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Validation of a Competitive Marketing Model for Achieving Competitive Advantage of Iranian Cosmetic and Personal Care Products in the Iraqi Market

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to develop and validate a competitive marketing model that explains how Iranian cosmetic and personal care products can achieve sustainable competitive advantage in the Iraqi market. This study adopted a mixed-methods sequential exploratory design grounded in a pragmatic paradigm. In the qualitative phase, a systematic grounded theory approach was employed using semi-structured interviews with academic and industry experts in marketing and the cosmetic and personal care sector, selected through purposive and theoretical sampling until theoretical saturation was achieved. Qualitative data were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding to develop a conceptual competitive marketing model. In the quantitative phase, a structured questionnaire derived from the qualitative findings was administered to 384 marketing experts and practitioners. Structural equation modeling was applied to assess the measurement and structural models, evaluate model fit, and test the hypothesized relationships among constructs. Inferential results indicated that causal factors had a positive and significant effect on the core phenomenon of competitive marketing. Contextual factors and intervening factors both exerted significant positive effects on competitive marketing strategies. Furthermore, competitive marketing strategies showed a strong and significant impact on marketing outcomes related to competitive advantage. Model fit indices confirmed that the proposed structural model demonstrated an excellent fit with the empirical data, supporting the validity of the hypothesized relationships. The findings confirm that achieving competitive advantage in the Iraqi market requires an integrated competitive marketing system that aligns internal marketing capabilities with contextual and intervening environmental conditions and translates them into coherent strategic actions and outcomes.

Keywords: Competitive marketing; Competitive advantage; Cosmetic and personal care products; Grounded theory; Structural equation modeling; Iraqi market

Introduction

In recent decades, the intensification of global competition, accelerated technological change, and the expansion of regional markets have fundamentally transformed the nature of marketing and competitive strategy across industries. Firms are no longer able to rely solely on cost leadership or traditional marketing tools; instead, they must develop adaptive, innovation-driven, and context-sensitive marketing models capable of generating sustainable competitive advantage in highly dynamic environments [1, 2]. This shift has been particularly pronounced in emerging economies, where local products increasingly seek entry into regional and international markets characterized by intense rivalry, heterogeneous consumer preferences, and complex regulatory structures [3, 4]. Within this broader landscape, the cosmetic and personal care industry

has emerged as one of the most competitive and fast-growing sectors, driven by rising consumer awareness, brand consciousness, and rapid diffusion of global trends.

Competitive advantage in contemporary markets is increasingly rooted in marketing-related capabilities, including brand development, customer relationship management, digital engagement, and strategic positioning [5, 6]. Marketing is no longer viewed merely as a functional activity but rather as a strategic system that integrates organizational resources, market intelligence, and adaptive strategies to create superior value for customers and stakeholders [7, 8]. From a theoretical perspective, this evolution reflects the convergence of the resource-based view and industrial organization theory, emphasizing both internal capabilities and external competitive structures as sources of sustained advantage [2]. Consequently, scholars increasingly argue that competitive marketing models must be empirically grounded, context-specific, and capable of explaining how firms translate marketing inputs into measurable performance outcomes.

The Middle East, and particularly Iraq, represents a strategically significant market for regional exporters due to its demographic structure, consumption growth, and reconstruction-driven demand. In recent years, Iraq has experienced a notable expansion in demand for cosmetic and personal care products, fueled by urbanization, population growth, rising disposable income in specific segments, and increased exposure to international brands through digital media and cross-border trade [9, 10]. However, the Iraqi market is also characterized by high competitive intensity, fragmented distribution systems, regulatory uncertainty, and strong presence of Turkish, Gulf, and international brands, which together pose substantial challenges for new entrants and regional exporters [11, 12]. These conditions underscore the necessity for exporters to adopt competitive marketing strategies that are not only efficient but also aligned with local market realities.

