






The Impact of International Marketing Capabilities and Export Operations Capabilities on the Strategic Performance of Cross-Border E-Commerce with the Mediating Role of Information Technology Capabilities

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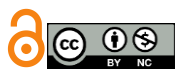
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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of this study is to examine the impact of international marketing capabilities and export operations capabilities on the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce, considering the mediating role of information technology capabilities.

Methodology: This research is applied in purpose and descriptive-survey in nature for data collection. The statistical population consists of managers of small- and medium-sized businesses engaged in online exports in Tehran. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, a total of 207 valid questionnaires were obtained through simple random sampling. Field data were collected using the questionnaires developed by Casillas and Magno (2022) and Catanzaro and Tesser (2020). The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed using face and content validity, while its reliability was established through Cronbach's alpha. SPSS and Smart PLS software were used for data analysis.

Findings: The findings revealed that international marketing capabilities and export operations capabilities have a significant impact on both the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce and information technology capabilities. Additionally, information technology capabilities were found to have a significant impact on the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce. Furthermore, the mediating role of information technology capabilities in the relationship between international marketing capabilities, export operations capabilities, and the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce was confirmed.

Conclusion: Developing global business relationships and establishing international distribution networks enable companies to reach more customers and increase their sales volumes. By analyzing market conditions and anticipating risks, companies can develop appropriate strategies to address challenges. International marketing capabilities also contribute to creating a sustainable competitive advantage in global markets.

Keywords: *International Marketing Capabilities, Export Operations, Strategic Performance, Cross-Border E-Commerce, Information Technology*

1 Introduction

Recent advancements in information technologies have enabled exporters to enhance their efficiency, effectiveness, and overall performance in foreign markets (Ferreira et al., 2021). Digitalization has become a necessity in the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (Kuznyetsova et al., 2023). Some studies have explored how exporters can leverage the Internet to strengthen their international activities (Anderski et al., 2024; Balouchi, 2024; Berndt et al., 2023; Griffith & Yalcinkaya, 2023; Kuznyetsova et al., 2023; Nazem Bakaei & Ashrafi Rahqi, 2024).

Extensive knowledge exists about how the Internet facilitates foreign market analysis, reduces psychological distance, accelerates market entry, enriches internationalization capabilities, and supports customer relationship management (Hooper & Holtbrügge, 2020; Sheth & Sharma, 2005). However, most of this research views the Internet as a complementary tool for integrating and enhancing exporters' marketing strategies rather than as a direct sales channel (Mathews et al., 2016; Sinkovics et al., 2013). Nevertheless, official statistics indicate that cross-border e-commerce—the sale of goods and services over the Internet to foreign customers—is rapidly growing. Some analyses even suggest that cross-border e-commerce is the most effective channel for entering export markets (Giuffrida et al., 2017).

Although a growing number of exporters are incorporating cross-border e-commerce into their foreign market entry strategies, research in this area remains in its early stages (Qi et al., 2020; Watson et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2019). Knowledge about the factors influencing the cross-border e-commerce performance of small and medium-sized exporters is limited to the analysis of their digital marketing tactics (Goldman et al., 2020). This study addresses this gap by proposing a model that incorporates export capabilities (Morgan et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2004; Morgan et al., 2012). The capabilities framework has been widely applied in international management to explain companies' foreign market performance (Morgan et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2004; Morgan et al., 2012).

In this research, international marketing capabilities, export operations capabilities, and information technology capabilities are examined as prerequisites influencing the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce (Tolstoy et al., 2021; Watson et al., 2018). Considering the aforementioned points, the objective of this study is to investigate the impact of international marketing capabilities and export operations capabilities on the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce, with the mediating role of information technology capabilities in small and medium-sized businesses engaged in online exports.

