



The Paradigm Model of Digital Marketing in Iraqi Handball: A Grounded Theory Study

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing provides new opportunities for sports organizations to engage their audience. The current research aims to compile the Model of Digital Marketing in Iraqi Handball based on the qualitative paradigm model which is an approach of the grounded theory (GT) methodology. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants who were sport management scholars, experts in Iraqi handball, and online marketers. The data was analyzed using three coding phases. The findings revealed 79 concepts, 23 sub-categories, and 5 categories. The results showed a comprehensive framework for digital marketing in Iraqi handball that can significantly improve the current practices. The framework highlights strategies for content creation, social media engagement, data analytics, and audience targeting that resonate with fans. Adopting this digital marketing paradigm can strengthen relationships between Iraqi handball organizations and their audience by increasing awareness of their brand, enhancing interaction with audiences, increasing income opportunities, improving fan experience, and enhancing data insights.

Introduction

Marketing is a dynamic and evolving commercial activity. Today, marketing and attracting investment are considered important sources of economic revenue, and countries worldwide attempt to invest substantially in the marketing sector to draw more capital as a suitable income stream. Marketing has been defined variously based on different perspectives. For instance, marketing is a set of productive, distributive, and commercial activities that deliver goods to the ultimate consumer more swiftly and efficiently (Bala & Verma, 2018). Kotler, one of the most prominent theorists in this discipline, defines marketing as a human activity to satisfy needs and desires through an exchange process (Kotler, 2019).

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Today, sport and its various dimensions are considered an important topic across different circles. As a unique phenomenon, sport reveals its extensive applications in creating a dynamic and lively society and resolving many socio-cultural and economic-political crises. Currently, professional sport is regarded by most countries worldwide as an efficient and powerful tool for economic, social, and cultural development, which requires attention to numerous issues across different areas for its survival and growth – one of the most critical being sports marketing (Mahdi Salimi , Mohammad Soltan Hosseini, & Jahrom, 2015). On the other hand, owing to its inherent appeal and excitement, sport is many people's primary recreational or health target. Hence, sports constitute an appropriate basis for marketing development (Al-Basir, 2022).

Sports marketing is a sub-branch of the broader marketing discipline. Contrary to popular belief, sports marketing encompasses more than profit generation and is more comprehensive than advertisements, public relations, and social relations. The term "sports marketing" was first employed in the United States through a 1979 press release. However, the first definition is attributed to Kasler, who defines sports marketing as: "sports marketing encompasses the activities of consumers and marketers who increasingly utilize sport as a means for product or service promotion among sports sponsors" (Karg & Funk, 2020). Today, sports marketing is considered one of the most popular and lucrative marketing types globally, especially across developed nations, wielding undeniable influence on countries economically, socially, culturally, and politically .

In the current era, the development of information technology is acknowledged as one of the most important infrastructures underpinning national growth. Organizations have also been profoundly impacted by information technology. The combination of "electronic" with terms like "commerce" and "marketing" indicates the new philosophy that organizations should adopt to gain a competitive advantage (Varmaghani, Zarei, & Varmaghani, 2020). Companies have further realized the significance of digital marketing. For business success, online methods must be integrated with traditional techniques to fulfill customer needs more precisely. Digital marketing employs technologies to facilitate marketing activities to improve customer knowledge by adapting to their requirements. Introducing new technologies has created novel business opportunities for marketers to manage their websites and achieve commercial goals. The Internet is the most powerful tool for businesses. Marketing managers who cannot harness the Internet's potential in framing business marketing strategy will struggle as the Internet transforms branding, pricing, distribution strategy, and advertising (Bala & Verma, 2018).

The advent of digital marketing has additionally confronted sports organizations and marketers with new technological innovations and challenges since utilizing digital networks can potentially alter market structure, and the sports market is no exception. Increased usage of new media has led to the growth of sports media-oriented consumers, transforming social media into a vital apparatus for sports marketers (Alam, Seyyed Ameri, Khabeiri, & Amiri, 2020).

Iraqi society is transitioning from an industrial to an information economy, with every aspect of life shifting focus from physical to intellectual and technological. Technology has emerged as a pivotal component propelling economic expansion, while knowledge accumulation is the predominant paradigm underpinning global economic growth (Obaid, 2022). With specialist shortages, sports marketing remains scarce across Iraqi sporting institutions and clubs. Most Iraqi premier league clubs rely on sports marketing to attain financial autonomy (Khalaf & Waga, 2019). Due to limited information technology exploitation, Iraqi sports clubs are still undergoing early development phases. Sports teams have a unique approach toward technological shifts. With advancing technology, a new club model is taking shape (Al-Hamdani & Lazim, 2020).

