



**Impact of Marketing Capabilities, Situational Advantage, and Competitive Performance on Export Performance  
(Role of Ambidexterity Innovation)  
(Case study: Dairy Exporters in Iran)**

Ardavan Ahmadpour<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Master of International Business Management, Faculty of Management, Khatam University, Tehran, Iran.

**\*Corresponding Author**

**E-mail: ardavanahmadpour@yahoo.com**

**ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of marketing capabilities on export performance with the mediating role of competitive strategy and situational advantage. The statistical population of this study includes the managers of large dairy exporting companies in the whole country. According to the statistics, there are 128 dairy export companies in the country. They are managers. The target managers in this research are senior managers and decision-makers related to export affairs as well as managers of the export department in these companies. This research is applied in terms of purpose type and descriptive-survey in terms of nature. Also, in order to analyze the data and test the research hypotheses, SPSS and PLS software were used. The results of testing the hypotheses confirm all the hypotheses of the research and showed that marketing capabilities have a positive effect on export performance by mediating the competitive strategy of the dairy industry. Marketing capabilities have a positive effect on export performance by mediating the positional advantage of the dairy industry. Marketing capabilities have a positive effect on export performance by mediating the dual-power innovation of the dairy industry. Marketing capabilities have a positive effect on competitive strategy with the role of moderator of dual-power innovation in the dairy industry. Marketing capabilities have a positive effect on position advantage with the role of moderator of dual-power innovation in the dairy industry. Marketing capabilities have a positive effect on the competitive strategy of the dairy industry. Marketing capabilities have a positive effect on dual power innovation. Marketing capabilities have a positive effect on situational advantage. Competitive strategies (marketing) have a positive effect on export performance. Dual power innovation has a positive effect on export performance. Situational advantage has a positive effect on export performance.

**Keywords:** Marketing Capabilities, Export Performance, Situational Advantage, Competitive Strategy, Dual Potential Innovation

**INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, the detection and exploitation of market opportunities are not limited to countries' domestic markets. Due to globalization and the intensification of various communication tools, companies have realized the importance of international markets. Nonetheless, in developing societies, due to many underdevelopment, domestic markets have not been accurately identified by marketers, and basically, the lack of understanding and meeting the needs of domestic customers can be an obstacle to entering international markets (Hughes, 2010: 4; Noepasandasil et al., 2015: 97).

Currently, companies are trying to use the potential of marketing capabilities to capture target markets as much as possible (Morgan et al., 2009: 912). Marketing capabilities designate the specific abilities of a company in identifying target markets, developing strategies and marketing mixes, and creating and maintaining relationships with loyal customers (Nekouizadeh, Golmohammadi, 2015: 74). The atmosphere of competition between companies focuses on the use of capabilities, and competitive marketing strategies along with various advertising tools, has increased. Theoretical and experimental research on marketing capabilities generally indicates a positive relationship between marketing capabilities and company performance, as well as the formulation of suitable marketing strategies. Marketing capabilities are the ability to influence the discovery of local and international markets and formulate appropriate marketing strategies. Meanwhile, as much as the company can provide innovation in the production of products and services, the marketing capabilities operate with great strength and scope (Nekouizadeh, Golmohammadi, 2015: 74). If marketing capabilities in the export field of a company are considered as a competitive advantage compared to other competitors, it is predictable that the export performance of that company will also improve (Murray et al., 2011: 254).

Nowadays, one of the most advanced food industries in the world is the dairy industry, which is developing at an increasing speed. A huge part of this effort is spent on producing new products with varied formulations. Hundreds of products in different parts of the dairy industry are being produced. Despite the abundance of raw materials and active workforce in Iran, no significant efforts have been made to grow and develop dairy products. So, the need to create research centers to work in this field is very vital. Cheese is one of the dairy products that today more than 500 different types are being produced in different countries of the world, which is the reason for this diversity due to the existence of many diets, different tastes, and the diversity of consumers and the different nutritional value of each product. Regrettably, in Iran, only the production of traditional cheese has been considered, which in some cases does not meet the minimum standard due to the unfavorable conditions of the environment and existing facilities, and there is a need to provide suitable formulations and methods according to the type of milk with the existing facilities and conditions. Creating diversity in dairy products can lead to a better response to this industry's current problems. Iranian dairy companies continue their export process based on the patterns of the past years and have not had a redesign in their export pattern. The result is that the market development and product variety have not changed much, and the export strategies have not been redesigned due to changing conditions.

Consequently, conducting this research is necessary from two aspects; First, the correct formulation of appropriate marketing strategies in industries such as dairy can attract more customers and improve the company's performance. Second, the gap in past research shows that, usually, previous research has considered the effects of marketing strategies on the organization's performance without considering marketing capabilities and situational advantage, and the current research fills this gap. Based on this, this research investigates the impact of marketing capabilities on export performance with the mediating role of competitive strategy and situational advantage.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

#### **A) Export performance**



Export performance depends on the degree of success in sales, marketing, customer satisfaction, and export volume of companies (Martin et al., 2016; Revti et al., 2018). Export performance is usually measured using a single index approach, and export sales, growth, revenue, and intensity are the most common indicators. Though, there is ample evidence that export performance is considered a multidimensional construct and should not be measured by a single index. Performance in international markets is related to managers' satisfaction with economic results, and new knowledge in the market is obtained from international activities, which reflects the market and empowerment goals (Revti, 2018: 273). There are numerous components of export strategy factors in management literature. One of these factors, called marketing strategy, includes the marketing mix, which includes the product, price, distribution, and promotion. The relationship between the exporter and other business partners can effectively improve the company's export performance (Bayat Gheyasi et al., 2017: 19). Partnership strategies are an effective way to develop export knowledge and strengthen resources. Product adaptation strategy is another factor of export strategy that refers to the adaptation of the product to the customer's culture and is based on the customer's needs, which leads to the improvement of the company's export performance. Another aspect of the export strategy is the choice of variation versus geographic concentration. Export market concentration is achieved by focusing marketing efforts on a limited number of core markets and gradually expanding into new markets over time. At the same time, diversity in the export market as the rapid entry of many markets and allocation of marketing efforts among different markets have been introduced (Amjadi Bigvand and Senobar, 2017: 39).

