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TEA E-MARKETING CHALLENGES FROM THE TEA ORGANIZATION EXPERTS' PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges of tea e-marketing from the perspective of tea organization experts during 2013-2014. The statistical population included 65 of tea organization experts which were selected by using census method. To gather the required data, a questionnaire was developed. The validity and reliability of the employed questionnaire were evaluated by using content validity and Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.872), respectively. In this study, explanatory factor analysis was used through the collected questionnaires. The obtained data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics. Using factor analysis test for significance coefficients of the studied of variables, 8 factors including economic, cultural, educational, policy making, technical, profit-seeking, supportive, and inefficiency were determined and these factors could explain 64.39% of total variance in tea e-marketing.

Keywords: E-marketing, Challenge, Marketing, Experts

INTRODUCTION

One of the dimensions of information age is deep changes created in economic relations between individuals, companies and governments such that it has led to the emergence of a new phenomenon called electronic business and e-commerce. Such a phenomenon has evolved many economic concepts, principles and theories so that the term of "traditional economy" has been gradually replaced with "internet-based economy". E-commerce provides an opportunity for developing countries which is highly importance to improve the attitude and planning for their economic growth and development (Nozari and RahimiBadr, 2010).

Nowadays, marketing is one of the necessities of rural and agricultural production system and its importance is evident in the process of agricultural productions. It is so important that in developed countries and even in developing countries, marketing is a category more vital than production and marketing is known as "invisible hand of production". There are many problems regarding traditional marketing of agricultural products and among them, it can be referred to inappropriate marketing facilities structure, price instability, agricultural products seasonality, inappropriate market informing system, high production cost, abundant losses during various selling stages, the presence of dealers, inappropriate supports of government regarding market development, and marketing policies of agricultural productions. All these factors have caused to hinder farmers to achieve market and gain high incomes and the increase of value added of agricultural products. Agricultural products market has a very important place in total structure of Iranian economy. With respect to the structure type of agricultural products, this market follows a traditional market and such markets cause some problems for producers, consumers, policy makers, and planners of agricultural sector. Some of these problems include losses in various production stages, some shortages in transportation and toads, lack of adequate ranking and packaging facilities, seasonal fluctuations of agricultural products' price and their instability, lack of market information services, inadequate processing industries, lack of advertising and close cooperation with world marketing activities, weak cooperation to provide marketing services, unclear price of agricultural products, wide and significant presence of dealers in market, inefficiency of marketing network and market update (Kabiri and Barzande, 2003).

Tea is considered as one the oldest and highly used drinking in the world. For a long time, using tea has been considered by people at different social classes in Iran. Producers of green leaf and craftsmen

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Research Article

dealing with maintaining, packaging, processing, and distributing play important role in creating value added and fostering the commerce of producer and consumer countries (Cheraghi and Gholi, 2009). Investigating the structure of tea market in Iran, the present study refers to two approaches of estimating tea efficiency and the factors influencing the quality and quantity of tea. The concept of distribution, sometimes, means some limited activities regarding physical movement of goods to end user. Usually, each commodity passes some stages from production to be ready for consumption and these stages from distribution network of commodity; the constituents of a distribution network is usually and continuously followed by some objectives such as removing spatial and temporal distances between production and consumption, decreasing temporal distance between purchasing commodity and paying its value, balancing and minimizing price difference of commodity and services in different times and places (Alipour and Mohebi, 2010).

Therefore, technology is accompanied with applied electronic cultural solutions in condense agricultural systems in developing countries to improve the quality and quantity of products through maximizing farmers' profit. Using computer and satellites, farmers decrease extra costs; increase the performance of production and attempt to preserve environment. E-commerce and e-marketing include marketing and selling agricultural productions through electronic networks such as internet (Nozari and RahimiBadr, 2010).

