

The Impact of International Marketing Mix Policies on the Export Decision The Mediating Role of Standardization and Adaptation

Dr. Laouar Nouara

Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, Abbes Laghrour University,
Khenchela, Algeria — laouarnouara3@gmail.com

Dr. Trad Mourad

Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, University of Algiers 3 —
trad.mourad0425@gmail.com

Received: 17.03.2026 Accepted: 25.08.2026 Publishing: 29.09.2026

Abstract:

This study aimed to examine the effect of international marketing mix policies on the export decision, using the standardization and adaptation strategies as a mediating variable, in ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises in the province of Batna. The study was conducted on a sample of 36 strategic decision-makers in Batna's ceramic enterprises.

The results showed that international marketing mix policies explain 53.9% of the variation in the export decision ($R^2 = 0.539$). The sub-hypothesis testing further revealed a statistically significant effect of international distribution policy alone on the export decision ($\beta = 0.399$, $p = 0.010$), whereas product, pricing, and international promotion policies showed no significant direct effect on the export decision among the enterprises studied. Based on these findings, the study recommended that sector stakeholders focus on strengthening the efficiency of supply chains and international distribution channels in order to penetrate foreign markets effectively.

Keywords: International marketing mix, standardization and adaptation, export decision.

Introduction

The international marketing mix is of major importance in the field of international marketing, and is considered the decisive factor enabling international enterprises to survive and endure in complex international environments characterized by intense competition and rapid change. Enterprises with a strong capacity to survive in international markets are those able to offer an international marketing mix that responds to the requirements and tastes of these markets, capable of satisfying the desires of their target customer segments. Given the fundamental differences that distinguish international markets — arising from numerous cultural, economic, social, technological, legal, political and competitive factors — identifying and selecting the targeted international market requires planning a unique international marketing mix (product, pricing,

promotion and international distribution) capable of capturing the customer in the international market and satisfying their desires in order to secure their lasting loyalty to the enterprise.

Marketing activity in the international market differs from that in domestic markets, given the differing needs, tastes and expectations of customers, which requires enterprises to develop a distinctive marketing mix that responds to these differences. Enterprises must therefore decide whether to standardize the marketing mix in line with the nature of international markets and in harmony with the needs of the targeted customer — offering products with uniform specifications both locally and internationally — or to adapt the marketing mix specifications according to the characteristics of each individual market. This is done by choosing one of the strategies for entering international markets: exporting, licensing and franchising, joint ventures, or direct investment.

Exporting is considered the simplest way of penetrating international markets and the first strategy that enterprises consider, being less risky compared to other strategies, and representing an opportunity to direct products to one or more foreign markets in order to expand and generate profits.

Through this research paper, we aim to determine the relationship of influence between the international marketing mix (international product, international pricing, international promotion, international distribution) and the export strategy, through the mediating role of standardization and adaptation.

Main Research Question

The problem of the study is framed in the following main question: Does the international marketing mix (international product, international pricing, international promotion, international distribution) have an effect on the export decision through the mediating role of the standardization and adaptation strategies?

Study Variables

The study includes two types of variables:

- Independent variables: The international marketing mix, through its dimensions (international product, international pricing, international promotion, international distribution).
- Dependent variable: Export.
- Mediating variables: Adaptation and standardization.

Study Hypotheses

Based on the research question and the variables above, the following main hypothesis is proposed: Main hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect at the level $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of the elements of the international marketing mix (product, pricing, distribution, promotion) on the export decision among ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises in the province of Batna.

Sub-hypotheses:

- There is a statistically significant effect at the level $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of international product policy (adaptation and standardization) on the export decision among ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises in the province of Batna.

- There is a statistically significant effect at the level $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of international pricing policy (adaptation and standardization) on the export decision among ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises in the province of Batna.
- There is a statistically significant effect at the level $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of international distribution policy (adaptation and standardization) on the export decision among ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises in the province of Batna.
- There is a statistically significant effect at the level $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of international promotion policy (adaptation and standardization) on the export decision among ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises in the province of Batna.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to achieve a number of objectives, most notably:

- Shedding light on the ceramics and sanitary-ware industrial cluster in the province of Batna, and analytically identifying the sector's marketing mix and its presence in the international market;
- Enabling the results of the study to be used to encourage strategic decision-makers in the ceramics and sanitary-ware enterprises of Batna to seek new international markets for their products, particularly in light of the local competition facing this sector.

Significance of the Study

- The significance of the study lies in uncovering the relationship between standardizing or adapting the international marketing mix and the export strategy within the ceramics and sanitary-ware industrial cluster of Batna, which has recently made inroads into international markets, achieving substantial profits;
- Revealing the capacity of the Batna ceramics cluster to offer competitive products and a diversified mix, with specifications that have enabled it to penetrate international markets within a short period, thereby increasing export rates and expanding market share;
- No prior studies were found linking these two variables together; this study is therefore considered a new contribution, as it links two variables of great contemporary importance, particularly exporting as one of the strategies for establishing a presence in the international market, and the importance of its recognition by international decision-makers.

Previous Studies

Numerous studies have shed light on the effect of international marketing strategies (product, pricing, promotion and distribution) on the export decision, with a focus on the mediating role of standardization and adaptation choices. The most notable of these include:

- Cavusgil et al. (1993), "Product and promotion adaptation in export ventures: An empirical investigation": This study examined the effect of adaptation in product and promotion strategies on the performance and orientation of enterprises toward foreign markets. It found that the degree of adaptation does not occur randomly, but instead acts as a crucial mediating variable between firm/market characteristics and the export environment on one hand, and export success on the

other. It also showed that cultural and legal differences necessitate adaptation for the success of the export decision.

- Brei et al. (2011), "The influence of adaptation and standardization of the marketing mix and export performance: A meta-analysis": This study aimed to measure the effect of standardization and adaptation strategies at the level of the marketing mix on export performance. The meta-analysis concluded that both options (standardization and adaptation) have a positive effect on exporting, but that the degree of marketing-mix adaptation gives a greater advantage in raising levels of export expansion and acceptance among foreign consumers compared to absolute standardization.