### **B) Competitive marketing strategy**

Suitable allocation and coordination of marketing activities and resources to achieve operational goals in terms of market and product are called competitive marketing strategies (Martin et al., 2016; Hughes, 2010; Heodosiou et al., 2012). Competitive strategies are a tool for the organization to respond to competitive situations, and existing frameworks in this field facilitate the effective performance of the organization by establishing a relationship between the strategic parts of the organization and external factors. Strategy can help to create and develop skills and knowledge in the organization, focus on customer needs, and facilitate the process of acquiring information and activity in a dynamic market environment (Shafei 6, 2012: 84).

The critical issue in marketing strategy is determining the specific target markets for a particular family or product. Then companies gain a competitive advantage by designing and implementing a marketing mix program based on the needs and desires of the potential target market, and customers and integration are on their agenda (Wantao et al., 2018: 161). There are four competitive marketing strategies. A Focus marketing strategy seeks to satisfy the needs of small groups of customers by offering specific products or services. This strategy is successful when part of the industry is large enough to grow. Since only one organization can provide different products and services at the lowest cost of competing organizations' products and services, other organizations must find other ways to differentiate their products and services in the relevant industry (Hadadian et al., 2013: 23).

Differentiation marketing strategy focuses on providing and producing a unique product or service. In this strategy, the company tries to charge customers a higher price than usual by offering unique products (Oderiah et al., 2019: 1422). The product-market strategy determines



the organization's approach in choosing the market to provide products and services. This organization uses market and product strategies to implement the competitive strategy.

### **C) Competitive situational advantage**

The extent to which market positions are used to provide and produce and supply unique products that produce an advantage is called competitive situational advantage (Martin et al., 2016; Wantao et al., 2018). Situational advantages are created from the characteristics and assets of the company; the factors that create such advantages are usually resident and based on the ownership of resources and assets or based on availability (Felzensztein and Gimmon, 2014: 568). On the other hand, dynamic competitive advantage is the basis of the efficiency and effectiveness of companies in the market. This advantage makes companies perform their business activities more efficiently and effectively than competitors, based on the organization's knowledge.

Hey and Williamson (1994) consider the competitive position advantage to be the recognition of capabilities and market position that makes the company superior to its competitors. In other words, competitive advantage is the unique position of an institution or business compared to competitors, which is developed through the resource development model (Akbarzadeh, 2013: 29). In this context, competitive advantage consists of things that one company or enterprise can do that other company cannot, which in turn leads to higher demand or lower costs for that company.

### **D) Ambidexterity Innovation**

Ambidexterity innovation is the simultaneous management of gradual and radical innovation (Martin et al., 2016; Revti et al., 2018). Researchers such as Lean- Chein (2008) and Liao (2007), regarding the effect of knowledge management on organizational innovation, state that knowledge is very important as the main source of organizational innovation and productivity. The main goal of knowledge management is to create and organize an environment in which people develop their knowledge, exchange it with each other, combine the knowledge of others with their knowledge and finally apply it. The use of knowledge, in turn, leads to innovation in the organization, which is why knowledge management is often recognized as the main source and reference of innovation and is one of the basic needs of the innovation process in the organization (Liao et al., 2007: 342).

Innovation is essentially a knowledge-based process and is the product and result of intellectual capital, and it can be said that organizations with a favorable level of intellectual capital are also more innovative. The reason is that in such organizations, due to the existence of intellectual capital and the use of knowledge, learning also occurs more often, leading to problem-solving, providing innovative and non-imitable solutions for doing things, and innovation in general (Lean-Chein, 2008, 273). Experts believe that transformational leadership increases organizational innovation and tends to organizational innovation. These leaders use the motivational drive critical for organizational innovation (Khan et al., 2009: 679). The findings of Khan's research showed that organizational structure is a factor that affects innovation in the organization.

### **E) Marketing capability**

A set of resources and capabilities in the marketing field, which includes human resources, social capital, equipment, etc., is called marketing capability (Martin et al., 2016; Nopasand Asil et al.,



2015). Strengthening marketing capabilities can create and accelerate cash flow and reduce shareholder cash flow risks. Leo and Danto (2006) studied marketing communication capabilities as a marketing efficiency ratio (i.e., distribution, printing, advertising, and sales promotion costs). Muller and Antilla (1987) divided marketing capabilities into internal and external capabilities. External marketing capabilities are related to the organization's ability to do a complete and comprehensive analysis of the characteristics of the organization's macro environment through monitoring, analyzing and fully understanding these features. On the other hand, internal marketing capabilities include strategic management, functional integration, and marketing and operational management (Murray et al., 2011: 253).

If a company's marketing capabilities are seen as a competitive advantage over other competitors, then a large gap is created in evaluating the company and its competitor. A company can develop its marketing capabilities by combining its employees' skills and knowledge with available resources. A company that spends more resources on customer interaction can increase its ability to meet market needs (Mu and Di Benedetto, 2013: 5).