Iranian cosmetic and personal care products possess several inherent advantages, including relatively low production costs, growing domestic manufacturing capabilities, and cultural proximity to the Iraqi market. Nevertheless, despite geographical closeness and historical trade ties, Iranian brands have struggled to achieve a stable and sustainable competitive position in Iraq. Prior studies suggest that this challenge cannot be explained solely by product quality or price competitiveness, but rather by deficiencies in marketing capabilities, brand positioning, distribution strategy, and strategic adaptation to local consumer behavior [13, 14]. These findings indicate that competitive success in the Iraqi market requires a systematic and validated marketing model that integrates causal conditions, contextual factors, strategic actions, and performance outcomes.

Marketing capability development has been widely recognized as a critical determinant of export performance and competitive advantage, particularly in volatile and emerging markets [13, 15]. Empirical evidence demonstrates that firms with strong marketing capabilities are better positioned to manage market uncertainty, respond to competitive threats, and leverage digital platforms to enhance brand visibility and customer engagement [16, 17]. In the cosmetic and personal care industry, where brand perception, trust, and symbolic value play a decisive role in consumer choice, the strategic deployment of marketing tools becomes even more critical [6, 18]. Consequently, the absence of an integrated and validated competitive marketing framework represents a significant gap in both academic literature and managerial practice.

Recent research has increasingly emphasized the role of digital marketing, inbound marketing, and innovation-oriented strategies in enhancing competitive advantage across industries [10, 12]. Digital platforms enable firms to bypass traditional distribution barriers, engage directly with consumers, and tailor marketing messages to specific market segments. However, digitalization alone is insufficient without alignment with broader strategic orientations, ethical standards, and relational

marketing foundations [14, 19]. Particularly in culturally sensitive markets such as Iraq, marketing strategies must reflect local norms, religious values, and communication styles to achieve legitimacy and consumer acceptance [8, 19].

Another important dimension in the development of competitive marketing models relates to environmental and contextual factors, including political stability, legal frameworks, economic conditions, and market structure. Studies have shown that these contextual variables significantly influence the effectiveness of marketing strategies and the translation of marketing efforts into performance outcomes [20, 21]. In export-oriented industries, intervening factors such as distribution intermediaries, technological infrastructure, and media environment further shape strategic choices and constrain or enable competitive actions [11, 17]. Despite their importance, these factors are often examined in isolation rather than as part of an integrated causal framework.

From a methodological standpoint, there is growing recognition that complex marketing phenomena, particularly in emerging and cross-border markets, require mixed-method approaches capable of capturing both depth and generalizability [4, 22]. Qualitative methods such as grounded theory are especially valuable for theory building and identification of context-specific constructs, while quantitative validation through structural equation modeling enables empirical testing of proposed relationships [17, 23]. Nevertheless, many existing studies remain either purely conceptual or limited to single-method designs, thereby restricting their explanatory power and practical applicability.

In the context of Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market, the absence of a validated competitive marketing model represents a critical research gap. While previous studies have examined elements such as digital marketing, green marketing, entrepreneurial marketing, and marketing ethics in relation to competitive advantage, few have integrated these dimensions into a coherent model grounded in empirical evidence from the target market [5, 7, 21]. Moreover, limited attention has been paid to the interplay between causal conditions, contextual and intervening factors, strategic actions, and outcomes within a single analytical framework tailored to the Iraqi market.

Addressing this gap is not only of academic significance but also of substantial practical importance. For policymakers, exporters, and marketing managers, a validated competitive marketing model can provide strategic guidance for resource allocation, market entry decisions, and long-term brand development. For scholars, such a model contributes to the advancement of marketing theory by extending existing frameworks into underexplored regional contexts and product categories [1, 2]. Accordingly, there is a compelling need for research that systematically identifies, integrates, and empirically validates the key determinants of competitive marketing success for Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to develop and validate a competitive marketing model for achieving competitive advantage of Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market using a mixed-method approach.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods sequential exploratory design grounded in a pragmatic philosophical stance, aligning methodological choices with the research questions and practical objectives of model development and validation. The overall design followed the logic of Saunders' research onion, integrating philosophical assumptions, research approaches, strategies, time horizon, and data collection procedures into a coherent framework. In the qualitative phase, a systematic grounded theory strategy based on the Strauss and Corbin approach was employed to inductively develop a conceptual model

of competitive marketing tailored to Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market. Participants in the qualitative phase comprised two groups of experts selected through purposive and theoretical sampling: academic experts with substantial experience in marketing, branding, and international business research, and industry experts with direct managerial or executive involvement in the cosmetic and personal care sector, particularly in export, branding, and market development activities related to Iraq. Inclusion criteria emphasized depth of expertise, relevance of experience, diversity of professional roles, and willingness to participate. Sampling proceeded iteratively and continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, resulting in in-depth, semi-structured interviews with fifteen qualified participants.