- Ben Azza and Ahmed (2021), "The effect of the international marketing mix adaptation and standardization strategy on the export performance of economic enterprises": This study aimed to determine how adaptation and standardization marketing choices contribute to shaping the export decision among enterprises active in foreign markets. It confirmed that enterprises seek to standardize elements such as brand and quality in order to reduce costs, while resorting to adapting packaging, pricing, and promotion to meet the requirements of the importing country — which forms the main support for the export decision and its continuation.

- Powers and Loyka (2010), "Adaptation of Marketing Mix Elements in International Markets": This study aimed to determine the extent to which individual marketing-mix elements are adapted to suit international markets, and how firm, industry, and market factors influence the degree of this adaptation. The results indicate that the highest degree of adaptation appears in distribution, followed by price, then promotion, and finally product. It was also found that product adaptation is influenced by market factors, price adaptation by market and industry factors, promotion adaptation by market factors, while distribution adaptation is influenced by company factors. These findings can be used to understand and manage the level of adaptation needed for products in international markets.

- Lages and Montgomery (2004), "Export performance policy: An empirical study of price, product, distribution, and promotion adaptation": This study analyzed the effect of the four dimensions of the export marketing mix (product, price, distribution, and promotion) on the export performance of economic enterprises. It found a statistically significant positive effect of adjusting and adapting marketing-mix elements on improving sales volume and enhancing the profitability of export markets, noting that an adaptive response to the requirements of importing markets is an essential condition for the success and continuity of export decisions.

A review of previous studies shows that most of them addressed the independent variable — namely the international marketing mix and its dimensions — while also giving due attention to the standardization and adaptation strategies. Most studies found relationships of influence between the international marketing mix and its dimensions, through the mediating role of adaptation and standardization, with various dependent variables such as export performance, the

international environment, and others. They also used the questionnaire approach, which is the same approach followed in this study.

What the present study may add is an attempt to determine the degree to which the independent variable influences the choice of the export decision — being one of the simplest strategies for entering foreign markets — using the mediating variables (adaptation and standardization).

I. The International Marketing Mix

The international marketing mix is the set of marketing elements that an enterprise seeks to present in a homogeneous manner across foreign markets in order to achieve its sales and profit objectives, while taking into account the cultural, economic, legal, and political differences of each targeted market.

1. The International Product

The product is considered the core of the marketing process and the cornerstone around which various marketing activities revolve, whether in the domestic or international market. Several concepts have been proposed for it, the most important of which are:

Philip Kotler defines the product as: everything that can be offered to the market for the purpose of attention, acquisition, use, or consumption, with a view to satisfying a need or want (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020, p. 272). According to this definition, the product is everything available in the market that has the ability to attract the consumer's attention and drive them toward purchase in order to satisfy their desires.

The product is an integrated bundle of tangible and intangible benefits and characteristics designed to suit the cultural, economic, and legal dimensions of foreign markets (Hollensen, 2020, p. 315). Researchers consider the product to be a hierarchical structure consisting of three interrelated main levels, each level providing greater value to consumers, as shown in the figure below.

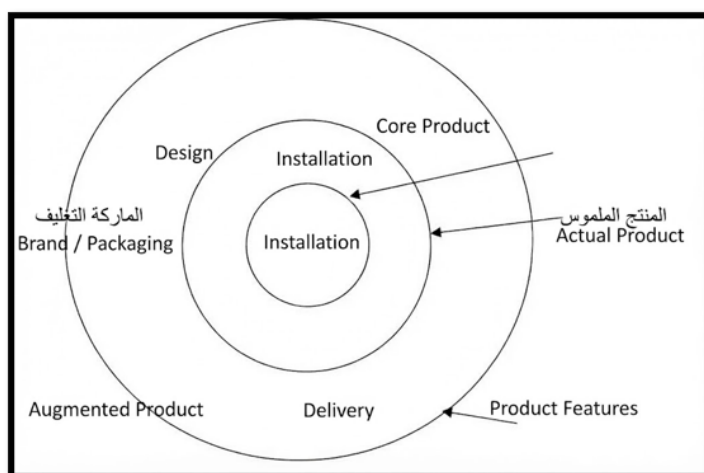


Figure No. (01): Levels of the Product

Source: (Calvo-Porrall & Stanton, 2017, p. 185)

According to the model above, the product is classified into three interconnected levels ranging from the core to the outward appearance and accompanying services. The core product represents the essential benefit sought by the consumer to satisfy their need, while the actual (tangible) product expresses the concrete structure that translates that benefit through quality, design, branding, and packaging. The augmented product then surrounds the core product, offering additional benefits and services such as warranty, maintenance, and after-sales service, thereby enhancing the value delivered to the consumer.

2. International Pricing

Kotler defines price as: the value or monetary amount that consumers pay in order to obtain the benefits of using a product or service (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009, p. 312).

Pricing is also viewed as the value of products or services expressed in monetary units, which consumers agree to pay in order to obtain the benefits and utility resulting from owning or consuming the product (Stanton, Etzel, & Walker, 1994, p. 302).

There are several pricing methods in both domestic and international markets, which are summarized in the following table:

Table No. (01): Pricing Methods

Approach	Pricing Method	Pricing Objective
Cost-based approach	Full cost	Covering all fixed and variable costs plus a profit margin
	Marginal cost	Covering only the variable costs of exporting in order to penetrate markets at low prices
Market-based approach	Competitive pricing	Setting the price at, below, or above competitors' domestic prices
	Perceived value	Pricing according to the international consumer's mental valuation of the product
	Flexible/differential pricing	Adjusting the price according to purchasing power and conditions of each country
Market-entry strategies	Market skimming	A high initial price to recover costs, then gradually lowered
	Penetration pricing	A very low initial price to gain the largest possible market share

	Standardization	A uniform global price plus shipping and customs charges
	Adaptation	An independent price set for each country based on its economic environment

Source: (Kotler & Keller, 2021; Keegan & Green, 2020)

3. International Distribution

For an enterprise to achieve its objectives of delivering its product mix to targeted consumers in the international market, increasing demand for its products, and establishing a position for itself in that market, it must select appropriate distribution channels that ensure the movement and delivery of products to the consumer, thereby achieving its international marketing strategy.

