Role of Social Media Advertising in the Marketing Performance of Sepahan Oil Company by Total Interpretive Structural Model (TISM)

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ABSTRACT

E-marketing is one of the objective manifestations of the information and communication technology revolution in the field of economics. This style of marketing is rapidly expanding due to its rich benefits. It can be said with certainty that e-marketing has overcome many of the limitations of traditional marketing, and it has changed not only the form and appearance of traditional marketing but also the content of business, a change that is the basis of any action in the field of economics. Accordingly, in recent years, companies active in the field of oil, like other industrial companies, to understand customers' values, have sought to develop their marketing programs in the field of e-marketing so that they can reach competitive values even in achieving sanctions conditions. In this study, which was synthetic and inductive–deductive in terms of data collection method, 12 marketing management specialists at the university level participated as panel members in the quality department. In fact, in the qualitative part, which used meta-synthesis and Delphi analysis, the aim was to identify the contents of e-marketing statements in advancing the marketing goals of oil companies. In a small part, with the participation of 16 managers and deputies of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company, the identified propositions were in the form of a comprehensive structural interpretive analysis based on the priority of effectiveness. Therefore, relying on meta-analysis, the first 26 studies were reviewed as a basis for

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evaluation to determine the content of e-marketing propositions in advancing the marketing goals of oil companies in the form of critical evaluation. According to this, 21 themes of selected propositions were entered into Delphi analysis in a checklist manner to determine the theoretical adequacy. At this stage, 7 propositions were removed during the two stages of Delphi analysis, and a total of 16 propositions were included in the quantitative analysis section, i.e., comprehensive structural interpretive analysis. In this section, the results showed that the content of the proposition of creating an intelligent marketing system to recognize changes in the oil industry at the ninth level was determined as the most effective e-marketing factor in advancing the marketing goals of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company.

1. Introduction

Oil as an economic and value-based commodity for the sovereignty of countries, even today, despite the growing trend of using new energy such as nuclear energy, has not lost its position as a raw and complementary energy and is still the most important It is part of the world's energy demand, met by fossil fuels (Hartmann et al., 2021). In other words, this strategic and vital commodity for the survival of societies has become an instrument of power over the past few decades, and even with the advent of new energies, its value and importance have not diminished. Due to its past and present connections with different sectors of the economy, oil has become the engine of development in economic growth and the axis of connection with different sectors of the economy. On the one hand, the oil industry is a demander for goods and services from different sectors of the economy. On the other hand, it is a supplier of fuel and food for a long chain of industries (Shirin Abadifarahani, 2018). Nevertheless, although the production of this strategic product based on advanced technologies can be the reason for the difference between countries with strategic power in the field of the oil economy, the distribution and marketing of this product today have gone far beyond traditional marketing methods. Moreover, it has led to countries having the ability to distribute this product more quickly to their customers in a raw form or its derivatives having a higher strategic advantage (Munodawafa and Johl, 2021). It is noteworthy that the increasing penetration of the Internet and social networks has caused companies to change their marketing methods based on the development of IT infrastructure and, while accelerating the exchange of information with their customers, it can eliminate intermediaries, increasing the functions of developing their markets (Agarwal et al., 2020). Although marketing methods at the level of marketing of petroleum products

may differ from other commercial products due to political interference and economic sanctions, due to the increasing prevalence of network technologies and online communications, this important part of marketing is ignored in the distribution and sale of petroleum products. Especially in the political conditions of our country's diplomacy with other countries in the world, there are more restrictions on the marketing of petroleum products in our country's economy, especially in the form of electronic marketing. In this regard, it should be noted that in the face of US oil sanctions and given current financial constraints and traditions resulting from the war, Iran has adopted policies in the field of marketing oil products and related products in a competitive environment. It has not been very effective and has made the world's largest oil exporter unable to take advantage of marketing potential to develop economic sustainability (Dolaii, 2018). In other words, most marketing methods for selling and supplying petroleum products are based on traditional marketing principles and functions and have never been able to develop the capacity of this sector, especially at the beginning of the new century (Hatefi and Wahhabi, 2018). Of course, some measures taken in this area were inevitable. They are sometimes justified to a limited extent due to international restrictions. However, when referring to the perspective of 2025 and determining the position of the oil industry in this document, they are very vital and strategic for the development of special geo-economic situations. The geopolitics and geostrategy of the country are planned under the domination of this black matter, and focusing on its sale and distribution in regional and global markets is one of the important priorities of the vision document of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the oil and economy sector (Abbaszadeh et al., 2013). Although difficult to achieve in today's sanctions environment, e-marketing methods as a pervasive marketing function, while circumventing

many sanctions, have kept the country's economic strength in line with the prospects. To improve the marketing of crude oil and promote Iran's position in the global oil market, the electronic market will help create a major change in the country's oil export sector (Mottaghi, 2019). Efforts to achieve the goals of the oil industry within the framework of a strategic planning system considered environmental factors (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and observance of dynamism to respond to environmental changes in the needs of industry in the evolution of companies and related industries. The arena will be possible and create exchange markets based on the development of information technology by eliminating intermediaries and speeding up transactions with customers. Therefore, this study analyzes Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company, a leading company in this industry, due to the global experiences it has gained over the past years to identify the most effective topics related to this field by identifying the dimensions of electronic marketing in order to evaluate the effective strategic functions in the future while evaluating the correct e-marketing programs.

2. Literature review
2.1. Electronic marketing

Beyond developing a website, e-marketing focuses on online communications, direct dialogue with consumers involved in creating new products, finding effective ways to gain customer loyalty, and facilitating the processes that drive a business. E-marketing is a set of activities to find, attract, and gain customers. E-marketing enables digital communication in an engaging and networked environment (Chaffey and Ellis, 2019). E-marketing reduces costs by saving buyer time and making shopping easier. Many business models can increase customer benefits and increase value. E-marketing refers to how the Internet can be used alongside traditional media to provide customer services and discusses how internal and external marketing processes and communications can be improved through communication and information technology (Habibi et al., 2015). Kennedy (2011) presented the dimensions of e-marketing in a specific framework in Figure 1.
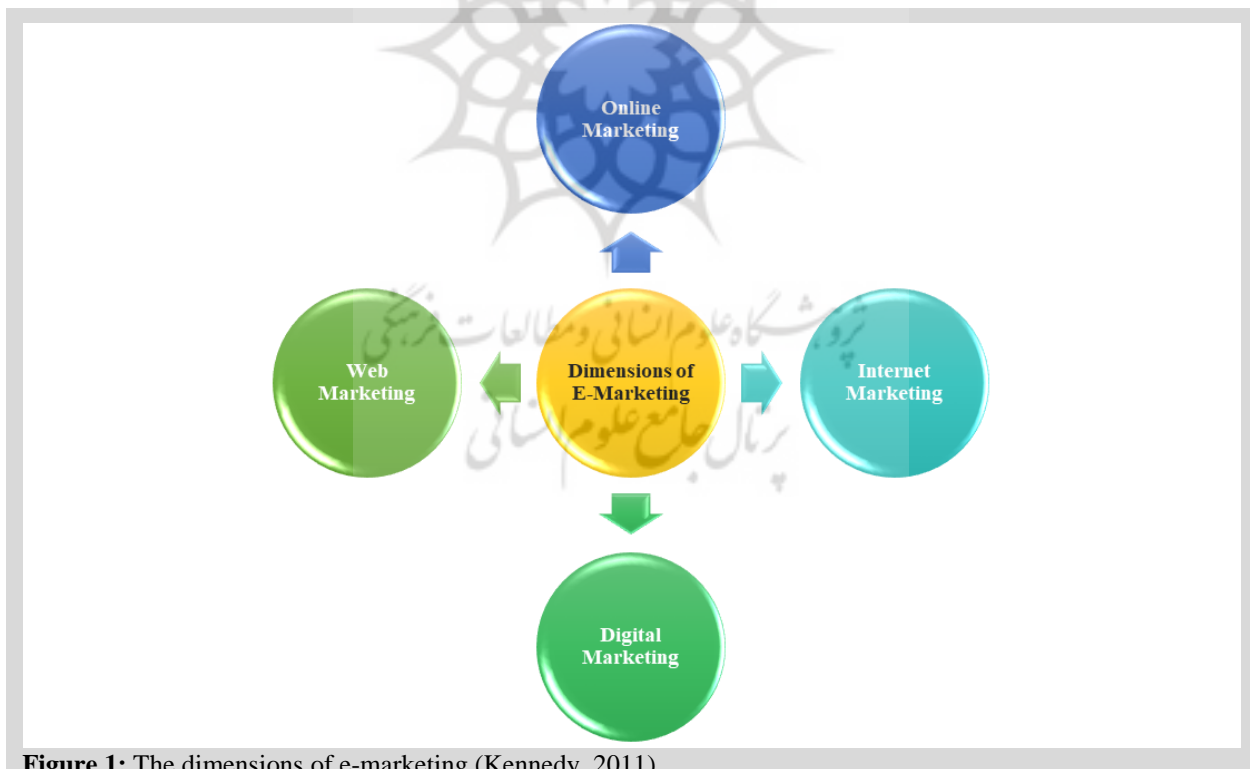