The quantitative phase aimed to validate and generalize the model derived from the qualitative findings. The target population for this phase included professionals, specialists, and practitioners actively involved in marketing, sales, distribution, and export of cosmetic and personal care products, with demonstrable familiarity with the Iraqi market. Given the large and indeterminate size of this population, a combination of purposive, convenience, and random sampling techniques was applied. Sample size determination followed Cochran's formula for infinite populations, yielding a final sample of 384 respondents. Data collection was cross-sectional, reflecting the study's temporal horizon, and focused on capturing perceptions and evaluations of the constructs and relationships identified in the qualitative phase.

Data collection employed an inter-method approach combining qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey instrument to ensure depth, rigor, and triangulation. In the qualitative phase, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews designed to elicit rich, contextualized insights into competitive marketing dynamics, causal conditions, contextual and intervening factors, strategic actions, and expected outcomes relevant to achieving competitive advantage in the Iraqi market. An interview protocol guided the process, outlining core research questions while allowing flexibility for probing and follow-up based on participants' responses. Interviews emphasized participants' lived experiences, professional judgments, and strategic perspectives, and were conducted in an iterative manner, with ongoing refinement of questions as analysis progressed. The protocol also included space for reflective notes and methodological memos to capture emergent ideas and analytic insights.

For the quantitative phase, a structured, closed-ended attitude-based questionnaire was developed directly from the categories, dimensions, and indicators produced by the grounded theory analysis. This instrument operationalized the core constructs of the proposed competitive marketing model, including causal factors, contextual conditions, intervening variables, central phenomena, strategic orientations, and anticipated outcomes. Content and face validity were established through expert review by academics and industry specialists, ensuring conceptual clarity, relevance, and adequacy of item coverage. Construct validity was assessed using factor loadings and measures of convergent and discriminant validity, including average variance extracted and the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Reliability was evaluated through internal consistency indices, including Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, both meeting accepted threshold values. Together, these procedures ensured that the measurement instrument was both theoretically grounded and empirically robust.

Data analysis proceeded sequentially and integratively, consistent with the mixed-methods design. Qualitative data analysis followed the systematic grounded theory procedures of open, axial, and selective coding, conducted concurrently with data collection through a constant comparative method. During open coding, interview transcripts were examined line by line to identify key concepts and assign initial codes. Axial coding then organized these codes into higher-order categories by explicating relationships among causal conditions, contextual and intervening factors, strategies, and consequences.

Selective coding integrated these categories around a central phenomenon to produce a coherent, visually representable conceptual model of competitive marketing for Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market. Throughout this process, analytic rigor was enhanced through memo writing, iterative comparison, and participant feedback to confirm interpretive accuracy and credibility. Trustworthiness in the qualitative phase was addressed through criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, supported by strategies such as member checking, expert sampling, detailed contextual description, and transparent documentation of analytic decisions.

Quantitative data analysis focused on testing and validating the proposed model using structural equation modeling. After preliminary data screening, measurement models were assessed to confirm reliability and validity, followed by evaluation of the structural model to examine hypothesized relationships among constructs. Model fit was assessed using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including absolute and relative fit measures, ensuring alignment between the theoretical model and the observed data. The analysis examined the strength and significance of path coefficients, as well as the explanatory power of the model in accounting for competitive advantage outcomes. By integrating qualitative theory building with quantitative model testing, the study achieved both conceptual depth and empirical generalizability, providing a validated competitive marketing framework tailored to the specific dynamics of the Iraqi market.

