

Success factors of selling handicrafts on Facebook (case of pate in Iran)

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Abstract: Along with the significant rise in social media users, many companies have sought to tap this market to attract more customers for selling traditional goods. The main objective of the present study was to test the factors such as market trends, social responsibility, media power, push rivals, relationship management, and managing online customers on the improvement of selling Pate (a traditionally sewn, patterned Iranian fabric) via Facebook in Kerman (a large city in southeast Iran). 196 managers at the Pate workshops were surveyed through a questionnaire, and the collected data is analyzed through AMOS and SPSS. Results show that market trends, media power, and relationship management increase Pate sales on Facebook and should be considered by Pate workshop owners more wisely. However, the effect of corporate social responsibility, push rivals, and managing online customers on sale improvement was not significant. This research is intended to be a basis for developing traditional products and establishing effective positioning in various markets by continuously monitoring customer feedback and addressing their immediate concerns on Facebook.

Keywords: selling; social media; handicrafts; Facebook

1. Introduction

Social media still shape the world by increasing the propensity of users to be connected and share digital content. For example, the number of internet users grew from 2.177 billion in 2012 to 4.95 billion in 2022, an average annual increase of 8.6% [1]. Social commerce is developing very fast in Indonesia because the use of social commerce applications is easy to understand, so many Indonesians are interested in shopping on social commerce. Social media has become a phenomenon in marketing, as companies use social media to inform, impress and retain existing consumers. Social media marketing empowers business enterprises to generate the perceived brand quality activities and builds ideas among consumers to continue using the company's products and service [2]. Social networks such as Facebook can provide a good platform for marketing and advertising in cyberspace for any kind of business. Although access to Facebook in Iran is a bit difficult, it is possible. While the Iranian government blocked and unblocked Facebook two times before 2009 and after 2009, it is blocked until now. Iranians open Facebook pages with Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). The Techrasa website reported, "Iran has more Facebook users than any country in the Middle East, with 17.2 million users" [1].

Facebook provides a safe platform not only for entertainment but also for business. The best social network site by users' access and use has been Facebook [3], which had 2.7 billion monthly active users as of the second quarter of 2020 [4]. Facebook has been considered as one of the important tools for improving customer

relationships. Hsu examined Facebook use and found it was used widely as a marketing strategy by many businesses [3]. Because of its high number of users, Facebook has revolutionized advertising, promotion, and marketing [5]. Social media's role helps bring about communicational needs and builds the ability to create interpersonal relations and develop them [6]. Customers' attitudes toward social marketing are effective on their usage of social media [7]. E-commerce companies are highly recommending their customers and users connect to different social media platforms such as Facebook and Pinterest [8]. As many people from all over the world share the same social media platforms, business owners have been investigating how this technology could be used as a new tool to connect with customers [4]. Companies and shops have developed Facebook pages to introduce their products and services, as Facebook advertising is cheap and can reach large potential customer groups every day, who then share their product experiences, both good and bad, with their connections on their private pages. Therefore, many studies to date have clearly identified the importance of social media in modern-day advertising and marketing strategies [9]; however, few have examined the effective social media marketing factors in developing countries or examined the effective marketing factors of traditional products. Therefore, to fill this gap, the present survey has been done to find the Facebook advertising factors affecting the marketing sale of a handicraft called Pate, which is a traditional woven, embroidered product from southeast Iran that is usually bought as a luxury product for the home or as a gift for special events such as weddings, produced in Kerman, a large city famous for pistachios, oranges, dates, metals such as copper, and handmade items such as Pate.

The contribution of this study can be examined from two perspectives. First, it aims to provide an initial framework for developing handicraft markets, particularly in the context of Facebook. Previous studies have typically focused on specific aspects of this topic. Additionally, this study serves as a valuable platform for promoting Iranian handicraft products in both domestic and international markets. By doing so, it can help Iran improve its trade imbalance and showcase its branded products at both regional and global levels. This involves recording customer information, conducting real-time and continuous monitoring, addressing customer concerns, understanding their needs, and working to eliminate product defects. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve a superior market share. In order to meet the objectives stated, the paper was designed as follows. Firstly, the research background and hypotheses are discussed. Secondly, data analysis is done. Thirdly, the paper's results and discussion, and finally, a conclusion and recommendations are presented.