Figure 1: The dimensions of e-marketing (Kennedy, 2011)

Although the concept of e-marketing is broader than the concepts mentioned above, internet marketing can be a concept of making money, selling products, and providing services through the Internet, including all marketing activities through email, pop-ups, chat rooms,

social networks, link exchange, and search engines (Saeedbakhsh et al., 2020). Internet marketing is the creation of online marketing channels for customers and allows them to be quickly analyzed and reported. E-marketing, however, covers a wide range, as it covers not

only Internet marketing but also telephone, mobile, electronic hall books, and digital business exchanges to achieve marketing goals. It is noteworthy that e-marketing pursues the same goals as traditional marketing, except that e-marketing seeks innovation through new technology tools and methods (Pattinson and Brown, 1996). E-marketing is not a specific function that is only related to the sale of products and services. It is a management process to manage the relationship between the organization and the customer. E-marketing is more of a process than traditional marketing through Internet technology. This method establishes a two-way relationship between marketers and customers in an interactive way. In other words, based on the existence of electronic channels, it is possible to communicate with customers to spread marketing messages and lead to more cognitive interaction between companies and customers. Through an advanced media environment, they try to bring more profit to the company by conveying complete information to customers while reducing transaction costs and accelerating the sale of products without intermediaries (Graesch et al., 2021).

2.2. Marketing goals of oil companies in Iran

Given the particular characteristics of crude oil, such as its extensive connection to political issues, oil marketing economic issues such as sanctions have made the functional conditions of this strategic commodity different from those of other commodities. Especially in our country, due to the lack of economic and political diplomacy, the situation is much more acute than in other countries with this precious reserve. In general, in the current system of the country's oil industry, marketing is considered equivalent to sales, and marketing-related units are more engaged in concluding contracts and selling oil (post-marketing stages) (Razavi and Rasooli-Amirabadi, 2018). Some experts in marketing and selling oil in Iran, due to the particular characteristics of the country's oil market, including supply constraints and recognition of customers and Iranian crude oil in the market, basically describe traditional marketing because marketing is summarized in the sale of oil. These experts state that due to the unpredictable fluctuations of the oil market and the increasing competition of the world's oil suppliers, especially in times of recession, marketing and trying to find new markets and new customers, retaining current customers, and achieving sales contracts with better conditions are constant and undeniable necessities (Parsa et al., 2015). It should be noted that successful marketing, even in the oil field, requires the selection of appropriate strategies and the identification and analysis of specific environmental factors such as the market, competitors, economic and commercial businesses, syndicates, and general environmental factors (e.g., technology, social situation, analyzing economic and political opportunities and threats, and recognizing the role and importance of key players in regional and international markets). Generally, the following framework summarizes the marketing goals of Iranian oil companies based on Dolaii's study (2018).
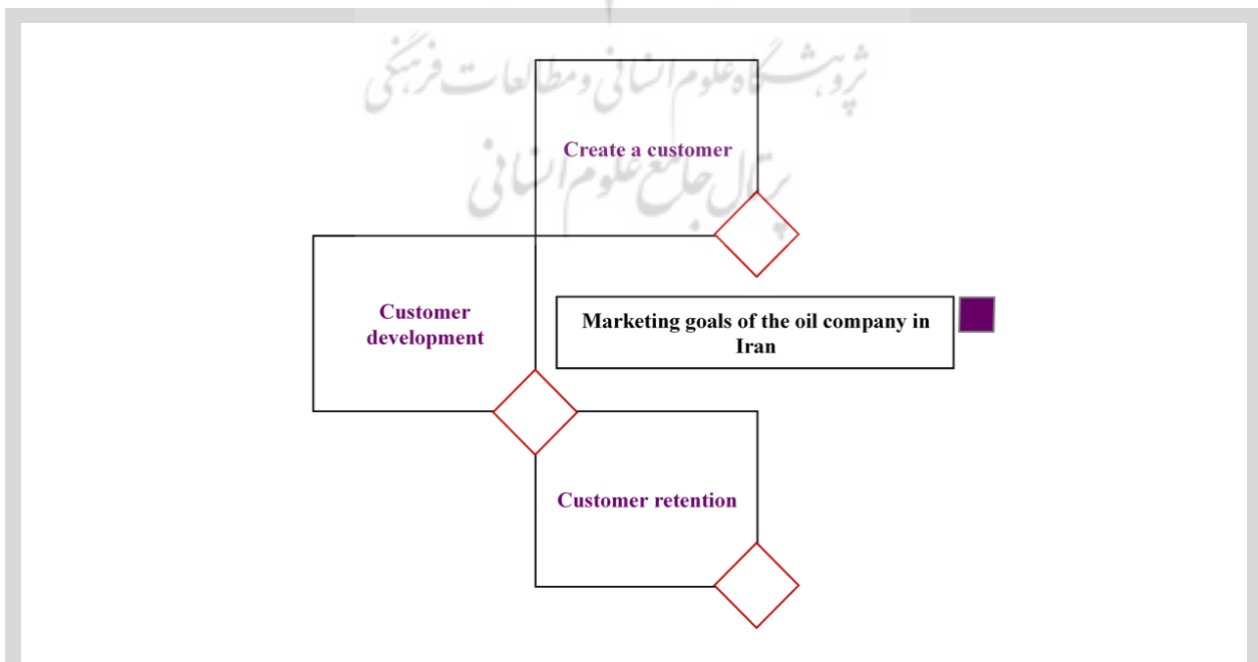

Figure 2: The marketing goals of oil companies in Iran (Dolaii, 2018)

As this framework shows, regardless of marketing strategies, the most crucial goal in marketing oil companies in Iran is to attract customers and retain them, and due to the lack of coherent strategies in the field of oil marketing, customer retention in this area may be challenged. The market development strategy in the oil field includes strategic planning for developing current and new markets in which oil companies try to do their best to match opportunities with the company's resources, even if it fails to create the opportunity for sudden development (Ghasemi et al., 2018). Companies

in this field seek to create a competitive advantage to increase profits or survival, increase production capacity, make technological progress, produce a wide variety of products, and have close competition. Increasing customer awareness has caused the attraction and retention of customers due to the lack of targeted marketing strategies in the Iranian oil field to become the concern of most companies in this field. In a cognitive breakdown of oil marketing strategies in Iran, Soleimian and Shahbazi (2017) presented a six-dimensional model.