### **Research background**

Gregory et al. (2019) conducted research entitled “Developing e-commerce marketing capabilities and efficiencies for enhanced performance in business-to-business export ventures.” The results revealed that specialized e-commerce marketing capabilities directly increase the company's distribution and communication efficiency, leading to increased export investment market performance.

Farshadi et al. (2018) did research entitled “The effect of export marketing capability on export performance considering the moderating role of inefficient competition - Case study of Tehran exporting companies.” The results indicated that market responsiveness and export product innovation have a positive and meaningful effect on export performance. Furthermore, ineffective competition negatively moderates the effect of market responsiveness and export product innovation on export performance.

Sheibani (2018) conducted research entitled “The Impact of Marketing Capabilities and Research and Development Capabilities on SME Innovation Performance Case Study: Shiraz Industrial Town.” The results designated that there is a relationship between marketing and research and development capabilities in the innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the industrial town in Fars province; in other words, entrepreneurial enterprises use three marketing mix elements (person, price and product) in their marketing decisions.

Lajevardian and Naghdi (2018) did research entitled “Investigating the Impact of Organizational Innovation on Export Performance Mediated by Radical Innovation and Incremental Innovation Variables (Case Study: Iran-Khodro Group).” The results revealed that organizational innovation affects export performance by mediating the variables of radical and incremental innovation.

Norouzi et al. (2018) conducted research entitled “The effect of marketing capabilities in the field of export and innovation on the dimensions of export performance by inefficient competition moderation (Case study: handicraft and art companies).” It showed that the ability to innovate in handicraft products and the use of marketing capabilities and marketing principles have a positive effect on export performance, as well as on the dimensions of export



performance and the variable of ineffective competition as a moderator between marketing capability and export performance.

Sartipi and Masoom (2017) did research entitled “The Impact of Marketing Capabilities on the Export Performance of Iranian Companies Exporting Sports Equipment.” The results indicated that marketing capabilities have a positive and significant effect on competitive strategies and situational advantages, and competitive strategies have a positive and significant effect on situational advantages and export performance. The results also confirmed the effect of situational advantage on export performance.

Boso et al. (2019) conducted research entitled “The effect of export marketing capabilities on export performance: Moderating role of dysfunctional competition.” The results showed that market responsiveness of export performance is driven by product innovation capability. The combined effect of both capabilities on export performance is weakened by a high level of inefficient competition in the export market environment. These findings suggest that greater ability to meet export market needs and greater competence to introduce new products in export markets and sub-Saharan African markets are not beneficial, as the resulting export performance depends on the degree of ineffective competition.

Gregory et al. (2019) did research entitled “Developing e-commerce marketing capabilities and efficiencies for enhanced performance in business-to-business export ventures.” The results showed that specialized e-commerce marketing capabilities directly increase the company's distribution and communication efficiency, leading to increased export investment market performance.

Tartaglione and Formisano (2018) conducted research entitled “A Dynamic View of Marketing Capabilities for SMEs' Export Performance.” The results indicated that a company lacking international development resources could improve its export performance by adapting, integrating, creating, and rebuilding existing internal and external marketing capabilities for international markets.

Thi Song et al. (2017), in their research entitled “The influence of relational capability and marketing capabilities on the export performance of emerging market firms,” showed that marketing capabilities positively affect export performance. Relational capabilities have a positive effect on export performance. Lastly, marketing capabilities positively affect export performance with the role of relational capabilities.

Martin et al. (2016) conducted research entitled “Marketing capabilities, positional advantage, and performance of born global firms: Contingent effect of ambidextrous innovation.” They concluded that marketing capabilities positively affect obtaining a situational advantage. Marketing capabilities have a positive impact on performance. Marketing capabilities positively affect the acquisition of situational advantage with the moderating role of ambidextrous innovation. Marketing capabilities positively affect performance with an ambidextrous moderating role of innovation.

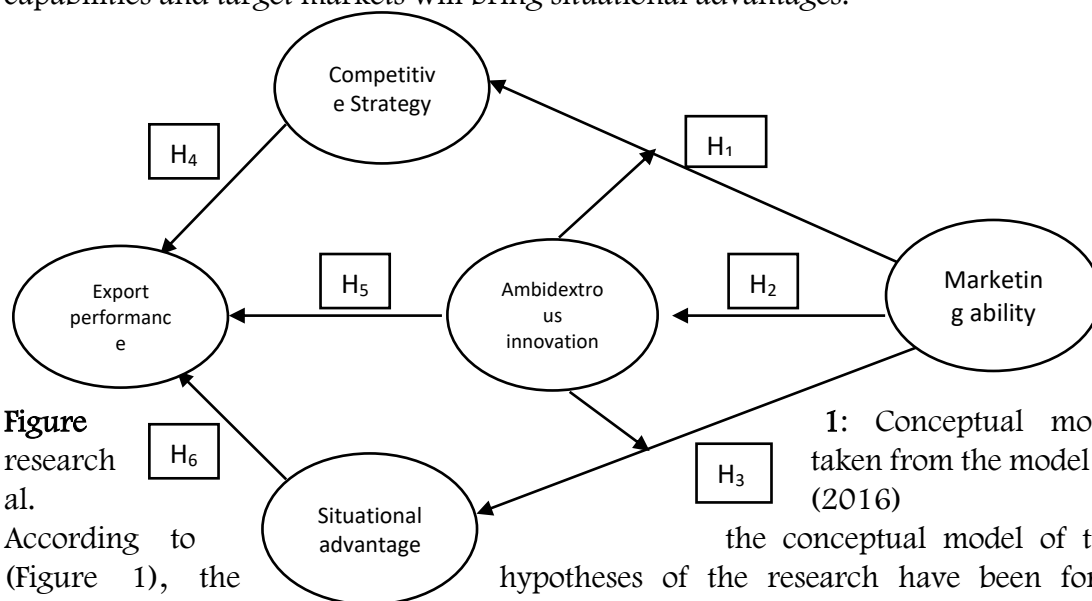
Regarding the review of the research background, the current research innovation is that, so far, no internal research has been conducted that has investigated the impact of marketing capabilities on competitive strategy and situational advantage with the moderating role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries in Iran.