Findings and Results

The qualitative findings revealed a comprehensive and interconnected model of competitive marketing aimed at achieving sustainable competitive advantage for Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market, structured around causal conditions, contextual and intervening factors, strategic actions, and outcomes. At the core of the model lies competitive marketing as the central phenomenon, which emerged as a dynamic and multi-dimensional process encompassing competitive marketing development, market development, export development, and distribution channel development. The causal factors influencing this phenomenon were identified as brand-building factors, promotional factors, distribution network policies, pricing policies, and legal policies, all of which were perceived by experts as foundational drivers shaping firms' ability to compete effectively in the target market. These causal conditions operate within a broader set of contextual factors, including cultural and social characteristics of the Iraqi market, prevailing economic conditions, the political and regulatory environment, and the structure of the market, which together define the external setting in which marketing decisions are formulated and implemented. In addition, several intervening factors were found to moderate or condition the effectiveness of competitive marketing efforts, notably competitive intensity, the role and power of distribution intermediaries, the availability and sophistication of technological infrastructure, and the media and communication environment, all of which can either facilitate or constrain strategic actions. In response to this complex configuration of conditions, firms adopt a set of competitive marketing strategies, including branding strategies, pricing strategies, promotion and advertising strategies, distribution strategies, and relationship management strategies, which collectively represent purposeful actions designed to translate marketing capabilities into market performance. The implementation of these strategies was reported to lead to a range of positive outcomes, such as increased market share, enhanced brand awareness, sales growth, and improved sustainable organizational performance. Ultimately, these outcomes converge in the achievement of competitive advantage, which participants described as the long-term ability of Iranian cosmetic and personal

care brands to secure a stable and differentiated position in the Iraqi market despite environmental uncertainty and competitive pressures (Table 1).

Table 1

Results of the Qualitative Phase: Competitive Marketing Model for Iranian Cosmetic and Personal Care Products in the Iraqi Market

Main Category	Subcategories / Dimensions
Causal Factors	Brand-building factors
	Promotional factors
	Distribution network policies
	Pricing policies
	Legal policies
Contextual Factors	Cultural and social factors
	Economic conditions
	Political and regulatory environment
	Market structure
Intervening Factors	Competitive intensity
	Distribution intermediaries
	Technological infrastructure
	Media and communication environment
Competitive Marketing (Core Phenomenon)	Competitive marketing development
	Market development
	Export development
	Distribution channel development
Competitive Marketing Strategies	Branding strategies
	Pricing strategies
	Promotion and advertising strategies
	Distribution strategies
	Relationship management strategies
Outcomes	Market share increase
	Brand awareness enhancement
	Sales growth
	Sustainable organizational performance

The demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate that the sample was predominantly male, with 290 participants (75.5%), while females accounted for 94 participants (24.5%), yielding a total sample size of 384 respondents. In terms of age distribution, 47 respondents (12.2%) were under 30 years old, the largest proportion belonged to the 31–40 age group with 187 respondents (48.7%), and 150 respondents (39.0%) were between 41 and 50 years of age. Regarding educational attainment, the majority of respondents held a master's degree, comprising 256 individuals (66.6%), followed by 78 respondents with a bachelor's degree (20.4%), while 50 respondents (13.0%) possessed a doctoral degree. Overall, the demographic profile reflects a sample with substantial professional maturity and a high level of academic qualification, appropriate for examining competitive marketing and strategic issues in the cosmetic and personal care industry.

