

Presenting the export market oriented model
On competitive intelligence in the age of digital economy:
A grounded theory study

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Abstract

The current research was conducted with the aim of exploring the direction of the market of exported merchandise based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy among sample exporting companies. In order to carry out the research, a qualitative approach was adopted. The method used in this research is Granded Theory . Sampling was a purposeful judgment and was followed until theoretical saturation was reached, which included a total of 10 exporting sample company managers and experts (15 managers and experts of the companies). The systematic process of the research included open coding, axial coding and selective coding, which was done using the strategies of analysis, questioning, comparison, reminders, schemas and paradigms. A revision was made while coding; The classification was done by confirming the results through reference to the subjects. The findings showed the paradigmatic pattern of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy including 6 main categories of causal conditions, context, phenomenon or central category, intervening conditions, strategies and the consequences. Causal conditions have 3 sub-categories of learning abilities promotion of customer-oriented culture, knowledge of export technology and R&D processes and identification of export market needs; background conditions include three sub-categories of competitive thinking, competitive export processes (technical evaluation) and competitive governance; intervening conditions include three sub-categories of market technical structure (new technologies), environmental uncertainty and global markets (export risks); the central phenomenon has three sub-categories of value chain (reward strategy), human resource empowerment and employee training (export intelligence); The strategies include three sub-categories of competitive value creation, development of export competitiveness and strategic evaluation of resources and competitive agility and strategic entrepreneurship; The results include three sub-categories of developing entrepreneurial activities, competitive advantage and promoting innovation and dynamic export capabilities. With regard to the results, it can be said that in order to successfully implement the model of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy in sample exporting companies, managers of sample exporting companies should create a positive understanding of the export market by by spending more efforts on activities based on market orientation. In addition, they

can present a better image of their services by emphasizing competitive intelligence in order to pay attention to the export system and include a positive association of their name in the minds of international customers.

Keywords: Digital economy, Exports, Marketing, Orientation, Export market, Competitive intelligence.

Introduction

The last decade has been distinguished from the previous decades due to globalization and competition in business, the markets of consumer products, industrial goods and services or resource markets such as capital, materials and technology have been strongly integrated at the global level. (Aligoli and fatemi,2016) Orientation of the export market through the creation of new business and development is necessary for the economic growth processes of countries, and in this way it helps economic growth through the creation and transfer of knowledge, and increasing competition and diversity (Cadogan, 2012). In order to provide security and increase the company's sales volume, the industrial market players are more or less facing increasing competitive pressure and lack of sufficient resources and management commitment in the export markets. Therefore, since international activities are vital for their performance, companies active in the export business face the challenge of designing and implementing export strategies that are targeted as an uncertain environment in rapidly changing markets. (Boikanyo and Etial ,2016) On the other hand, globalization in recent years has required commercial companies to start looking for new opportunities based on competitive intelligence in international markets, along with their domestic and traditional markets. Export managers allow organizations to respond to strategic changes based on competitive intelligence in order to coordinate organizations with the general operating environment and affect their export performance.

On the other hand, companies try different ways to sell their goods and services all over the world and maximize their profits. By exporting, companies can offer their products in foreign markets with minimal involvement in local activities . However, the development of exports and correct entry into the world market, as well as maintaining the conditions and sustainability in it, cannot be achieved except with a specific and stable export strategy. Therefore, considering the necessity and importance of developing export activities, companies need to identify factors affecting their export performance in order to survive and succeed in these activities. The degree of success of a company in exporting can be evaluated by its export performance (Gallego & et al., 2014). It should be said that the success of exporting organizations in the international market is not

