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## Developing a distribution strategy model for food industries with online marketing and sale approach

Solmaz Seyed Ghafouri<sup>1</sup> , Vahid Nasehifar<sup>2</sup> , Farid Askari<sup>3</sup> 

1- PhD student, Department of Management, Abhar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Abhar, Iran

2- Department of management and accounting, Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran

3- Department of Finance and Economics, Abhar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Abhar, Iran

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is to present a distribution strategy model in the food industry with an online marketing and sales approach. The present research is applicable-developmental in terms of its purpose, and a descriptive research conducted with a cross-sectional survey method in terms of data collection. The statistical population of the present research includes 420 managers, producers, and suppliers of high-consumption goods in Tehran, selected using a cluster-random sampling method. The collection tool includes a researcher-made questionnaire derived from a qualitative method. Face and content validity were used to measure the validity of the data collection tool, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability tests were used to measure the reliability of the data collection tool. SPSS and PLS software were used to analyze the findings. The results of structural equation analysis indicate that the extracted model is validated. After confirmatory factor analysis, the GoF criterion method was used to fit the overall model, and the model has a strong fit. All factor loading coefficients are greater than 0.4, indicating the suitability of this model.

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**Publisher:** Research Center of Resource Management Studies and Knowledge-Based Business

**Corresponding Author:** Vahid Nasehifar

**Email:** vahid.n3004@gmail.com

## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

With the growth and expansion of technology, companies have turned to using online methods and channels to sell and distribute products. It is important to note that the use of online methods is not a substitute for traditional distribution and sales methods, but is used alongside them. Strategic marketing planning must be carried out in businesses in order to properly apply these methods, and this has a great impact on pricing and sales (Chen et al., 2021). Distribution is one of the four main elements of the marketing mix. Distribution is a powerful lever for product presentation by marketing managers, which determines the accessibility and trust of the supplier among customers (Yang et al., 2023). In simple terms, distribution is the delivery of the customer's desired product to the desired location at the desired time. The breadth of the distribution field, and its role in companies' marketing and their success have led to special attention being paid to this element of the marketing mix. One of the major issues and problems of the country in economic and commercial affairs is the shortcomings and weaknesses related to the distribution method. Distribution services and decisions related to distribution channels are of great importance in various organizations (Rusta et al., 2022).

In developing a distribution strategy, attention should be paid to its coordination with the marketing strategy and, consequently, the business strategy. In the strategic business planning process, decisions should be made about the various channels of communication with customers, the costs and benefits of each of these channels, and the understanding of the business and customers around them. Then, a long-term strategy should be designed for market presence and communication with customers, wholesalers, or retailers of products (Cao et al., 2023). The distribution channel strategy should be designed within the framework of the marketing mix. First, marketing objectives are reviewed; then, the role of the product, price and promotion, and distribution are outlined and studied. The company should also decide on whether distribution is defensive or aggressive. If the intended distribution strategy is defensive, it should try to make its distribution as nice as that of competitors, but if the goal is aggressive distribution, it should try to make its distribution superior to that of competitors (Rusta et al., 2022).

Given the above explanations, the researcher seeks to answer the question: what does the distribution strategy model in the food industry look like with an online marketing and sales perspective?

### Theoretical framework

#### Distribution channel

A distribution channel is a network of individuals and organizations involved in delivering a product or service from the manufacturer to the customer. Distribution channels are also known as marketing channels or marketing distribution channels (Yenipazarli, 2023).

#### Online sales

Online sales require teamwork and need the support of other forces such as senior management; especially when online sales are nationally relevant. In this regard and in implementing the online sales strategy, the company needs various forces; specialists or technical people, who can provide customers with sufficient information about the type of product and service before, during, or after the purchase. It is also very vital to have people with programming and search engine optimization (SEO) expertise. Online support people who are intended to provide customer service are also very important. That is, those who can play an important role in the way customers buy, pay online, and provide after-sales service to

customers. Online sales are not completely separate from traditional sales; and support and administrative teams are also necessary. Sales analysts, who can speed up the online purchase process and send orders; finally, office staff who carry out administrative tasks are also very important (Seifbarghy & Kafshian Ahar, 2022).

Seyedghafouri et al. (2025) investigated the identification of factors affecting distribution strategy in the food industry with an online marketing and sales perspective. This research was analyzed and reviewed using the scientific method of metasynthesis and by reviewing published articles; and 85 indicators were extracted based on 23 selected articles. Finally, 16 components were evaluated and identified, and the final framework was confirmed and identified by applying the total opinions of experts in the components of human factors, creating value for the customer, paying attention to the competence of managers, internal factors, external factors, management factors, opinion mining, digital marketing, environmental factors, content marketing, business strategies, complete knowledge of the internal and external environment, direct marketing, visual features, optimization, competitive performance.

Riyadi et al. (2023) conducted a study entitled The Effect of Distribution Strategy and Price on Retail Purchase Decisions. This study was conducted with a survey approach in small stores and retail stores in Indonesia. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using structural equation modeling. This study showed that by changing distribution strategies by combining intensive, exclusive, and selective types, significant results were obtained in prices and purchasing decisions by customers. The main finding in this study was that implementing distribution strategies to adjust government policies was very effective in reaching customers in every corner of the city so that price adjustment and customer purchasing decisions were made continuously.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is an applicable-developmental study in terms of purpose, and descriptive in terms of data collection, conducted using a cross-sectional survey method. The statistical population of the present study included 420 managers, manufacturers, and suppliers of high-consumption goods in Tehran, selected by a cluster-random sampling method. The collection tool in the present study included a researcher-made questionnaire derived from a qualitative method. Face and content validity were used to assess the validity of the data collection tool, and Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability tests were used to assess the reliability of the data collection tool.

### **Research findings**

SPSS and PLS software were used to analyze the findings. The results of structural equation analysis indicate that the extracted model is validated. After confirmatory factor analysis, the GoF criterion method was used to fit the overall model, and the model has a strong fit. All factor loading coefficients are greater than 0.4, indicating the suitability of this model.

### **Conclusion**

The present study was conducted with the aim of presenting a distribution strategy model in the food industry with an online marketing and sales approach. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Seyedghafouri et al. (2025), Riyadi et al. (2023), Cao et al. (2023), Zhang et al. (2023), Sun et al. (2023), Wei & Dong (2022), Wang et al. (2023), Seifbarghy & Kafshian Ahar (2022), Honarmand (2022), Khoi & Jamili (2022), Bashokouh & beigi firoozi (2022), and Hahighi Kaffash et al. (2021). Riyadi et al. (2023) showed that by

changing distribution strategies through combining intensive, exclusive and selective types, significant results are obtained in prices and purchasing decisions by customers. The main finding of this study was that implementing distribution strategies to adjust government policies was very effective in reaching customers in every corner of the city so that price adjustment and customer purchasing decisions were made continuously.

According to the results of the study, the following suggestions are made:

-Analyze the features, characteristics, and benefits of their product carefully. This analysis includes examining the quality, capabilities, performance, adaptability to customer needs, and competitive advantages of the product. By accurately understanding the features and benefits of the product, they can design unique strategies for marketing and selling their product.

-They should accurately define their target market and segment it. They can pay attention to factors such as gender, age, geographical location, industry type, and other characteristics. By accurately defining the target market, they can design specific strategies for each customer group and improve the sales process.