**Conceptual model of research**



The conceptual model of the current research is derived from the model of Martin et al. (2016). Based on this model, marketing capability directly impacts competitive marketing strategy, innovation and situational advantage. Also, competitive marketing strategy, innovation and situational advantage affect export performance. In explaining the theoretical model and framework, it should be mentioned that creating, acquiring and strengthening marketing and relational capabilities is a means for the organization to respond to competitive situations, and existing frameworks in this field will facilitate the effective performance of the organization by establishing a relationship between organizational strategic departments and external factors. Aker states that if marketing capabilities are correctly recognized and redefined, appropriate marketing strategies will be formulated. This interaction between marketing capabilities and strategies and the communication between companies can have a competitive situational advantage in different situations, at least in marketing.

Nonetheless, the problem here is that the company must be able to reach a set of relational capabilities in this field. For example, it must gain other companies' trust and increase cooperation and flexibility in developing its products, services and goods. Nowadays, organizations that can use marketing and relationship capabilities to gain a competitive advantage and develop appropriate marketing strategies will be able to present new products to the market. However, some companies go beyond this, and they acquire a type of market knowledge based on communication, cooperation and advertising, and such market knowledge can transform the development of their products and services. The synergy of marketing capabilities and competitive marketing strategies of the company leads to sustainable competitive advantages, and such competitive advantages are created in situations where the company's advertising and communication with other companies are done correctly. This awareness and correct understanding of the market, people's tastes and communication with other companies can create a situational advantage in different situations based on understanding the market's needs and customers' tastes. Consequently, developing marketing strategies based on marketing capabilities and target markets will bring situational advantages.



**Figure**  
research  
al.  
According to  
(Figure 1), the  
follows:

***Main hypotheses***

**1:** Conceptual model of the taken from the model of Martin et (2016)  
the conceptual model of the research hypotheses of the research have been formulated as

1. Marketing capabilities affect export performance with the mediating role of the competitive strategy of dairy industries.
2. Marketing capabilities affect export performance with the mediating role of situational advantage of dairy industries.
3. Marketing capabilities affect export performance with the mediating role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries.
4. Marketing capabilities affect the competitive strategy with the moderating role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries.
5. Marketing capabilities affect situational advantage with the moderating role of ambidextrous innovation in the dairy industry.

#### ***Sub-hypotheses***

1. Marketing capabilities affect the competitive strategy of dairy industries.
2. Marketing capabilities affect ambidextrous innovation.
3. Marketing capabilities affect situational advantage.
4. Competitive strategies (marketing) affect export performance.
5. Ambidextrous innovation affects export performance.
6. Situational advantage affects export performance.

#### **Method**

The current research is applied in terms of its purpose and descriptive survey in terms of its method. The statistical population of this research includes the managers of large dairy exporting companies in the whole country. Based on the collected statistics, there are 128 dairy exporting companies in the country. The statistical population includes 384 managers using the simple random sampling method and according to the sampling formula of Cochran's unlimited population. The standard questionnaire of Martin et al. (2016) was used to collect information. The questionnaire in the research consists of two parts. The first part consists of questions that collect the respondents' general and demographic information. The second part includes specialized questions. This part of the questionnaire contains the main questions, which have a total of 20 questions to measure the variables of this research, which are scored based on the Likert scale from 5 (completely agree) to 1 (completely disagree). The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, and its composite reliability and validity were confirmed by convergent and divergent validity methods, the results of which are shown in Table 1. The obtained data were analyzed using SPSS and PLS software.

#### **Research findings**

##### **Descriptive findings**

Descriptive statistical findings revealed that 54% of the respondents, equal to 209 people, were women, and 46% (175) were men. The age of the respondents shows that the respondents in the age range of 25-35 years have the highest number with 24% (n=91), while the respondents under 24 years old with 14% (n=53) have the lowest number. The age group of 36-46 years and more than 58 years old are each with 21% and 82 people, and the age group of 47-57 years is 20% and 78 people. 42% (n=162) of the respondents had master's degree, and 38% (n=146) participants had bachelor's degrees. Holders of an associate degree with 16% and 61 people are in the third place; doctorates with 4% and 15 people are ranked fourth.

##### **Inferential findings**



Smart PLS software was used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses regarding the type of research, the sample size and the non-normality of the distribution of the questionnaire indicators.

### Validation of measurement models

Several criteria are used to check the structural model's fit; the first and most basic criterion is the significance coefficient Z or t-value. The value of the coefficients must be greater than 1.96 to confirm their significance at the 95% confidence level. Based on the value measurement model (t-statistic), all cases are greater than the critical value of 1.96, which shows the significance of the relationships between the variables at the 95% confidence level.

