



Designing an Electronic Marketing Model Based on Social Networks –Case Study on Sports Equipment Manufacturing Companies

Ziba Mohammad Rezaei¹ , Korosh Veisi^{2*} , Adel Fatemi³ , Samira Aliabadi² , Mohsen Smaeili⁴

¹PhD Student of Sport Management, Department of Physical Education, Sanandaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj, Iran.

²Assistant Professor of Sport Management, Department of Physical Education, Sanandaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj, Iran.

³Assistant Professor of Statistics, Department of Statistics, Sanandaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj, Iran.

⁴Assistant Professor of Sport Management, Department of Physical Education, Research Institute of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Today, due to the potential of networks and social media, marketing has experienced significant growth in them. However, the mechanism by which a sports equipment manufacturing company can engage in this field is uncertain. Therefore, this study aimed to present an electronic marketing model based on social networks in sports equipment manufacturing companies.

Methodology: This research was conducted qualitatively using a structural-functional analysis approach at the strategic level. The participants consisted of experts in sports marketing, media, and sports equipment production, and a snowball sampling method based on theoretical saturation was used to select 18 of them. The data collection tool was a semi-structured interview, and its validity, transferability, reliability, and conformability were examined. The data was analyzed using the coding method.

Findings: We showed the company's marketing model production of sports equipment in the network social functions subject to five main aspects (opportunity, targeting, setting up, monitoring and optimization, and threats), and there are 19 major categories. This result showed electronic marketing based on social networks in the company production of sports equipment is a systemic process. Based on this, it is suggested that the company producing sports equipment is made for optimal use of the opportunity. The existing part of their marketing actions is the fluency of the media in social activities while keeping pace with statistics and content steps that are based on the opinion of experts, monitoring the threats in this area, and as much as possible based on the reasons for the political conditions of the country from the all-round presence on the platform foreigners should be avoided and if possible, in the network internal social activities to operated.

Originality: This study helps to understand how companies producing sports equipment can effectively use social networks for marketing purposes.

Keywords

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CONTACT Korosh Veisi koroshveisi@iausdj.ac.ir

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1. Introduction

At the global level, three significant trends in technological development, socio-economic changes, and geopolitical transformations have led to increased attention to marketing processes in all areas (Fesanghari et al., 2021). The sports industry is not exempt from these trends, and marketing activities in this industry have become challenging (Rust, 2020). Therefore, to remain resilient, it is necessary to review marketing strategies and employ innovative mechanisms to achieve marketing goals (D'Attoma & Ieva, 2020). One of the innovative mechanisms in marketing that has experienced the most growth in the past decades with the advancement of information and communication technology is electronic marketing. It involves utilizing electronic communication channels with customers to disseminate marketing messages (Kamandi & NiyakanLahiji, 2019). At the same time, it is defined as creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with customers through online activities to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products, and services in a way that achieves the goals of both parties (Mohammed, 2004). The history of electronic marketing dates back to the first commercial transaction over computer networks in 1989, and gradually, websites, Netscape, Microsoft browsers, and the internet introduced digital commerce environments (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Electronic marketing encompasses a diverse and extensive range of methods, including content, video, influencer, affiliate, email, social media, SMS, and viral marketing (Bokhare & Metkewar, 2014). Among these, one of the new tools in electronic marketing is social media marketing, which allows organizations and companies to adapt their marketing activities and influence their customers, thereby engaging in online commerce (Nejadfarahani, 2015). Social networks are computer-based technologies that enable the exchange of ideas and opinions, content sharing, and collaboration through digital platforms (Fernández et al., 2022). Furthermore, social media marketing is a type of internet marketing that helps companies achieve their marketing goals by generating and sharing content on social media platforms, and its formation can be traced back to 2003 and 2004 (Trattner & Kappe, 2013).

Based on conducted surveys, it is predicted that worldwide investments in social media marketing platforms will increase to \$563.153 billion. Correspondingly, it has been identified that 90% of marketers worldwide use social media platforms for their marketing activities. In this regard, the United States of America is the largest investor in this field, with over \$14.8 billion in investment (Ali Abbasi et al., 2022). These statistics indicate that social media platforms are currently one of the most common marketing strategies for various businesses (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020; Duff & Segijn, 2019).

In sports, the use of social media has become an essential strategy for coverage and promotion of sports (Piché & Naraine, 2022). The results of a survey indicate that the majority of winners and sports producers either utilize or intend to use social media to increase their revenue, as these media platforms provide them with the best marketing platform and millions of users spend their time on social networks, which represents a potential marketing opportunity (Kapnia, 2022). Nike is a prominent example of these companies, as it has achieved its marketing goals to a great extent by creating various pages on these social networks (Kapnia, 2022).