Krishen et al. (2021) found that the primary advantage of digital marketing is access to the target audience through a cost-effective and measurable approach (Krishen, Dwivedi, Bindu, & Kumar, 2021). Obaid (2022) states that most people in Iraq currently prefer using digital platforms over traditional media. They enjoy chatting and watching advertisements on digital platforms, which allows them to feel a stronger connection with their favorite players or teams. Therefore, digital platforms play a significant role in marketing strategies for retail brands as they allow consumers to stay updated with the latest products and advertisements and participate in many sports events (Obaid, 2022). Javani and Karimivand (2022) have found results indicating a significant influence

of social media marketing as one of the digital marketing strategies on consumer purchasing behavior (Javani & Karimivand, 2022).

The introduction of digital platforms has created a new dynamic in sports marketing (Pradhan, Malhotra, & Moharana, 2019). Digital marketing, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., is continuously expanding in the sports sector and among Iraqis. Many young people in Iraq utilize digital platforms to communicate with the press, companies, managers, and businesses (Aljuboori, Fashakh, & Bayat, 2020). New knowledge, skills, and approaches are required by marketers today and in the future to understand the changing marketing environment and technology. Marketing is increasingly becoming digital, and continuous technological advancements present marketers with new challenges and opportunities. With the rapid development of digital technology and social media, keeping up with these advancements and effectively using them poses a significant challenge (Franco & Olano, 2021)

Handball is a relatively niche sport with dedicated fans and a growing presence on social media platforms, especially among young audiences. Additionally, handball has recently gained popularity in Iraq, and more people are interested in following local teams and players. Despite the growing popularity of handball in Iraq and the increasing tendency of the general public to use cyberspace and social networks, unfortunately, no comprehensive and practical study has yet been conducted regarding digital marketing patterns and solutions for this sport. Most previous studies have addressed the general role of social media in sports marketing, while there is a need to provide a specialized digital marketing model for further expanding this sport by conducting an accurate study based on the indigenous conditions of Iraq. Given the existing gap, achieving such a study in the field of digital marketing of Iraqi handball looks pretty essential so that its findings can be used to take a practical step toward the growth and development of this popular sport.

Methodology

The present research employs a qualitative method. Based on the study's exploratory nature, which requires discovering various factors and variables, a grounded theory approach with a systematic inductive stance is utilized.

The target population consisted of sports management scholars in Iraq, experts in Iraqi handball, and online marketers. The criteria for participating in the interviews included being at least 28 years old and holding at least a bachelor's degree. The summary of individual characteristics is mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Participant's Demographic Characteristics

Number	Age	Gender	Education	Organizational position
1	50	Man	PhD	Member of the Academic Faculty in the Department of Sports Management
2	43	Man	PhD	Member of the Academic Faculty in the Department of Sports Management
3	43	Man	PhD	Member of the Academic Faculty in the Department of Sports Management
4	41	woman	PhD	Member of the Academic Faculty in the Department of Sports Management
5	36	woman	PhD	Member of the Academic Faculty in the Department of Sports Management
6	31	Man	Masters	Handball Player
7	34	Man	Masters	Handball Player
8	42	Man	Masters	Handball Player
9	34	woman	Masters	Handball Player
10	44	woman	PhD	Handball head coach
11	38	Man	Masters	Handball head coach
12	31	Man	Masters	Online Marketer
13	37	Man	Masters	Online Marketer
14	41	woman	Masters	Online Marketer

15	43	woman	Masters	Online Marketer
16	44	Man	Masters	Online Marketer
17	45	Man	Masters	Online Marketer
18	47	Man	Masters	Online Marketer
19	32	Man	Masters	Online Marketer
20	33	woman	Masters	Online Marketer

Given the nature of the research and the target population's characteristics, purposive sampling was initially used, followed by snowball sampling to select participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. Due to work-related constraints for the interviewees, online interviews were conducted via the Telegram app. Data saturation was achieved after 16 interviews, but interviews continued up to 20 for further assurance. The minimum interview duration was 20 minutes, and the maximum was 70 minutes.