2. Review of literatures and theoretical framework

Nowadays, people live in a world that is surrounded by a huge amount of information. Customers face new methods of online shopping in social media [10]. As social media provides information about products and prices [11], online users have tended to join at least one social media platform to gain access to information about and updated information on a company and their products [12]. Therefore, having a good understanding of the different social media is very important when seeking to use social media for advertising purposes, as most consumers have negative attitudes

towards advertising [13]. The power of social media comes from its viral nature, whereby a consumer can spread a marketing message rapidly and to many people [14]. Because of the potential of social customer relationship management, many organizations have invested heavily in this area [15], as good customer relationship management has been found to have a positive effect on organizational performance and customer relationships [16]. Also, the bandwagon theory argues that firms follow a rival's behavior without thinking of the value-added consequences. So, business owners have no choice but to make a trustful environment not only for advertising their products but also for customers' interaction. Porter and Kramer claimed that firms now need to generate trust by having a stronger focus on social value creation [17].

2.1. Market trends

Social media has emerged as a novel tool for marketing communication, fostering valuable relationships with customers and disseminating the latest organizational offerings to key stakeholders to fulfill marketing objectives [2]. Given that social media are sources of big data, several researchers have explored the possibility of exploiting the information inferred from Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc., and web search exploration tools such as Google Trends and Yahoo! search query logs, to predict real-world outcomes [5]. Financial markets tend to move in a certain direction over time, which is called market trends. As the latest news and discussion topics are generally available on social media [18], it is relatively easy to determine the market trends for particular products. Therefore, the researchers propose the hypothesis that:

H1: Market trends have a positive effect on improving the sales of Pate via Facebook.

2.2. Corporate social responsibility

Previous research suggest that CSR directly impacts a company's financial performance, and this impact becomes more significant as the company's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) scores improve. Our findings contribute to the CSR literature in that we investigate how the valence of CSR performance and the readability of the CSR report jointly influence investors' judgment regarding financial performance, using a rigorous method to observe investor behaviors [19]. There are two views on whether CSR creates value from a business perspective. According to the stakeholder value maximization approach, CSR engagement secures the support of stakeholders and consequently increases company value. By contrast, the shareholder expense approach assumes that CSR is an expression of agency conflict. According to this view, CSR engagement is managers' opportunistic behavior that benefits other stakeholders (especially management) at the expense of shareholders [20]. Social media marketing, therefore, needs to focus on the responsibilities and organizational hierarchies employed to benefit the society and is also related to who can or should say what happens in social media, posting responsibilities, and interactions [21]. Therefore, the researchers propose the second hypothesis that:

H2: The social responsibility of the organization has a positive effect on

improving sales of Pate via Facebook.

2.3. Media power

The dynamic nature of social media has created a huge multiplier effect. Through the networking of friends and contacts, this leads to higher direct leverage for the digital marketers, who rely heavily on social media as a key platform and level field to deliver valued promises and better customer experiences [22]. In this sense, Facebook becomes more than just a platform to sell products; it also serves as a space for building relationships between sellers and consumers, creating a more meaningful and profitable online shopping experience. With its continuously evolving features and functionalities, Facebook remains a primary choice for businesses seeking success in the world of e-commerce [23,24]. Graham and Havlena demonstrated that the power of media can assist in passing knowledge from customer to customer without focus on time or location, which shows the power of media [5]. By harnessing the power of social media, marketers have more opportunities to communicate with customers and build personal relationships [25]. Media accessibility is a key factor in enhancing company satisfaction and boosting sales. Consumers tend to transform the online buying experience and Internet navigation, in general, into a hedonic-type consumption experience that is capable of counterbalancing the social pressure and stress that can be overwhelming during an economic and social crisis like the one that we are facing today. Accessibility is seen as a basic attribute, easy to understand by this type of consumer, and dominant in his perception of the idea of “successful online shopping” [26]. Therefore, the researchers propose the third hypothesis that:

H3: Media power has a positive effect on improving the sales of Pate on Facebook.