International distribution channels are the networks that perform the functions of delivering products from the point of production to the point of consumption across national borders, aiming to manage the channel strategy so as to balance coverage, control, and cost (Keegan, 2017, p. 312). International distribution involves complex channels linking the consumer in the foreign market with the international enterprise, and includes the movement of goods across borders as well as local distribution networks within the target country (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021, p. 582).

The following table shows the forms of international distribution channels and the various intermediaries involved in getting products to the final consumer.

Table No. (02): Types of Distribution Channels

Channel Type	Concept	Forms and Applications	Advantages / Disadvantages
Direct Distribution	Selling the product directly from the manufacturing company to the final consumer or industrial buyer in the foreign market, without independent intermediaries.	• Foreign sales offices and branches. • Direct online sales across borders. • Direct supply contracts with foreign companies.	Advantages: maximum control over price and strategy, and direct market knowledge. Disadvantages: high fixed costs and greater direct risk.
Indirect Distribution	Using independent intermediaries based in the home country or the host market to transport and distribute the products.	• Export merchants and commission agents. • Export management companies (EMCs). • Local distributors in the importing country.	Advantages: lower initial costs, and overcoming customs and cultural barriers through the intermediary's

			expertise. Disadvantages: partial loss of control over pricing and promotion, and profit-sharing.
--	--	--	---

Source: Adapted from: Global Marketing Management (8th ed., pp. 320–322), by W. J. Keegan, 2017, Pearson.

4. International Promotion

International promotion is the process of preparing and coordinating communication efforts aimed at informing, persuading, and influencing the target audience in foreign markets to purchase a good or service, while taking into account the cultural, linguistic, and regulatory environments of the target country (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013, p. 380).

In order to reach and persuade the final consumer to make a purchasing decision, enterprises use a range of promotional tools: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations.

II. Exporting

Exporting is considered the simplest way for an enterprise to enter foreign markets, whereby the enterprise produces in its home country and merely exports the surplus to the target market.

Exporting is defined as: the process of selling products manufactured in one country to residents of another country (Hill, 2021, p. 412).

One researcher has noted that exporting is among the least risky and least costly international expansion strategies compared to foreign direct investment (Griffin & Pustay, 2015, p. 385).

Exporting means entering the foreign market by shipping and selling production with the help of intermediaries in the international market (indirect exporting), or with the help of a dedicated department or branch of the enterprise, and its commercial representatives or agents (Kotler et al., 2017, p. 114).

Exporting is thus the flow of the enterprise's surplus production to foreign markets, either through international or local intermediaries, and accordingly it is divided into two types: direct and indirect.

Table No. (03): Difference Between Direct and Indirect Exporting

Direct Exporting	Indirect Exporting
Requires the exporting enterprise to invest considerable effort, financing, and resources — for example, logistics management.	The trading partner performs well, which reduces the effort required from the exporting enterprise.
Involves a greater degree of risk compared to indirect exporting, requiring more investment, with the level of risk tied to establishing substantial operations in the foreign market.	Considered the less risky option.

The ease with which the exporting enterprise can exit the market depends on its degree of involvement — i.e., the extent of its investment in the process.	Indirect exporting is usually the easier strategy (agreements can be cancelled depending on market entry and exit conditions).
Has relationships with customers, but must manage (remotely) the staff responsible for those customer relationships.	Little to no contact with customers.
The exporting enterprise gains market experience.	The exporting enterprise gains no market experience and relies on agents for data feedback.

Note: Adapted from Title of Book (p. 357), by R. Masterson, N. Phillips, and D. Pickton, 2021, SAGE Publications.

III. Adaptation / Standardization Strategy of the International Marketing Mix

The issue of standardization versus adaptation is one of the most important strategic decisions facing enterprises when entering international markets. Enterprises find themselves facing the challenge of designing an international marketing mix (product, price, promotion, distribution) suited to a variety of international environments, particularly given the diversity and differences these environments display in customs, traditions, cultures, consumer tastes, and other factors.

Standardizing the international marketing mix means offering the mix with the same specifications and characteristics across all targeted international markets, whereas adaptation means changing and modifying the international marketing mix to suit the characteristics of consumers as well as the variables of the targeted international markets.

Standardizing or modifying the international product depends on the specificity of each market. In deciding on its presence in the international market and choosing the best method of penetration, the enterprise relies on the specifications of the international product. The core product is the most suitable for standardization across countries, while the accompanying services are harder to standardize due to varying levels of requirements from one country to another. For instance, the symbolic and intangible characteristics of a product can be standardized if the image of the exported products is valuable, whereas the content of colors and shapes varies across cultures, which reinforces the case for an adaptation strategy (Ahmane, 2015, p. 266).

International product standardization is thus more suitable for enterprises engaged in exporting, as well as for joint ventures in which the enterprise retains control of the core product while the partner handles the remaining elements of the marketing mix.

International pricing policy is affected by demand conditions, competitor behavior, government policies, and regulations, in addition to other elements of the marketing mix. It should be noted that international price standardization follows the same factors considered when standardizing the international marketing mix as a whole, with the key difference that pricing for the foreign market

is more complex (Al-Sayrafi, 2020, pp. 72–73). Consequently, some enterprises attempt to fix prices for all products, while others focus only on core products (Al-Sumaidaie, 2010, p. 307).