Since the research intended to theorize and present a model, it applied a systematic inductive approach to identify critical elements (concepts and variables) and categorize and comprehend their relationships. Charmaz's framework was chosen as one of the data-driven theoretical approaches aligning well with the research objectives.

To ensure research validity, Edwards and Skinner (2009) suggest prolonged engagement, persistent observation, checking with participants, and triangulation, given qualitative research's distinct goals and traits (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). The techniques applied to validate the present research are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Validation Techniques

Prolonged engagement	Practical participation and participant engagement were undertaken to increase theoretical sensitivity to evaluate the researcher's interpretations.
Persistent observation	The researcher inspected the obtained information and codes to prevent bias and ensure accuracy.
Checking with participants	The acquired data was reviewed through discussions with the research team and surveying the interviewees regarding the results.
Triangulation	Data collection relied on three sources: interviews, literature and theoretical foundations, and documents.
Constant comparison	Comparison of the obtained data from the examined sources with other sources was carried out throughout the research process.

Moreover, the formula for agreement percentage was utilized to ensure reliability. For this, a research colleague was asked to participate in the coding process. The researchers and the colleague then coded three interviews together. The agreement percentage between the coders was 71.28%. Since reliability above 60% is acceptable (Kvale, 1996), the reliability of the codings was confirmed, and it can be claimed that the reliability of the current interview analysis is adequate.

Results

The obtained data was analyzed using the grounded theory coding method with a constructivist approach introduced by Charmaz (Charmaz, 2006). In Tables 3 to 7, the data coding from the sources is presented.

The term "causal conditions" refers to factors that directly contribute to the occurrence of a specific outcome. In other words, they are necessary and sufficient causes for a particular effect or result. Generally, identifying causal conditions is an important component of scientific research and inquiry. By understanding the causes of events or specific outcomes, we can make more accurate predictions, implement interventions to prevent or mitigate negative consequences and achieve a deeper understanding. This study has categorized these conditions into three main components, as mentioned in Table 3.

Table 3. Causal Conditions of digital marketing in Iraqi handball

Meaningful expressions	Open coding	Concepts	Sub-categories	Categories
Understanding the needs and preferences of the target audience to create a message that resonates with them.	Understanding the needs and preferences of the target audience	Application of messaging	Target Audience	
The use of various digital channels for both elderly and young individuals for content consumption.	Utilizing various digital channels	Selection of appropriate channels		
Considering the availability of time for the audience.	Considering accessibility	Identification of the audience's free time		
Consider cultural differences and align the content with the audience's culture.	Taking cultural differences into account	Localization		
Introducing one's brand as a reliable source of information provides valuable and relevant content to attract and retain the audience.	Reliable source information	Audience attraction and retention	Content Quality	
Enhancing brand credibility among the audience through high-quality content.	Impact of content on brand credibility	Brand credibility enhancement		
Increasing the sharing of high-quality content on social media platforms	Sharing high-quality content	Encouragement of sharing		
Choosing cost-effective channels to maximize marketing budget value.	Maximizing value for marketing budget	Cost-effectiveness	Channel Selection	Strategic Media Deployment (Causal conditions)
Improving the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies for brands.	Improving effectiveness	Measurement of effectiveness		
Positioning a brand within a channel as a thought leader in the industry.	Brand positioning as a thought leader	Brand positioning		
The effectiveness of using social media channels during weekend holidays.	Effective timing of social media	Scheduling		
The need for resources for content production and advertising by brands.	Strategic allocation of resources	Resource allocation	Budget Allocation	
Maximizing the ROI of digital marketing and minimizing costs by allocating the budget to the most effective channels.	Maximizing digital marketing ROI	Selection of cost-effective channels		
Despite the associated costs, it is necessary to produce high-quality content to succeed in digital marketing campaigns.	The necessity of producing high-quality content.	Allocation of budget for content production		

"Contextual conditions" refers to pre-existing factors or circumstances that may influence or set the stage for an outcome. These conditions are often beyond the immediate control of individuals or

systems involved in an event but can still significantly impact the outcome. These conditions constitute a set of factors that influence the strategies and approaches of the model.