For the first time, some farmers started to cultivate tea in suburbs of Lahijan City (CharkhaneSar) and it was gradually developed all around Gilan Province such that in 1940, the area of tea gardens reached to 600 hectares. This trend was gradually continued till the government of Iran attempted to establish tea organization in 1957 to support tea planters and tea making industry owners. At the present time, the level of tea cultivation is about 32000 hectares which has been irregularly and separately located in more than 900 villages in Some Sara, Fouman, Shaft, Rasht, Lahijan, AstaneAshrafie, Siahkal, Langeroud, Roudsar, and Amlash in Gilan Province and Ramsar and Tonekabon up to aroundChalous in Mazandaran Province with about 200 km with low and high distance with the main road. Currently, about 60000 families are cultivating tea (Tea Organization, 2012).

In the present research, with respect to the problems of agricultural products production cycle, particularly in marketing and access to real buyers due to rural regions dispersion, far distance from selling centers, the presence of dealers, lack of facilities of using virtual spaces, and the importance of tea, the factors influencing tea e-commerce in Iran and its related problems and challenges have been examined. In this regard, in addition to studying specialized texts and reviewing foreign and internal experiences, the views of tea organization's experts have been analyzed.

The importance of e-commerce is to wonderfully increase purchasers' purchasing power and speed. They will promptly receive the responses of their needs and there won't be any need to pass long distances to stores and there won't be any bargaining. According to O'brein, e-commerce is changing the shape of competition, speed of actions, stream of interactions, products and payment by customers to companies and from companies to suppliers (O'brein, 2008).

Turban *et al.,* (2002) stated that purchasing and selling through e-commerce can be done in the form of macro or micro, physical or non-physical commodity such as book or software, providing various services for purchasers such as medical or legal consultation and other commercial cases such as tenders, bids and/or purchasing/selling information between organizations, between organizations and individuals and between individuals.

For farmers, marketing is a way providing produced products through better methods for consumption market. E-marketing provides them with information regarding market demands for agricultural products and provides more income contexts. For consumers, marketing is a means through to provide their required products with a more speed, higher quality and lower price. Developing information and communication technology and providing facilities and equipments of e-commerce regarding agricultural products can provide more useful context for farmers in addition to improving competitive conditions of the market through creating information providing systems about market demand and products' price (Shekofte, 2012).

Research Article

Iran has a significant role in producing tea in the world and it has the healthiest product in the world in terms of health and omitting additives and non-allowed materials. However, recently, this product has lost its market and it seems that excessive imports and smuggling foreign tea to Iran have highly influenced this issue. Therefore, internal marketers search for a solution to revive the market of this product (ibid).

Regarding other products in Iran such as Iranian rice, many studies have been performed but no study has examined the effect of e-marketing on Iranian tea. Since e-commerce, as a new and global category, has many advantages such as increasing selling, income, quality of life and lifestyle, and attracting foreign and internal investors (ibid), so, using this technology help Iranian tea market. Accordingly, given to the above mentioned, it is revealed that performing such a research highly contribute producers, consumers and marketers regarding Iranian tea; also, optimal market of domestic agricultural products will be significantly improved in addition to help farmers through selling them, causing to their satisfaction. Considering the fact that electronic marketing plays a significant role in this regard, it seems necessary to explore attracting tea consumers in Iran with respect to the opinions of experts.

The recent advancements regarding information technology has rapidly evolved the world and such a change is so that some scholars consider it as industrial revolution. Internet and subsequently, e-marketing as a phenomenon deriving from information technology has created a deep evolution in performing commercial and purchasing-selling affairs, leading to the increase of return and competition between economic entities. The extent of such a competition is such that if a company has had a less competitive advantage relative to other company, it should inevitably leave trade scene. E-marketing systems provide an important context to achieve such an advantage.