International distribution is considered more difficult than domestic distribution. If enterprises prefer international distribution standardization, they must focus on two matters:

- Variation in the availability of distribution channel members across targeted markets;
- Instability in the influence of international environmental variables — enterprises should therefore establish a general, flexible policy and leave their branches free to adapt this policy to each market according to circumstances (Al-Sumaidaie, 2010, p. 309).

When adopting an export strategy, an enterprise may use direct distribution channels by distributing definitively to export merchants, who then handle distribution in the international market — thereby following international distribution standardization. Alternatively, in the case of multiple and differing markets and environmental conditions, the enterprise relies on indirect distribution channels through international distribution intermediaries and agents, thereby adapting international distribution to the conditions of each targeted market.

Standardizing or adapting international promotion is linked to the product. A direct-extension strategy — based on making no modifications to either the product or the promotional means, i.e., standardizing both product and promotion — suits products with a global brand, such as Coca-Cola, and fits enterprises that use exporting as their strategy for entering international markets.

In the case where the product is not modified but the promotional policy is changed (communications adaptation), the product may be unfamiliar in the language of the targeted foreign countries, requiring a change to the promotional mix accordingly — which suits enterprises pursuing joint ventures or foreign investment as a strategy for penetrating international markets.

4. Design of the Field Study and its Methodological Procedures

4.1 Design of the Field Study

This section covers the design and methodology of the field study, its scope, the questionnaire instrument, and the study variables.

4.1.1 Type and Method of the Field Study

Given the nature of the study — examining the effect of the international marketing mix on the export decision, and the mediating role of adaptation and standardization — and given the need to gather real-world data and facts, the study is classified as descriptive research, aiming to provide an accurate and detailed description of certain phenomena or events, gather facts and information about them, describe their particular conditions, and report their actual state.

In terms of method, the study relied on the descriptive approach based on field research, in order to obtain data from its primary sources and test the validity of the hypotheses to answer the research questions. This was achieved through a questionnaire containing a number of questions on the topic, formulated according to the study's objectives and applied to a sample of the study population. Statistical methods were also used to determine the study sample and to analyze the field study data.

4.1.2 Scope of the Study

The study was defined by the following scopes:

- Geographic scope: The study was conducted in ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises in the province of Batna;
- Human scope: The human scope was determined from a sample of 36 international strategic decision-makers in the ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises of Batna, holding positions such as general manager, head of the export department, commercial director, or head of the marketing department;
- Time scope: The field study took approximately 3 months to complete, from preparing the questionnaire to distributing its final version to the study sample.

4.1.3 The Questionnaire

To complete the practical side of the study, a questionnaire was designed specifically for this study's purposes. To bring the questionnaire to its final form, a number of steps were followed, including observing the scientific requirements for constructing a questionnaire — particularly ensuring that the questions relate to the study's topic — as well as drawing on questions from prior scientific studies, while ensuring simplicity and clarity of style when wording the questions, using simple Arabic, and avoiding leading questions.

4.2 Methodological Procedures of the Field Study

This section addresses the study population and sample, the data-collection instrument, and its validity and reliability.

4.2.1 Study Population and Sample

The study population consists of the international strategic decision-makers in the ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises of the province of Batna — general managers, heads of export departments, commercial directors, heads of marketing departments, and executives. A convenience sample of 36 individuals was selected.

4.2.2 Statistical Processing of the Study Data

After administering the questionnaire to respondents, the data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS V24) and Smart PLS 4.

The statistical methods used in the analysis were:

- Frequencies and percentages, to identify the characteristics of the enterprises studied and determine respondents' answers regarding the main statements included in the study instrument;
- The arithmetic mean, to determine the level of agreement of the sample's responses on each statement of the study's core variables; the arithmetic mean was also used to rank statements by highest mean;
- The standard deviation, used to identify the extent to which respondents' answers to each statement, and to each main axis, deviated from its arithmetic mean. The relative level of agreement was determined according to the following scale:

Class width = (upper limit of alternative – lower limit of alternative) / number of levels = (5 – 1) / 5 = 0.8

Accordingly: complete disagreement ranges from 1 to less than 1.8; disagreement ranges from 1.8 to less than 2.6; neutrality ranges from 2.6 to less than 3.4; agreement ranges from 3.4 to less than 4.2; and complete agreement is 4.2 and above;

- Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the reliability of the study instrument; Composite Reliability (CR) was used to assess convergent validity, along with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings; discriminant validity was assessed using the cross-loadings of the model's variables and the overlap between dimensions;

- To evaluate the structural model, the significance of the path coefficients was tested using bootstrapping; the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to determine the extent to which the independent variables explain the dependent variable; f^2 was used to determine the strength of each independent variable's individual effect in explaining the dependent variable; Q^2 was used to measure the predictive capacity of the independent variables with respect to the dependent variable; and the Goodness of Fit (GOF) index was used to measure the overall reliability of the measurement and structural model;

- A test was also applied for the moderating role of the international experience of international strategic decision-makers in the relationship between the independent variable — one of the international marketing mix policies (product, pricing, promotion, distribution) — and the dependent variable, the export decision.

4.2.3 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

After the questionnaire addressed to the study sample was drafted in its initial form, it had to undergo validity and reliability testing — an instrument is considered valid if its statements actually measure what they were designed to measure. The study confirmed the validity of its instrument through both face validity and construct validity.

Regarding face validity, the questionnaire was presented to a panel of experienced and specialized reviewing professors, to benefit from their views on revising it and to verify the suitability of each statement to the axis it belongs to, as well as the soundness and precision of the wording, and the extent to which it covered the study's problem and achieved its objectives. In light of the reviewers' comments, some statements were reworded and others added to improve the instrument, after which the questionnaire was adopted in its final form.

Construct validity and the reliability of the instrument are addressed when evaluating the study model.

Results of the Field Study

4-1 Descriptive Analysis of the Field Study

This section covers a description of the characteristics of the study sample, in addition to a description of the sample's responses regarding the study variables.