2 Methods and Materials

This research is applied in purpose and descriptive-survey in nature regarding data collection. The statistical population consists of accounting and finance students from non-profit universities in Tehran. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, a total of 207 valid questionnaires were obtained through simple random sampling. Data collection was conducted through two methods: library research (reviewing articles, books, internet sources, etc.) and field study. Field data were collected using the questionnaires developed by Casillas and Magno (2022) and Catanzaro and Tesser (2020), employing a 5-point Likert scale.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics were used. After verifying the normality of data distribution, SPSS and Smart PLS software were employed for analysis.

3 Findings and Results

Out of a total of 207 respondents, 71 participants (34.3%) were female, and 136 participants (65.7%) were male. Among the respondents, 42 individuals (20.3%) were under 30 years old, 83 individuals (40.1%) were between 30 and 39 years old, 67 individuals (32.4%) were between 40 and 49 years old, and 15 individuals (7.2%) were 50 years old or above. In terms of education, 22 respondents (10.6%) held a high school diploma or associate degree, 138 respondents (66.7%) had a bachelor's degree, and 47 respondents (22.7%) had a master's degree or higher.

Table 1

Statistical Characteristics of Research Variables

Components	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Statistic	Significance Level	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Consumer Ethical Perception	3.43	0.869	0.126	0.000	0.849	0.898	0.690

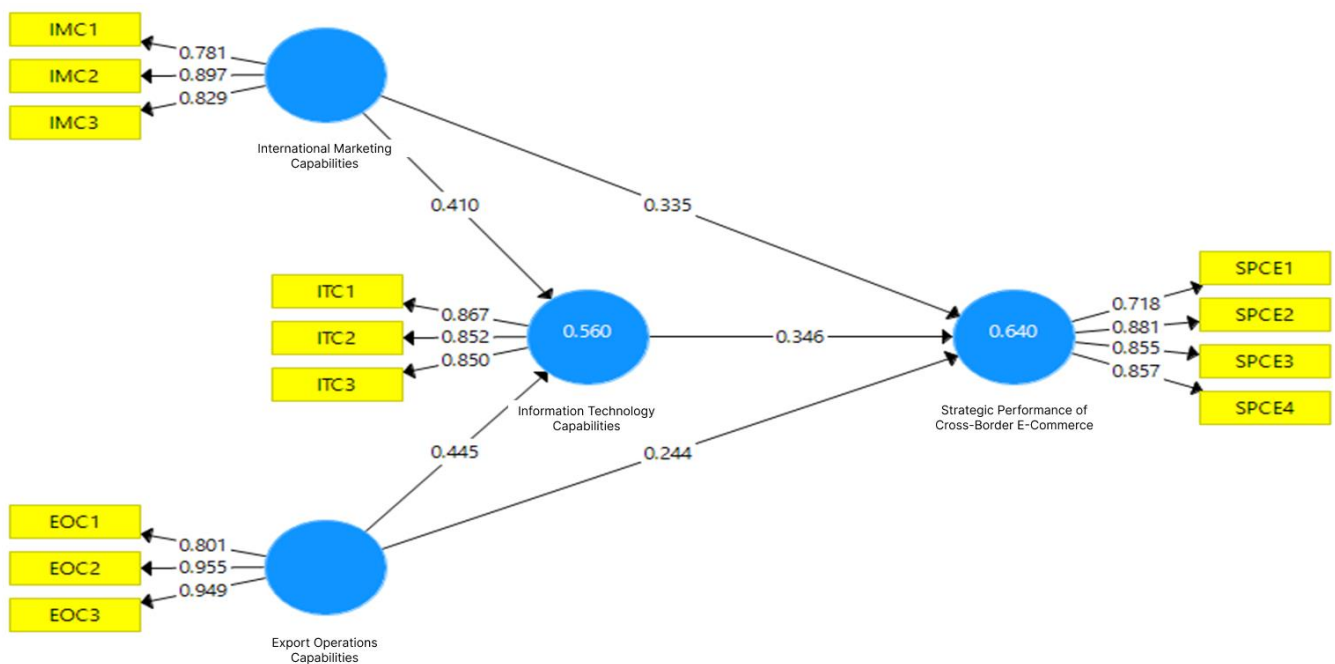
Consumer Identification with Organization	3.47	0.950	0.170	0.000	0.785	0.875	0.701
Brand Trust	3.46	0.943	0.187	0.000	0.885	0.930	0.818
Consumer Purchase Intention	3.49	0.937	0.170	0.000	0.818	0.892	0.733

