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Designing a digital marketing environment model in global markets

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the topic of digital marketing environment. The research method is applied in terms of purpose, and in terms of data collection, it is a qualitative research based on foundational data theory. Data were collected through the study of documentary sources and semi-structured interviews with 19 managers and experts active in the field of digital marketing, through targeted sampling and snowball using MAXQDA18 software. In the open coding stage, 242 preliminary codes were identified from the analysis of the interviews. In the second step, axial coding was done using the structures of the axial coding model around the investigated phenomenon. Based on the findings of the research, the concept of digital marketing environment was chosen as the central phenomenon. Causal conditions were placed in the form of four categories of innovation, optimal management, structural factors, convenience, and six main categories including business strategies, educational strategies, innovative strategies, planning and monitoring were selected as strategies. Intervening factors were identified in two categories: strengthening and weakening. Cultural factors, infrastructural factors, education, leadership style, strategies were determined as the background factors of the digital marketing environment. Finally, the consequences of the factors affecting the digital marketing environment were determined at three micro, medium and macro levels.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Since the arrival of the Internet in the commercial field and the beginning of the web, there have been tremendous changes in businesses (Virat et al., 2018). Changes in digital technologies have reduced the information asymmetry between customers and businesses. The most important indicator of reducing information asymmetry can be observed in customer's behavior. It is obvious that customer's behavior is changing as a result of access to technology and various tools in mobile and online platforms, and this factor affects the acquisition of quality and price information, the search process and customer expectations; on the other hand, the emergence of digital platforms of entities created through innovation, which facilitates customer-to-customer interactions for thinking in the development of new services/products, has reduced the information asymmetry of businesses. Information asymmetry has caused the emergence of the problem of the ineffectiveness of the traditional theory for businesses active in the business world, especially at the global level. This characteristic has caused the theories and techniques used to analyze strategic components in traditional markets; including environmental analysis, competitor analysis, customer analysis, as well as the analysis of the organization's resources and capabilities, to lose their effectiveness; on one hand, organizations must always be one step ahead of their competitors (Shafa, 2021). Therefore, organizations always try to maintain their competitive advantage; but as mentioned, traditional approaches cannot compete in a market where all the rules governing it have been changed. E-marketing is a nascent knowledge that has been formed and expanded with the emergence and development of the Internet. As a result, developing a model for digital development and evolution in the content of examining the factors affecting the digital marketing environment seems necessary for companies (Namati et al., 2021). Digital marketing is a new, fast-growing field that provides managers with new ways to reach, inform, and engage customers in order to market and sell their products and services. This new marketing approach is very effective and is expected to be at the top of technological developments and the investment priority of senior marketing managers; on the other hand, factors affecting the digital marketing environment can be considered factors that influence the digital marketing environment, and effective steps can be taken towards the success of digital marketing strategies by using these factors (Karimi et al, 2022).

Based on this, the current research is looking for an answer to the question: what is the pattern of factors affecting the digital marketing environment in global markets?

Literature

Digital marketing includes measures to advertise and introduce products and services using digital tools and facilities. This type of marketing is much broader than traditional marketing. Digital marketing is defined as the use of all internet facilities as well as digital technology in order to market the goods and services of companies (Schuler et al., 2014). In fact, this method means that digital marketing relies more on digital media such as mass media and social networks. Taking advantage of social networks, whether it is paid or free, helps digital marketing (Soule et al., 2019). In this type of marketing, the effort is to investigate and analyze the behavior of customers and users by using existing facilities and tools such as e-mail, mass media and the website to be able to obtain the highest level of efficiency and performance of marketing from the audience. The first generation of marketing, which emphasized product-oriented and the second generation was customer-oriented, were upgraded to human-oriented in the third generation. In this generation, human was envisioned to be a mirror of marketing in the creation of products, services and corporate cultures that embrace human values. The most important developments from the 3rd generation of

marketing to the 4th generation are: strengthening the trend of sharing economy, promoting of the current economy, increasing the role of interactions of versatile channels, strengthening content marketing, the high position of social communication management in the world of advanced technology; people have a desire for more physical contact, and are looking for things that are made for them. The role of marketers is to guide customers through their journey from the awareness stage to the final support stage. The alignment of technologies will eventually lead to the convergence between digital marketing and traditional marketing (Kartajaya et al, 2019).