The overall objective of the present work is to investigate the challenges of tea e-marketing from the perspective tea organization's experts. In this regard, the specific objectives of the study include investigating cultural, economic, educational, and policy making challenges of tea e-marketing from the perspective of experts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Methodology
This study used filed (questionnaire) and library methods to gather required information and data. The statistical population included 65 experts of tea organization and 63 people completed the distributed questionnaires. The employed questionnaire entailed 6 parts. The first part pertained to the respondents' personal information and the rest 5 parts were allocated to cultural, economic, technical, educational, and policy making challenges. The items have been designed based on Likert scale. To evaluate the questionnaire's validity, the opinions of university professors and experts were used. Cronbach's alpha was also used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire (0.85- 0.89) (Table 1).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Various Parts of the Questionnaire

Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Cultural challenge	0/85
Educational challenge	0/86
Technical challenge	0/87
Policy making challenge	0/87
Economic challenge	0/89

Identifying and Prioritizing Challenges
According to the computations, Kmo value of the test equals 0.650 and its significance level equals 99% and it is appropriate in this regard, indicating the internal consistency of data and appropriate correlation of the entered variables. Then, to extract factors, the main challenges components were classified using factor analysis. Table 2 shows the number of the extracted factors with the especial values, variance percentage and accumulated variance percentage of each factor.

Research Article

Table 2: The extracted factors with the especial values, variance percentage and accumulated variance percentage of each factor

Factor	Eigen value	Variance percentage	Accumulated variance percentage
1	3/42	11/05	11/05
2	3/26	10/53	21/59
3	2/45	7/90	29/49
4	2/31	7/47	36/96
5	2/24	7/24	44/20
6	2/15	6/93	51/14
7	2/08	6/71	57/85
8	2/02	6/54	64/39

Table 3: The Variables related to Each of Factors and the Amount of Coefficients Obtained from Rotation Matrix

Factor	Variables	Factor Loading
Economic factor	Lack of adequate prohibition from external tea smuggling and applying discretionary rules	0/610
	Lack of allocating adequate budget by authorities for tea e-marketing	0/557
	Lack of long-term investment by teach gardeners to improve e-marketing	0/317
Cultural factors	Lack of people's trust to e-marketing	0/788
	Lack of accepting e-marketing by people	0/465
	Lack of public awareness about e-marketing	0/397
Educational factors	Lack of users' knowledge to use internet websites for purchasing	0/777
	Lack of considering the increase of e-marketing experts' skills by tea organization	0/654
	Lack of users' awareness to use internet websites for purchasing	0/543
	Lack of users' computer knowledge to use internet websites for purchasing	0.498
Policy making factors	Weak compiled rules and legal issues regarding e-marketing security	0/825
	Lack of comprehensive program of e-marketing development	0/609
	Lack of appropriate policy makings of tea organization regarding e-marketing	0/519
Technical factors	Lack of expert groups and	0/832

Research Article

	conversation groups in the organization's website	
	The ease and comfort in terms of access	0/678
	Lack of on-line catalogues and electronic newspapers due to encouraging users to purchase	0/595
	Attracting users in terms of graphic	0/520
	Lack of advertising through e-mail	0/475
	The quality of public access to internet	0/472
Profit making threats	Low importance of e-marketing from the behalf of experts	0/889
	Lack of experts' skills and e-marketers	0/631
	Low quality of Iranian tea	0/460
Supporting factors	Not executing the programs approved by the organization related to e-marketing improvement	0/863
	Lack of exemption of services right and service providing related to e-marketing as a prohibition for tea e-marketing development	0/577
	Lack of economic planning to attract users in tea organization website	0/255
Inefficient factors	Lack of cultural building regarding using e-marketing in community	0/807
	Lack of related organizations' cooperation regarding the improvement of e-marketing	0/805
	Lack of internet websites in tea organization	0/783
	Lack of educational classes for using internet websites by people	0/642

Based on the findings, out of 31 items valuated for tea e-marketing challenges, 8 factors were extracted. The first factor with the especial value of 3.42 could explain 11.05% of total variance (the highest amount of variance).

The second factor with especial value of 3.26 could explain 10.53% of total variance; the third factor with especial value of 2.45 could explain 7.90% of total variance; the fourth factor with especial value of 2.31 could explain 7.74% of total variance; the fifth factor with especial value of 2.24 could explain 7.24% of total variance; the sixth factor with especial value of 2.15 could explain 6.93% of total variance; the seventh factor with especial value of 2.08 could explain 6.71% of total variance, and the eighth factor with especial value of 2.02 could explain 6.54% of total variance.