Table 4. Contextual conditions of digital marketing in Iraqi handball

Meaningful expressions	Open coding	Concepts	Sub-categories	Categories
Transforming platforms into powerful tools for reaching and engaging with audiences.	Platforms as powerful tools	Digital Platforms	Technological Advancements	
Enhancing the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns through data analysis.	Improving the effectiveness of marketing programs	Data Analysis		
Creating personalized content based on user behavior and preferences.	Considering user behavior and preferences	Personalization		
Creating new opportunities for digital marketing through the widespread adoption of mobile devices.	Creating new opportunities through mobile phones	Mobile Phone		
Cultural and social trends impact attitudes toward sports and physical activity.	Influencing cultural and social trends	Changing Attitudes Towards Sports	Cultural and Social Trends	
Providing a pleasant and inclusive environment for all handball enthusiasts.	Providing a pervasive environment	Diversity and Inclusion		
Investing in the interests of individuals participating in local handball events within a specific region.	Investing in the interests of specific regional individuals	Local Events		
Developing communication strategies based on increased cultural understanding of target audiences.	Setting appropriate communication strategies	Digital Communication Trends		
Adherence to regulations governing the storage of personal data.	Monitoring personal data storage	Surveillance Environment	Surveillance Environment	Digital Evolution (Contextual conditions)
The influence of advertising regulations on how digital marketers promote handball.	The impact of regulations on handball advertising	Advertising Regulations		
Obtain necessary licenses for marketers to use any intellectual property related to Iraqi handball.	The right to use trademarks related to handball	Intellectual Property Laws		
The impact of privacy laws on how marketers collect and utilize personal data.	The impact of privacy laws	Privacy Protection Laws		
Aligning digital marketing efforts with regulations to protect customer data.	Protecting customer data	Cybersecurity	Infrastructure	
The impact of internet accessibility on the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns.	Internet accessibility	Internet Access		
The need for e-commerce	Electronic	E-commerce		

platforms for product sales.	commerce platforms for product sales	Platforms
The impact of Internet availability and reliable payment systems in Iraq on the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns.	Availability and reliability of payment systems	Payment Systems
Utilizing social media to reach and engage with the target audience of Iraqi handball	Reaching and interacting with audiences	Presence of Social Media Platforms
Creating mobile-friendly digital marketing campaigns, including mobile-compatible websites.	Creating suitable digital marketing campaigns with mobile phones	Availability of Mobile Devices

The term "Intervening conditions" refers to factors or events between the primary cause and the outcome, which may influence or mediate their relationship. These conditions can act as a link between the primary cause and the outcome and can have a significant impact on the result. In this case, the mediating conditions are beyond the control of digital marketers and pertain to Iraqi clubs, but they do affect digital marketing for these clubs.

Table 5. Intervening conditions of digital marketing in Iraqi Handball

Meaningful expressions	Open coding	Concepts	Sub-categories	Categories
The Impact of Access to Technology on Access and Active Participation in Digital Marketing Activities for Iraqi Handball.	Access and active participation in digital marketing activities	Access and participation	Access to Technology	External Environmental Factors (Intervening conditions)
There is a need to create stylized content for individuals without high-speed internet access to engage with the content.	Creation of stylish content	Content consumption		
The existence of necessary technology for data collection and analysis regarding user behavior and interaction by digital marketers	Availability of necessary technology for data collection and analysis	Data collection		
Considering regional differences in dialects when creating content for digital marketing campaigns.	Regional differences in dialects	Creating content in an appropriate language	Language Barriers	
The need for professional translation services for marketers.	Professional translation services	Content translation		
Marketers must align their messages and content with their target audience's cultural background and language preferences.	Alignment of messages and content with cultural background and language preferences	Localization		

Adapting digital marketing strategies to regulations set by the government and regulatory bodies.	Adaptation of digital marketing strategies to political regulations	Political regulations	
The impact of the political environment on the censorship of digital content in Iraq.	Censorship of digital content due to the political environment	Censorship	Political Environment
Ensuring no insult to specific political groups through digital marketing activities.	Non-insulting toward political groups	Political tensions	
Ensuring no insult to other countries or their citizens through digital marketing activities.	Non-insulting towards other countries or citizens	International relations	
Ensuring no negative impact on Iraq's economic stability through digital marketing activities.	No negative impact on economic stability	Economic stability	
Marketers' assurance of having a budget for their digital activities in handball.	Having a budget	Marketing budget	Economic Conditions
Cost-effectiveness and consideration of the purchasing power of digital marketing audiences in handball.	Cost-effectiveness	Purchasing power	
Avoiding reinforcement of gender stereotypes through marketing activities.	Avoidance of reinforcing gender stereotypes	Gender roles	
Respecting various religious beliefs through digital marketing activities.	Avoidance of insulting religious beliefs	Religious beliefs	Social and Cultural Norms
Aligning marketing activities with local customs, traditions, and norms.	Attention to local customs, traditions, and etiquette	Local customs and traditions	
The necessity of creating a unique selling proposition for a brand.	Unique selling proposition	Brand positioning	
Distinguishing a brand's digital marketing activities from competitors through created content.	Distinctiveness	Distinct messaging and content	Competition