Figure 3: A six-dimensional model of Iranian oil marketing strategies (Soleimian and Shahbazi, 2017)
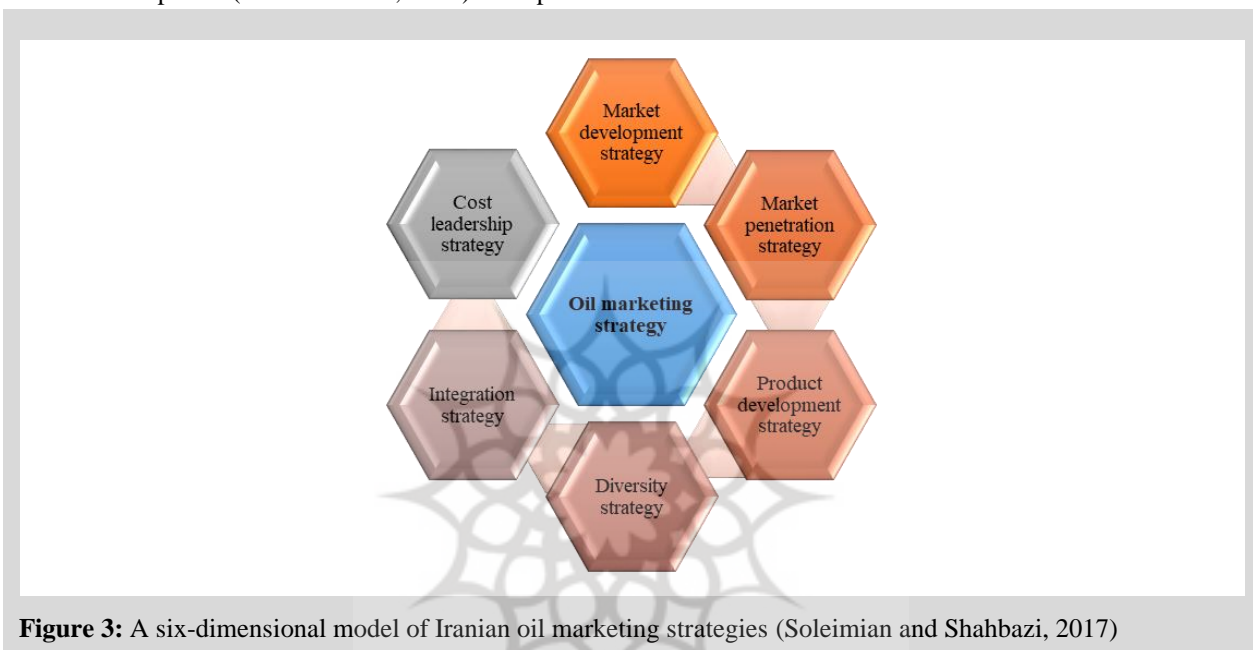
According to this model, the market development strategy follows the strategic approach of oil companies in terms of competitive advantage to increase profits by retaining existing customers and attracting new customers by focusing on its position in the market, which increases crude oil production capacity and its derivatives. Technological infrastructure development is among this strategy's goals (Soleimian and Shahbazi, 2017). Nevertheless, the oil companies' market penetration strategy focuses on maintaining quality to increase marketing activities in its current position. In other words, oil companies' market penetration strategy relies on selling current products in a market whose customers have a long-term relationship with the company in question, and the users of this strategy try to maintain their position in the current market. Based on the product development strategy, oil companies try to offer their new products to customers in existing markets based on production methods to develop products in terms of differences with other competing goods. In this strategy, oil companies offer products different from the

products of their competitors and past products to customers with a new process and idea (Dolaii, 2018). The marketing diversity strategy of oil companies refers to the supply of new products to the company to new markets. This strategy is used in times of intense regional competition regarding oil sales, which may pose a significant risk to the company.

On the other hand, the integrated marketing strategy of oil companies also refers to controlling competing companies or companies with specialized knowledge and even distribution channels, which can offer their products to their customers under another brand, even in the presence of sanctions. Finally, oil companies' cost leadership strategy refers to marketing functions aimed at reducing the price of products offered to their customers while maintaining product quality to maintain the current market in the face of intense competition and economic sanctions (Shin and Mahmoudlu, 2021).

2.3. Oil digital marketing strategy

The Stated Policies Scenario of the International Energy Agency (IEA) indicates that "global growth in oil demand slows markedly post-2025 before flattening out in the 2030s" (Ruml and Qaim, 2020). The IEA forecast that a peak of passenger cars will be reached in the late 2020s, and these cars are a primary consumer of oil-based products. It is expected to happen due to the energy transition, that is, a significant switch to electric cars soon becomes cost-competitive with conventional cars. However, due to the global paradigm shift to sustainable development, more companies are setting up strategies to implement clean energy to mitigate climate change risks. Companies are also urged to set up sustainability and other strategies such as energy transition, low-carbon, and decarburization. Those strategies and policies usually focus on a particular direction of sustainable development, such as renewable energy promotion, energy efficiency increase, net carbon footprint ambition, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, ESG concept, and decarburization path. However, if these goals are to be achieved, oil production must be significantly reduced or completely abandoned. The increasing social and economic pressures on oil companies' demands provide answers about the future of these companies. Without them, the normal functioning of economies is impossible, but with their business-as-usual practice, the safe life of future generations is at risk.

The oil industry is highly competitive, so as a provider, it is essential to success that one stays ahead of the competition. Marketing for oil and gas companies is critical, especially online marketing. Online marketing is one of the best ways to ensure that the oil and gas company gains the customers it needs to succeed in terms of sales and revenue. With digital oil marketing, a business can reach current and future clients where they spend most of their time online. When advertising an oil company on the Internet to obtain more clients, nothing is more worthy than digital marketing strategies. Every oil company's main concern is generating. They need a robust online presence to convert their potential audience into happy clients. As the popularity of online marketing is continuously growing, oil companies should start selling their oil products on the Internet. We will discuss digital marketing, the oil and gas industry, the relationship between the two, and how the latter can benefit from the former. Digital marketing is advertising delivered through digital channels such as social media, mobile applications, email, web applications, search engines, websites, or any new digital channel. It can also be defined as any form of marketing products or services that involves online and offline electronic devices.

Most marketing professionals tend to hire a digital agency that does not know the industry dynamics of the energy sector. Thus, before doing the same, we perhaps look into hiring a marketing professional who can guide the marketing department. As soon as we hire a marketing professional, the oil and gas marketing team will learn and understand the dynamics of content, engagement, and digital infrastructure. Once that is achieved, we can then start the agency-hiring process. During the selection process, ensure they know the difference between downstream, upstream, and midstream; offshore and onshore; refining processes; and petrochemicals. The agency should talk and understand the language of oil and gas.

There are four key factors to consider when creating a digital marketing strategy for an oil and gas company. Fortunately, there are plenty of reasons to be excited about digital marketing, social media, and their current and future place in the oil and gas industry.