As shown in Table 1, the results indicate that the mean scores of all respondents' opinions regarding all variables are above the average. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for all research variables indicate significance levels below 5%, rejecting the null hypothesis of normality. Reliability analysis of the outer model was confirmed through

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability criteria, showing acceptable fit for the measurement models. The average variance extracted (AVE) for all variables is greater than 0.50, confirming convergent validity. Additionally, discriminant validity was confirmed since the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was below 0.90.

Figure 1

Standardized Path Coefficients for Hypotheses



The final research model, based on the main variables and their criteria, is illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 2

Coefficient of Determination (R²) and Predictive Power (Q²)

Dependent Variable	R²	Intensity	Q²	Intensity
Strategic Performance of Cross-Border E-Commerce	0.640	Strong	0.404	Strong
Information Technology Capabilities	0.560	Strong	0.385	Strong

Based on Table 2, both the coefficient of determination and predictive power are strong.

Table 3

Hypothesis Testing Results

No.	Path	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T-Statistic	Significance Level	Result
1	International Marketing Capabilities -> Strategic Performance of Cross-Border E-Commerce	0.689	0.039	17.470	0.000	Confirmed
2	Export Operations Capabilities -> Strategic Performance of Cross-Border E-Commerce	0.658	0.046	14.179	0.000	Confirmed
3	International Marketing Capabilities -> Information Technology Capabilities	0.646	0.047	13.794	0.000	Confirmed
4	Export Operations Capabilities -> Information Technology Capabilities	0.665	0.054	12.369	0.000	Confirmed
5	Information Technology Capabilities -> Strategic Performance of Cross-Border E-Commerce	0.726	0.041	17.540	0.000	Confirmed
Main 1	International Marketing Capabilities -> Information Technology Capabilities -> Strategic Performance of Cross-Border E-Commerce	---	---	6.821	0.000	Confirmed
Main 2	Export Operations Capabilities -> Information Technology Capabilities -> Strategic Performance of Cross-Border E-Commerce	---	---	6.500	0.000	Confirmed

As shown in Table 3, since the significance levels of all sub-hypotheses are less than 0.01 and the T-statistics exceed 1.96, the paths are significant. Given the positive path coefficients, the independent variables have a direct and significant impact on the dependent variables, confirming the sub-hypotheses with 99% confidence. The results for the main hypotheses indicate that the Sobel test significance levels, with T-statistics of 6.821 and 6.500, are less than 0.05, confirming the mediating relationships.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

International marketing capabilities play a vital role in enhancing the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce. In this context, companies encounter diverse markets and cultures. International marketing capabilities enable firms to adapt their strategies to the specific needs and preferences of each market. This adaptation may involve modifications to advertising messages, product design, pricing, and even distribution methods. Companies with strong international marketing capabilities can leverage advanced technologies to optimize their marketing strategies. These technologies help businesses better understand consumer behavior and improve their products and services. Additionally, international marketing capabilities allow firms to identify and exploit new opportunities in foreign markets. Developing global business relationships and establishing international distribution networks enable companies to reach more customers and increase their sales volumes. By analyzing market conditions and anticipating risks, companies can develop appropriate strategies to address challenges. International marketing capabilities also contribute to creating a sustainable competitive advantage in global markets. The findings of this study align with the prior

results (Abolfathi & Montazeri, 2022; Asgari & Khodaparast, 2023; Bashkooch Ajirloo et al., 2021; Cassia & Magno, 2022; Ferreira et al., 2021; Kardanayej & Heydari, 2020; Qi et al., 2020; Tolstoy et al., 2021).