In this section, Strategies that have been designed to address the central phenomenon, contextual conditions, and intervention conditions are proposed.

Table 6. Strategies for digital marketing in Iraqi handball

Meaningful expressions	Open coding	Concepts	Sub-categories	Categories
Aligning digital marketing activities with primary objectives.	Alignment with objectives	Clear objectives and purposes	Developing a Strategic Program	Integrated Marketing Campaign (Strategies)
Assisting in creating digital marketing activities to differentiate the brand from competitors.	Brand differentiation	Competitive analysis		
Facilitating the creation of content and messages for increased interaction with the target audience.	Increased interaction with the target audience	Target audience focus		
Making decisions based on performance measurement results.	Decision-making	Performance measurement		
Selecting experts specialized in digital marketing and Iraqi handball.	Utilization of specialized individuals	Domain expertise	Selection of Specialized Individuals	
Valuing innovative ideas presents individuals' minds.	Importance is given to innovative ideas	Talent and creativity		
Choosing specialists in data analysis to determine the effectiveness of activities.	Selection of data analysis experts	Data analysis		
Selecting individuals knowledgeable about Iraqi cultural and social norms.	Importance of cultural and social norms	Local knowledge		
Utilizing the popularity of influencers and engaging more with the audience through them.	Enhanced interaction with the audience through influencer popularity	Access and interaction through influencers	Collaboration with Influencers	
Building trust among the audience through brand messages delivered by influencers.	Audience trust in brand messages	Influence of influencers on the audience		
Cost-effectiveness of collaborating with influencers compared to other advertising methods.	Cost-effectiveness of collaborating with influencers	Cost-effectiveness		
Increasing accessibility and visibility of digital marketing activities in handball through paid advertisements.	Increased accessibility and visibility	Accessibility and visibility	Investment in Paid Advertising	
Using paid advertisements to showcase unique brand offers.	Displaying unique brand sales propositions	Creating a competitive advantage		

The “consequences” result in the implementation of strategies. They can be positive or negative, intentional or unintentional, and vary in intensity depending on the situation. This study examined the

consequences of digital marketing in Iraqi handballs, many similar to the general consequences of digital marketing.

Table 7. Consequences of digital marketing in Iraqi handball

Meaningful expressions	Open coding	Concepts	Sub-categories	
Increasing brand awareness through digital marketing campaigns on social media platforms.	Increasing awareness of the brand through social media platforms	Benefits of Social Media	Awareness of the brand	Categories
Utilizing content marketing techniques to enhance brand awareness.	Increasing brand awareness through content	Content Utilization		
Enhancing brand awareness for Iraqi Handball through search engine results.	Increasing brand awareness of Iraq through search engine results	Search Engines		
Feedback on products, services, and marketing of the brand.	Feedback on brand marketing activities	Feedback Mechanisms	Enhancing interaction with audiences	Holistic Brand Engagement (Consequences or Outcomes)
Improving interaction with Iraqi Handball audience through live events such as webinars, live streaming, and virtual conferences.	Improving interaction with Iraqi handball audiences through live events	Live Events		
Creating a sense of engagement among the audience with suitable content.	Creating a sense of interaction	Creating Suitable Content for Interaction		
Creating attractive financial support opportunities for potential financial supporters.	Creating financial support opportunities	Financial Support Opportunities	Increasing income opportunities	
Becoming an appealing advertising opportunity for advertisers by establishing a large and engaged audience.	Turning into an attractive advertising opportunity	Advertising Revenue		
Generating revenue through ticket sales in online and live events.	Generating revenue through ticket sales	Online Events	Improving fan	
Providing the joy of a competitive experience at home for fans who cannot attend in person.	Providing the enjoyment of the competition experience	Online Broadcasting		
Utilizing virtual reality	Utilizing	Virtual Reality		