Customer acquisition and retention: With this new age, oil and gas companies need to speed up when it comes to being present with relevant content and executing value-added marketing activities. This means that, in this new age, it is essential to have a step up on competition from a digital marketing standpoint as both large- and small-scale customers are making decisions to buy a product or use a service, not only based on salespeople or consultants but also on social media branding. This means that by having a digital "leg-up" against the competition, service providers can gain an early edge when facilitating the initial phases of the buying process through their online presence. The importance of solid storytelling, SEO, and providing content in the appropriate context of channels like Twitter, Facebook, and traditional media are consistently echoed and cannot be overemphasized. Moreover, the fact that this tool is more than cost-effective makes us wonder why more oil and gas companies have not joined the bandwagon. Specifically, content, SEO, and customer experience were named as "no-budget" activities that companies can focus on when the marketing budget is stretched or not there at all to continue to grow in challenging times.

Good online strategy leads to positive ROI: With the right metrics and tools, marketing efforts can and should be linked to measurable financial gains. It is straightforward for an in-house digital marketing team to

be confused about the right metrics to focus on. "likes" and "tweets" are great, but they are not what to focus on as primary digital marketing metrics unless your online activities will just be viewed as an expense. A digital strategy, including solid content, in the proper context, with metrics linked back to the business' KPIs, can and should be a core aspect of that plan to continue driving growth and differentiation in the increasingly competitive energy sector.

Using social media platforms to take advantage of the B2B nature of the oil and gas industry: Top company executives and decision-makers are all online and on social media, and it is required to ensure that the company's target market, whether CEOs of multinationals, directors or government official, sees the brand in the proper perspective. By using social media in the proper context, oil and gas companies can form connections with an online community they might otherwise not reach while engaging their employees who define their culture and are ambassadors for the brand.

Bid for pay-per-click (PPC): Pay-per-click represents a compelling shift in how B2B companies handle advertising. Instead of pumping tons of money into print advertising, we can now compete for who sees our advertisements once they have searched for relevant terms to our industry. This potentially represents a more efficient model for conserving our budget since we only pay for the interest generated from our ads, i.e., the number of people who click our ads. For example, if someone searches for "remote monitoring for oil and gas", you can present an ad highlighting your company's SCADA solutions for integrating dispersed assets across the oilfield. Once clicked, we can direct the visitor directly to the landing page on our website to lead them further into the funnel.

3. Research background

Shin and Mahmoudlu (2021) conducted a study entitled "Comparative Comparison of Global Oil Market Strategies in Saudi Arabia and Iran". This research was conducted methodologically as a case study from the perspective of three dimensions of political strategy. Economic and social strategies examined the differences in oil marketing between Iran and Saudi Arabia. In terms of political strategy, the difference between the types of governments in terms of left and right and in terms of adherence to traditions and governance practices in governing the country was an issue that played an essential role in the sale and marketing of oil between the two countries. The two countries also had substantial

economic differences because Saudi Arabia was rich and economically prosperous.

In contrast, Iran has been involved in issues such as sanctions and inflation for more than 20 years due to many economic problems from the end of the last century and the beginning of this century. Finally, regarding social strategies, it shows that Iran has considered the desire to remove oil in the past few years, while Saudi Arabia's one-dimensional economy on oil may cause many problems for its economy in the coming years. Munodawafa and Johl (2021) conducted a study entitled "Development of a Standard for Environmental Innovation Capabilities of Malaysian Oil and Gas Companies". In this research, three dimensions of innovation capability in environmental processes were identified by studying the theoretical literature of similar research and interviews with experts. Then, based on exploratory analysis and factor validation, an attempt was made to evaluate and validate the components of each of the three capabilities. The results of all three dimensions of environmental innovation capability, including technological commitment in the field of the environment, approved the prevention of environmental pollution and sustainable development based on nine sub-components. These results suggest that Malaysian oil and gas companies must consider all three dimensions to develop and mechanize their processes.

Taherifard et al. (2020) conducted a study entitled "Sensitivity of the Crude Oil Market to Insecurity in the Persian Gulf region". According to the study, the Persian Gulf countries account for 47.8%, 32.3%, and 31.1% of the world's oil reserves, production, and exports, respectively, which indicates its importance for the international oil and gas market. Despite the unrest in the region in recent years, such as the unrest in Bahrain, the Iraq conflict, the Yemeni–Saudi war, the embargo on Iranian oil, and even the Yemeni attacks on Saudi Arabia's largest crude oil processing plant, the oil market has not reacted significantly. This article shows that over time, the sensitivity of the oil market to various political, economic, and security events in this market has decreased, and despite the decline in production and exports of crude oil in recent times, the price has practically decreased. The most important reason for this is the surplus of oil supply and the expectation of its continuation in the coming years. This shows that crude oil is changing from a strategic product to a purely economic commodity. Varhrami and Yavarimehr (2020) conducted a study entitled "Modeling Factors Affecting the Behavior of Iranian Oil Prices in the Northwest European Market". This study investigated the factors

affecting oil prices using the multivariate Garch model from 2 to 3 AD. The results showed that in addition to the role of oil exchanges in oil prices, other factors such as the dollar index, trading positions, crude oil quality, market time structure, and the type of oil affect the price. The impact of factors such as oil quality, capital market index, time structure, and trading positions on the price of crude oil is positive, and factors such as the dollar index and competing crude oil have a negative impact on crude oil prices.

4. Methodology

Based on the methodological classification of each research according to the result, objective, and data type, this research is considered developmental because the concepts related to e-marketing in advancing the marketing goals of the oil company theoretically do not have a coherent framework in the public sector. Moreover, since this research seeks to develop the theoretical basis of this concept in Isfahan Sepahan Oil Company, it is considered a development from this perspective. Further, based on the purpose, this research is among the descriptive research to explain the phenomenon of developing electronic marketing to advance the oil company's marketing goals. Finally, in terms of logic, data collection is inductive–deductive. In the qualitative part, relying on the inductive approach, the theoretical foundations of propositional themes in the development of e-marketing to advance the marketing goals of the oil company are first analyzed. Then, based on inductive induction, the proposition identified in the target community, i.e., the managers and deputies, become Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company. In this combined research, meta-synthesis is used in the qualitative part. Meta-combination includes steps to reach components and propositions, and perhaps the most critical way to do this is through process steps, which range from recognizing the root cause of the problem in the form of the research question to providing a specific model based on identifying propositional themes from previous research based on member participation, including the panel. Then, based on Delphi analysis, an attempt is made to confirm the propositions in terms of theoretical adequacy to determine the theoretical adequacy according to the two criteria of average and coefficient of agreement. Finally, in a quantitative part, through the analysis of a comprehensive interpretive and structured model, the identified layers are explained in the form of a prioritization model in terms of influence and effectiveness.

4.1. Statistical population and research sampling method

The target population in the qualitative section includes the relevant research on the research topic and 12 marketing management specialists at the university and company level who identify the content propositions of the research based on the process of meta-synthesis, critical evaluation, and Delphi analysis. A homogeneous qualitative sampling method was used in the form of panel group members to select these individuals. In this sampling method, the researcher selects his/her samples intending to gain deep, focused, and detailed knowledge from those who have experienced this phenomenon and can provide much information to the researcher. However, the target population was a small number of 16 managers and deputies of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company, which is acceptable from the statistical population due to the need to analyze a comprehensive interpretive and structured model while having the necessary experimental and scientific conditions. Because the purpose of the participation of this community is to explain the results of the quality sector in Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company, this method is based on the analysis of complex systems at certain levels. Participants must do it based on specific criteria, such as experience or expertise. A cross-matrix questionnaire with 15 to 30 people is usually designed. Researchers such as Singh and Kant (2011), Malone (2014), Ramesh et al. (2008), and Attri et al. (2013) predicted the optimal limit for selecting the number of samples in the range of 15 to 30 people and stated that the basis for selecting the sample population was the available sampling method according to filters following the nature of the research.