Since the presence of various businesses, particularly sports-related businesses, on social networks is of great importance in this research, sports equipment manufacturing companies, in particular, need a specialized model for social media marketing. However, the issue is that every business, whether sports-related or non-sports-related, has its unique nature, audience, mission, structure, and specific goals that set it apart. Therefore, it is impossible to use a unified and homogeneous model for their media marketing activities. Another issue is that in previous research, a specific mechanism for social media marketing has not been presented, and it is unclear what specific actions a sports equipment manufacturing company should take for its marketing on its media. What actions should they take? Under what conditions are these actions influenced? And in general, the marketing process on social media is not clear and straightforward.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, social media marketing is not one type of electronic marketing that differs from other electronic marketing methods, so it is impossible to apply a uniform interpretation and understanding to them, nor can a unified guideline be used for their formation or excellence. These issues, along with the fact that some previous research has viewed social media marketing as a direct sales channel, while these media are only tools for advancing marketing goals and not a direct sales channel, have made it difficult for sports equipment manufacturing companies to take advantage of a cohesive and native model for marketing on social media. It has also led to confusion for these companies, as understanding the factors influencing this phenomenon alone cannot guarantee its successful implementation. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive model specific to electronic marketing based on social media in sports equipment manufacturing companies to fill these gaps and enable effective and efficient marketing activities on social networks.

2. Theoretical background

Past research indicates that achieving marketing goals on social networks and achieving the desired marketing strategy based on technology is not a simple task and requires specific requirements and needs. In this regard, [Javani and Nayyeri \(2022\)](#) have shown that sports service brands can influence the value of their brand and consumer response through social media marketing activities, thereby increasing their market share and sales. [Sohrabi et al. \(2023\)](#) demonstrated in a research study titled "strategic business development model of Iran's professional sports" that professional sports in Iran lacks sustainable performance in terms of both financial and sporting aspects due to severe profitability and commercialization weaknesses. [Saberi et al. \(2023\)](#) also reported on a study titled "The sport-for-all development strategies based on social marketing approach" in which they proposed two solutions: employing appropriate reward and punishment systems of the employees and dividing the society into heterogeneous groups". In another study, [Nazari et al. \(2023\)](#) showed that the antecedents of social network marketing include social business drivers, brand experience, and perceived values from branded web advertisements, which have a positive and significant effect on customer business relationships and brand health through customer brand engagement and brand attitude. Also, we showed that the customer's brand engagement and attitude lead

to brand promotion. Making the right decision for clubs regarding social networks is very important. [Fesanghari et al. \(2021\)](#) have demonstrated that market-oriented marketing activities of recreational sports based on a 9-stage technology-oriented approach include market targeting, market research, market analysis, market development, market exploration, market retention, market warming, market expansion, and market guidance. Completing these stages can lead to the benefits of technology-oriented recreational sports development in terms of market exploration and growth, enabling entry into international markets. [Abdoli et al. \(2022\)](#) have also shown that knowledge management customer needs assessment. Customer engagement is a foundational component of an effective social media marketing model that influences strategic marketing and the competitive advantage of a company. They contribute to media effectiveness and customer loyalty. Previously, [Amanati et al. \(2020\)](#) conducted a study on the social media sports marketing model and found that human resources, skilled workforce, training, and volunteers are the most critical factors in the success of sports marketing in social media. The elements of social media power, differences between traditional and new media, inclination towards digital systems, easy access, audience categorization, price, search, print media, and inefficiency of conventional media are essential enabling and limiting factors, and infrastructure and managers' unawareness are the most critical intervening factors. Based on this, the present research proposes strategies for promotion, communication, loyalty, content production, branding, trust building, and public relations.

In this regard, [Alam et al. \(2018\)](#) demonstrated, through their study on the marketing model of social media in premier league football clubs, that the mentioned marketing is influenced by internal conditions (structural factors, nature of football, managerial characteristics, professional factors related to the sports industry, and factors related to social media) and contextual conditions (communication and information technology, cultural and social factors, legal and regulatory factors, economic factors, and factors related to government and policies). Accordingly, it is necessary to utilize strategies of technological actions, structural actions, cultural and social actions, legal actions, economic actions, marketing-related actions, human resources-related actions, actions related to fans, and social media. Additionally, [Pereira et al. \(2022\)](#) discovered through their study on social media marketing in Portuguese football clubs that the structure and content of the posts were based on interaction, user-generated content, online communities, and content marketing. The mentioned research also showed the effectiveness of content-based marketing actions and the selection of the most suitable social network. [Körkkö \(2022\)](#) demonstrated the increasing impact of social media on sports marketing and revealed that social media significantly affects the promotion of sports brands. The mentioned research also indicated that traditional marketing has more integration and credibility than social media marketing, meaning that sports consumers trust traditional marketing more than social media marketing. However, consumers expressed that social media marketing is more interactive than conventional marketing.