technology to create immersive fan experiences.	virtual reality technology		experience
Enhancing fan experience through mobile applications, such as providing programs about scores, news, and statistics.	Enhancing fans' experience through mobile devices	Mobile Applications	
Delivering personalized content based on fans' interests and preferences.	Delivering personalized content	Personalization of Fan Experience	
Using website analytics tools to provide insights into user engagement on the site.	User dwell time on the website	Website Analysis	
Utilizing social media analytics tools to offer insights on the best-performing posts.	Insights on the best-performing posts	Social Media Analysis	
Employing email marketing analytics tools to track high-performing emails.	Providing insights on high-performing emails	Email Marketing Analysis	Enhancing data insights
Utilizing A/B testing to gain insights into essential elements of digital marketing activity regarding interaction and revenue generation.	Identifying key elements of a digital marketing activity	A/B Testing	

The paradigmatic model consists of the causal conditions that influence the central concept or phenomenon, which in this research is digital marketing in Iraqi handball. The strategies for achieving the objective, the central phenomenon itself, have been identified. The other two components of the paradigmatic model are the contextual and intervening conditions that impact the strategies. Finally, the consequences of implementing the strategy to achieve the model's objective are demonstrated.

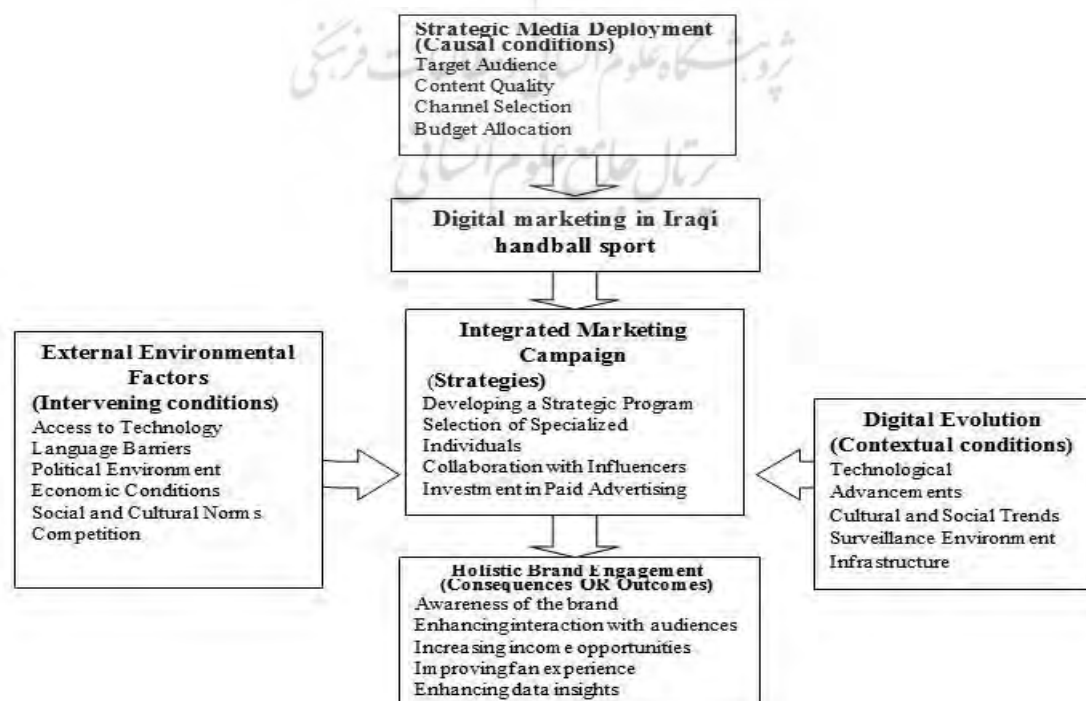


Figure 1. Paradigm model of digital marketing in Iraqi handball

Discussion and Conclusion

This article emphasizes the importance of digital marketing in Iraqi handball, where technology and digital platforms play a significant role in attracting fans and enhancing teams and players. The model of this research provides a helpful framework for understanding how digital marketing can be effectively utilized in this field.