5. Findings

In the first step of the research to determine the components and propositions of electronic marketing in advancing the marketing goals of the oil company based on meta-analysis and referring to databases and research authorities, an attempt was made to determine the mentioned components and propositions based on critical evaluation. As described in Section Theoretical Foundations, 26 research studies were conducted between 2013 and 2021. Then, with the participation of 12 marketing management specialists at the university level and the company based on 10 criteria of the critical evaluation method, including research objectives, the logic of the research method, research design, sampling, data collection, reflectivity, the accuracy of analysis, and the theoretical and transparent expression of findings and

research value, the evaluation of the research in terms of screening was theoretical.

Table 4: The evaluation process of approved research to determine propositional themes

Critical evaluation criteria/research	Research purposes	The logic of the research method	Research design	Sampling	How to collect	Generalized findings	Ethical	What a statistical analysis	Theoretical capability	The value of research	Total
Whitelock et al. (2013)	3	2	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	2	24
S.-C. Chu et al. (2013)	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	27
Muk et al. (2014)	2	3	4	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	27
Akar and Mardikyan (2014)	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	34
Sano (2014)	5	3	2	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	34
Setiawati and Pratiwi (2015)	3	4	5	5	3	4	3	3	3	4	37
Boateng and Okoe (2015)	3	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	34
J. Lee and Hong (2016)	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	5	3	34
Lin and Kim (2016)	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	22
Noprisson et al. (2016)	3	3	3	3	4	3	5	3	3	3	33
Zhang and Mao (2016)	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	33
Octaviani (2016)	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	19
Z. Zhu et al. (2016)	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	4	4	32
Talih Akkaya et al. (2017)	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	34
Amegbe et al. (2017)	4	5	3	3	3	4	5	4	3	4	38
N. Kim and Kim (2018)	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	33
Alalwan (2018)	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	32
Ajina (2019)	2	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	23
Wijaya et al. (2019)	2	3	4	5	3	3	4	3	4	3	34
Kyriakopoulou et al. (2019)	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	31
S. C. Chu and Chen (2019)	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	22
Mekawie and Hany (2019)	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	33
An and Kwak (2019)	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	24
Sreejesh et al. (2020)	3	4	5	5	4	5	5	3	4	4	42
Luo et al. (2020)	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	27
Niu et al. (2021)	3	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	5	4	41

Based on the results of the critical evaluation based on the score checklists, it was determined that out of a total of 26 similar studies in line with the subject under study, 9 studies would be removed from the review process because they scored below 30. In order to determine the themes of e-marketing statements in advancing the marketing goals of the oil company, the following scoring method was used. Based on this method, all sub-criteria extracted from the text of approved articles were written in the table column, and then the approved research researchers' names were listed in each table row. Based on each researcher's use of the sub-criteria written in the table column, the symbol "☑" was inserted, then the scores of each ☑ were added together in the sub-criteria column, and the scores above the average of the researchers were selected as research components.

Table 5: The analysis of the main themes of e-marketing propositions in advancing the marketing goals of the oil company

No.	Critical evaluation criteria/research	Communication functions	Blended functions	Accelerated functions	Diversification functions	Knowledge functions
1	Akar and Mardikyan (2014)	☑	-	-	☑	☑
2	Sano (2014)	-	☑	-	☑	-
3	Setiawati and Pratiwi (2015)	☑	-	-	-	☑
4	Boateng and Okoe (2015)	-	-	☑	-	☑
5	J. Lee and Hong (2016)	☑	-	☑	-	-
6	Noprisson et al. (2016)	☑	-	-	☑	-
7	Zhang and Mao (2016)	☑	-	-	-	☑
8	Z. Zhu et al. (2016)	-	☑	☑	-	-
9	Talih Akkaya et al. (2017)	☑	-	☑	-	-
10	Amegbe et al. (2017)	-	☑	-	-	☑
11	N. Kim and Kim (2018)	☑	☑	-	-	-
12	Alalwan (2018)	-	-	☑	-	☑
13	Wijaya et al. (2019)	-	-	☑	☑	-
14	Kyriakopoulou et al. (2019)	☑	☑	-	☑	☑
15	Mekawie and Hany (2019)	-	☑	☑	-	-
16	Sreejesh et al. (2020)	☑	☑	☑	-	☑
17	Niu et al. (2021)	☑	-	☑	☑	☑
Total		10	7	9	6	9

According to the approval of 17 research works in the critical evaluation process, the main components that have obtained more than half of the approved research are approved as the main themes in determining the research propositions. In this section, after analyzing the theoretical foundations of approved research and confirming the three main themes, the contents of the research propositions have been determined according to Table 6.

Then, Delphi analysis was used to reach the theoretical saturation point to ensure the identified components and propositions. For this purpose, these statements were provided to experts for the survey in the form of a checklist of seven options. Table 7 shows the results of the Delphi analysis.

Table 6: The themes of e-marketing propositions in advancing the marketing goals of the oil company

Main components	Propositions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communication functions in e-marketing	Ownership in network marketing in the region							
	Developing the level of knowledge of regional customers in recognizing petroleum products							
	Development of research and development teams in understanding the performance processes of competitors in the region							
	Development of communication with communication channels to reach new customers in the region							

Main components	Propositions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Development of oil diplomacy to network marketing in the region compared to competitors							
	Keeping up-to-date information on online networks about company products in different languages							
	Providing reliable and accessible information to access petroleum products							
Accelerated functions in e-marketing	Providing suggestions for customizing oil production							
	Eliminating intermediaries for the fast delivery of products to customers							
	Creating facilities for receiving products with customers' needs through the company's up-to-date websites							
	Production of customized products for customers tailored to industrial and climatic needs							
	Using online shopping discounts to increase the loyalty of local customers							
	Keeping customers' needs up to date by diversifying the company's products							
	Issuance of dedicated customer cards to facilitate payment for the purchase of products							
	Presenting the products of the day through holding special conferences and exhibitions							
Knowledge functions in e-marketing	Using the company's customers in developing the level of technical knowledge and marketing products							
	Maintaining relationships with oil companies and research institutes through strategic alliances							
	Creating an intelligent marketing system to recognize changes in the oil industry							
	Using forecasting techniques such as marketing scenarios to develop petroleum products for future markets							
	Using the future needs of customers through extensive and ongoing interactions							
	Buying oil companies or using consortium strategies to offer a variety of products							

Table 7: The process of the first and second steps of Delphi analysis

Main components	Propositions	The first round of Delphi		The second round of Delphi		Results	
		Mean	Coefficient of agreement	Mean	Coefficient of agreement	Delete ☒	Confirm ☑
Communication functions in e-marketing	Ownership in network marketing in the region	6	0.80	6.20	0.85	-	☑
	Developing the level of knowledge of regional customers in recognizing petroleum products	3	0.20			☒	-
	Development of research and development teams in understanding the performance processes of competitors in the region	4	0.35			☒	-
	Development of communication with communication	5.30	0.65	5.50	0.75	-	☑