accidental. Competition on the one hand and continuous changes on the other hand, make organizations face complex conditions that remind us of the need for a long-term strategy and plan. In this regard, one of the prerequisites for a successful export is a proper long-term strategy and plan, and proper strategic planning and development involves its prerequisites, including the correct export market orientation (Julian & et al., 2014). Export market orientation is defined as a competitive action in the market (Kayabasi & et al., 2016). In this regard, competitive intelligence has become one of the important concepts of management and has become intertwined with the culture of export businesses (Håkansson & Lakke, 2015) providing more competitive advantages. In today's world, with the characteristics of fast growing markets, relying on old information will cause decrease in insight and the organization to lose its future opportunities (Kotler, 2010) Only the organizations with more insight and intelligence or awareness of themselves are most likely to achieve the acme of success and prosperity in business. Information is considered as one of the important items of strategic assets and marketing tools. Gathering and evaluating information about rival companies plays a vital role in formulating strategies. Capacity building for the development of export market orientation on the one hand requires providing the necessary training and skills with a market-oriented approach and the growth of export companies based on the needs of society in all levels, but on the other hand, the development and growth of export businesses requires the recognition and removal of obstacles and the creation of suitable fields for the development of service activities. The institutional framework affects the development of export companies, especially by influencing the effective behavior of foreign companies. The reason needs to be investigated and analyzed (Håkansson & Lakke, 2015). Therefore due to the abundance of information in today's world, collecting as much information as possible is no longer considered; Rather, benefiting from information and turning it into an export market orientation has to guide organizational decisions in order to develop the competitive intelligence of export companies has come to the fore . Since this study explores the direction of the export market from the point of view of the managers, also because the digital marketing strategy and communication between the exporter and other business partners results from competitive intelligence in this field, the importance of examining the export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in It describes the digital economy, one of the important factors influencing the success of exports(Kayabasi & et.al ,2016).

Considering the nature of export companies, the success of these companies is the key to their survival in the competitive market. Export success is expressed by various titles of export performance, etc., which has not been examined in the form of a comprehensive model that is influenced by this typology of export market

orientation based on competitive intelligence in the age of digital economy. Therefore, in order to resolve the existing theoretical gap, the current research aims to provide effective solutions to strengthen and improve competitive intelligence in the digital economy and will answer the following question: what is the proposed model of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy among sample exporting companies?

Literature Review

Export market orientation: Today, the methodology of creative marketing strategies is carried out with export market analyzes based on customer orientation and competitors' activities, but less is used of organizational missions and values that change over time and in a dynamic international environment. In such a situation, the strategy is no longer deploying a series of fixed activities to create added value and profitability of the organization, so the current successful export companies need to follow the goal of the export market orientation strategy beyond the requirements of market changes and paying attention to the customer-oriented process. (Hong & et al., 2014).

Therefore, conditions should be provided so that organizations will be able to create vital values and deliver them to their customers, and business organizations should be able to adapt to changes in the future conditions in terms of values. Therefore, the traditional emphasis on export market orientation helps managers to ensure that the company is aware of the current and future needs of customers and can work to respond to these needs (Pakparvar & et.al , 2020).

Competitive intelligence: Managers usually use objective criteria as reference points for competitive evaluation. Competitive capabilities are defined as the ability to connect organizational assets with each other and expand them in an effective and profitable way. (Ghaffari & et al., 2012). Competitive intelligence is a complex set of knowledge, skills and abilities that are located in all levels of the company's business processes. The key role of competitive capabilities in a company is to try to achieve a competitive advantage and superior export performance. Creating value through competitive service intelligence often requires the company to anticipate future customer needs. In order to provide superior value by the company to the customers, the company needs to anticipate environmental changes to develop strategic performance . However, competitive intelligence represents an additional tool by which companies can help improve their market and business performance, which in turn it can possibly contribute to competitive advantages in today's business environment. Many export companies compete based on services and not based on physical products (Hassani & Mosconi, 2021). In this regard, Pakparvar & et.al (2020) also examined the impact of export marketing capabilities on export performance: modeling the role of

ineffective competition showed that a strong ability to respond to export markets is essential and a high ability to introduce new products in export markets is persistent. They are not useful for sub-Saharan African markets, because export performance outputs depend on the degree of inefficient competition.