4-1-1 Description of the Sample's Characteristics

The table below shows information about the international strategic decision-makers of the enterprises studied:

Table No. (04): Information on the Enterprises Studied

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Position Held	General Manager	9	25.0
	Head of Export Department	8	22.2
	Commercial Director	9	25.0
	Head of Marketing Department	8	22.2
	Executive	2	5.6
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	3	8.3
	5 – 10 years	23	63.9
	More than 10 years	10	27.8

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the SPSS V24 statistical program

The table shows that the largest proportion of respondents (25%) hold the position of general manager or commercial director in the enterprises studied, followed by those holding the position of head of the export department or head of the marketing department (22.2%), while executives ranked last (5.6%). It can also be seen that the largest proportion have 5–10 years of work experience (63.9%), 27.8% have more than 10 years of experience, while those with less than 5 years of experience represent only 8.3%.

4-1-2 Description of the Sample's Responses to the Study Variables

The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were calculated, and the level of agreement determined, in order to analyze the sample's responses regarding the dimensions of the study, as follows:

Sample Responses on the International Product Policy Dimension

The table below shows that the sample's responses tend toward strong agreement with the statements of the international product policy dimension, with an overall mean of 4.62 and a standard deviation of 0.483. The statement "Your enterprise modifies its products according to the requirements and preferences of consumers in the targeted international markets" ranked first, with a mean of 4.89 and a standard deviation of 0.319, followed by "Your enterprise offers a diverse range of products to international markets," with a mean of 4.78 and a standard deviation of 0.422. The statements "Your enterprise offers its products to international markets under the same brand used in the domestic market" and "Your enterprise follows a product-standardization strategy" ranked last, with means of 4.50 and standard deviations of 0.507 and 0.971, respectively.

Table No. (05): Sample Responses on the International Product Policy Dimension

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Agreement
Your enterprise offers a diverse range of products to international markets	4.78	0.422	Very high
Your enterprise offers its products to international markets under the same brand used in the domestic market	4.50	0.507	Very high
Your enterprise modifies its products according to the requirements and preferences of consumers in the targeted international markets	4.89	0.319	Very high
Your enterprise follows a product-standardization strategy	4.50	0.971	Very high
International product policy dimension (overall)	4.62	0.483	Very high

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the SPSS V24 statistical program

Sample Responses on the International Pricing Policy Dimension

The table below shows that the sample's responses tend toward strong agreement with the statements of the international pricing policy dimension, with an overall mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 0.649. The statements "Through its pricing policy, your enterprise seeks to build a good reputation in the international markets it deals with" and "Your enterprise sets the prices of its exported products based on the product's total cost" ranked first, with means of 4.31 and standard deviations of 0.786 and 0.822, respectively, while "Your enterprise bases the pricing of its products on supply and demand conditions in international markets" ranked last, with a mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 1.298.

Table No. (06): Sample Responses on the International Pricing Policy Dimension

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Agreement
Your enterprise bases the pricing of its products on supply and demand conditions in international markets	4.17	1.298	Very high
Your enterprise studies unloading and handling fees at ports, and shipping costs	4.22	0.760	Very high
Through its pricing policy, your enterprise seeks to build a good reputation in the international markets it deals with	4.31	0.786	Very high
Your enterprise sets the prices of its exported products based on the product's total cost	4.31	0.822	Very high
International pricing policy dimension (overall)	4.24	0.649	Very high

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the SPSS V24 statistical program

Sample Responses on the International Distribution Policy Dimension

The table below shows that the sample's responses tend toward strong agreement with the statements of the international distribution policy dimension, with an overall mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.618. The statement "Your enterprise has distribution outlets in many international markets" ranked first, with a mean of 4.75 and a standard deviation of 0.649, while "Your enterprise owns warehouses abroad" ranked last, with a mean of 1.22 and a standard deviation of 0.422.

Table No. (07): Sample Responses on the International Distribution Policy Dimension

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Agreement
Your enterprise has distribution outlets in	4.75	0.649	Very high

many international markets			
Your enterprise adopts direct distribution methods for distributing its products internationally	4.69	0.525	Very high
Your enterprise adopts indirect distribution methods for distributing its products internationally	3.75	0.770	Very high
Your enterprise relies on intermediaries from foreign countries to distribute its products	3.83	1.028	Very high
Your enterprise owns warehouses abroad that it owns itself	1.22	0.422	Very weak
International distribution policy dimension (overall)	4.22	0.618	Very high

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the SPSS V24 statistical program

Sample Responses on the International Promotion Policy Dimension

The table below shows that the sample's responses tend toward strong agreement with the statements of the international promotion policy dimension, with an overall mean of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.645. The statement "Your enterprise participates in international exhibitions and gatherings to promote its products" ranked first, with a mean of 4.75 and a standard deviation of 0.500, followed by "Your enterprise uses electronic promotional tools such as websites and social media to promote its products internationally," with a mean of 4.72 and a standard deviation of 0.454, while "Your enterprise advertises its products in newspapers and magazines in international markets" ranked last, with a mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 1.746.

Table No. (08): Sample Responses on the International Promotion Policy Dimension

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Agreement
Your enterprise advertises its products	3.42	1.746	High

in newspapers and magazines in international markets			
Your enterprise allocates a budget for advertising to promote its products in targeted markets	4.14	1.222	High
Your enterprise uses electronic promotional tools such as websites and social media to promote its products internationally	4.72	0.454	Very high
Your enterprise participates in international exhibitions and gatherings to promote its products	4.75	0.500	Very high
Your enterprise uses photographic and illustrated posters to display and promote its products in international markets	4.58	0.500	Very high
International promotion policy dimension (overall)	4.32	0.645	Very high

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the SPSS V24 statistical program

Sample Responses on the Export Decision Dimension

The table below shows that the sample's responses tend toward complete agreement with the statements of the export decision dimension, with an overall mean of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.463. The statement "Your enterprise has achieved growth rates in exports in recent years" ranked first, with a mean of 4.72 and a standard deviation of 0.454, followed by "Your enterprise's export activity contributes to increasing market share" and "Export activity enhances your

enterprise's competitive position in the domestic and international markets," both with a mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.504.