Furthermore, [Atker et al. \(2022\)](#) concluded, through analyzing the impact of social media on sports businesses, that sustainable economic value depends on sports companies studying their consumers' habits, researching their competitors, and determining when and where growth in daily activities should occur. In another study, [Kowalski \(2022\)](#)

demonstrated, through a survey of viral marketing in social media, that sports clubs in Poland do not fully utilize the viral marketing potential on social networks, and most communication activities are based on official messages. Additionally, the mentioned study showed that in these clubs, communication management is based on peer criteria and repeating actions that others perform. Finally, [Ong and Leng \(2022\)](#) showed that social media marketing had limited influence on the behavior of sports consumers, especially football spectators, while previous studies have shown that social media marketing has a practical impact on consumer behavior.

In the conclusion drawn from the analysis of the presented literature, it can be said that social media marketing is a crucial determinant in promoting sports and achieving sports marketing objectives. However, there is no consensus on this matter because the study by [Ong and Leng \(2022\)](#) demonstrated contrary findings to previous studies, indicating that social media marketing has a limited influence on sports consumers' behavior. It is also evident that sports marketing on social media requires a model, leading to the proposal of various models for sports marketing on social media. However, it is worth noting that most of the models presented have been developed for non-production sectors of the sports industry, and a model depicting how marketing is conducted on social media for sports production companies has not been designed before. Notably, researchers have primarily focused on influential factors in the described models, and a model illustrating the process of social media-based sports marketing has not been presented.

Furthermore, in the presented models, the use of paradigmatic models of data-based theory has been more prominent, and no structural-functional analysis has been provided for them. Moreover, paradigmatic models themselves come with limitations. Additionally, previous research on sports marketing on social media has mainly been concentrated on a specific platform, with less emphasis on other social platforms. Finally, the current studies have primarily focused on the reactions of sports consumers, with less attention given to marketing methods through sports networks.

3. Methodology

This research was conducted qualitatively using a structural-functional analysis approach at the strategic level. The described method takes a holistic, systemic, and long-term view of phenomena ([Nasiri & Dastoom, 2020](#)). It is based on the Marxist theoretical worldview and utilizes it to study social phenomena that have their functional structure ([Peters, 1954](#)). Structural-functional analysis, also known as functional-structural analysis, is a sociological framework that examines how social networks and systems function to maintain social order and stability. It focuses on understanding the functions and interrelationships of different societal components. This approach was popularized by sociologist Robert K. Merton, who emphasized the importance of functional analysis in understanding social phenomena. The available analysis explains why specific actions occur, continue, or are sustained over time. Concerning social structures, Merton argued that they serve specific functions that contribute to a society's overall stability and functioning. These functions can be manifest (intended and recognized) or latent (unintended or unrecognized) ([Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017](#)).

The target population of this study consisted of experts in sports marketing, media, and sports equipment production. They were selected through snowball sampling, and initially, 15 of them were interviewed based on theoretical saturation. However, to increase the reliability, the number of interviews was increased to 18 cases. A semi-structured interview approach to collecting the data was utilized. The interview questions were divided into demographic questions and questions related to the research topic (such as: "How can sports manufacturing companies market themselves on social media? "What actions should these companies take for marketing on social media? What factors influence the marketing of sports equipment manufacturing companies on social media? Why should sports equipment manufacturing companies use social media for marketing?). Lincoln and Guba (1985) criteria were employed to ensure the research's validity. It was including credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Each of these criteria was examined, and the actions taken in this research to achieve them are discussed. In this study, to establish credibility, the interview transcripts and the extracted codes were sent to the participants for feedback, and their perspectives were incorporated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Additionally, to achieve transferability, all stages of the research were thoroughly documented for potential use by other researchers while providing detailed demographic information about the interviewees. Moreover, assistance was sought from an expert in sports management during the coding process to ensure dependability. Three interviews were randomly selected, and the expert performed the coding after necessary training. Codes that were similar according to both coders were labeled as agreement codes. In contrast, dissimilar codes were labeled as disagreement codes, and the percentage of agreement between the two coders was calculated, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability calculation.

Reliability	Codes of disagreement	Codes of agreement	the total number of codes	Interview no	Row
.888	1	4	9	P3	1
.750	4	6	16	P7	2
.909	1	5	11	P11	3
.803	6	15	36	Total	

To ensure the conformability of the research stages, including data collection, analysis, and formation of themes, the steps taken to facilitate the suitability of the research for the audience and readers were described. Finally, three processes were used for data analysis: open, axial, and theoretical coding.

4. Results

The demographic information of these individuals is reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants in the research.