Critical factors in digital marketing in Iraqi handball include target audience, content quality, channel selection, and budget allocation. Understanding the target audience is essential for the success of any digital marketing campaign, and the same applies to handball marketing in Iraq. By taking the time to understand the target audience's needs, preferences, and behaviors, marketers can create more effective campaigns that reach and engage their desired audience. Mandal and Joshi (2017) state that the alignment between digital marketing programs and the target audience's interests, hobbies, and priorities significantly impacts the program's success. Additionally, by creating educational, attractive, and relevant content that addresses the needs and interests of the target audience, marketers can capture and retain their attention, enhance brand credibility, encourage social media sharing, and ultimately attract customers (Mandal & Joshi, 2017). Umami and Darma (2021) stated that traditional marketing methods are gradually losing their effectiveness in today's dynamic and deeply personalized online environment (Umami & Darma, 2021). Businesses must rely on carefully crafted marketing strategies and high-quality content to succeed in this landscape. High-quality content is essential for capturing and retaining the target audience's attention, solidifying the brand, and establishing deeper connections with the audience. By investing in high-quality content, businesses can differentiate themselves from competitors, build greater trust among their audience, and ultimately achieve better business results.

Contextual conditions in digital marketing for Iraqi handball include technological advancements, cultural and social trends, regulatory environment, and infrastructure. The development of digital platforms, data analytics tools, marketing automation, personalization, and mobile marketing has revolutionized the accessibility of marketers to their target audience and interaction with them (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Keeping up with the latest trends and advancements in digital media and marketing allows businesses to leverage these opportunities and succeed tremendously in their marketing efforts.

Cultural and social trends are another important contextual condition in digital marketing for Iraqi handball. By understanding and aligning with these social and cultural trends, marketers can design more effective digital marketing strategies to attract and engage their target audience. Adhering to the regulatory environment is another crucial condition for digital marketing in Iraqi handball. By complying with data protection laws, advertising regulations, intellectual property laws, privacy protection, and cybersecurity regulations, marketers can create effective and compliant digital marketing campaigns that simultaneously protect customer data and reach their target audience.

The necessary infrastructure for digital marketing in Iraqi handball must be professionally designed and implemented. Access to the Internet, mobile devices, social media platforms, e-commerce platforms, and payment systems are infrastructural elements that should be considered in developing digital marketing campaigns. Effective and compatible digital marketing, characterized by access to the target audience, interaction with them, and desired outcomes, can be achieved through continuous evaluation and improvement of digital marketing infrastructure.

Access to technology, language barriers, political environment, economic conditions, social norms, cultural factors, and competition are intervening conditions in digital marketing for Iraqi handballs. Considering the impact of technology access on interaction, content consumption, data collection, marketing automation, and e-commerce, marketers can create effective digital marketing campaigns that reach and interact with their target audience, leading to desired outcomes. As Kiang, Raghu, and Shang (2000) demonstrated, companies can expand their access to a broader customer base with 24/7 internet availability and without physical boundaries (Kiang, Raghu, & Shang, 2000). In digital marketing, businesses must use the Internet to connect with their audience in real-time, regardless of geographical location.

Marketers can create effective digital marketing campaigns by overcoming language barriers in content production, translation, localization, keyword research, and social media marketing. These campaigns should reach the target audience, engage with them, and aim to achieve the desired results. In fact, by eliminating language barriers in digital marketing, it is possible to improve communication with the target audience, attract more customers, increase sales for the brand, and expand access to new markets. The political environment is another factor influencing digital marketing intervention in the Iraqi handball market. By understanding the impact of the political environment on regulations, censorship, political tensions, international relations, and economic stability, internet marketers can create effective digital marketing

campaigns in line with regulations, prevent controversy, and achieve desired results while operating in the political environment in Iraq. Considering the influence of economic conditions on purchasing power, marketing budgets, competitive landscape, consumer behavior, and industry trends, it is possible to create compelling digital marketing campaigns.

Social-cultural norms vary in different societies, and these differences can impact the effectiveness of online marketing strategies. Online marketing activities and social media play a significant role in today's digital landscape, and understanding the preferences and cultural habits of the target audience is essential for businesses. It includes understanding the types of content that resonate with different cultures and the social media platforms popular in other regions. By adopting a culturally sensitive approach to online marketing, businesses can create more relevant and engaging content that resonates with their target audience and helps them achieve their marketing goals.