Pham & et al. (2017) also investigated the use of dynamic export capabilities for competitive advantage and performance consequences in Chinese export companies. The results showed that the impact of adaptability on competitive advantage decreases under higher competitive conditions. However, for unpredictability, this effect becomes negative.

From the study of theoretical foundations, it can be concluded that the lack of use of exploratory research methods in the field of digital marketing, as well as the use of qualitative research methods such as the use of contextual theory, ethnography, case study, phenomenology, discourse analysis, etc. It was another case that directed the current research. The digital marketing research that has been done so far has usually been done using quantitative methods through data collection with questionnaires to test non-native and foreign theories, and as a result, there is a lack of domestic/indigenous research based on the hypothesis developed in target communities. In relation to the subject of the present research, there was a lack of such a research that expresses positive and negative views side by side regarding the role and function of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the digital age. Therefore, due to the lack of a coherent and practical model regarding the determination of effective factors in the orientation of the export market and competitive intelligence in the age of digital economy, the researchers used the grounded theory qualitative research method, so that with a systematic analysis of data, an inductive theory in a real realm could be reached. Therefore, the need to know the pattern of export market orientation in this field is undeniable. On the other hand, in the current research the presentation of export market orientation model based on competitive intelligence has been evaluated in the relevant literature with a foundational data approach using coding method with a view to filling this gap.

Method

The current research is fundamental in terms of its purpose and qualitative in terms of data collection method. So, grounded theory method is used. has been employed. The research community included experts in the field of digital marketing, and business, as well as, experts in the field of digital marketing and export, and managers of sample exporting companies in Tehran. The sampling method is non-random and the number of samples is not predetermined and the sampling process continues during data analysis until the theory reaches the theoretical saturation stage. The data collection tool was interviews with experts,

specialists, and activists. In this way, by using the interview protocol, interviews were conducted with a sample of automotive industry activists and the necessary information for the research was extracted from the interviews. 15 people were interviewed; Of course, theoretical saturation occurred from the 11th interview onwards, which continued until the 15th interview. The method of data analysis was based on the foundational data approach and drew on coding and categorization. In such a way that in the initial phase of the research, through open interviews with the managers of the sample exporting companies, information is obtained. Also, observing the behavior of experts and activists of sample exporting companies will help the researcher to to have an in-depth understanding. For this purpose, the data, including interviews, documents, notes and audio files, were entered into the software and coded in the beginning. Three stages of open, axial and selective coding were performed on the data. For this purpose, first the data was read line by line and open codes (which are the participants' own words) were extracted. The resulting codes were compared with the previous codes, and the codes that were conceptually similar to each other were placed in the same class, and classes gradually formed. The levels were also compared with each other and merged into each other if needed, or some cases of one level were separated into two or more levels, or the location of the code was changed from one level to another until finally a central level was reached. Then, based on this and after coding and categorization, the conceptual model of the research is drawn.

Findings

The communication process in coding is based on the expansion of one of the classes, such as the one chosen as the central class in the current research, that is, the orientation model of the export market based on competitive intelligence in the sample exporting companies, which originates from causal conditions and affecting the process and strategy leads to the final result. Selective coding also revealed the relationship between classes. However, after conducting scientific interviews with scientific and executive experts in the organization, the pattern of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy emerged in sample exporting companies based on the Foundation's data method. In this model, the categories were placed in the following six groups: causal conditions, context, phenomenon or central category, intervening conditions, strategies and consequences. In the qualitative phase of this research, interview and document collection tools were used to collect information.

Causal conditions

Causal conditions include cases of categories that directly affect the orientation of the export market based on competitive intelligence in the age of digital economy,

or these factors create and develop the phenomenon. In this research, the three categories of learning abilities (promotion of customer-oriented culture), knowledge of export technology and R&D processes, and identifying the needs of the export market are experimental factors, which can create causal conditions for export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy. The categories related to causal conditions are shown in Table 1.