Work experience	Age	Education	Activity	Row
7	35	Master's degree	Director of Datak Company	1
16	47	Bachelor's degree	Media manager of Iran Legionnaire	2
10	39	PhD	University faculty	3
6	41	PhD	University faculty	4
15	46	PhD	University faculty	5
5	44	PhD	Sports shop Store Manager	6
6	39	Master's degree	Manager of the sports news page Sports news page manager	7
17	41	Master's degree	Marketing Director of Pishtazan Zendgi Asan company	8
6	28	PhD	Owner of the Capital Sports Cooperative store	9
13	39	Master's degree	Makan, two-wheeler sales manager	10
19	47	PhD	University faculty	11
7	38	Bachelor's degree	Shahsavand Market manager	12
3	29	Master's degree	Director of the Karo Vision Trading Company	13
14	41	PhD	University faculty	14
5	27	Master's degree	The owner of the Geisha sports online store	15
6	38	Master's degree	The owner of Rad Sport	16
9	33	Bachelor's degree	Sales Manager of Tolo Sports Iranian Company	17
21	51	PhD	University faculty	18

Based on the results of open coding through the review of conducted interviews, 98 final concepts were identified. After the open coding and concept determination, in the axial coding stage, 19 dimensions were determined under the titles of consumer behavior change, value creation, effective interactions, platform determination, marketing effectiveness, customer understanding, marketing outcomes determination, competitor analysis, tactic and policy determination, financial provision, content production strategy determination, legislation, short term, medium term, long term, severe threat, soft threat, digital environment growth, and social media penetration expansion. Finally, based on the combination of five main perspectives, the dimensions were named goal setting, implementation, monitoring and optimization, threat, and opportunity.

Table 3. Concepts, dimensions, and perspectives of electronic marketing based on social networks in production companies.

landscape	Dimensions	Concepts	Interview code	
Targeting	Change in consumer behavior	Increase consumer loyalty	P6, P7, P18	
		Provide word-of-mouth advertising	P13, P17	
		Gaining consumer trust	P3, 10, P8, P9, P17	
		Increasing consumer satisfaction	P5, P16, P2	
	Value creation	Effective interactions	Get more value	P8
			Improve brand credibility	P15, P12, P13
			Increase brand awareness	P9, P11, P16
			Creating a personality for the brand	P7, P9
			Market leadership and thought leadership	P9
			Approaching the customer	P5, P9

landscape	Dimensions	Concepts	Interview code
	Effectiveness of marketing actions	Establishing deep, long-term, and two-way relationships with audiences	P9
		Keeping customers	P1
		Get audience and follower's information	P1, P2
		Analyzing competitors and learning from them	P1, P9, P14, P13
		Generating quality leads	P1, P0
		More sales	P1, P9, P16, P18
		Brand audience growth	P7, P11, P12, P14
		Reduce marketing costs	P3, P4, P9, P11
		Increasing the effectiveness of content	P7, P11, P12, P15
	Platform determination	Increasing the effectiveness of marketing processes	P9, P14
		Facebook	P6, P9, P17
		Instagram	P4, P6, P9, P16
	Determination of marketing achievements	Twitter	P4, P5, P16
		LinkedIn	P10, P12, P13
		Special and unique measurable	P1, P4, P12, P16
		realistic	P4, P3, P7, P9
	Customer Recognition	On-Time	P1, P11, P14, P12
		accessible	P10, P15
Age		P10, P17	
Job		P1, P2, P5	
Analysis of competitors	Income	P14	
	Habits and motivations	P1, P8, P11, P13	
	issues and problems	P10, P15, P17, P18	
	Favorites	P10	
	Preparing a list of competitors	P2, P5, P6, P10, P13, P14, P16	
Setting up launch	Identifying close competitors	P2, P3, P8, P11	
	Modeling successful competitors	P10, P14, P15	
	Analysis of competitors' production content strategy	P10	
	Analysis of competitors' service type	P10, P15, P17	
	Evaluating all types of social media	P10, P15	
	Choosing the suitable social media	P10	
	Determining primary and secondary social media	P2, P5, P6	
	Adopting the best practice for each platform	P2, P3, P8, P11	
	Consider video content	P10, P14, P15	
	Continuity in producing and publishing content, especially video content	P10	
Determination of content production strategy	Determine the type of content	P10, P15, P17	
	Show attractive aspects of business	P3, P11, P15	
	Use of statistics, figures, and infographics	P1, P3, P7, P11, P12, P13, P14, P16	
	Coverage of business news	P10	
Financing	Attention to the time of posting content	P10, P11	
	Content Monitoring	P10	
	Provide appropriate content	P3, P9	
	Add the annual cost of the project	P4	
	Fit between the adjusted budget and tactics and strategy	P1, P2, P5	
	Cost concentration for the most productive sectors	P2, P6, P9	