In the current research, the measurement model for the existing variables has been considered, and their fit has been examined separately using confirmatory factor analysis. The confirmation of each of the hypotheses has an interpretation and a meaning, and the results of the research hypothesis test will be stated in the following. Figure 2 is the model test in the standard coefficient estimation mode, and Figure 3 is the model test in the significant coefficient estimation mode, which are the following and are the basis of the hypothesis analysis:

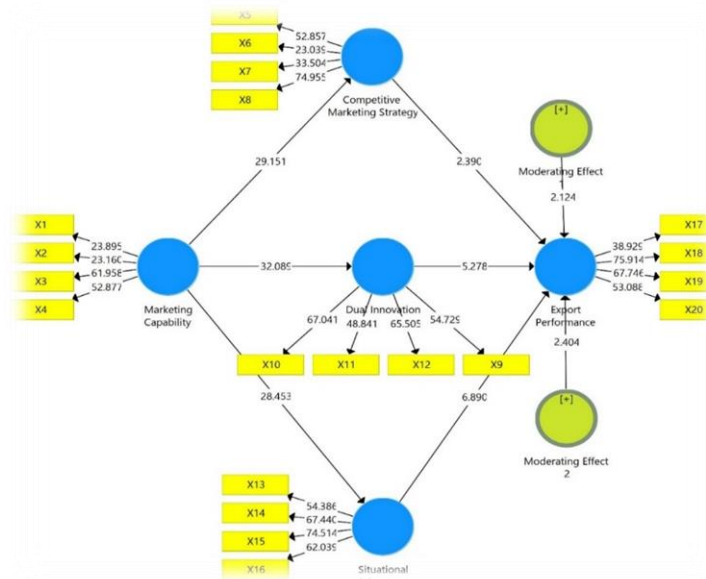


Figure 2: Model test in the mode of estimating significant coefficients

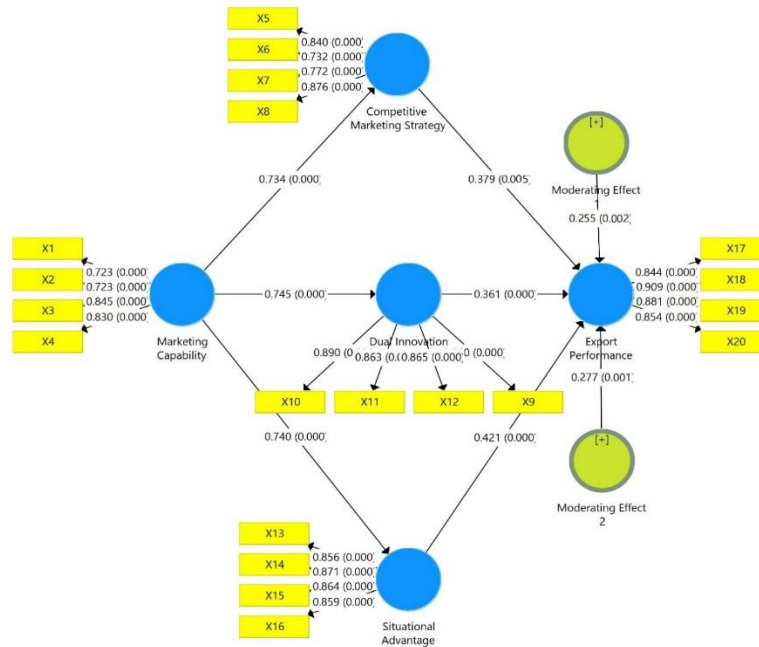


Figure 3: Model test in standard coefficient estimation mode

### Convergent validity

One of the convergent validity indicators is the average variance extracted index. The average variance extracted is a measure of convergence among a set of observed items of a construct. This average extracted variance should be higher than 0.5 to confirm the convergent validity. As seen in Table 1, the value of this variable for the model constructs with an average value of the explained variance is higher than 0.5 and shows the confirmation of convergent validity in the model.

Furthermore, two composite reliability indexes and Cronbach's alpha were used to check the reliability of the research variables. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha should be 0.7 or higher, which indicates sufficient internal convergence. Internal consistency is the reliability that uses both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Both indicators examine internal consistency. For all research variables, Cronbach's alpha value and composite reliability are greater than 0.7, which indicates the reliability of the measurement tool.

Table 1: Checking the convergent validity of the model

Variable name	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	AVE
Competitive marketing strategy	0.821	0.843	0.881	0.651
Ambidextrous innovation	0.892	0.893	0.925	0.756
Export performance	0.895	0.896	0.927	0.761

Marketing capability	0.789	0.810	0.862	0.612
Situational advantage	0.885	0.886	0.921	0.743

### Discriminant validity

The prerequisite to confirming the discriminant validity is that the value of the square root of the average explained variance is greater than all the correlation coefficients of the relevant variable with the rest of the variables. The results of the index can be seen in Table 2. For example, the square root of the average explained variance for the competitive marketing strategy capability variable is (80.7%), which is higher than the correlation value of this variable with other variables. As it is clear in the table, the value of the square root of the average explained variance index for all variables is higher than the correlation of that variable with other variables.

**Table 2:** Correlation coefficients and discriminant validity index

Variable name	Competitive marketing strategy	Ambidextrous innovation	Export performance	Marketing capability	Situational advantage
Competitive marketing strategy	0.807				
Ambidextrous innovation	0.781	0.870			
Export performance	0.662	0.753	0.873		
Marketing capability	0.734	0.745	0.689	0.782	
Situational advantage	0.706	0.786	0.757	0.740	0.862



### Structural equations (answer to research hypotheses)

The results of confirming or rejecting the hypotheses and the data obtained from the structural equations are summarized in Table 3. To determine the intensity of the indirect effect of the mediator variable, a statistic called VAF has been used, which has a value between zero and one, and the closer this value is to one, the stronger the effect of the mediator variable. This value measures the ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect. The value of VAF is calculated from the following formula, and its results are shown in Table 3.

$$VAF = \frac{a * b}{(a * b) + c} =$$

**Table 3:** Test of research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Direction	Standard coefficient	VAF	p-value	Z	Result
------------	-----------	----------------------	-----	---------	---	--------