2.4. Relationship management

Relationship management is the means that organizations choose to engage with their targeted audiences. Social media has been found to be a cost-effective method for collecting customer data [18], and business owners act based on gathered information. In previous literature, social media’s role seems to be an essential item for communicational needs and has received attention for being able to create and develop interpersonal relations [6]. Network effects also play a significant role in using Facebook as an e-commerce platform. Users can easily share products they like with their friends, creating trusted personal recommendations. This not only expands the reach of businesses but also builds consumer trust [27]. In this way, both organizations’ owners and customers receive the numerous benefits. Social media has played an important role in marketing strategies. As part of social media, social networking sites can be utilized by companies to create direct communication and good relations with their customers. Social media marketing campaigns have become an effective factor affecting brand image and brand loyalty [28]. Also, Facebook likes serve as both a quality signal and a commitment mechanism [29]. Therefore, the researchers propose the fourth hypothesis that:

H4: Relationship management has a positive effect on Pate sales through Facebook.

2.5. Push rivals

Every single decision and action of the company or business, such as changing product prices or using different designs, can affect the rivals in the same or related business. Most of the business owners tend to follow others without considering the result of their actions. From another point of view, it can be helpful when a company is unsure of the costs, benefits, or stockholder influences; they can gain valuable information from their rivals [30]. International alliances enable domestic firms to access a foreign partner’s strategic resources, which they can then use to develop new sources of competitive advantage and strengthen their market positions [29]. It is interesting to see how rivals can be effective in selling traditional goods. Therefore, the researchers propose the fifth hypothesis that:

H5: Push rivals have a positive effect on Pate sales on Facebook.

2.6. Managing online customers

Facebook is the dominant social media network widely used by individuals and businesses for communication and commerce [27,31]. It seems to be difficult to organize all messages and reviews coming from customers, but it is essential to respond to all important ones to keep connections with customers. The result of a study that has been done in Malaysia showed that businesses should build a long-term relationship with their customers to have a successful marketing strategy [32]. In general, all companies and business owners must accept full responsibility for perfect service for their customers [18], and responding to their messages is one of them [33]. Consumers tend to transform the online buying experience and Internet navigation, in general, into a hedonic-type consumption experience that is capable of counterbalancing the social pressure and stress that can be overwhelming during an economic and social crisis like the one that we are facing today [20,3]. In this context, every factor that can contribute to easy access and easy navigation in the online environment acquires considerable importance [26]. Therefore, the researchers propose the sixth hypothesis that:

H6: Managing online customers has a positive effect on Pate sales through Facebook.

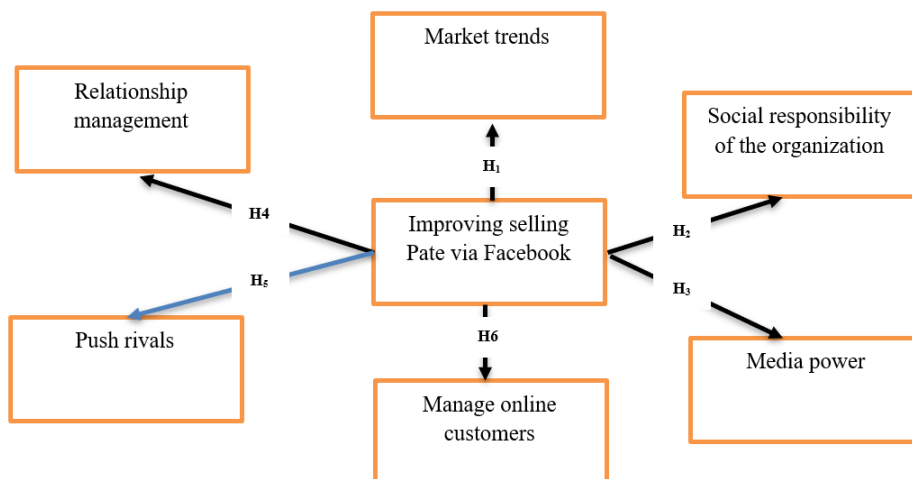


Figure 1. Conceptual model of study [26,28].

In accordance with the formulated hypotheses, the conceptual model of the research can be drawn in the form of **Figure 1**.

3. Methodology

The nature of the present study is quantitative. The research has six hypotheses, and for proving the hypotheses, the deductive method has been used.