landscape	Dimensions	Concepts	Interview code
Monitoring and optimization	Legislation	Determination of roles	P2, P4, P9, P11, P12, P13
		Determine the timetable	P1, P2
		Division of tasks, orderly and purposeful	P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P9, P11, P15
		Set a daily and weekly schedule	P3, P5, P6, P9, P11
	Short term	Responding to comments and questions	P5
		Asking questions to followers	P1, P8, P10, P11, P15, P18
		Observing brand behaviors online and reacting to them	P9, P11
		Discover and check keywords	P1, P5, P9
		Check posts and content produced by competitors	P9
		Following news and topics related to work	P9, P10
		Checking trending hashtags	P5, P9, P11, P13, P14
		Preparation of calendar and posting schedule for the coming week	P14, P15, P17
		Coordination with other team goals and future activities	P3, P4, P9, P16, P18
		Identifying the best posts of competitors	P9
		Follow the results of advertising campaigns in execution	P9, P13
		Medium-term	Collecting monthly statistics
	Strategy analysis Competitors' social networks		P1, P5, P9, P14
	Compare your performance with competitors		P2, P4
	Identifying the successes of the past month and integrating them into the social media strategy		P2, P4, P8, P9, P11, P14, P15
	Research upcoming events and news		P1, P4, P6, P9, P11, P17
Ensuring brand proof in various social networks	P1, P2		
Reviewing and evaluating key performance indicators in the last three months	P9, P11, P13, P14, P15		
Set goals for the next three months	P13, P14, P16, P17		
Long term	Definition of key performance indicators for the next three months	P8, P9, P13, P14, P16	
	Target audience analysis	P5, P15, P17, P18	
	Blocking access to the social network by the owner of the network	P4, P6, P9	
	Blocking access to social networks by governments	P4, P14, P12	
Threat	Hard threat	Hacking social networks	P13, P14, P16
		Setting up fake and similar pages	P11, P13, P15
		Time-consuming activities in social networks	P2, P3, P4
	Soft threat	Extensive changes in the possibility of using social networks	P4, P9, P11, P13, P16, P17
		Ethical considerations	P1, P2, P3
		Attracting different strata of society, even negative and destructive people	P3, P4

landscape	Dimensions	Concepts	Interview code
Opportunity	Growth of the digital environment	Disorder and crowding	P4, P9, P11, P13, P15, P17
		It is difficult to measure the rate of return on investment accurately	P3
		The spread of smartphones	P3
		The growth of advertising demand in social networks	P1, P2, P4
		Growing demand for digital services	P1, P10
	Expansion of influence of social networks	Increasing social networks	P3
		Influence of social media on society	P5, P6, P7, P9, P13, P16
		The membership of many people in social networks	P12, P15, P16
		Epidemic use of social networks around the world	P9, P13, P14, P17

The following conceptual model for social media-based electronic marketing in sports equipment manufacturing companies was developed based on expert interviews.

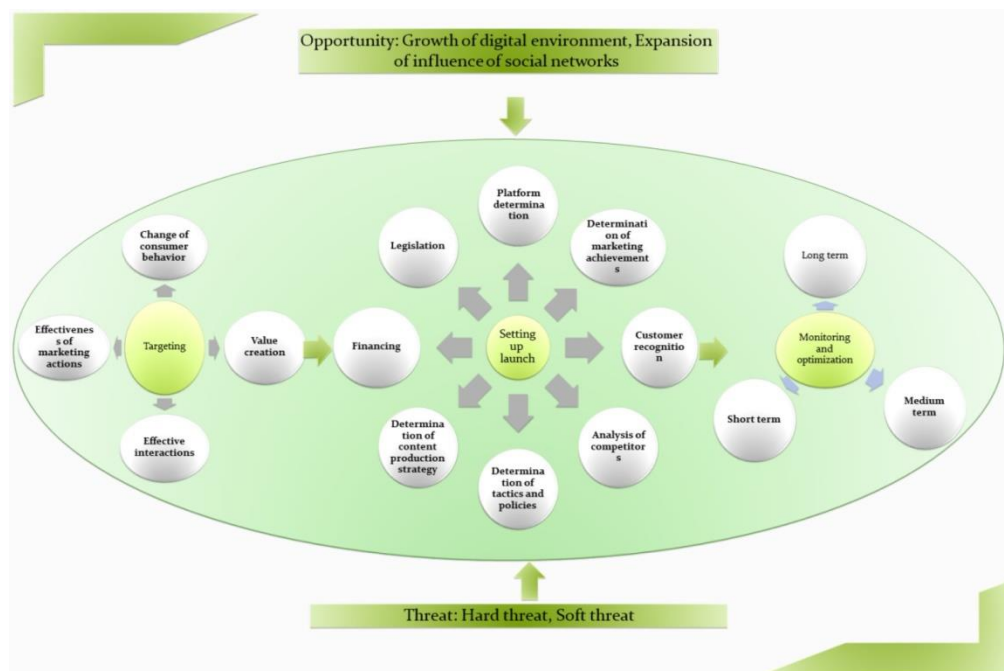


Figure 1. The conceptual model of social media-based electronic marketing in sports equipment manufacturing companies.

According to the mentioned model, social media marketing in sports equipment manufacturing companies comprises five main perspectives. The first perspective, called the "Opportunity Perspective," is created by combining the dimensions of digital environment growth and expanding social networks' penetration. In this perspective, sports equipment manufacturing companies adapt and transition from traditional

marketing to electronic marketing, explicitly marketing through social media, to align with the appropriate conditions and achieve their marketing goals. In this situation, the companies need first to establish "targeting." Targeting in this context refers to why and for what reasons they choose to market on social media. Based on experts' opinions, these companies pursue marketing through social media for four main objectives: behavior change of consumers, value creation, effectiveness of actions, and effective interactions on social media. It is worth noting that there is no specific priority or sequence among these objectives, and a company can simultaneously pursue all four goals or focus on one or multiple purposes at a given time.