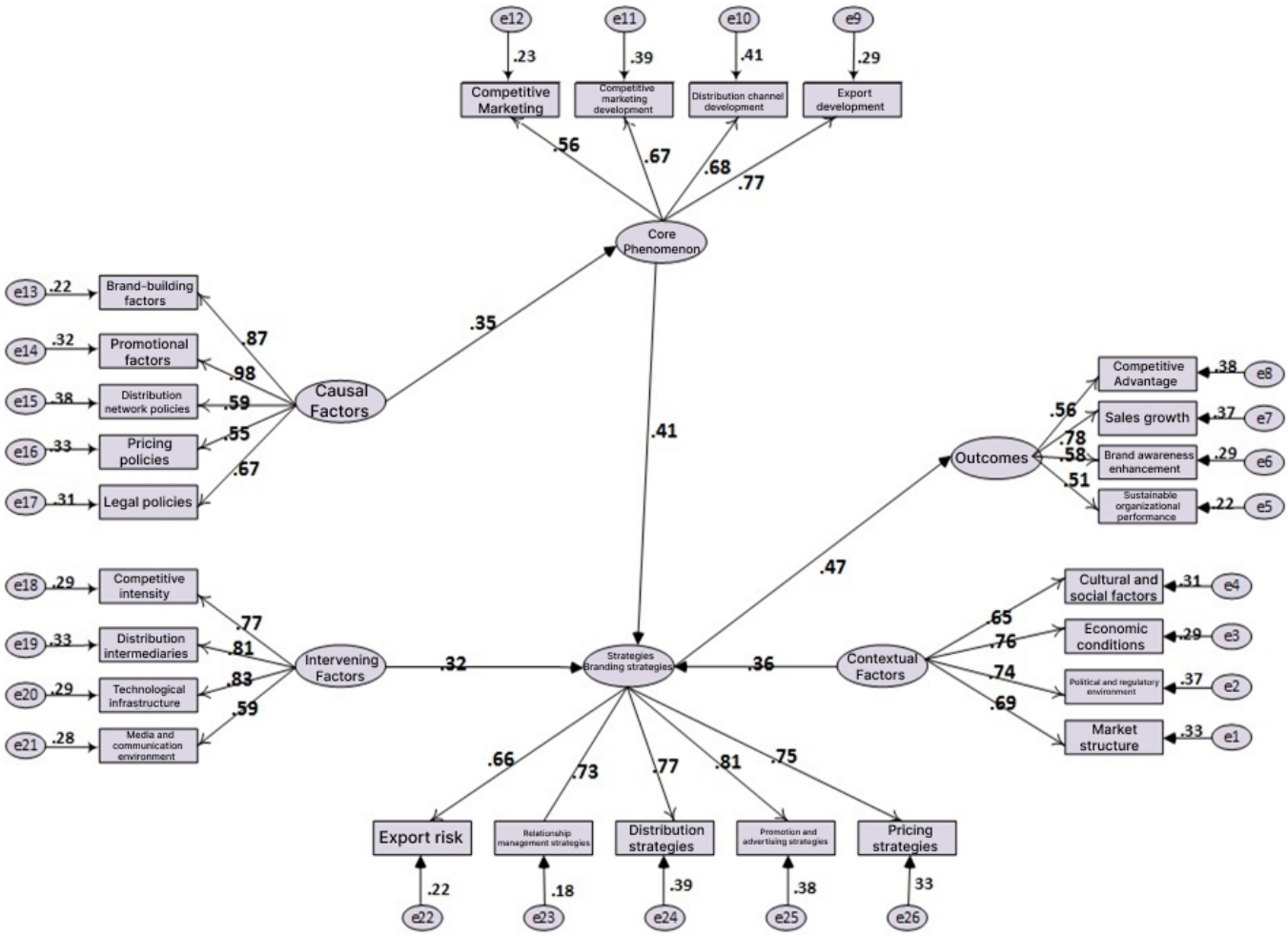
Table 2

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results for the Competitive Marketing Model

Hypothesis	Direct Path	Path Coefficient	p-value	T-value	Result
H1	Causal factors → Core phenomenon (competitive marketing for achieving competitive advantage of Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market)	0.35	< 0.001	7.23	Supported
H2	Intervening factors → Competitive marketing strategies for achieving competitive advantage of Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market	0.32	< 0.001	5.34	Supported
H3	Contextual factors → Competitive marketing strategies for achieving competitive advantage of Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market	0.36	< 0.001	5.08	Supported
H4	Strategic factors → Outcomes of competitive marketing for achieving competitive advantage of Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market	0.47	< 0.001	11.56	Supported