Table No. (09): Sample Responses on the Export Decision Dimension

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Agreement
Your enterprise has achieved growth rates in exports in recent years	36	100.0	4.72	0.454	Very high
Your enterprise's export activity contributes to increasing market share	36	100.0	4.56	0.504	Very high
Export activity enhances your enterprise's competitive position in the domestic and international markets	36	100.0	4.56	0.504	Very high
Export decision dimension (overall)			4.43	0.463	Very high

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the SPSS V24 statistical program

4-2 Testing the Study Hypotheses

The following section covers the testing of the study hypotheses using Smart PLS 4. Before doing so, the measurement model must be evaluated.

4-2-1 Evaluation of the Measurement Model

Evaluation of the Measurement Model:

The following covers both convergent and discriminant validity:

Convergent validity: To assess convergent validity, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Factor Loading are used.

Table: Validity and Reliability of the Scale

Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
International product policy	0.703	0.707	0.829	0.618
International pricing policy	0.720	0.710	0.790	0.558
International distribution policy	0.783	0.828	0.858	0.564
International promotion policy	0.751	0.759	0.834	0.504
Export decision	0.676	0.701	0.769	0.531

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the Smart PLS 4 statistical program

Composite Reliability: We note that all CR values are significant and statistically acceptable, being greater than 0.7, which indicates strong internal consistency among the study items in measuring the latent variables, and thus confirms the reliability of the measurement model used.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE): The table shows that all AVE values are significant and statistically acceptable, being greater than 0.5, which indicates that each latent variable explains more than half of the variance of its indicators, confirming that convergent validity has been achieved in this model.

It is also noted that Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.6 for all constructs except the export decision, where removing another item would reduce the AVE value below 0.5.

Discriminant validity: According to Hair et al., there are two criteria for assessing discriminant validity:

Cross-loadings of the model variables: This verifies that the questions measuring a given latent variable do not also measure another latent variable — i.e., that the relationship between a question and its own latent variable is stronger than its relationship with any other latent variable, in order to confirm the independence of the items.

Table No. (10): Cross-Loadings of the Model Variables

Dimension	Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5
International product policy (Product 3 / Product 7 / Product 10)	0.758	0.831	0.767		
International pricing policy (Price 10 / Price 12 / Price 13)	0.733	0.739	0.591		
International distribution policy (Distribution 1/2/6/7/9)	0.594	0.514	0.868	0.883	0.873
International promotion policy (Promotion 1/2/3/6/8)	0.634	0.817	0.741	0.694	0.648
Export decision (Export 3/4/6)	0.584	0.722	0.856		

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the Smart PLS 4 statistical program

The table shows that the loading of each variable recorded the highest value compared to its corresponding cross-loadings with the other variables.

Overlap between dimensions (Fornell–Larcker criterion): This measures the distinctiveness of the dimensions; the relationship of a dimension with itself must be greater than its relationship with another dimension in order to confirm that the dimensions are independent. This is assessed according to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which compares correlations between factors with the square root of the AVE — the square root of the AVE should be higher than the correlations between the latent variables included in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, p. 45). The table below shows that all the independent variable coefficients are significant and statistically

acceptable, since, looking at the diagonal, each variable is distinct from the others — the intersection value of a variable with itself on the diagonal is greater than its intersection with any other variable — indicating a distinction among the latent variables, and thus that each latent variable represents itself.

Table No. (11): Overlap Between Dimensions According to the Fornell–Larcker Test

Dimension	International product policy	International pricing policy	International distribution policy	International promotion policy	Export decision
International product policy	0.786				
International pricing policy	0.044	0.697			
International distribution policy	0.032	0.592	0.751		
International promotion policy	0.606	0.336	0.491	0.710	
Export decision	0.564	0.532	0.615	0.564	0.729

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the Smart PLS 4 statistical program

Evaluation of the Structural Model

This is done by confirming the hypotheses, evaluating the paths, and — if statistical significance is confirmed — accepting the hypotheses, then determining the extent to which the independent variables explain the dependent variable via the coefficient of determination (R^2), determining the strength of each individual independent variable's effect via f^2 , measuring the predictive capacity of the independent variables regarding the dependent variable via Q^2 , and finally assessing the overall reliability of the measurement and structural model via the Goodness of Fit (GOF) index.