3.1. Measurement development

To achieve the research aims, scale items were used that come from the previous literature. We use a five-point Likert scale questionnaire that has six parts: market trends, relationship management, social responsibility of the organization, push rival, media power, and managing online customers. In this study, we aimed to explore managers' perceptions regarding the impact of six variables on improving sales on Facebook. To achieve this, we employed the Likert scale. One of the main advantages of the Likert scale is its high accuracy in measuring attitudes and perceptions. Unlike binary questions (such as yes/no or true/false), the multiple-choice response options allow for a more nuanced expression of attitudes and enable a more detailed assessment of complex issues. **Table 1** briefly illustrates the background of the research.

Market trends, relationship management, social responsibility of the organization, push rival, media power, and managing online customers consisted of 4 items, 4 items, 3 items, 4 items, 4 items, and 3 items, respectively. Although there were more items, some items have been removed during the data analysis.

Table 1. Scale items.

Construct	Scale items	Sources
Market trends	Online sales	[25]
	Market leader	
	Provide a new concept of product	
	Demand for custom goods	
Social responsibility of the organization	Green marketing	[28]
	Create common values	
	Social power of the brand	
Media power	Survival campaigns	[34]
	Managing customer loss	
	Viral marketing	
	Social networks	
Organizational structure	Pricing strategy	[26]
	Advertising strategy	
	The future of managers research	
	Electronic business	

Table 1. (Continued).

Construct	Scale items	Sources
Push rivals	Strategic integration	[14]
	Cost leadership	
	Multiplicity rivals	
	The tendency of rivals to B2B	
Manage online customers	Customer relation management	[20]
	Perceived usefulness	
	Innovative customers	

3.2. Sample selection and data collection

Data has been collected from about 400 listed Pate workshops in Kerman and its environs. Data collection was conducted by four volunteers, who helped the responders to understand the concept of each question clearly. The statistical population of this study consisted of all managers of handicraft companies in Kerman province, with a total of 196 companies selected using the convenience sampling method. The sample size was determined based on the sampling formula and the Morgan table. In this study, the unit of analysis was the company itself, meaning that each company represented a sample. Managers and experienced members of each company were tasked with completing the questionnaire. To evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used, with the total coefficients being 0.750; therefore, the reliability of the questionnaire was supported [35]. In the next section, the questionnaire items are listed separately for each variable.

4. Results

The descriptive information for these respondents is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Data definition.

	Valid	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	100	51%
	Male	96	49%
Age	Between 20–30	51	26%
	Between 30–40	81	41.3%
	Between 40–50	45	23%
	More than 50 years old	19	9.7%
Education	Diploma	14	7.1%
	Associate degree	58	29.6%
	Bachelor	55	28.1%
	Master's	45	23%
	Doctoral	24	12.2%

Table 2. (Continued).

	Valid	Frequency	Percent
How long using Facebook	Less than 2 years	37	18.9%
	Between 2–4	93	47.4%
	Between 4–6	33	16.8%
	Between 6–8	21	10.7%
	More than 8 years	12	6.2%
Membership type	Official	78	39.8%
	Alliance	84	42.9%
	Contractual	34	17.3%

Out of 196 respondents, 49% of them were male and 51% were female. 41.3% of the respondents were between 20 and 30 years old, and 26% of them were from 30 to 40 years of age. In the case of educational levels, 29.6% of them were holding associate degrees and 28.1% had bachelor's degree. Average variance and composite reliability of the factors are given in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Average variance and composite reliability.

	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Market trends	0.725	0.382	0.741	0.591
Social responsibility of the organization	0.790	0.770	0.841	0.616
Media power	0.792	0.761	0.852	0.603
Organizational structure	0.852	0.939	0.882	0.755
Push rivals	0.713	0.567	0.755	0.510
Manage online customers	0.709	0.668	0.804	0.578

Average variances have been used to confirm convergent validity, which are higher than 0.50. The researchers use both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability to evaluate the model. As it is a requirement for explorative research, all the Cronbach's alpha are more than 0.60 and composite reliability is more than 0.70 [35].

