate traders give great importance to the issue of time, and prefer to buy products in the early morning period.
3. There is a statistically significant effect of the time of selling of the agricultural products in achieving better responses to the customers' needs, integration of selling activities and operations, and maintaining the market share, in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

The recommendations of the study

In light of the study results, the study recommends the following:

1. The necessity of paying attention to the time of selling the agricultural products because of its impact on achieving a competitive advantage in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.
2. The necessity for intermediary traders to display their products in the early morning period, because buyers prefer that.
3. The necessity of paying attention to the time of selling because of its impact in achieving better responses to the needs of customers, the integration of selling activities and operations, and the preservation of the market share in the central wholesale market of Jordanian agricultural products.

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