Research Article

Conclusion
With respect to the constituting items, the first factor is economic challenge and considering the especial value (3.42) and total variance determination (11.05), it was revealed that economic challenges play an important role in tea e-marketing from the perspective of tea organization's experts. Such a finding is consistent with the result reported by Latif and SabeghiSarouii (2006) investigating the factors influencing economic entities to apply e-marketing systems. As they found, the factors influencing economic entities included lack of recognizing necessary capabilities to implement and apply information technology, inappropriate perception about time and place of technology application in marketing process, lack of necessary organizational infrastructures to use technology, unplanned macro investment regarding information technology which occasionally do not lead to the creation of a considerable commercial values and desirable return (Latif and SabeghiSarouii, 2006).

Additionally, the second factor is cultural challenge and considering the especial value (3.26) and total variance determination (10.53), it was revealed that cultural challenge is the second most important factor in tea e-marketing from the perspective of tea organization's experts. This finding is consistent with the finding obtained by Mohammad and MollaHasani (2011) that used system approach in e-marketing to develop e-marketing. They introduced various online models for consumers' behaviors in e-marketing environment as well as classic marketing patterns especially mixed marketing patterns.

As the findings revealed, the first item of the third factor (educational challenge), i.e. lack of users' knowledge to use internet websites for purchasing has the highest factor loading (0.777) and the above challenge with especial value of 2.45 explains 7.90% of total variance. It is consistent with the result reported by Aghazade and Mehrnoush (2009) investigating the contexts of applying e-marketing in the form of components' level in two classes of external (related to the government) and internal (related to enterprises) and in the form of the components' nature in the two classes of strategic and operations in their study entitled the requirements of e-marketing in Iranian businesses. The obtained results revealed that from the perspectives of marketing experts, all internal and external contexts of e-marketing application in Iranian business space has undesirable situation and is of high importance which confirm high data (Aghazade and Mehrnoush, 2009).

Moreover, the results revealed that the fourth factor, i.e. policy making with the especial value of 2.31 explains 7.47% of total variance. The results obtained by Naseri *et al.,* (2008) in the study entitled macro architecture of formulated Iranian tea's value chain are consistent with this finding of the present study. Naseri *et al.,* (2008) showed that lack of integrated management in supply chain of tea industry has been the most important and fundamental factor weakening this industry.

Also, creating supporting structures in various parts of tea supply chain and the dominance of integrated management thought on tea production chain and creating dependency between the destinies of involved parts in supply chain can be considered as a factor of forming the mechanisms strengthening competitive advantage of tea industry.

The fifth factor, i.e. technical challenge with the especial value of 2.24 explains 7.24% of total variance. This finding is consistent with the finding obtained by Rahimi and Saeidani (2013) in their study entitled e-commerce in marketing agricultural products. As they concluded, in Germany, about 78% of farmers have access to internet and e-banking, about 28% of them access to e-purchasing and 10% of them access to internet selling. In Germany, farmers have achieved to more agricultural productivity by access to internet. In India, e-commerce has had significant growth and it has reached from about 3 milliard dollars in 1997 to 160 million dollars in 2001. Tea is of important agricultural and industrial products of India. The economy of many states of this country highly depends on cultivating this product; however, tea not only plays an important role in industrial and agricultural development of India but also it is one of the important foreign exchange sources through export. In china, the growth of internet and e-commerce has been rapid and in 1997, about 10% of customer performed their purchase through internet. In Malaysia, macro plan of e-commerce was propounded in 1999. The government provided multi-media communication to encourage all commercial and agricultural companies for testing the proposed design through information technology and preparing for future. In Cairo, communication researches network

Research Article

and virtual network development, governmental researchers, workers and employees of institutes in villages were set up using website (RahimiBadr *et al.,* 2013).

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