<b>First main</b>	Marketing capabilities affect export performance, mediating role in the competitive strategy of dairy industries.	0.258	0.250	0.000	4.758	Accept
<b>Second main</b>	Marketing capabilities affect export performance with the mediating role of positional advantage of dairy industries.	0.311	0.300	0.000	5.105	Accept
<b>Third principle</b>	Marketing capabilities affect export performance with the mediating role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries.	0.269	0.250	0.000	6.509	Accept
<b>Fourth main</b>	Marketing capabilities affect the competitive strategy with the moderating role of ambidextrous innovation in the dairy industry.	0.255	0.215	0.002	2.124	Accept
<b>Fifth principle</b>	Marketing capabilities affect positional advantage, moderating the role of dual innovation in dairy industries.	0.277	0.235	0.001	2.404	Accept
<b>First sub</b>	Marketing capabilities have an impact on the competitive strategy of dairy industries.	0.734	0.725	0.000	29.151	Accept
<b>Second sub</b>	Marketing capabilities have an impact on bilateral innovation.	0.745	0.722	0.000	32.058	Accept
<b>Third sub</b>	Marketing capabilities affect positional advantage.	0.740	0.718	0.000	28.453	Accept
<b>Fourth subsection</b>	Competitive strategies (marketing) affect export performance.	0.379	0.360	0.002	2.390	Accept
<b>Fifth sub</b>	Bilateral innovation affects export performance.	0.361	0.350	0.000	5.278	Accept
<b>Sixth subsection</b>	Positional advantage affects export performance.	0.421	0.400	0.000	6.890	Accept

The first main hypothesis is that marketing capabilities affect export performance with a mediating role in the competitive strategy of dairy industries.

The significance level obtained for the first main path is favorable and greater than +1.96 (t-value=4.758) and the path coefficient was also positive ( $\beta=0.258$ ). Consequently, the first main hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, marketing capabilities positively affect export performance with a mediating role in the competitive strategy of dairy industries. This means

that by increasing the marketing capabilities, the export performance will increase with the mediating role of the competitive strategy of the dairy industry.

The second main hypothesis is that marketing capabilities affect export performance with the mediating role of the situational advantage of dairy industries.

The significance level obtained for the second main path is favorable and greater than +1.96 ( $t$ -value=5.105) and the path coefficient was also positive ( $\beta=0.311$ ). So, the second main hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, marketing capabilities positively affect export performance with the mediating role of situational advantage of dairy industries. This means that by increasing the marketing capabilities, the export performance with the mediating role of the situational advantage of the dairy industry is increased.

The third main hypothesis is that marketing capabilities affect export performance with the mediating role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries.

The significance level obtained for the third main path is favorable and greater than +1.96 ( $t$ -value=6.509) and the path coefficient was also positive ( $\beta=0.269$ ). Consequently, the third main hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, marketing capabilities positively affect export performance by mediating ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries. This means that by increasing the marketing capabilities, the export performance will increase with the mediating role of ambidextrous innovation in the dairy industry.

The fourth main hypothesis is that marketing capabilities affect competitive strategy, moderating the role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries.

The significance level attained for the fourth main path is favorable and greater than +1.96 ( $t$ -value=2.124) and the path coefficient was also positive ( $\beta=0.255$ ). Then, the fourth hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, marketing capabilities positively affect the competitive strategy with the moderating role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries. This means that by increasing the marketing capabilities, and the competitive strategy, the role of the moderator of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries is increased.

The fifth main hypothesis is that marketing capabilities affect situational advantage with a moderating role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries.

The significance level obtained for the fifth main path is favorable and greater than +1.96 ( $t$ -value=2.404) and the path coefficient was also positive ( $\beta=0.277$ ). Consequently, the fifth main hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, marketing capabilities positively affect situational advantage with the moderating role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries. This means that increasing the marketing capabilities increases the advantage of the situation with the role of the moderator of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The dairy industry in Iran has faced a shortage of equipment since the beginning of the revolution, and there have not been many important innovations in the export of these products, and most of the previous procedures have not attracted new customers and have not increased in diversity. Hoffman believes that if export companies can cooperate with other companies, a set of resources that the market cannot provide will be provided through corporate cooperation. According to Zhao and Zhou (2018), exploiting market opportunities can better identify customers' needs. The main objective of this research is to investigate the impact of marketing capabilities on export performance with the mediating role of competitive strategy and



situational advantage. The test of the first main hypothesis of the research showed that marketing capabilities positively affect export performance with the mediating role of the competitive strategy of dairy industries. This finding is consistent with the findings of Farshadi et al. (2018), Azour et al. (2017), Zamanizadeh and Salvati (2017), Bayat Gheyasi et al. (2017), Taisong et al. (2017), Martin et al. (2016), Nalkaji and Yaqji (2014). In explanation, it should be said that marketing capabilities can bring new areas of market share to companies and improve performance; usually, the choice of strategy is also influential.

The results revealed that marketing capabilities positively affect export performance with the mediating role of situational advantage of dairy industries. This finding is consistent with the findings of Zamanizadeh and Salvati (2017), Bayat Gheyasi et al. (2017), Thi Song et al. (2017) and Martin et al. (2016). Companies that can gain competitive advantages from market opportunities have the best performance. Therefore, they use marketing capabilities for this purpose. Similarly, marketing capabilities positively affect export performance by mediating ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries. This finding is in line with the findings of Thi Song et al. (2017), Martin et al. (2016) and Nalkaji and Yaqji (2014). When the market and society need innovation, companies are successful and provide innovations that fit customers' needs. Marketing capabilities positively impact identifying market needs with customer feedback and facilitating innovation.