After the targeting phase, sports equipment manufacturing companies must take "Launch Perspective" actions. The actions in this perspective involve determining the platform, identifying marketing achievements, understanding customers, analyzing competitors, setting tactics and strategies, determining content production strategy, securing financial resources, and legislating. The notable characteristic of launch perspective actions is that, unlike the targeting phase, there is a policy of precedence and sequence. This is because until these companies determine their platform, meaning which social network (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter) they intend to market on, they cannot define their achievements or gain the necessary understanding of their customers and competitors. Additionally, tactics and strategies for content production may vary across different platforms, and financial resourcing and legislation may differ. However, it is essential to consider all these actions simultaneously.

By the fourth perspective, the mentioned companies need to monitor and optimize their performance and actions after launching. To do so, they should regularly monitor daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly. Notably, the "Monitoring and Optimization Perspective" is one of the essential perspectives of the social media marketing model. Without proper monitoring, ensuring goal achievement or addressing deficiencies and weaknesses is impossible.

Finally, in this framework, sports equipment manufacturing companies must be aware that conducting marketing activities on social media, particularly in Iran, faces challenges and threats. Neglecting these challenges can lead to the failure of marketing initiatives and pose risks to the company's survival if all its marketing activities rely on social networks. These threats can be examined at two levels: soft and complicated. Complicated hazards include government-imposed access restrictions to social networks, while soft threats refer to extensive changes in the usability of social networks and disorder and congestion.

5. Managerial implications

The study aimed to design an electronic marketing model based on social networks in sports equipment manufacturing companies. The data analysis showed that manufacturing companies tend towards marketing in social media according to the leading and, at the same time, relevant opportunities. Marketing in social media is an innovative mechanism; at the same time, they can influence consumers through it. Consumers who want to receive digital services due to the expansion of smartphones and the increase of social networks are, at the same time, more exposed to advertisements on social networks.

On the other hand, by increasing its penetration rate in society, expanding the number of its users, and spreading it worldwide, social media emit this signal that the influence of social networks has increased and the way to marketing success goes through their channel. This finding is consistent with the interpretation of [Chatterjee and Kar \(2020\)](#); [Duff and Segijn \(2019\)](#). They stated that social media is currently one of the most common marketing strategies, and on the other hand, the study's findings also confirm ([Ali Abbasi et al., 2022](#)).

The data analysis also showed that targeting is the first step of electronic marketing based on social networks in sports equipment manufacturing companies. Targeting can be followed from the four dimensions of consumer behavior change, value creation, effectiveness of actions, and effective interactions. This finding is consistent with the results of studies by [Abdoli et al. \(2022\)](#), who envisioned gaining a competitive advantage for social media marketing, and [Körkkö \(2022\)](#) because they mentioned promoting sports brands. On the other hand, this finding is inconsistent with the results of the study of [Ong and Leng \(2022\)](#) because the realization above showed that it is impossible to change the behavior of sports consumers. There can be several reasons for this inconsistency. The first thing is that in the mentioned study, the marketing measures in social media were not evaluated independently. The viral marketing policy was emphasized, while no specific marketing strategy was considered in the current research. The other thing is that in the mentioned research, the effect was evaluated based on the football spectators.

In contrast, in the current research, the unit of study is sports equipment manufacturing companies, and at the same time, what has been proposed is at the level of theory and whether it has an effect. Or not because the model has not been tested. It is unrecognizable. Also, the data analysis showed that after the completion of targeting, it is necessary for sports equipment manufacturing companies to enter the "launch scene." The actions of this perspective are a combination of determining the platform, defining the marketing achievements, knowing the customer, analyzing the competitors, choosing the tactics and policy, determining the content production strategy, financing, and legislation. This finding is in line with [Abdoli et al. \(2022\)](#); [Alam et al. \(2018\)](#); [Amanati et al. \(2020\)](#); [Fesanghari et al. \(2021\)](#) because they had previously proposed some measures of the launch landscape. As mentioned, the first step in the launch scenario is to determine the platform. This action was recognized as one of the first actions because the sports equipment manufacturing companies need to determine which of the social networking platforms is more suitable for their business in the first place. It is worth mentioning that Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn platforms currently have the most users. Still, the nature of their performance is not equal, so they cannot be used with a single strategy for a specific purpose. For example, Facebook is the largest social network in the world, and its users see various content published by businesses active on the Internet every day.