Main components	Propositions	The first round of Delphi		The second round of Delphi		Results	
		Mean	Coefficient of agreement	Mean	Coefficient of agreement	Delete ☒	Confirm ☑
	channels to reach new customers in the region						
	Development of oil diplomacy to network marketing in the region compared to competitors	5.50	0.75	6.10	0.82	-	☑
	Keeping up-to-date information on online networks about company products in different languages	5	0.50	5.10	0.55	-	☑
	Providing reliable and accessible information to access petroleum products	5.20	0.65	5.50	0.75	-	☑
Accelerated functions in e-marketing	Providing suggestions for customizing oil production	5.50	0.75	6.10	0.82	-	☑
	Eliminating intermediaries for the fast delivery of products to customers	5.30	0.65	5.50	0.75	-	☑
	Creating facilities for receiving products with customers' needs through up-to-date websites	4	0.35			☒	-
	Creating facilities for receiving products with customers' needs through up-to-date websites	5.50	0.75	6.10	0.82	-	☑
	Using online shopping discounts to increase the loyalty of local customers	5.20	0.65	5.50	0.75	-	☑
	Keeping customers' needs up to date by diversifying the company's products	2	0.15			☒	-
	Issuance of dedicated customer cards to facilitate payment for the purchase of products	6	0.80	6.20	0.85	-	☑
	Presenting the products of the day through holding special conferences and exhibitions	5	0.50	5.10	0.55	-	☑
	Using the company's customers in	5.30	0.65	5.50	0.75	-	☑

Main components	Propositions	The first round of Delphi		The second round of Delphi		Results	
		Mean	Coefficient of agreement	Mean	Coefficient of agreement	Delete ☒	Confirm ☑
Knowledge functions in e-marketing	developing the level of technical knowledge and marketing products						
	Maintaining relationships with oil companies and research institutes through strategic alliances	5	0.50	5.10	0.55	-	☑
	Creating an intelligent marketing system to recognize changes in the oil industry	5.20	0.65	5.50	0.75	-	☑
	Using forecasting techniques such as marketing scenarios to develop products	3	0.20			☒	-
	Using the future needs of customers through extensive and ongoing interactions	5	0.50	5.10	0.55	-	☑
	Buying oil companies or using consortium strategies	5.50	0.75	6.10	0.82	-	☑

The Delphi analysis results showed that five statements were removed from the study in two steps due to obtaining a score below the set limit of agreement coefficient (0.5) and the average (mean = 5). Based on this, a total of 16 themes of e-marketing propositions were approved to advance the marketing goals of the oil company. Based on the proposed propositions, the conceptual framework of e-marketing themes in advancing the marketing goals of the oil company was first presented in the following order, and in the next step, they entered the phase of comprehensive interpretive/structural analysis.

Then, after determining the propositional themes of e-marketing in advancing marketing goals, the overall structural interpretive model was analyzed to determine the most compelling propositions related to it in Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company. In order to start this analysis, it is necessary to encode the confirmed statements from the Delphi analysis stage. In this section, it is necessary to sort the propositions randomly and then codify them so that the matrix statements' level is specialized.

As presented in Table 8, the statements confirmed by the experts are defined as acronyms for forming the structural interaction matrix itself. At this stage, the opinions of 16 managers and deputies of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company on the relationship between the propositions are first compared. For this purpose, the proposition "Mode" is used so that the relationship with the most frequent expert opinion will be considered in the final table among the four possible relations between the propositions. To determine the type of relationships, it has been suggested that experts use it based on various management techniques, including brainstorming and nominal grouping techniques (Singh et al., 2013). The symbols listed in Table 9 can be used to determine the type of relationship.
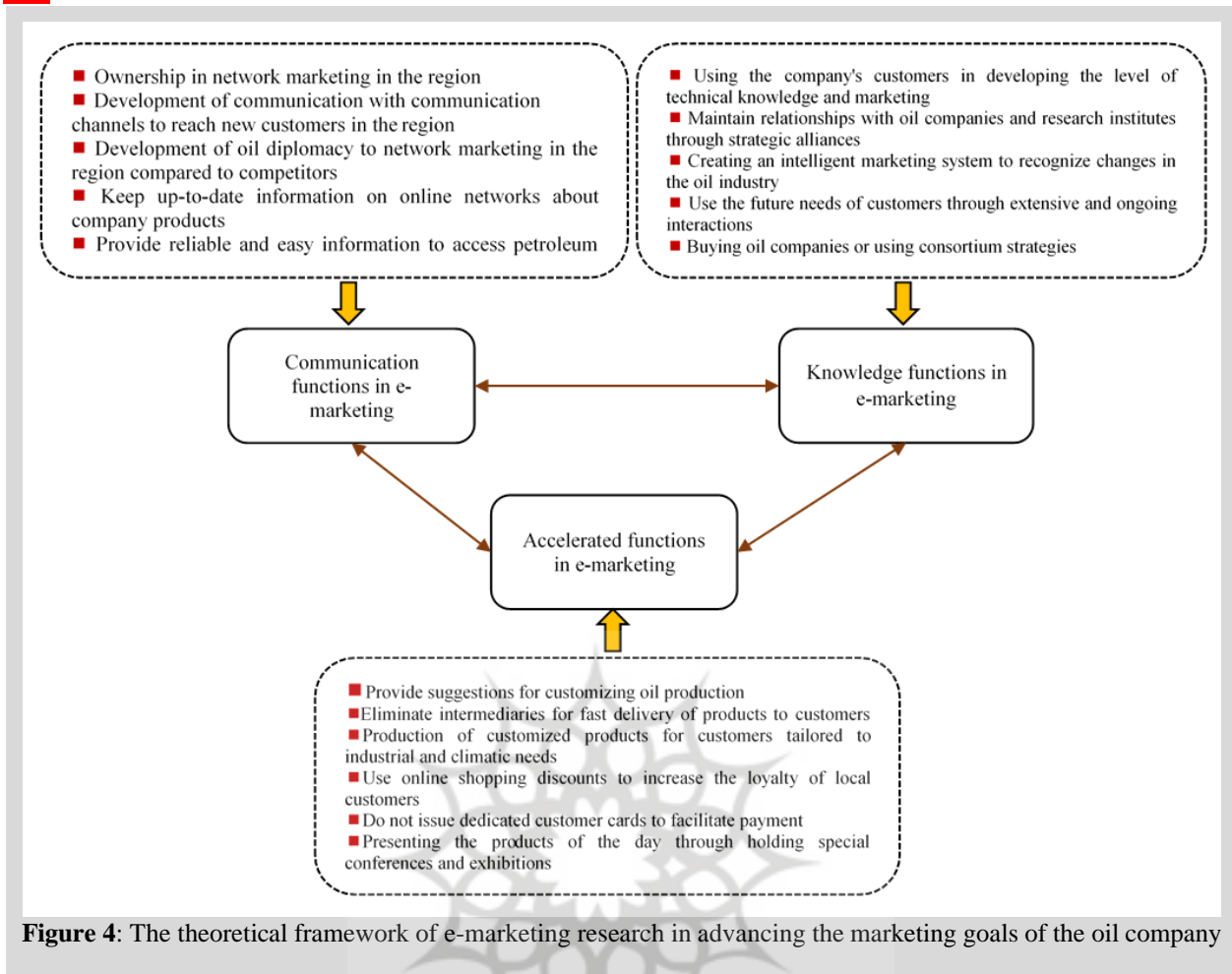
Figure 4: The theoretical framework of e-marketing research in advancing the marketing goals of the oil company

Table 8: The abbreviation of the approved statements

Statement	Abbreviation
Development of communication with communication channels to reach new customers in the region	A1
Creating an intelligent marketing system to recognize changes in the oil industry	A2
Development of oil diplomacy to network marketing in the region compared to competitors	A3
Keeping up-to-date information on online networks about company products in different languages	A4
Issuance of dedicated customer cards to facilitate payment for the purchase of products	A5
Providing suggestions for customizing oil production	A6
Eliminating intermediaries for the fast delivery of products to customers	A7
Production of customized products for customers tailored to industrial and climatic needs	A8
Using online shopping discounts to increase the loyalty of local customers	A9
Providing reliable and easy information to access petroleum products	A10
Presenting the products of the day through holding special conferences and exhibitions	A11
Using the company's customers in developing the level of technical knowledge and marketing products	A12

Statement	Abbreviation
Maintaining relationships with oil companies and research institutes through strategic alliances	A13
Ownership in network marketing in the region	A14
Using the future needs of customers through extensive and ongoing interactions	A15
Buying oil companies or using consortium strategies	A16

Table 9: Conceptual relations in the formation of the structural self-interaction matrix (Singh et al., 2013)

The concept of symbol	Symbol
i leads to j (Row leading to column).	V
j leads to i (Column leading to row).	A
There is a two-way relationship between i and j.	X
There is no good relationship.	O

Accordingly, the final structural self-interaction matrix (SSIM) is calculated. In other words, in this step, the symbols of the structural matrix related to the numbers zero and one can be formed according to the below table.