Another factor affecting the performance of companies is the market environment. The three components of the market environment; market turbulence, technology turbulence, and competition intensity, are of special importance for marketing activities (Hatziargrave et al., 2005). Competitive strategies are marketing planning patterns related to the market environment that support choices about how to invest in competing for target customers and achieving desired goals. Competition means that the groups fight with each other to achieve economic opportunities and each tries to outdo the others. Competitive intensity refers to a situation where competition is very intense due to the presence of (large) number of competitors in the market and lack of growth opportunities (Saura et al., 2017).

Some of the most important differences between traditional and digital marketing are: moving from targeting segmentation to confirming the customer community, from positioning and differentiation to clarifying personality traits and brand codes, from the 4 P's of the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) to the 4 C's (joint creation, currency, social activity and conversation), from customer service processes to collaborative customer care. In the early stages of interaction between the company and customers, traditional marketing plays a major role in creating awareness and interest. With the improvement of interactions and the demand of customers for closer relations with the company, the importance of digital marketing increases. The most important role of digital marketing is to stimulate action (purchase attempt) and support. Since digital marketing is more responsive than traditional marketing, its focus is on achieving results, while traditional marketing focuses on initiating and engaging with customers (Kartajaya et al, 2019). On the other hand, while in traditional marketing, the conventional approach is defined by the segmentation and strategic targeting of brand positioning and differentiation, the combination of tactical marketing (product, price, place, promotion) and the sales approach; in digital marketing, communication marketing approach, clarifying personality traits and brand codes, mixing communication marketing (its joint creation, currency, social activity and conversation) and its commercialization are combined with collaborative customer care (Kartajaya et al, 2019).

Research methodology

The research method is qualitative and basic, applicable in terms of its purpose. To collect and analyze the data, the data-based theory research strategy was used. The statistical population of the research includes 19 managers and experts in the field of digital marketing in global markets who were selected through targeted sampling. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview.

Research findings

Open, axial and selective coding was used for data analysis, and MAXQDA18 software was used for coding interviews. The results indicated that the design of the digital marketing environment model in global markets includes 10 dimensions (structural factors, cultural factors, intervening factors, infrastructural factors, education, leadership style, strategies, educational strategies, innovative strategies, planning and monitoring) which were placed in

the paradigm model of research in the form of causal factors, central category, background factors, intervening factors, strategies and consequences.

Conclusion

The current research was conducted with the aim of designing a digital marketing environment model in global markets. The results of this research are in agreement with the findings of researchers such as Buchanan et al, (2018), Saura et al, (2017) Ding et al, (2021), Hosseinzadeh et al, (2022), Buchanan et al, (2018), and Rahimi Kalor et al, (2021). In the context of comparing the results of the research with the achievements of domestic and foreign researches, it can be said that the focus of the research on identifying the factors affecting the digital marketing environment as the most key task of the marketing managers of the organizations has caused comprehensive attention to the digital marketing environment, which in addition to revealing hidden aspects of this importance, it is the reason for aggregating the scattered indicators of different researches in the form of a comprehensive and localized model. This is despite the fact that in none of the researches conducted in the field of digital marketing environment, the factors affecting the digital marketing environment have not been discussed separately, and a general look at the role of digital marketing in the marketing approach has led to a generalization in the field of numerous management activities and tasks.

According to the findings, the following suggestions are provided.

- By conducting a comparative study, the result of this study can be compared with successful and prominent companies in the world and successful examples in the field of marketing.
- Using other validation methods of the dimensions and indicators of the model
- To make a comparative comparison between the companies active in the field of digital marketing inside and outside the country and provide new ways to use the concept of digital marketing in the global market.