However, due to the filtering of this platform, the role of this media is weak in Iran, but we can still have some expectations from it. In contrast to Instagram, which mainly focuses on visual content, it is considered an essential and critical platform for introducing more and better internet businesses. Especially since several tens of millions of Iranians are on this social network. However, this social network is now also accompanied by a filter. The second major category of the launch perspective categories is the determination

of marketing achievements by manufacturing companies. What achievement means is the specific goals that must be completed to reach the main goals. It is worth noting that the mentioned achievements specify how sports equipment manufacturing companies get from point A (unfavorable conditions, un-estimated goals) to point B (successfully met goals). Therefore, the described achievements should be specific, unique, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. The third major category of the launching landscape category was called customer recognition. This action was recognized as critical in social media marketing because knowing customers' personalities and characteristics helps sports equipment manufacturing companies reach their desired goals at the right time and place. If the companies mentioned above know their target community's age, occupation, income, interests, issues and problems, obstacles, habits, and motivation, it will be elementary to target them in social media.

Moreover, if the mentioned companies know their customers well, they can advertise according to their wishes and needs. As a result, more efficiency will be expected with less spending, and competitor analysis is another step in the start-up landscape. Competitor analysis was recognized as a start-up action, and it was determined that sports equipment manufacturing companies should implement it because the mentioned companies should be aware of the activities of their competitors by marketing on social media. This helps them to understand what strategy has worked better in the market, and at the same time, they identify successful methods and tactics. For this purpose, the production mentioned above companies must prepare a list of their competitors and monitor and analyze their production content strategy by checking which social media they use. It is worth noting that this calculation helps sports equipment manufacturing companies get a general picture of their competitors' behavior. Based on these criteria, they can monitor and measure the status of their actions in the market.

The fifth action of the launch landscape was called determining tactics and policies. From this point of view, the mentioned category is essential, and many companies in social media marketing are active on all social media, regardless of choosing the best and most appropriate option. As a result, the companies mentioned above must determine which media is more suitable for them by using the information they get from their customers. In this way, they do not waste their time and capital in the wrong place. It is worth noting that the chosen tactic for each social media, in addition to the most appropriate method for each platform, depends on the goals and achievements of the company. For example, if the company's goal is to remove competitors and the primary social media of the company in its social media marketing strategy is Instagram, one of the effective tactics that the said companies can use is investing in Instagram marketing or influencer marketing, which draws attention attracts a lot to them, it was also found that determining the strategy of content production in social media marketing of sports equipment manufacturing companies is an essential step because social media and content have a close relationship with each other. So, without appropriate content, social media marketing will be impossible and meaningless; without social media, no one will know the company's range.

As a result, the mentioned companies must use both to achieve their goals and visions. It is worth noting that the type of content, the time of posting content, and the number of

published content are three fundamental components for any successful marketing strategy in social media. Based on the analysis, funding is also one of the actions of the start-up landscape, and the manufacturing companies above need to pay attention to the tactics chosen to achieve their goals and achievements to finance their social media marketing. For this purpose, they need to think of a comprehensive list of the tools they need and the costs of the advertising work they need to do. It is worth noting that the last step was called the launching of legislation. This measure was considered the final step because a platform for legislation is not provided until the pre-legislative measures are taken. In the legislation of sports equipment manufacturing companies, it is necessary to divide the duties and establish rules to avoid confusion and disruption. In addition, the legislation provides the possibility of monitoring marketing actions. However, the monitoring and surveying of activities is not under it but should be considered as a separate perspective.

Adapting from what has been said, the fourth perspective of social media marketing of sports equipment manufacturing companies is called "monitoring and optimization," which is both the last operational step of marketing and the step in which the previous measures of monitoring and evaluation are carried out. It is worth mentioning that the actions of this perspective are summarized in four dimensions or significant categories of daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly monitoring and optimization. This finding is somewhat consistent with the results of [Atker et al. \(2022\)](#) previously, by analyzing the impact of social media on sports businesses, they concluded that sustainable economic value depends on the fact that specific sports companies. It is consistent with when and where growth should occur in daily activities. The important point in connection with the significant categories of monitoring and optimization is that in carrying out the operations of this perspective, the mentioned manufacturing companies should move from part to whole. It means that first, they should do daily monitoring and optimization, and by putting daily information together, they should do weekly monitoring. In this way, the process of actions, both in the short and long term, is better defined, and it is easier to see whether the operation was negative or positive over time.

It is worth mentioning that monitoring and optimization is the end of the marketing process of sports equipment manufacturing companies in social networks. However, as mentioned earlier, it is essential to note that the companies do not operate in a vacuum. At the same time, social media marketing comes with its challenges and problems. As a result, you cannot invest in social media marketing, allocate time, and consider appropriate tactics but ignore possible threats. An issue that, if not paid attention to and a reasoned and consistent policy is not considered, will lead to the collapse of marketing measures. At the same time, it will also endanger the company's life.

Moreover, with the filtering of Instagram and WhatsApp social networks in Iran, this problem has happened to many companies and caused many losses. It is worth mentioning that two major categories of threats are considered in this research. The first threat is called the challenging threat, through which the network owner or government blocks access to the social network. The most common issue in Iran is that companies do their marketing actions in such a situation. The second and last type of threat is called soft threat, whose characteristic feature is that marketing activity in social networks is superior to marketing

in the time environment. At the same time, extensive changes in the possibility of using social networks make these networks complex.