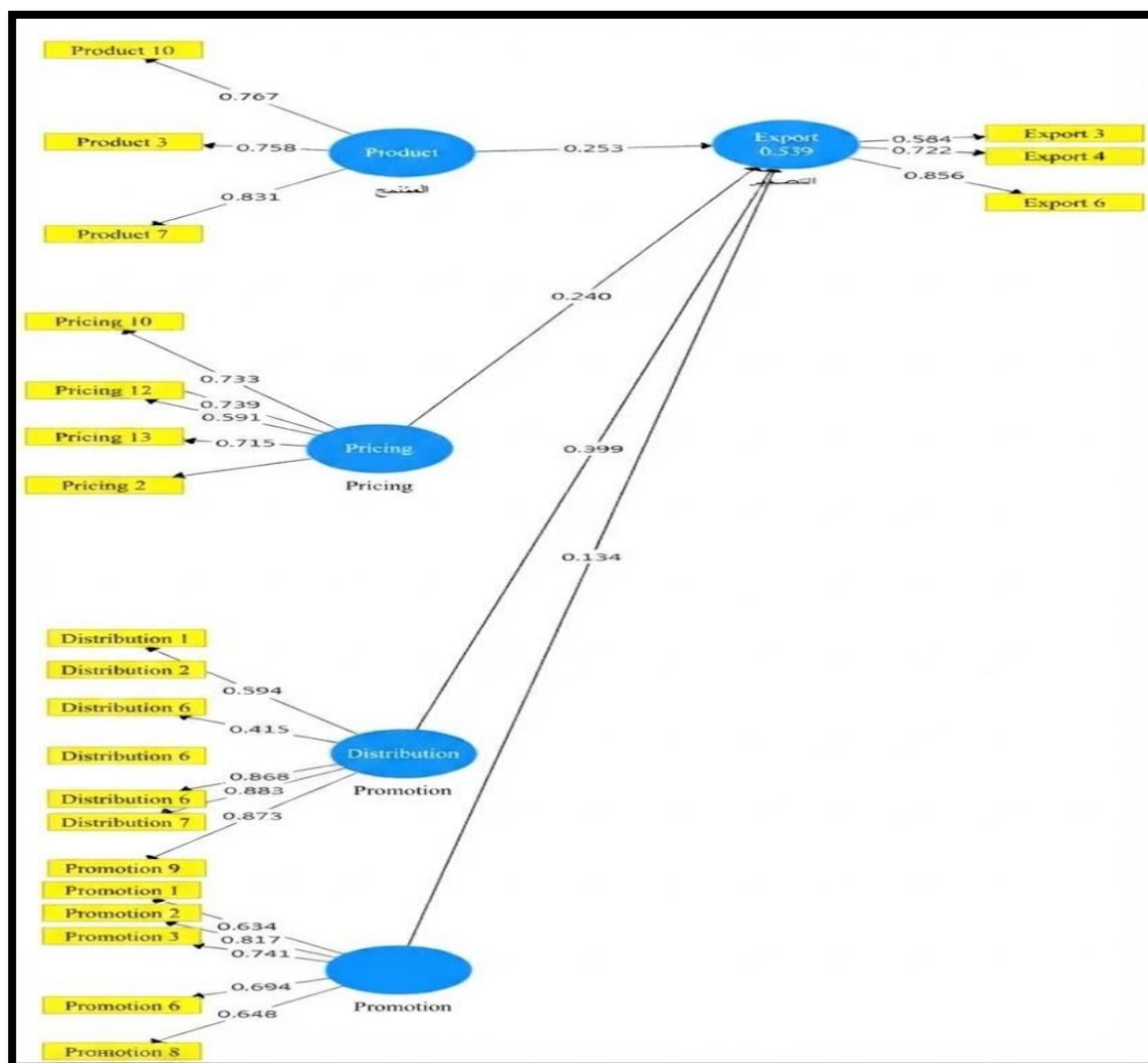
Path-Coefficient Evaluation

To evaluate the paths, all hypothesized paths between the factors of the measurement model were identified, based on the study model and its derived hypotheses. At this stage, the significance of the structural model's hypothesized paths is tested, whereby path coefficients are estimated through multiple regression. Multiple regression is used to obtain standardized regression parameters; the closer the estimated coefficients are to zero, the weaker the relationships — very low values close to zero, which usually do not differ significantly from zero, indicate a relationship that is not

statistically significant, whereas a relationship is significant when the error rate (p-value) is less than 5% (Hair et al., 2017, p. 206).

The following figure shows that international distribution policy explains 39.9% of the changes occurring in the export decision, international product policy explains 25.3% of the changes in the export decision, international pricing policy explains 24% of the changes in the export decision, while international promotion policy explains 13.4% of the changes in the export decision.

Figure No. (02): Path Coefficients of the Overall Structural Model



Source: Output of the Smart PLS 4 statistical program

The figure above shows five latent variables representing the core dimensions of the study model: international product policy, international pricing policy, international distribution policy, international promotion policy, and the export decision. These latent variables are linked to a set of observed variables representing the statements used in the questionnaire, allowing the effect of each variable on the others within the structural model to be measured.

The model shows that the elements of the marketing mix have a direct effect on the export decision, which is consistent with the study's hypotheses.

Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is the most widely used measure for evaluating the structural model, as it defines the strength of the effect according to the R^2 value (weak, medium, large). If R^2 is greater than 0.67, the effect is large; if R^2 ranges between 0.33 and 0.67, the effect is medium; if R^2 is less than 0.33, the effect is weak; an R^2 value is accepted when it is greater than 0.1 (Hair et al., 2017, p. 209). The following table shows the R^2 value, indicating that it is greater than 0.1, recording a medium effect on the export decision, as the international marketing mix policies explain 58.1% [reported in the model output as 0.539 in the final table below] of the variation occurring in the export decision. It is also noted that the adjusted R^2 values are close to, and do not differ greatly from, the R^2 values, which indicates the quality and significance of the model.

Table No. (12): Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Item	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Export decision	0.539	0.480

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the Smart PLS 4 statistical program

Effect Size Evaluation

In addition to evaluating R^2 values, the f^2 effect size can be used: the effect size is large if f^2 is greater than 0.35, medium if f^2 is between 0.15 and 0.35, weak if f^2 is between 0.02 and 0.15, and there is no effect if f^2 is less than 0.02.

Table No. (13): Effect Size (f^2)

Item	Export Decision
International product policy	0.075
International pricing policy	0.081
International distribution policy	0.170
International promotion policy	0.016

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the Smart PLS 4 statistical program

The table shows that the effect size of international distribution policy on the export decision is the largest, estimated at $f^2 = 0.170$, a medium effect, while the effect size of international pricing policy and international product policy on the export decision was weak, estimated at $f^2 = 0.081$ and $f^2 = 0.075$ respectively, while there was no effect of international promotion policy on the export decision ($f^2 = 0.016$).

Model Quality Criteria

Predictive Relevance (Q^2): R^2 values were used as a criterion for predictive accuracy; the Q^2 value should also be used, as this measure is an indicator of predictive capacity outside the sample model, or its predictive relevance.