4.1. Analysis methods

The results of factor loading with SPSS are shown in **Table 4**. The factors in the results and the expert opinions were used to develop the hypotheses and the model.

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis.

Construct	Items	Factor loadings					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Market trends	How much does "online sales" affect the development of exports by social networks?	0.876					
	How much does "market leader" affect the development of exports by social networks?	0.522					
	How much does "provide a new concept of product" affect the development of exports by social networks?	0.621					
	How much does "demand for custom goods" affect the development of exports by social networks?	0.535					

Table 4. (Continued).

Construct	Items	Factor loadings					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Social responsibility of the organization	How much does “ green marketing ” affect the development of exports by social networks?		0.521				
	How much does “ create common values ” affect the development of exports by social networks?		0.525				
	How much does “ social power of the brand ” affect the development of exports by social networks?		0.832				
Media power	How much does “ survival campaigns ” affect the development of exports by social networks?			0.656			
	How much does “ managing customer loss ” affect the development of exports by social networks?			0.546			
	How much does “ viral marketing ” affect the development of exports by social networks?			0.560			
	How much does “ social networks ” affect the development of exports by social networks?			0.506			
Relationship management	How much does “ pricing strategy ” affect the development of exports by social networks?				0.506		
	How much does “ advertising strategy ” affect the development of exports by social networks?				0.654		
	How much does “ the future of managers research ” affect the development of exports by social networks?				0.550		
	How much does “ electronic business ” affect the development of exports by social networks?				0.624		
Push rivals	How much does “ strategic integration ” affect the development of exports by social networks?					0.589	
	How much does “ cost leadership ” affect the development of exports by social networks?					0.592	
	How much does “ multiplicity rivals ” affect the development of exports by social networks?					0.662	
	How much does “ the tendency of rivals to B2B ” affect the development of exports by social networks?					0.569	
Manage online customers	How much does “ customer relation management ” affect the development of exports by social networks?						0.876
	How much does “ perceived usefulness ” affect the development of exports by social networks?						0.523
	How much does “ innovative customers ” affect the development of exports by social networks?						0.621

4.2. Second questionnaire

The final items from the first questionnaire were used to develop the second questionnaire, the purpose of which was to examine the hypotheses. Previous studies and articles, as well as the expert opinion from Pate workshop employees with years of experience, were used to determine the effective factors for improving Pate sales using Facebook marketing. To cover all conceptual factors in the hypotheses, six final factors were identified: market trends, organizational social responsibility, media power, relationship management, push rivals, and managing online customers. Amos software was used for the confirmatory factor analysis, as this could assist in exploring the hidden factors beyond the stated variables.

Using the parametric Pearson's correlation test, the relationships between the variables were investigated, and based on the results from the SPSS (**Table 5**) analyses, the significance level for each of six social marketing variables—market trends, organizational social responsibility, media power, relationship management, push rivals, and managing online customers—was found to be less than 0.05. All six hypotheses were supported, and each of the factors was found to have a direct and significant association with sales with a confidence interval of 0.95, which indicated that the higher the factor, the higher the relationship with Pate sales from the Kerman sewing workshops.

Table 5. Hypothesis test.

Independent variable	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig. (significance)	Hypothesis test result
Market trends	0.847	0.000	The first hypothesis supported
Organizational Social responsibility	0.845	0.000	The second hypothesis supported
Media power	0.849	0.000	The third hypothesis supported
Relationship management	0.825	0.000	The fourth hypothesis supported
Push rivals	0.853	0.000	The fifth hypothesis supported
Managing online customers	0.849	0.000	The sixth hypothesis supported

Based on Pearson's correlation coefficient and the significance levels, with each unit increase in each of the six social marketing variables, the relationship with Pate sales respectively increased to 0.847, 0.845, 0.849, 0.825, 0.853, and 0.849.