Figure 1

Final Model of the Study



The results of structural equation modeling indicate that all proposed hypotheses in the competitive marketing model were empirically supported at a high level of statistical significance. The findings demonstrate that causal factors exert a positive and significant effect on the core phenomenon of competitive marketing aimed at achieving competitive advantage for Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market, as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.35 and a strong T-value. Moreover, intervening factors were found to have a significant influence on competitive marketing strategies, highlighting the important moderating role of environmental and operational conditions in shaping strategic actions. Contextual factors also showed a meaningful and positive effect on the formulation and implementation of competitive marketing strategies, underscoring the relevance of cultural, economic, political, and market-related conditions in the target market. Finally, strategic factors exhibited the strongest effect on competitive marketing outcomes, with a relatively high path coefficient, indicating that well-designed and effectively implemented marketing strategies play a decisive role in translating competitive marketing efforts into tangible outcomes. Collectively, these results confirm the internal consistency of the proposed model and provide robust empirical support for the sequential relationships linking causal conditions, contextual and intervening factors, strategic actions, and outcomes in the pursuit of competitive advantage in the Iraqi cosmetic and personal care market.

Table 3

Structural Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	NFI	TLI	AGFI	GFI	RMSEA	χ^2/DF	DF	χ^2
Acceptable Threshold	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	≤ 0.08	< 3.00	> 0	—
Obtained Value	0.989	0.933	0.918	0.932	0.055	0.89	187	167.523

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that the structural model demonstrates a very good overall fit to the observed data. All incremental and absolute fit indices, including NFI, TLI, AGFI, and GFI, exceed the recommended threshold of 0.90, confirming the adequacy of the proposed model. The RMSEA value of 0.055 falls well below the acceptable upper limit of 0.08, indicating a satisfactory approximation of the model to the population covariance matrix. In addition, the normalized chi-square value (χ^2/DF = 0.89) is substantially lower than the recommended maximum of 3.00, further supporting the robustness of model fit. Collectively, these indices provide strong evidence that the hypothesized structural model reliably represents the relationships among the study variables and is suitable for hypothesis testing and interpretation of causal paths.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop and validate a competitive marketing model for achieving competitive advantage of Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in the Iraqi market through an integrated qualitative–quantitative approach. The findings of both phases provide strong empirical support for the proposed grounded theory model and confirm the sequential relationships among causal factors, contextual and intervening conditions, competitive marketing strategies, and marketing outcomes. Overall, the results indicate that competitive advantage in the Iraqi market is not the product of isolated marketing actions, but rather the outcome of a coherent system of marketing capabilities, strategic orientations, and environmental alignment.

The qualitative findings demonstrated that competitive marketing constitutes the core phenomenon through which firms translate internal and external conditions into strategic action and performance outcomes. This finding is consistent with contemporary marketing theory, which emphasizes marketing as a dynamic capability that integrates organizational resources with market knowledge to generate sustainable advantage [1, 2]. Participants emphasized that brand-building, promotional effectiveness, pricing logic, distribution network policies, and legal compliance act as causal drivers shaping the effectiveness of competitive marketing efforts. These results align with prior research showing that marketing capabilities and structured marketing mixes play a decisive role in export performance and competitive positioning, particularly in emerging and cross-border markets [13, 23].

The quantitative results further confirmed the significant effect of causal factors on the core phenomenon of competitive marketing. The positive and statistically significant path coefficient indicates that firms possessing stronger brand orientation, clearer promotional strategies, and more coherent pricing and distribution policies are better positioned to develop effective competitive marketing systems. This result is consistent with empirical evidence suggesting that marketing competency and innovation directly enhance competitive advantage by enabling firms to differentiate their offerings and communicate value more effectively [4, 7]. In the cosmetic and personal care industry, where brand image and consumer trust are central to purchase decisions, these causal factors become particularly salient.

Contextual factors were also found to exert a significant influence on competitive marketing strategies. Cultural and social norms, economic conditions, political and regulatory frameworks, and market structure were identified as key contextual

variables shaping strategic choices. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of market context in determining the effectiveness of marketing strategies, especially in international and regional markets with high institutional complexity [20, 21]. In the Iraqi market, cultural affinity, religious considerations, and sensitivity to price and quality perceptions were highlighted as critical contextual elements, reinforcing the argument that standardized marketing approaches are insufficient for achieving competitive advantage.