Export operations capabilities are crucial for improving the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce. A key success factor in cross-border e-commerce is the ability to efficiently manage international logistics and supply chains. Export operations capabilities enable firms to manage the transportation of goods, inventory control, and timely deliveries more effectively. A robust and efficient supply chain reduces delivery times, lowers transportation costs, and increases customer satisfaction, all of which contribute to enhanced strategic performance. Companies with strong export operations capabilities can swiftly and accurately comply with regulations, avoiding delays caused by legal and customs issues and maintaining a consistent presence in international markets. These capabilities also enable firms to identify and manage risks more effectively. Flexibility in export operations helps companies quickly adjust their strategies and maintain their position in international markets. Proper management of export operations allows businesses to effectively enter new markets and expand their geographical reach, resulting in access to new customers, increased revenue, and enhanced market share—all of which positively impact strategic performance. The findings are consistent with prior studies (Abolfathi & Montazeri, 2022; Asgari & Khodaparast, 2023; Bashkooch Ajirloo et al., 2021; Cassia & Magno, 2022; Ferreira et al., 2021; Hooper & Holtbrügge, 2020; Kardanayej & Heydari, 2020; Qi et al., 2020).

International marketing capabilities significantly impact the development and enhancement of information technology (IT) capabilities within organizations. These

marketing capabilities require analyzing vast amounts of data from various global markets, encouraging companies to adopt advanced data analysis technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. These tools enable businesses to analyze complex behavioral patterns in different markets and make more precise marketing decisions. The demand for improved IT capabilities in digital communications and online interactions increases significantly under the influence of international marketing strategies. International marketing involves exchanging sensitive customer and partner data globally, necessitating robust cybersecurity measures and data protection strategies. Companies must upgrade their security systems to counter cyber threats and comply with various data protection regulations across countries, driving IT development to enhance security and meet international standards. Moreover, international marketing capabilities are often correlated with global e-commerce. Firms operating in multiple markets need to develop e-commerce platforms that support international payment processes, global logistics, and customer experience across various markets. These requirements drive improvements in IT capabilities for managing electronic payments, ensuring transaction security, and handling content management systems. The findings align with prior findings (Abolfathi & Montazeri, 2022; Asgari & Khodaparast, 2023; Bashkooch Ajirloo et al., 2021; Ferreira et al., 2021; Tolstoy et al., 2021).

Export operations capabilities also significantly enhance and strengthen IT capabilities within organizations. Managing export operations involves handling substantial information related to products, international customers, transportation documentation, customs regulations, and taxes. IT solutions in these areas reduce human errors, speed up business processes, and increase efficiency. Cybersecurity systems and IT-based risk management solutions protect export-related information from cyber threats and ensure secure real-time access for all stakeholders. IT-based supply chain management systems allow firms to optimize inventory, production processes, and delivery operations globally. IT capabilities enable companies to quickly adapt to changes in export regulations across different countries. Information systems can automatically update firms on the latest changes in customs, tax, and legal regulations, ensuring that all export documentation and processes comply with these laws. This reduces the legal and financial risks associated with non-compliance. Additionally, IT-based financial and accounting systems provide accurate calculations of taxes and costs

associated with export processes, analyzing financial data in real time to help businesses optimize costs and use resources more efficiently. The findings align with prior findings (Catanzaro & Teyssier, 2020; Goldman et al., 2020; Hooper & Holtbrügge, 2020; Kardanayej & Heydari, 2020; Qi et al., 2020; Sabouri et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2019).

IT capabilities play a key role in improving the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce. Content management systems, online store management systems, and digital payment platforms depend on IT capabilities. These infrastructures allow companies to offer their products and services efficiently to international customers without geographical limitations. IT capabilities, through supply chain management systems and enterprise resource planning systems, enable firms to manage procurement, warehousing, and transportation processes more precisely and effectively. IT also supports quick, secure, and efficient transactions via electronic payment systems, international payment processors, and blockchain solutions. By facilitating multi-currency payments and compliance with financial regulations in different countries, IT helps firms manage their complex financial processes with high accuracy and efficiency. IT also allows companies to customize customer experiences in international markets and reduce operational costs in cross-border e-commerce. Automation of processes, use of chatbots, and automated management systems help firms lower costs related to human resources and operations management. The findings align with prior findings (Abolfathi & Montazeri, 2022; Asgari & Khodaparast, 2023; Bashkooch Ajirloo et al., 2021; Cassia & Magno, 2022; Catanzaro & Teyssier, 2020; Ferreira et al., 2021; Goldman et al., 2020; Hooper & Holtbrügge, 2020; Kardanayej & Heydari, 2020; Qi et al., 2020; Sabouri et al., 2019; Tolstoy et al., 2021; Watson et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2019).