Table (1) causal categories (main, secondary)

Secondary codes	Conceptual codes	The main category	Row
Coherent learning network	Learning abilities (promoting customer-oriented culture) Knowledge of export technology and R&D processes Identifying the needs of the export market	Causal condition	1
Favorable environmental advertising			
Use of social networks			
Optimal learning development			
Long-term activities in knowledge and technology			
Finding potential applications for achievements			
Increasing export competitiveness			
Establishment of research and development units			
Evaluation of competing companies			
Increasing competition in the export market			
Identification of product standards in the target market			
Responding to needs			

Infrastructure conditions

Infrastructure conditions represent a specific set of characteristics related to the phenomenon, which generally refer to the place of events and related events. Contextual features include factors without which the realization of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence is not possible in organizations and provide the context of special conditions in which strategies for administration, control and response to the phenomenon are made. These conditions are made up of a set of concepts, categories and Infrastructure variables (Mohammadi, 2013). In this research, competitive thinking, competitive export processes (technical evaluation) and competitive dominance are the main Infrastructure factors of

export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy, which is shown in Table 2.

Table (2) Infrastructure categories (main, secondary)

Secondary codes	Conceptual codes	The main category	Row
Development of innovative ideas	Competitive thinking		
Technological infrastructure			Infrastructure conditions
Active participation of stakeholders			
Development of competitive standards	Export competitive processes (technical evaluation)		
Attention to external restrictions			
Sharing favorable information with competitors			
Group participation with competitors in the export market			
Assessments of internal strengths and weaknesses			
Using the potentials available in the market	Competitive dominance		
Market share			
Competitive model			

Intervening conditions

In this research, three categories of market technical structure (new technologies), environmental uncertainty and global markets (export risks) are considered as the categories of intervening conditions according to the orientation of the export market based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy as shown in Table 3.

Table (3) intervening categories (main, secondary)

Secondary codes	Conceptual codes	The main category	Row
Manpower capability	Technical structure of the market (new technologies)		
Change in required skills and expertise			
Relationships based on trust			
Strategic vision			
The type of technology that matches the need for new product development		Intervening conditions	3

Economic factors Political factors social factors	Environmental uncertainty		
A lot of changes in the rules	Global markets (export risks)		
Inconsistency of rules			
Currency fluctuation			
Sanctions Lack of support from managers Reduction of interdepartmental cooperation			

Main phenomenon

The phenomenon in question must be central, that is, all other main categories can be related to it and appear repeatedly in the data. In the sense that in all or almost all cases, there are signs that point to that concept. The central phenomenon refers to the idea or phenomenon that is the basis and center of the process to which all other main categories are related. In this research, three categories of value chain (reward strategy), human resources empowerment and employee training (export intelligence) are considered as the central categories of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy, as shown in Table 4.

Table (4) core categories (main, secondary)

Secondary codes	Conceptual codes	The main category	Row
adaptability	Value chain (reward strategy) Empowering human resources	The central category	4
Innovation			
Advancing in a competitive environment			
Diversity in the competitive environment			
Flexibility with competitive advantage			
Development of knowledge capital in the export market			
Export knowledge transfer			
Employee Creativity			
Empowering human resources			
Adequate technical knowledge and knowledge Positioning strategy			

Export entrepreneurship education Educational evaluation Improving the place of education in entrepreneurial activities	Employee training (export intelligence)		
Strategic thinking in domain of export			

Strategies

In this research, three categories of competitive value creation, development of export competitiveness and strategic evaluation of resources and competitive agility and strategic entrepreneurship are considered as strategies based on the core categories of export market orientation according to competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy, as shown in Table 5

Table (5) category of strategies (action/reaction, main, secondary)

Secondary codes	Conceptual codes	The main category	Row
Providing new products and services	Competitive value creation	Strategies	5
Introducing new production methods			
Supplying products to new export markets			
Access to new suppliers of raw materials			
Choosing efficient advertising channels			
Establishment of a customer club			
New organizational structures in the export market	Development of export competitiveness and strategic assessment of resources		
To acquire knowledge Evaluating market changes through intra-company collaboration Flexibility Responding to changes in markets New features and services	Competitive agility and strategic entrepreneurship		

Consequences

According to open coding, the concepts related to the consequences of the model have been extracted, then according to the back and forth movement between themes and concepts, the main categories have been extracted and named, and accordingly, the consequences in three sections related to the development of entrepreneurial activities, competitive advantage and promotion of innovation and dynamic export capabilities are classified as the consequences of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy. Table 6 deals with categories and concepts related to outcomes.

