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Testing a digital marketing model for the internationalization of small and medium-sized dairy companies

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to test the digital marketing model for the internationalization of small and medium-sized dairy companies. The present research is applicable in terms of its purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of its nature and method. The statistical population of the present research includes 289 managers and experts of the dairy industries of Mazandaran province. The Cochran formula was used to determine the sample size and 165 people were selected as samples using stratified random sampling. The collection tool in the present research includes a researcher-made questionnaire. SPSS and PLS software were used to analyze the findings. According to the results, the main themes include digital marketing content, digital marketing tools, digital advertising, digital sales development, and digital customer relationship management. Among them, the theme of a strong presence in the digital space is of first importance, and the theme of analyzing and understanding international markets is of second importance, the theme of using innovative international digital marketing models is of third importance, the theme of creating a global brand is of fourth priority and importance, the theme of complying with international laws and standards is of fifth importance, and finally, the theme of cooperating with international business partners is of sixth importance. Also, the adaptation and adaptation of the obtained digital marketing model for the internationalization of small and medium-sized dairy companies in Mazandaran province has been assessed as appropriate.

Keywords:

Digital marketing, internationalization, Innovative marketing, International standards, SMEs

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The extensive growth of technology and the increase in people's access to the Internet have paved the way for the transition to digital marketing. Evidence indicates that digital marketing has gradually replaced conventional marketing, meaning that its effects on customers' lives have become more important. This is a reality that current businesses must accept and embrace digital marketing (Rahmani et al., 2023). Industries and companies use digital marketing not only to carry out marketing activities within their borders and geographical areas, but digital marketing is also considered a suitable model for cross-border activities and exports (Zahoor & Lew, 2023).

In recent years, the dairy industry has faced a reduction in the scope of export markets and sinusoidal exports for various reasons, which requires a solution to completely overcome such conditions. The potential capabilities of the country's dairy companies, as well as the existence of potential and diverse markets for exporting dairy products in the Middle East, Asia and Eurasia, provide the conditions for reclaiming past markets and even expanding markets along with improving and increasing continuous and sustainable exports (Dadashi Jokandan et al., 2022).

Now, producers and customers have become more aware of the transparency, health and environmental impacts of product production and service provision activities. Changes in customer and market demands have forced producers to abandon short-term gains and consider long-term development of dairy production, distribution, and sales using digital marketing. It seems that companies active in the dairy industry are also forced to use digital marketing (Ikramov et al., 2021).

The dairy industry is important in the economy of Mazandaran province and its importance is expected to increase in the next few years. Therefore, dairy industry marketing, which takes into account all current technology-based tools and facilities, is very important for growth in international and domestic markets. Despite valuable efforts to develop exports in the dairy sector for easy and correct management, no practical model has been presented so far for developing dairy product exports in this province. Therefore, the main question of the present study is: how to test the digital marketing model for the internationalization of small and medium-sized dairy companies?

Theoretical Framework

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing means achieving marketing goals using the methods and tools of the digital technology world. In this method, all possible capacities and channels available in the digital world are used to deliver information to the customer or consumer. The use of digital tools (to introduce a product, attract customers, build a brand, and sell) is called digital marketing. In other words, the business owner introduces his product to customers through digital marketing tools and tries to increase sales (Diss & Henberry, 2020).

Internationalization of Small and Medium-sized Businesses

A small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) is a business with fewer than a certain number of employees. This limit varies in different countries and economies, but in many societies, including the European Union, it is considered 250 people. Small and medium-sized enterprises have an important place in the literature on organization and management. When talking about such companies, they mostly refer to companies that were formed based on entrepreneurship. Various types of spin-offs, startups, science and technology park

companies, knowledge-based companies, and companies operating in industrial parks fall into this category (Amini & Fatahi, 2018).

Beigloo et al. (2025) studied the provision of an appropriate digital marketing model for Iranian small and medium-sized industries. The research findings indicate 6 dimensions (including: marketing strategy, digital content marketing, appropriate digital tools, customer engagement, visitor conversion, interaction with target customers), 18 components and 54 indicators that determine the digital marketing model in Iranian small and medium-sized industries. The research results show that the dimensions, components and indicators extracted from the meta-synthesis method (research model) were approved by the target community. Also, in the ranking of digital marketing dimensions for small and medium-sized industries, among the 6 dimensions; “Reaching the target customer and interacting with them” and “Customer engagement” are in first place and “Visitor conversion”, “Digital content marketing”, “appropriate digital tools” are in second place and finally “Marketing strategy” is in third place.

Zarei & Mohammad Khani (2024) stated in a study entitled A Model for Improving Digital Marketing Capabilities with Emphasis on Digital Marketing Usage Indicators in Industrial Companies that the convergence of information, media, and communication technologies has changed consumer behavior in terms of searching, obtaining, processing, and responding to company information or services. And the model for improving marketing capabilities has been designed with an emphasis on digital marketing usage indicators in industrial companies.

Research Methodology

The purpose of the present study is to test the digital marketing model for the internationalization of small and medium-sized dairy companies. This research is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of nature and method. The statistical population of the present study includes 289 managers and experts in the dairy industries of Mazandaran province. The Cochran formula was used to determine the sample size, and 165 people were selected as samples using stratified random sampling. The collection tool in the present study includes a researcher-made questionnaire.

Research findings

SPSS and PLS software were used to analyze the findings. According to the results, the main themes include digital marketing content, digital marketing tools, digital advertising, digital sales development, and digital customer relationship management. Among them, the theme of a strong presence in the digital space is of first importance, and the theme of analyzing and understanding international markets is of second importance, the theme of using innovative international digital marketing models is of third importance, the theme of creating a global brand is of fourth priority and importance, the theme of complying with international laws and standards is of fifth importance, and finally, the theme of cooperating with international business partners is of sixth importance. Also, the consistency and fit of the obtained digital marketing model for the internationalization of small and medium-sized dairy companies in Mazandaran province has been assessed as appropriate.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of testing the digital marketing model for the internationalization of small and medium-sized dairy companies. The results of this research are somewhat similar to the results of Beigloo et al. (2025), Zarei & Mohammad khani

(2024), Dalili et al. (2024), Moradi ziba et al. (2023), Jahandideh & Bahramzadeh (2023), Rahmani et al. (2023), Javid et al. (2023), Raja (2023), Jadhav et al. (2023), Thaha et al. (2021), Quirós-Gómez & Arce-Gutiérrez (2020), Pakparvar et al. (2020), Jadhav et al. (2023), Khaerani et al. (2023), Klapkiv et al. (2023), Borhani et al. (2023), Bulegoda & Fernando (2023), Asgarnezhad (2023), and Nouri et al. (2020). Jadhav et al. (2023) stated the various benefits received by SMEs due to digital marketing in different capacities that can help organizations to improve their productivity. The mind map presents the idea of the impact of SMEs on their various functions in rural as well as urban areas.

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

Creation of target market database: Creation of a comprehensive database for information related to the needs, preferences and behavior of customers in target markets.

Precise targeting of digital advertising: Use market information to create targeted advertising campaigns on social networks and search engines.