On the other hand, marketing capabilities positively affect competitive strategy with the role of ambidextrous innovation in dairy industries. This finding is consistent with the findings of Sartipi and Masoom (2017), Gregory et al. (2019) and Martin et al. (2016). When innovation turns from idea to action, companies increasingly emphasize the correct formulation of competitive strategies, especially aggressive ones. The results revealed that the marketing capabilities positively affect the situational advantage with the moderating role of ambidextrous innovation in the dairy industry. This finding is consistent with Sartipi and Masoom (2017) and Martin et al. (2016). The situation advantage requires the recognition of market opportunities and innovation. In companies where opportunities are correctly recognized, innovation is created.

Regarding the available findings from the research, recommendations are made to improve the performance:

- It is recommended that companies exporting dairy products participate in foreign exhibitions or at least participate and cooperate with other companies by sending representatives from Iranian companies for discussion and cooperation
- Companies should have a more proper and deeper analysis of their position and competitors to take advantage of the market's situational advantages by offering unique products.
- Companies should harmonize as much as possible with the realities of the destination market to attain the anticipated operational goals.
- Companies should pay more attention to existing situational advantages to perform better in sales, marketing and other export fields.
- It is recommended that companies improve their export performance by coordinating resources and measuring the quality of more products.



- Companies should improve their export performance by researching and learning the innovations that the company's regional competitors have achieved or by cooperating with regional companies.
- The joint use of radical, incremental innovation and marketing capabilities to offer unique products can increase companies' situational advantages.
- It is recommended that companies make more use of elite human resources, equipment and innovations to produce products that suit their regional customers' needs and provide innovative ideas for export by setting up and using a website or social networks.

## References

- Akbarzadeh, Ali (2013), Analysis of the Effect of Innovation Capability on Entrepreneurship with Sustainable Competitive Advantage Approach in Small and Medium Industries Kaveh Industrial Town Business Management Quarterly, No. 23, Fall 2014. (In Persian).
- Allen, R. and Helms, M., (2008). Linking strategic practices and organizational performance to Porter's generic strategies. *Business Process Management*, 12 (4), pp.433-54.
- Amjadi Bigvand, Shima and Nasser Sanobar (2018). The mediating role of export commitment in promoting the export activities of Iranian companies, Second International Conference on Management and Business, Tabriz, Management Department of Tabriz University.
- Arezu, Hussein; Mehdi Vaghari; Safoura Shojaei and Raheel Ghodrati (2015), The Impact of Marketing Capabilities on Export Performance Using a Source-Based Perspective, Sixth National Conference on New Studies and Research in Humanities, Management and Entrepreneurship, Iran, Tehran Association for Development and Promotion of Basic Sciences and Technologies. (In Persian).
- Bayat Ghiasi, Seyed Hossein; Reza Talaei Nik and Kiomars Kiani (2018). Marketing capabilities, its effect on export performance, with the mediating variable of competitive strategy, competitive advantage, the variable of innovation moderator; Case Study; Majid Food Industries, National Conference on New Approaches in Management, Economics and Accounting, Tehran, Khorram Dareh Higher Education Institute. (In Persian).
- Boso Nathaniel, Ogechi Adeola, and Albert Danso, Shahin Assadinia (2019). The effect of export marketing capabilities on export performance: Moderating role of dysfunctional competition. *Industrial Marketing Management*. Volume 78, Pages 137-145.
- César, Camisón & Beatriz, Forés. (2008). "Knowledge absorptive capacity: New insights for its conceptualization and measurement", *Journal of Business Research*.
- Farshadi, Sajjad; Navid Boroumand and Karim Rasouli (2011), The effect of export marketing capability on export performance considering the moderating role of inefficient competition - Case study of Tehran exporting companies, Second International



Conference on New Research Strategies in Management, Accounting and Economics, Tehran, Arvin Alborz Conference Company. (In Persian).

- Felzensztein, C., & Gimmon, E. (2014). Competitive advantage in global markets: The case of the salmon industry in Chile. *European Business Review*, 26(6), 568–587.
- Gregory Gary D., Liem Viet Ngo, Munib Karavdic (2019). Developing e-commerce marketing capabilities and efficiencies for enhanced performance in business-to-business export ventures. *Industrial Marketing Management*. Volume 78, Pages 146-157.
- Hadadian, Alireza; Manzami Borhani, Massoud; Rahimi, Ibrahim; Shaban, Omid (2014). Investigating the effect of focus and differentiation strategies on performance by considering the mediating role of marketing capabilities and technology capabilities. First International Conference on Economics, Management, Accounting and Social Sciences. Rasht 31 June 2014. (In Persian).
- Heodosiou, M., Kehagias, J., & Katsikea, E. (2012). Strategic orientations, marketing capabilities and firm performance: An empirical investigation in the context of frontline managers in service organizations. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41(7), 1058–1070.
- Hughes, M., Martin, S. L., Morgan, R. E., & Robson, M. J. (2010). Realizing productmarket advantage in high-technology international new ventures: The mediating role of ambidextrous innovation. *Journal of International Marketing*, 18(4), 1–21
- Jieke, H, Yun, J., Thai, J., Rhee, K (2016). The impact of export marketing on the performance of small and medium-sized companies exporting chips. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*. 31(3): 365-380.
- Kenny, Breda and Reedy, Eileen. (2006). "The Impact of Organizational Culture Factors on Innovation Levels in SMEs: An Empirical Investigation", *The Irish Journal of Management*, pp.119-42.
- Khan, Rabia. Rehman, Abaid Ur. and Fatima, Afsheen. (2009). "Transformational leadership and organizational innovation: Moderated by organizational size", *African Journal of Business Management*, Vol.3, No.11, pp.678-684.
- Lajevardian, Seyedeh Saad and Yazdan Naqdi (2019). Investigating the Impact of Organizational Innovation on Export Performance Mediated by Radical Innovation and Incremental Innovation Variables (Case Study: Iran-Khodro Group), Fifth International Conference on Accounting, Management and Business Innovation, Tehran, Permanent Secretariat of the Conference. (In Persian).
- Liao S. H., Fei W. N., Chen C. C. (2007). "Knowledge Sharing, Absorptive Capacity and Innovation Capability", *Journal of Information Science*, Vol.33, No.3, pp.340-356.
- Lin, C., Wu, Y.-J., Chang, C., Wang, W., & Lee, C.-Y. (2012). "The alliance innovation performance of R & D alliances- the absorptive capacity perspective", *Technovation*, Vol.32, pp.282 ~ 292.
- Martin, Silvia L., Javalgi, Rajshekhar G., Cavusgil, Erin (2016). Marketing capabilities, positional advantage, and performance of born global firms: Contingent effect of