Marketers can design and execute effective digital marketing campaigns by positioning the brand, messaging, and content, selecting advertising channels, and budgeting. These campaigns can help the brand differentiate itself from competitors, reach the target audience, engage with them, and achieve desired objectives. In a competitive market in Iraq, the results of these campaigns are crucial.

Strategic planning, hiring specialized individuals, collaborating with influencers, and investing in advertising are strategies for successful digital marketing in Iraqi handball. Having a strategic plan for successful digital marketing in Iraqi handball is crucial. This plan can help marketers implement the best marketing solutions and strategies for market growth and development in this field. The plan should be based on a thorough market analysis and an understanding of the needs and challenges of the target audience. Additionally, it should be designed considering Iraq's political, economic, and cultural conditions so that marketers can access their target audience and provide their products and services in the best possible way.

The selection of experts in the field of digital marketing in Iraqi handball is one of the most important factors for success in digital marketing and holds significant importance. Experts with specialization, experience, and local knowledge in digital marketing provide the best marketing solutions and strategies for Iraqi handballs. Furthermore, marketing experts' data analysis skills and creative talent enable them to accurately analyze the market, identify competitors' strengths and weaknesses, and design appropriate marketing plans for Iraqi handball.

Collaborating with influencers in digital marketing is highly important in Iraqi handball. Due to their continuous interactions with the audience, influencers have an active network of individuals who can help marketers easily access their target audience by understanding their needs and problems. Additionally, influencers, with their precise understanding of the target audience, can assist marketers in implementing the best marketing strategies for market growth and development in this field. Zak and Hasprova (2020) state that collaborating with influencers in digital marketing allows marketers to reach their target audience through networking and social interactions, and by understanding their needs and problems, they can effectively offer their products and services (Zak & Hasprova, 2020).

Investing in paid advertising in digital marketing is highly important in Iraqi handball. Through paid advertising, brands can quickly and effectively introduce themselves to the target audience and offer services and products. Moreover, by investing in paid advertising, businesses can increase website traffic and visits, increasing sales and revenue.

The consequences of digital marketing in Iraqi handball include increased brand awareness, improved audience engagement, increased revenue opportunities, enhanced fan experience, and improved data insights. Raising brand awareness is a significant consequence of digital marketing in Iraqi handball. Through digital marketing, brands can rapidly and effectively introduce themselves to the target audience and gain support. Increased audience awareness of the brand improves communication with them and can help address competitive challenges in the field. Additionally, increased audience awareness of the brand raises the likelihood of its selection over competitors, leading to increased sales and revenue. Furthermore, increased audience awareness of the brand can improve customer and consumer relationships, resulting in improved satisfaction and loyalty. Cheung, Pires, and Rosenberger (2019) concluded that increasing audience awareness of the brand through digital platforms helps marketers access their target audience and achieve desired results by offering quality services and products (Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger III, 2019).

Improving audience engagement is one of the significant outcomes of digital marketing in Iraqi handball. By utilizing digital tools such as social networks, websites, advertising platforms, etc., it is possible to communicate effectively and rapidly with the target audience. Enhancing this aspect can lead to increased satisfaction and loyalty among the audience, thereby improving relationships with them. Additionally, it enables a better understanding of their needs and issues, allowing for the optimal provision of products and services. Increasing fan experience is another necessary consequence of digital marketing in Iraqi handball. Through digital marketing, it is possible to enhance the fan experience, elevate communication with them,

and gain their support. Heightened fan experience fosters a sense of closer connection with the brand, which can contribute to increased loyalty. Moreover, enhancing fan experience makes it possible to pursue improved satisfaction and consequently aids in strengthening the relationship with them.

Increasing income opportunities are also a significant outcome of digital marketing in Iraqi handball. Through digital marketing strategies, income opportunities for the brand, players, coaches, and other stakeholders associated with Iraqi handball can be rapidly and effectively expanded. This expansion can attract investors and supporters, improving the brand's financial conditions and entities related to Iraqi handball. Furthermore, increasing income opportunities can drive the development of businesses associated with Iraqi handball, thereby contributing to employment growth and economic advancement.

Enhancing data insights is another necessary consequence of digital marketing in Iraqi handball. By utilizing digital tools such as data analysis software, it is possible to analyze relevant Iraqi handball market data accurately. Based on these insights, more optimized marketing strategies can be designed. Improving data insights allows for identifying new opportunities, ultimately aiding in the growth and development of businesses associated with Iraqi handball.

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