International marketing capabilities directly impact the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce. Companies with strong international marketing capabilities are better equipped to understand global markets, develop suitable strategies for engaging with international customers, and establish relationships with global partners and customers. These capabilities involve analyzing international markets, customizing products and services based on local cultures and needs, and effectively managing international marketing campaigns. IT serves as a facilitating tool, enabling companies to execute their international marketing capabilities more efficiently on a global scale. IT provides platforms for e-commerce and social media, enabling direct and effective communication between

businesses and international customers. These platforms allow companies to execute international marketing campaigns quickly and receive real-time feedback from various markets. Strategic performance in cross-border e-commerce refers to the firm's ability to efficiently and successfully manage business processes globally. This includes factors like global supply chain efficiency, attracting and retaining international customers, managing international financial transactions, and competing effectively in global markets. IT capabilities act as a mediator, playing a key role in transforming international marketing capabilities into optimal performance in cross-border e-commerce. The findings align with prior studies (Bashkooch Ajirloo et al., 2021; Catanzaro & Teyssier, 2020; Goldman et al., 2020; Hooper & Holtbrügge, 2020; Kardanayej & Heydari, 2020; Qi et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2019).

Export operations capabilities, through the mediating role of IT capabilities, significantly influence the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce. This model suggests that companies with strong export operations capabilities can use IT as a key tool to enhance their strategic performance in cross-border e-commerce. IT capabilities serve as a mediator, playing a critical role in improving export processes and enabling firms to manage these operations more efficiently and accurately. Automation through IT optimizes time-consuming and manual export processes, enabling companies to focus more on strategic tasks. Automation reduces human errors and improves coordination across departments like production, warehousing, and transportation. IT, as a mediator, not only enhances export operations but also directly impacts the strategic performance of cross-border e-commerce. Advanced information systems allow firms to execute international financial and commercial transactions more accurately and quickly. This reduces the time between order placement and product delivery to international customers—a key indicator of strategic performance in cross-border e-commerce. IT enables companies to enter new markets faster and offer their products and services globally. The findings align with prior findings (Abolfathi & Montazeri, 2022; Bashkooch Ajirloo et al., 2021; Ferreira et al., 2021; Hooper & Holtbrügge, 2020; Kardanayej & Heydari, 2020; Qi et al., 2020; Tolstoy et al., 2021).

Companies can use big data analytics and artificial intelligence tools to better understand customer behavior, purchasing patterns, and specific regional needs. This information helps firms tailor their marketing strategies to

local cultures and preferences and customize their products or services accordingly. Customization increases customer satisfaction and improves strategic performance in cross-border markets. To strengthen e-commerce performance in global markets, companies should utilize multilingual and multi-currency platforms. These capabilities simplify and accelerate purchasing and payment processes, enhancing global business performance. Firms should establish efficient and connected distribution networks to various global markets. By collaborating with international logistics companies and utilizing supply chain management systems, businesses can enhance and expedite export processes.

Using supply chain management software helps companies manage the flow of goods, inventory, and orders in real time. Establishing close relationships with logistics companies and local suppliers in target countries aids in facilitating and accelerating export procedures. Utilizing export information management systems enables companies to effectively manage export-related data, including customs documents and information related to customs clearance. Investing in employee training to better understand export and customs regulations of different countries can reduce legal issues and expedite the export process. By participating in these events, companies can network and become acquainted with new partners in target markets. Creating online platforms for communication with customers and suppliers can facilitate collaboration processes and strengthen business relationships.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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