After determining the conceptual relationships based on the fashion proposition, an attempt is made to form a matrix in this section based on Table 11.

In other words, in this step, by converting the symbols of the structural matrix relations to the numbers zero and one, the achievement matrix can be formed based on Table 12.

Table 10: Achievement matrix formation

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16
A1	-	V	O	O	O	V	V	V	V	V	V	O	V	O	A	V
A2		-	A	A	A	A	O	V	V	V	O	A	O	A	V	O
A3			-	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	A	A	A	O	O	A
A4				-	X	O	O	O	V	O	V	O	O	A	V	O
A5					-	O	V	O	V	O	V	O	O	A	O	O
A6						-	V	V	O	V	O	V	V	A	A	O
A7							-	V	V	V	V	O	O	A	A	A
A8								-	O	V	V	O	A	A	O	A
A9									-	A	A	O	O	A	A	O
A10										-	O	A	O	A	O	O
A11											-	O	A	A	A	O
A12												-	O	A	X	O
A13													-	O	O	X
A14														-	V	O
A15															-	O
A16																-

Table 11: How to convert conceptual relations to numbers (Singh et al., 2013)

Conceptual symbol	Convert concept symbols to a small number
V	The cell for this pair is in the matrix of achieving the number 1, and the symmetric cell is the number 0.
A	The cell corresponding to this pair is in the matrix of achieving the number 0, and the symmetric cell is the number 1.
X	The cell corresponding to this pair is in the matrix of achieving the number 1, and the symmetric cell is the number 1.
O	The cell for this pair is in the matrix of achieving the number 0, and the symmetric cell is the number 0.

Table 12: Achievement matrix formation

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16
A1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
A2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
A3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A4	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
A5	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
A6	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
A7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
A8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
A9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
A11	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
A12	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
A13	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
A14	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
A15	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
A16	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

In order to improve interpretive structural analysis to comprehensive interpretive structural analysis, any pairwise comparison must be fully interpreted by answering the interpretive question mentioned in the previous step. The nth proposition is compared in pairs with all elements from $(i + 1)$ to n for pairwise comparisons. For each relationship, the answer is *yes*,

"Y" or "N", and if the answer is *yes*, the reason is stated. However, if the answer is *no*, the participants must comment on the pair of variables.

The matrix in Table 14 is obtained by converting its structural interaction matrix into a zero and one binary matrix.

Table 13: Comparison of the pairs between propositional themes based on the matrix form

Number	Couple comparison	Yes/No	Description of how the impact
A1 ownership in network marketing in the region			
1	A1 − A2	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
2	A2 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
3	A1 − A3	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
4	A3 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	

Number	Couple comparison	Yes/No	Description of how the impact
5	A1 − A4	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
6	A4 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
7	A1 − A5	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
8	A5 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
9	A1 − A6	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
10	A6 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
11	A1 − A7	Yes ☒ NO ☐	Ownership in network marketing in the region is the basis for eliminating intermediaries for the fast delivery of products to customers.
12	A7 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
13	A1 − A8	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
14	A8 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
15	A1 − A9	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
16	A9 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
17	A1 − A10	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
18	A10 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
19	A1 − A11	Yes ☒ NO ☐	Ownership in network marketing in the region is the basis for presenting the day's products through special conferences and exhibitions.
20	A11 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
21	A1 − A12	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
22	A12 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
23	A1 − A13	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
24	A13 − A1	Yes ☒ NO ☐	Maintaining relationships with oil companies and research institutes based on a strategic agreement is the basis for acquiring regional power in oil marketing.
25	A1 − A14	Yes ☒ NO ☐	Ownership in network marketing in the region is the basis for creating an intelligent marketing system to recognize changes in the oil industry.
26	A14 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	

Number	Couple comparison	Yes/No	Description of how the impact
27	A1 − A115	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
28	A15 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	
29	A1 − A16	Yes ☒ NO ☐	Ownership in network marketing in the region is the basis for buying oil companies or using consortium strategies.
30	A16 − A1	Yes ☐ NO ☒	

Table 14: The achievement of the degree of propositional themes

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16
A1	1	1	0	1*	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
A2	0	1	0	1*	0	1*	1*	1	1	1	0	0	1*	0	1	0
A3	0	1	1	1*	0	1*	1*	0	0	0	0	0	1*	0	0	0
A4	0	1	0	1	1	1*	1*	0	1	0	1	0	1*	0	1	0
A5	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1*	0	0	0
A6	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
A7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1*	0	0	0
A8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1*	0	0	0
A9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1*	0	0	0
A10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1*	0	0	0
A11	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1*	0	0	0
A12	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1*	0	1	0
A13	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
A14	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
A15	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
A16	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

As seen in the above table, the concept symbols assigned according to the fashion proposition have been converted to 0, 1, and 1* points according to the definition of the conceptual relationship to the numbers in the previous table. In the following table, specify the penetration power (1 point obtained from the row) and the dependency power (1 point obtained from the column).

This operation is repeated until the components of all levels of the system are identified.

Table 15: The separation of influence and dependence forces

Criteria	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16
Power of influence	11	9	6	9	7	7	6	4	2	3	4	5	5	12	7	5
Power of dependence	2	8	5	6	3	7	10	8	10	8	9	4	14	1	5	3

Table 16: The conical matrix

Abbreviation	Output statement	Input statement	Common elements	Prioritize
A1	1,2,4,6,7,8,9,10,11,13,16	1,2	1,2	Eighth level

Abbreviation	Output statement	Input statement	Common elements	Prioritize
A2	2,4,6,7,8,9,10,13,15	1,2,3,4,5,6,12,14	2,4,6	Ninth level
A3	2,3,4,6,7,13	3,11,12,13,16	3,13	Forth level
A4	2,4,5,6,7,9,11,13,15	1,2,3,4,5,14	2,4,5	Seventh level
A5	2,4,5,7,9,11,13	4,5,14	4,5	Seventh level
A6	2,6,7,8,10,12,13	1,2,3,4,6,14,15	2,6	Seventh level
A7	7,8,9,10,11,13	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,14,15,16	7	Forth level
A8	8,10,11,13	1,2,6,7,8,13,14,16	8,13	Third level
A9	9,13	1,2,4,5,7,9,10,11,14,15	9,13	First level
A10	9,10,13	1,2,6,7,8,10,12,14	10	Second level
A11	3,9,11,13	1,4,5,7,8,11,13,14,15	3,11,13	Second level
A12	2,3,10,12,13,15	6,12,14,15	12,14	Sixth level
A13	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,16	3,8,11,13,16	3,8,11,13,16	Sixth level
A14	14	2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,15	14	First level
A15	2,4,12,14,15	1,6,7,9,11,12,15	12,15	Fifth level
A16	1,13,16	3,7,8,13,16	13,16	Fifth level

Based on the results of prioritization, e-marketing propositions were identified in advancing the marketing goals of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company. In e-marketing and the development of communication with communication channels to reach new customers in the region (A1) at the 10th level are considered a proposition of the communication functions component in e-marketing. It is also found that the least compelling e-marketing propositions in advancing the marketing goals of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company are related to the two propositions of using online shopping discounts to promote customer loyalty in regions (A9) as a component of accelerated functions in e-marketing and ownership in network marketing in the region (A14) as a proposition of the communication function component in e-marketing, which are at the first level.