To evaluate the interactive effects of the variables, structural equations and AMOS were used. The results of the structural equation modeling were presented in a Pate chart, which is a graphic depiction of the structural equation modeling using graphical components such as a rectangle, an oval, and arrows. After developing the initial model using the structural equation modeling software, one of the challenging issues was to modify the model. The chi-square test was calculated at 0.750, which indicated that the model had a good fit. Some secondary indices were also employed: the root-mean-square error (RMSE), the Goodness-of-Fit (GFI), and the CMIN/DF. The RMSEA is the second fit statistic reported in the Amos program and explains how well a model with unknown but optimally chosen parameter estimates fits the population covariance matrix [35]. The Goodness-of-Fit (GFI) statistic is an alternative to the chi-square test and calculates the proportion of variance that is accounted for by the estimated population covariance [15]. By examining the variances and covariances accounted for by the model, it shows how closely the model comes to replicating the observed covariance matrix [36]. CMIN is the minimum value of the discrepancy between the model and the data; that is, when the chi-square is divided by its degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF), acceptable values should be in the 3/1 or 2/1 range.

MacCallum et al. suggested that the GFI should be equal to or greater than 0.9; when the GFI is above 0.9 and close to 1, the model is considered to be better [37]. MacCallum et al. also claimed that when the RMSEA was less than 0.05, the fitness is good and that the lower the RMSR values, the better [37].

4.3. Procedure

4.3.1. Initial study model

The GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) was found to be 0.763, and the NFI (Normed Fit Index) was found to be 0.531; however, optimally, these should be higher than 0.90. The RMSEA value was found to be 0.121; however, as the index was designed to evaluate the goodness of fit, the value needed to be less than 0.08, and the CMIN/DF value was found to be 3.845 (Table 6).

Table 6. Modified model’s chi-square value.

No	Result	Good value	Fit index
1	1.83	<3	X^2/df
2	0.948	>0.90	GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)
3	0.065	<0.08	(RMSEA)
4	0.901	>0.90	NFI (Normed Fit Index)
5	1.826	<3	CMIN/DF

As these results indicated that the model could not effectively evaluate the required variables, the modification was required. As shown, based on the estimated indices (Table 7), the structural study model had poor fit, and the model estimation results were unreliable.

Table 7. Chi-square for the initial model.

Chi-square	df	X^2/df	P-value	RMSEA
807.420	210	3.85	0.000	0.121

Therefore, the initial model required modification (Table 8).

Table 8. Fit indices for the initial structural model.

No	Result	Good value	Fit index
1	3.85	<3	X^2/df
2	0.763	>0.90	GFI
3	0.121	<0.08	RMSEA
4	0.531	>0.90	NFI
5	3.845	<3	CMIN/DF

4.3.2. Evaluation of research hypotheses

This section evaluates the research hypotheses based on Table 9 below.

Table 9. The significance level for the initial model for the relationships between the study variables.

Relationship Pate	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Pate sales ← Market trends	0.250	0.076	3.297	0.000
Pate sales ← Organizational social responsibility	0.404	0.090	4.472	0.000
Pate sales ← Media power	0.245	0.071	3.460	0.000

Table 9. (Continued).

Relationship Pate	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Pate sales ← Relationship management	0.060	0.035	1.714	0.086
Pate sales ← Push rivals	0.750	0.506	1.482	0.138
Pate sales ← Managing online customers	0.047	0.032	1.449	0.147

Depending on the significance level, three hypotheses were confirmed and three hypotheses were not confirmed at the 5% error level.

5. Discussion

After analyzing the questionnaire’s data, we provided the following results. The evaluation of the model fit based on the estimated indices (**Table 7**) found that the structural model had a good fit and the estimation results were reliable, as shown in **Tables 7** and **8**. Based on the information in the tables, three factors—market trends, media power, and customer relationship management; were found to have the greatest effect on pate sales through Facebook in Iran (**Table 10**).

Table 10. Significance levels for the modified model for the relationships between the studied variables.

Relationship Pate	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Pate sales ← Market trends	0.387	0.097	3.990	0.000
Pate sales ← Media power	0.380	0.100	3.779	0.000
Pate sales ← Relationship management	0.182	0.109	1.664	0.096