The significant effect of contextual factors on competitive marketing strategies also aligns with research on adaptive and ambidextrous marketing orientations. Strategic flexibility and contextual responsiveness enable firms to align their marketing actions with local market conditions, thereby enhancing performance [3, 9]. This suggests that Iranian cosmetic and personal care firms seeking success in Iraq must move beyond export-driven transactional approaches and adopt market-oriented strategies grounded in deep contextual understanding.

Intervening factors were found to play a critical role in shaping the relationship between environmental conditions and strategic action. Competitive intensity, distribution intermediaries, technological infrastructure, and the media environment were identified as variables that can either amplify or constrain the effectiveness of competitive marketing strategies. The significant impact of intervening factors on marketing strategies corroborates prior findings that environmental turbulence, digital readiness, and intermediary power significantly affect strategic outcomes in competitive markets [11, 17]. In particular, the role of intermediaries and media channels in Iraq underscores the importance of relationship management and communication strategies in markets characterized by fragmented distribution systems.

The findings further demonstrate that competitive marketing strategies exert the strongest effect on marketing outcomes. Branding strategies, pricing strategies, promotion and advertising strategies, distribution strategies, and relationship management strategies collectively explained a substantial proportion of variance in market share growth, brand awareness, sales growth, and sustainable organizational performance. This result is consistent with a wide body of literature emphasizing the mediating role of marketing strategy between capabilities and performance outcomes [5, 15]. The strong path coefficient observed in this study suggests that strategic execution is the primary mechanism through which firms convert marketing inputs into competitive advantage.

The importance of branding and promotion strategies identified in this study aligns with research highlighting the role of inbound marketing, digital engagement, and brand communication in competitive environments [10, 12]. Moreover, relationship management strategies emerged as a critical strategic dimension, reflecting the relational nature of marketing in Middle Eastern markets. This finding is supported by prior studies emphasizing the role of relational marketing foundations and ethical marketing practices in building trust and long-term customer loyalty [8, 14, 19].

The convergence of qualitative and quantitative findings reinforces the robustness of the proposed model. By integrating grounded theory insights with structural equation modeling, this study extends existing marketing literature by offering a validated, context-specific framework for competitive marketing in the cosmetic and personal care industry. The results also support the theoretical integration of capability-based and market-based perspectives, demonstrating that competitive advantage emerges from the interaction of internal marketing capabilities and external market conditions [1, 2].

Overall, the findings suggest that Iranian cosmetic and personal care firms can achieve sustainable competitive advantage in the Iraqi market by adopting a holistic competitive marketing approach that aligns causal capabilities, contextual awareness, strategic execution, and performance monitoring. This study therefore contributes to both theory and practice

by providing an empirically grounded model that explains how competitive marketing functions as a system rather than a set of isolated tactics.

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional nature of the quantitative phase limits the ability to capture dynamic changes in competitive marketing strategies and market conditions over time. Second, although efforts were made to ensure diversity among participants, the qualitative phase relied on a relatively limited number of experts, which may constrain the transferability of findings to other industries or markets. Third, the quantitative data were based on self-reported measures, which may be subject to common method bias and perceptual inaccuracies. Finally, the focus on the Iraqi market restricts the generalizability of the findings to other regional or international contexts.

Future research could build on the findings of this study by employing longitudinal designs to examine how competitive marketing strategies and outcomes evolve over time in response to market turbulence and strategic learning. Comparative studies across different export markets could also provide valuable insights into the contextual specificity of competitive marketing models. Additionally, future studies may integrate objective performance indicators alongside perceptual measures to enhance the robustness of empirical validation. Exploring the moderating role of digital transformation maturity or organizational culture could further enrich understanding of competitive marketing dynamics.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that firms should invest in developing integrated marketing capabilities rather than relying on ad hoc promotional activities. Managers are encouraged to align branding, pricing, distribution, and relationship management strategies with local market conditions and cultural expectations. Strengthening collaboration with distribution intermediaries and leveraging digital and media platforms strategically can enhance market penetration and brand visibility. Policymakers and export support institutions may also use the proposed model as a diagnostic framework to design targeted interventions that enhance the competitiveness of Iranian cosmetic and personal care products in regional markets.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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