ambidextrous innovation. International Business Review.<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2016.11.006>.

- Morgan, N. A., Vorhies, D. W., & Mason, C. H. (2009). Market orientation, marketing capabilities, and firm performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 30(8), 909–920.
- Mu, J. & Di Benedetto, C.A. (2012). Networking capability and new product development. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, 59(1): 4–19.
- Murray, J. Y., GAO, G. Y., & Kotabe, M. (2011). Market orientation and performance of export ventures: The process through marketing capabilities and competitive advantages. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(2), 252–269.
- Nalcaci Gul and Mehmet I.Yagci (2014).The Effects of Marketing Capabilities on Export Performance Using Resource-based View: Assessment on Manufacturing Companies. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Volume 148, Pages 671-679.
- Nan, h (2017). The effect of marketing capabilities on performance outcomes. *Procedia Economics and Finance*. 36: 22-28.
- Nekouizadeh, Maryam, Golmohammadi, Emad (2015). Relationship between marketing capabilities and performance of Ilam insurance companies due to the mediating role of service quality. *Standard and quality management of Iran Defense Standard Center*. 82-70: (20) 6. (In Persian).
- Noepasand asil, Seyyed Mohammad, Ramazanpour Ismail, Attari Asl Peyman, (2015). The Effect of Marketing Capacity, Innovation and Learning on Organizational Performance: A Case Study: Tabriz Petrochemical. *Productivity Management (Beyond Management)*, 124-95: (36) 9. (In Persian).
- Norouzi, Hussein; Darwish, Fatima; Nasri, Reza (2019). The effect of marketing capabilities in the field of export and innovation on the dimensions of export performance by inefficient competition moderation (Case study: handicraft and art companies). *Journal of International Business Management*. 2 (4): 97-119. (In Persian).
- Qaracheh, Manijeh (2007). Review and analysis of internal strategic factors to gain a competitive advantage. *Message from management*. 2007. No. 25. pp. 33-65. (In Persian).
- Rahimnia, Fariborz and Sadeghian, Seyed Hassan (2018). Strategic Orientation and Success of Export Companies, *Organizational Resource Management Research*, Volume 1, Number 1, pp. 136-115. (In Persian).
- Revti Raman Sharma, Thao Kim Nguyen, Dave Crick, (2018). Exploitation Strategy and Performance of Contract Manufacturing Exporters: The Mediating Roles of Exploration Strategy and Marketing Capability. *Journal of International Management*. 24(3), Pages 271-283.
- Sartipi, Sadaf and Mohammad Masoum (2018), The Impact of Marketing Capabilities on the Export Performance of Iranian Companies Exporting Sports Equipment, Fourth International Conference on Management, Entrepreneurship and Economic Development, Takestan, Takestan Institute of Higher Education. (In Persian).
- Shafei, Reza (2012). Study of the effectiveness of market presence strategies from managerial attitudes and their relationship with the choice of marketing metrics model



in industrial manufacturing companies. *Journal of Modern Marketing Research*, Second Year, Fourth Issue, Serial Issue (7). Pp. 104-82. (In Persian).

- Sheibani, Shima (2019). The Impact of Marketing Capabilities and Research and Development Capabilities on SME Innovation Performance Case Study: Shiraz Industrial Town, 2nd International Conference on Management, Industrial Engineering, Economics and Accounting, Tbilisi - Georgia, Permanent Secretariat in collaboration with Imam Sadegh University). (In Persian).
- Tan, Q., & Sousa, C. M. P. (2015). Leveraging marketing capabilities into competitive advantage and export performance. *International Marketing*
- Tartaglione Andrea Moretta and Vincenzo Formisano (2018). A Dynamic View of Marketing Capabilities for SMEs' Export Performance. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*; Vol. 10, No. 1; pp, 126-135.
- Thi Song Hanh Pham, Lien Le Monkhouse, Bradley R. Barnes (2017). The influence of relational capability and marketing capabilities on the export performance of emerging market firms.
- Udriyah, U., Tham, J & Azam, S. (2019). The effects of market orientation and innovation on competitive advantage and business performance of textile SMEs. *Management Science Letters*, 9(9): 1419-1428.
- Wantao Yu, Ramakrishnan Ramanathan, Prithwiraj Nathc, (2018). Environmental pressures and performance: An analysis of the roles of environmental innovation strategy and marketing capability. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*. (117), Pages 160-169.
- Zhou, K.Z. & Wu, F. (2010). Technological capability, strategic flexibility and product innovation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 31 (1): 547-561.