As a process of prioritizing the results of the cone matrix of electronic marketing propositions in advancing the marketing goals of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company, this model shows that Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company needs to focus on developing intelligent marketing systems to develop electronic marketing functions so as to better understand the changes in their oil sales areas.

6. Conclusions

Due to the particular characteristics of crude oil, such as extensive links to political issues, oil marketing in oil companies today is as essential as other strategic commodities. However, it is fundamentally different from other commodities because oil is not only a significant supply source but also energy in the world; at the same time, it is the basis for the economic power of countries. Nevertheless, countries like Iran, which face many challenges in oil sales and marketing, must use scientific procedures to advance strategic goals to reach new markets and sell more of these strategic products under sanctions. Understanding this issue, this study tried to identify electronic marketing strategies to advance the marketing goals of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company based on theoretical screening from previous research. In other words, this study tried to identify the components and propositions of electronic marketing to advance the marketing goals of oil companies to finally identify the most compelling propositions based on the knowledge of top managers and deputies of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company. Based on the results, it was found that creating an intelligent marketing system to recognize changes in the oil industry was the most important statement that Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company should consider to advance its marketing goals electronically. Intelligent marketing systems, created based on market changes through coherent structures inside and outside the company, try to gain market share by creating pervasive customer values. The existence of an intelligent marketing system helps Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company to create new customers' needs based on

understanding the market, competitors' capabilities, and their customers' expectations while meeting their needs. To be able to meet any challenges in a competitive environment while satisfying the needs and wants of its customers, this approach helps the company to apply knowledge in the fields of extraction, production, and

even sales in various ways, thereby increasing its market share based on retaining current customers in the region and the world and attracting newer customers in a competitive market with other large companies in the region and the world.
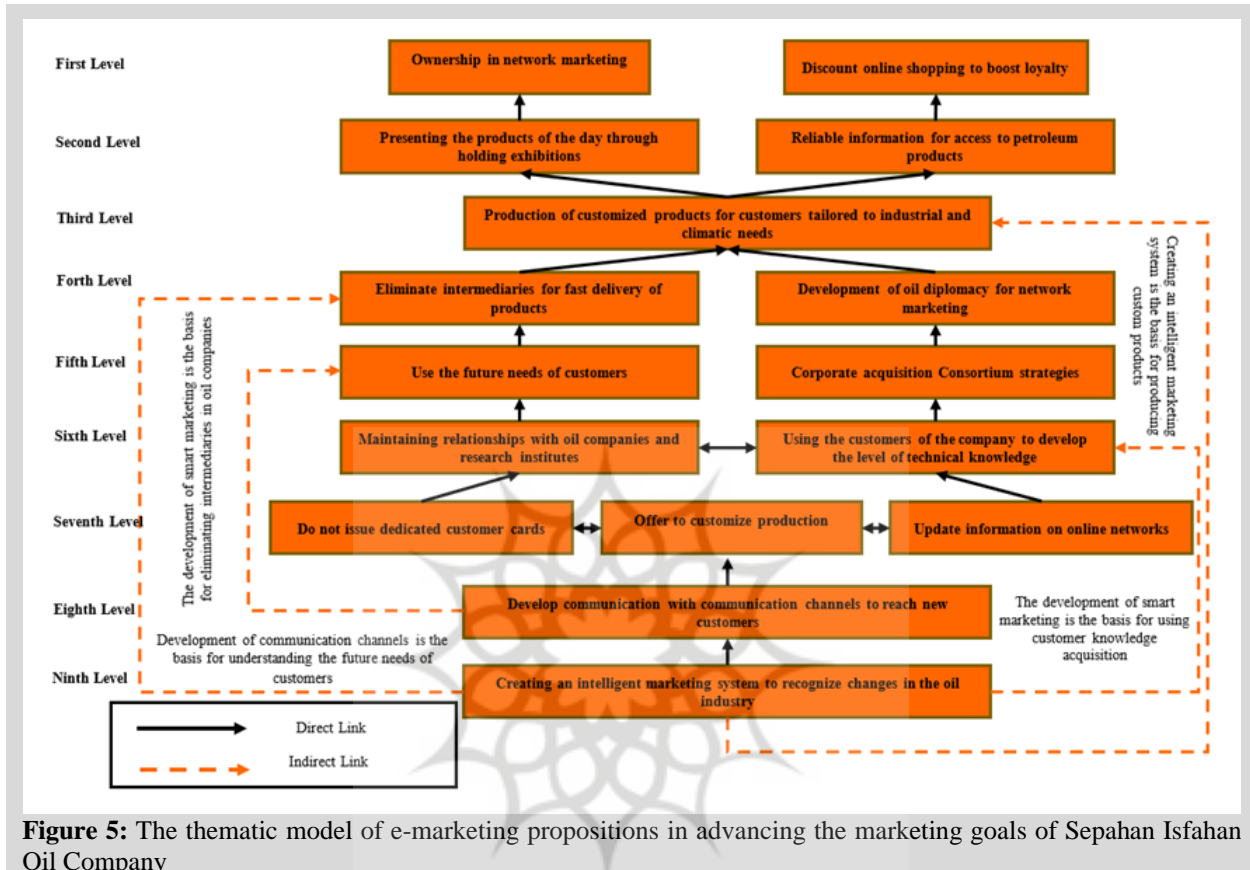

Figure 5: The thematic model of e-marketing propositions in advancing the marketing goals of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company

On the other hand, it was found that developing communication channels to reach new customers in the region was another compelling proposition that Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company could increase its marketing strategies in oil sales. In other words, developing communication channels as a basis for e-marketing helps companies to create more customers for their products, even in the face of sanctions, by maintaining long-term interaction with their customers to take advantage of sustainable development capacity in this area. For this purpose, issuing dedicated customer cards to facilitate payment for the purchase of products, offering suggestions for customizing the production of petroleum products, and keeping up-to-date information on online networks about the company's products in different languages are three propositions. These are considered in the seventh level of the e-marketing prioritization model in advancing the marketing goals of Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company, which can maintain the competitive position

of the company, accelerate the response to customer needs, and promote long-term loyalty to Sepahan Oil Company Isfahan. These results are conceptually and, to some extent, applied from the perspective of Zhang and Mao (2016) and Kim and Kim (2016), corresponding to Kyriakopoulou et al. (2019) and Niu et al. (2021).

Based on the obtained results, it is suggested that Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company should formulate its unique marketing strategy to design the value proposition so that the company's e-marketing values align with customers' expectations (marketing perspective), improve their requirements, and adapt to the limited internal resources of the company (strategic vision). In this regard, using an intelligent marketing information system helps Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company create compliance. On the other hand, Sepahan Isfahan Oil Company uses an intelligent marketing information system such as documents and internal information of the company; knowledge-based marketing and

marketing research can achieve a two-way flow of information at different stages of the value creation process: design, exchange, use/consumption, and after-use, which includes evaluating company performance. Furthermore, in the stage of evaluating the company's performance (customer-centric performance and financial-based performance), we use its results as a strong feedback stream in deciding whether to maintain the company's current value proposition and strategy or review and modify the company's current value proposition and strategy, which ultimately leads to the alignment of the strategic vision with the e-marketing perspective to create customer value, causing the company to achieve a superior position in the market.

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