6. Conclusion

Adapting from what was stated, it was found that electronic marketing based on social networks in sports equipment manufacturing companies is a systemic process. On this basis, it is suggested that the sports equipment manufacturing companies use the available opportunities to use social media as part of their marketing activities. While observing the calculated steps, which are based on the opinion of experts, the threats facing this field monitor and, as much as possible, due to the country's political conditions, avoid all-round presence on foreign platforms and, if possible, work on domestic social networks. It is worth mentioning that this research was accompanied by limitations that must be considered in interpreting the findings. The first limitation is that in this research, the role of stakeholders, policies, and strategic plans of the country that can be effective in marketing in social media was not discussed because examples for them were not raised in the interviews. Another limitation is that in this research, a conceptual model created on how to market in social media for sports equipment manufacturing companies was presented, and the accelerators and inhibitors of marketing in the mentioned media were not addressed. Based on this, future researchers are suggested to study the role of stakeholders and macro and micro policies in social media marketing and to investigate the accelerators and inhibitors of sports equipment manufacturing companies' marketing in the media. What are the social issues, and how can excellence be achieved in this field?

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طراحی مدل بازاریابی الکترونیکی مبتنی بر شبکه‌های اجتماعی - مورد مطالعه شرکت‌های تولیدی تجهیزات ورزشی

زیبا محمد رضایی^۱، کوروش ویسی^{۲*}، عادل فاطمی^۳، سمیرا علی آبادی^۴، محسن اسماعیلی^۴

^۱ دانشجوی دکتری مدیریت ورزشی، گروه تربیت بدنی، واحد سنندج، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، سنندج، ایران.
^۲ استادیار گروه مدیریت ورزشی، گروه تربیت بدنی، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، واحد سنندج، سنندج، ایران.
^۳ استادیار گروه آمار، واحد سنندج، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، سنندج، ایران.
^۴ استادیار مدیریت ورزشی، گروه تربیت بدنی، پژوهشکده تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، تهران، ایران.

چکیده

هدف: امروزه به دلیل ظرفیت بالقوه شبکه‌ها و رسانه‌های اجتماعی بازاریابی در آن‌ها رشد روزافزونی را سپری می‌کند با این حال سازوکار اینکه یک شرکت تولیدی تجهیزات ورزشی چگونه می‌تواند در این زمینه به فعالیت بپردازد نامشخص است. از این رو هدف مطالعه حاضر ارائه مدل بازاریابی الکترونیکی مبتنی بر شبکه‌های اجتماعی در شرکت‌های تولیدی تجهیزات ورزشی بود.

روش: این پژوهش به صورت کیفی با رویکرد تحلیل ساختاری- کارکردی در سطح راهبردی انجام شده است. مشارکت‌کنندگان آن را صاحب‌نظران حوزه بازاریابی ورزش، رسانه و تولیدات تجهیزات ورزشی تشکیل دادند که به روش گلوله‌برفی و مبتنی بر اشباع نظری ۱۸ نفر از آن‌ها انتخاب شدند. ابزار گردآوری اطلاعات مصاحبه نیمه‌ساختاریافته بود و ممیزی آن برحسب اعتبار، انتقال، قابلیت اعتماد و تأییدپذیری بررسی شد. جهت تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها از روش کدگذاری استفاده شد.

یافته‌ها: یافته‌های این تحقیق نشان داد مدل بازاریابی شرکت‌های تولیدی تجهیزات ورزشی در شبکه‌های اجتماعی تابع پنج منظر اصلی (فرصت، هدف‌گذاری، راه‌اندازی، پایش و بهینه‌سازی و تهدید) و ۲۰ مقوله عمده است. این نتیجه نشان داد بازاریابی الکترونیکی مبتنی بر شبکه‌های اجتماعی در شرکت‌های تولیدی تجهیزات ورزشی تابع یک فرایند سیستمی است. بر این اساس پیشنهاد می‌شود شرکت تولیدکننده تجهیزات ورزشی جهت استفاده بهینه از فرصت ایجاد شود. بخش موجود از اقدامات بازاریابی آنها، روانی رسانه‌ها در فعالیت‌های اجتماعی ضمن همگامی با آمار و گام‌های محتوایی مبتنی بر نظر کارشناسان، رصد تهدیدات موجود در این حوزه و تا حد امکان بر اساس دلایل باید از شرایط سیاسی کشور از حضور همه جانبه بر سکوی خارجی‌ها پرهیز کرد و در صورت امکان در شبکه فعالیت‌های اجتماعی داخلی را به انجام رساند.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: این مطالعه به درک این موضوع کمک می‌کند که چگونه شرکت‌های تولیدکننده تجهیزات ورزشی می‌توانند به طور موثر از شبکه‌های اجتماعی برای اهداف بازاریابی استفاده کنند.

کلیدواژه

بازاریابی الکترونیکی
بازاریابی دیجیتال
شرکت‌های تولیدی
عصر دیجیتال
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