Table (6) consequence category (main, secondary)

Row	The main category	Secondary codes	Conceptual codes
6	Consequence	Development of entrepreneurial activities	risk taking Export integrated marketing Making a distinction Identification of entrepreneurial opportunities
		Competitive Advantage	Consistent competitive measures Improvement of responsiveness International experience
		Promotion of innovation and dynamic export capabilities	Focusing on value-added activities Participation in the global market Management orientation and commitment
			Market orientation

paradigmatic model

The paradigm model of this research was designed based on the paradigm model of Strauss and Corbin. Despite these factors and conditions, the export market orientation model and process based on competitive intelligence in the digital economy era was designed in sample exporting companies in Tehran. Explaining the factors causing this issue has also been the main concern of this research. The research paradigm model is shown in Figure 1.

Causal conditions
Promoting a customer-oriented culture
Processes R&D
Comprehension and internalization
vision

Dimensions of the phenomenon
Reward strategy
Empowering employees
Staff training

Intervening conditions

Technology
Global trade
The structure of the market

Strategies
Strategic entrepreneurship
Evaluation of resource strategy
value creation

Infrastructure conditions
Employee citizenship behavior
Internal communication
Technical evaluation

Consequences

Competitive Advantage
Promote innovation
Development of entrepreneurial activities

Figure 1. Research paradigm model

The paradigm model of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the age of digital economy in sample export companies of Tehran, includes 6 main categories of causal conditions, Infrastructure conditions, phenomenon or central category, intervening conditions, strategies and consequences, as well as 18 sub-categories. The causal conditions have 3 sub-categories of learning abilities (promotion of customer-oriented culture), knowledge of export technology and R&D processes, and identification of export market needs. Background conditions include three sub-categories of competitive thinking, competitive export processes (technical assessment) and competitive dominance. Intervening conditions include three sub-categories of market technical structure (new technologies), environmental uncertainty and global markets (export risks). The central phenomenon refers to the idea or phenomenon that is the basis and center of the process to which all other main categories are related. In this research, the three categories of value chain (reward strategy), human resource empowerment and employee training (export intelligence) are the central categories of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy. Strategies include three sub-categories of competitive value creation, development of export competitiveness and strategic evaluation of resources and competitive agility and strategic entrepreneurship, and outcomes include three sub-categories of development of entrepreneurial activities, competitive advantage and promotion of innovation and dynamic export capabilities.

Discussion and conclusion

The model finally obtained shows that a holistic view and attention to various aspects of the field of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the age of digital economy, taking into account causal, contextual and intervening conditions is necessary. The current research aims to provide a model of export market orientation based on competitive intelligence in the era of digital economy by using the data theory of the foundation. The results of the research include the presentation of causal, contextual, interventional, central category, consequences, and formulation of strategies for the development of marketing

education, which is presented in the form of a paradigm model in accordance with the data theory of the foundation. This model, unlike the identified models, is not limited to the orientation of the export market and it also includes the attitudes along with the strategies of the export field. In addition, the research model does not create a specific limitation for including the types of export market orientation that may be identified in subsequent researches. In this regard, pham & et.al in their research (2017), came to the conclusion that the design of entrepreneurial orientation in the export market has three main consequences: individual, organizational and social. Hassani & Moscani (2021) also showed the effect of export companies mainly strengthening the ecosystem and achieving competitive advantage. In addition, Ghaffari & et al. (2012) showed in their studies that competitive intelligence and its effect on export performance have been the focal point. Managers should try to adapt the services in the context of education to the needs of the day and to the changes, and also by increasing the value creation, they should promote competitive intelligence in relation to the services they provide and the conditions they create to change managers way of thinking.