As it is clear from the information provided by figure three, market trends have positive effects on selling pate via Facebook. It is because of workshop owners, who learned how to lead the market based on their products and goals. Apart from that, Facebook provides the chance of building the new concept for goods and creating demands for them, which comes from sharing posts and communicating with followers. Another factor that proved to be effective is media power. The usage of social networks helps to manage customers and provide the products or services that they are looking for easily. The possibility of presenting the products’ shape, size, color, and so on by photos; gathering customers’ information; finding their opinion about our products or service; solving their problems by taking action based on their complains; and more are just some examples of the amount of power that a shop owner can have by using social media. Last but not least, relationship management shows positive effects on selling Pate by helping to build the right pricing and advertising strategy and also to find managers’ research target. This research does not support the online sales as the literature discussed above related to the market trends. So, market leader, provide a new concept of product and demand for custom goods to build the definition of market trends in our research. The electronic businesses do not seem to be a part of relationship management; therefore, pricing strategy and marketing strategy, followed by the future of managers’ research, provide the concept of relationship management here.

6. Conclusions

This article examined the factors which social media could be utilized to improve selling traditional products in a historical country, from which it was found that modern marketing methods could be helpful in selling traditional goods by paying attention to three factors; market trends, media power, and relationship management; all of which were found to have a positive effect on improving selling the handicraft Pate on Facebook. Although there has been a significant rise in social media users and a commensurate rise in the number of companies seeking to exploit social media to sell products, it is unknown whether this modern marketing method can assist in improving the sales of traditional goods. Based on our knowledge, there is not any article which focus on selling handcraft (Pate) in Facebook.

Based on the statistical results, it was found that market trend was an effective factor on improving selling Pate via Facebook. McCoy et al. found that a good understanding of the social media platform could assist managers develop appropriate advertising strategies, especially when customers had negative attitudes towards advertising [13]. Therefore, as certain markets develop, marketing designs need to adapt to the new technology and the new market trends; that is, marketing plans need to be based on current trends, no matter whether the products and service are modern, fashionable, or traditional. Besides keeping in contact with their friends, Iranian Facebook users are always seeking new knowledge; therefore, Facebook is a potential customer source for companies to display and sell their products as products and services that can be accepted and shared are more likely to gain greater sales.

The power of Facebook to increase Pate sales was found to be important, as it is accessed by a wide range of age groups, each of whom tends to use it for different reasons. While social media applications are popular around the world, different populations use the media differently based on their culture or because of the ease of access. Many Iranians have joined Facebook because it is free and is easy to use. Gone are the days when people bought products from catalogs or TV advertising. As de Vries et al. [38] demonstrated, the viral nature of social media is its main power source, which makes Facebook a powerful tool for Iranian people to search for what they want and review the comments from others before making decisions. People spend a long time every day sharing information and their stories with other users as well as looking for new content on their pages. Also, the result of research in 2015 showed that word of mouth and customers' interaction can improve the selling process [39]. Relationship management was found to be another effective factor for increasing Pate sales through Facebook. As people join Facebook and other social media to make wider connections, there is a strong possibility that people in one geographic area could get to know each other and ask advice about products. These types of relationships can have effects on pricing and advertising strategies. Srinivasan and Moorman, and Trainor et al. all proved that the relationships on social media had a positive effect on advertising on these media. [25,2,36].

Limitations and future suggestions

This research had some data collection limitations. First, in the present study, the unit of analysis was the company, and each person represented a company, which may

lead to bias in the research results due to personal reasons and beliefs. Second, in the present study, due to limitations in the collected samples, all handicraft companies were examined in terms of size, history, and revenue, which may affect the research results.

Also, as this study is exploratory in specific nature, future studies need to be directed towards the whole city, including all countryside, as the marketing behavior can be different from place to place. As this research only examined the factors related to selling on Facebook, these results cannot be generalized to other social media. Further, as we only consulted the managers and workers in the Pate workshops, customer attitudes were not considered. Therefore, future research should explore the effective marketing factors on other social networks (like Instagram), and future research should extend the findings in this survey to Pate Facebook customers. Finally, as a questionnaire was used to collect the data, it was difficult to assess the individual opinions about the effective marketing factors. Therefore, to add to these findings, follow-up qualitative research interviews could identify additional factors. The present research elaborates a structural model that examines the different items' influence on selling pate via Facebook. The result of the study helps the shop owners of Pate workshops to improve their sales and make better marketing plans, which leads them to more profit. Shop owners and managers can experience considerable growth by adopting this model and create strong relationships with customers by paying attention to all three variables discussed in this study.

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