Managers should provide an environment so that risk-taking becomes common. Creating a risk-taking spirit among the human resources of all departments encourages them to be creative and innovative, and they always try and pursue new opportunities in the market. In line with the development of the export market orientation, the adaptation of export marketing strategies such as the adaptation of export products to the preferences of foreign customers allows an exporter not only to meet the needs of foreign customers, but also to make the exporter create a competitive position in the market. Therefore, instead of focusing on the low cost strategy, managers should lean towards the adaptation strategy. Because many manufacturers in the world have started to reduce their prices. In response to these competitors, dried fruit companies must use an adaptive marketing strategy in order to stabilize their position in the global market. and be able to increase their market share. It is suggested to the managers of export companies that they should strive for the effective allocation of managerial and financial resources because the commitment of organizational resources necessary for the export market encourages and facilitates the development of new and innovative ideas about innovations. It will be products, services or processes that increase the value provided to the customer, and it leads to situational competitive advantages for companies. In addition, in order to emphasize alignment and commitment among export markets, it is strongly recommended to use a customer-oriented approach in these markets. Sample exporting companies are able to respond to the needs and preferences of foreign customers through innovative solutions. It is suggested that the managers of the sample exporting companies take into account the target market to make new products in proportion to the products of their rivals and by

conducting extensive marketing campaigns, try to introduce as many new brand names of their products in the export market as possible.

Considering the application of scientific methods of digital export marketing in exports, it is possible to identify the cultural, economic, political and legal environment of the target markets in order to reduce risk by creating and activating the market research and digital marketing department in the production-export unit in order to provide competitive prices. distribution channels and local distribution channels, identifying competitors and identifying the most effective methods of sales promotion activities, identifying consumers' tastes in the target market and investigating the possibility of changing or modifying the product in accordance with the target markets, also by creating the possibility of long-term investments for marketing and advertising in the form of short-term programs of the export system, increasing government assistance for sending marketing delegations to different markets, increasing specialized marketing conferences and seminars, and inviting business delegations from potential export markets. From the relevant organizations, holding international exhibitions and helping to hold a permanent exhibition of Iranian products abroad from the relevant organization/organizations, creating the necessary facilities from the Trade Development Organization, the Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Mines for advertising in mass media Foreign especially through consulates and export-related bodies, the creation of necessary postal facilities by the government to quickly send samples to foreign markets increased exports.

It is suggested that by expanding the innovation strategy based on the understanding of customer value creation for new products and services, they should finance from domestic and foreign sources, and in this regard, by helping the company's units and taking the initiative in important decisions, export effectiveness increases. It is suggested to the managers of the companies by strengthening the innovative processes and encouraging the participation of employees in group work that they exchange creative and enlightening works in the companies and as a result stimulate the innovative process in the companies to create new knowledge and ideas, share innovative ideas and finally use them. In the value creation process, they should reject the export market and as a result empower the employees. Managers of exemplary export companies in transferring and creating ideas should pay more attention to the design of cooperation mechanisms by encouraging teamwork culture, fostering and promoting cooperative thinking and creating an atmosphere of friendship between employees and try to strengthen it. The more the organizational infrastructure is strengthened, the more effective it will be in strengthening the innovative process in the company and will create, share and use more ideas in order to create value for companies in the export market.

Paying attention to the development and strengthening of the necessary innovation infrastructures such as network communications, document management, databases and information search and retrieval engines, integrating and updating the organization's information systems, facilitating employees' access to knowledge and information related to exports using new information technologies and communication and other cases are among other suggestions that can effectively provide the process of implementing innovative capabilities in the market of materials and as a result, value creation.

In order to develop the information ability in the market in the field of export innovations, company managers should consider the opinions and suggestions of employees and use their greater experience in creating, developing and maintaining regular export effectiveness, and the achievement of higher levels of innovation performance in domestic markets should be considered by them as well.

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