Table No. (14): Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Item	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 = (1 - SSE/SSO)$
International product policy	108.000	108.000	
International pricing policy	144.000	144.000	
International distribution policy	180.000	180.000	
International promotion policy	180.000	180.000	
Export decision	108.000	88.446	0.181

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the Smart PLS 4 statistical program

Regarding the Q^2 value for the international marketing mix elements, it is significant and statistically acceptable, being greater than zero, which indicates the predictive capacity of the dependent latent variables.

Goodness of Fit (GOF): The GOF index measures the extent to which the study model can be relied upon, i.e., it indicates the overall performance of the model. The GOF index is the square root of the product of the mean of the average variances extracted (AVE) and the mean R^2 . It can be calculated as follows:

After calculating the GOF value, it was found to equal 0.54, which is a good value since it is greater than 0.36 (Hair et al., 2017, p. 207), indicating a high goodness of fit for the study model — high enough to consider the overall validity of the model.

4-2-2 Results of Hypothesis Testing

Referring back to the path evaluation, the sub-hypotheses are confirmed via bootstrapping, then the relationship between the variables is examined through the p-value, which determines the probability of error in the relationship between two variables — if a relationship exists, it must have a probability of less than 5%. The Beta coefficient is derived from the Original Sample value: if positive or negative, the relationship is direct or inverse, respectively.

Table No. (15): Results of Testing the Effect of Marketing Mix Policies on the Export Decision

Item	Beta	T Statistic	P Values	Decision
International product → export decision	0.253	1.116	0.265	Rejected
International pricing → export decision	0.240	1.890	0.059	Rejected
International distribution → export decision	0.399	2.582	0.010	Accepted
International promotion → export decision	0.134	0.533	0.594	Rejected

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the Smart PLS 4 statistical program

Looking at the Beta coefficient, we note that the relationship between international distribution policy and the export decision ranks first ($\beta = 0.399$; $p = 0.010$), a significant direct relationship, whereas the relationships of international product policy, international pricing policy, and international promotion policy with the export decision are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) — meaning these policies play no significant role in influencing the export decision.

Accordingly, only the third sub-hypothesis is accepted: there is a statistically significant effect at the level $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of international distribution policy (adaptation and standardization) on the export decision among ceramic and sanitary-ware enterprises in the province of Batna.

5. Conclusion

Based on the study and analysis above, we arrived at the following conclusions:

- There is a statistically significant correlation between international distribution (adaptation and standardization) and the export decision. The enterprises studied follow an indirect distribution strategy in the domestic market, where agents in various provinces of the country handle distribution of their products, whereas for the international market they deliver products definitively to export merchants, who then handle distribution of the product in the target countries — as is the case with the Libyan market, where the company ALMEDMAR handles shipping the products directly from the Technoceram enterprise and takes charge of distributing the products in the Libyan market. Thus, most of the enterprises studied adopt a standardized international distribution policy.
- Products such as ceramics are classified, in terms of their specifications, as relatively heavy and homogeneous products, where technical specifications and prices are competitive, but the greatest challenge lies in shipping costs and networks and reaching the importer — which explains the lack

of significance of the direct effect of product, price, and promotion individually, compared to distribution.

- Ceramic products are characterized by high-quality specifications; they are sold before they are even produced, and have specific markets they are directed to, such as Spain, Libya, Bahrain, Mauritania, the Sultanate of Oman, and others, and are delivered directly from the factories. The enterprises studied therefore see no need to use standardization or adaptation policies, so long as everything produced is sold.

References

1. Ahmane, L. (2015). International advertising between the ambitions of standardization and the requirements of adaptation. *Annals of the University of Guelma for Social and Human Sciences*, (13), 261–280.
2. Ben Azza, A. Q., & Ahmed, F. (2021). The effect of international marketing mix strategies on the export performance of economic enterprises: A field study. *Al-Bahith Journal for Economics and Trade*, 9(1), 115–132.
3. Al-Sayrafi, H. M. (2020). *International Marketing* (1st ed.). Dar Al-Riyada for Publishing and Printing.
4. Al-Sumaidaie, M. J. M. (2010). *Marketing strategies: A quantitative and analytical approach*. Dar Al-Hamed for Publishing and Distribution.
5. Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2017). *Principles of Marketing* (Arabic translation by Sorour Ali Ibrahim Sorour). Dar Al-Marikh for Publishing.
6. Brei, V. A., d'Angelo, A. C., & Lacerda, D. P. (2011). The influence of adaptation and standardization of the marketing mix on performance: A meta-analysis. *Brazilian Administration Review*, 8(3), 266–287. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1807-76922011000300004>
7. Calvo-Porrà, C., & Stanton, J. L. (2017). *Principles of Marketing*. ESIC Editorial.
8. Cavusgil, S. T., Zou, S., & Naidu, G. M. (1993). Product and promotion adaptation in export ventures: An empirical investigation. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 24(3), 479–506. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490242>
9. Czinkota, M. R., & Ronkainen, I. A. (2013). *International Marketing* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
10. Griffin, R. W., & Pustay, M. W. (2015). *International Business: A Managerial Perspective* (8th ed.). Pearson.
11. Hill, C. W. L. (2021). *International Business: Competing in the Global Marketplace* (13th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
12. Hollensen, S. (2020). *Global Marketing: A Decision-Oriented Approach* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
13. Keegan, W. J. (2017). *Global Marketing Management* (8th ed.). Pearson.
14. Keegan, W. J., & Green, M. C. (2020). *Global Marketing* (10th ed.). Pearson.

15. Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2009). *Principles of Marketing* (13th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.
16. Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2020). *Principles of Marketing* (18th ed.). Pearson.
17. Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2021). *Principles of Marketing* (18th ed.). Pearson.
18. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2021). *Marketing Management* (16th ed.). Pearson.
19. Lages, L. F., & Montgomery, D. B. (2004). Export performance policy: An empirical study of price, product, distribution, and promotion adaptation. *International Marketing Review*, 21(1), 116–139. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02651330410522961>
20. Masterson, R., Phillips, N., & Pickton, D. (2021). *Marketing: An Introduction* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
21. Powers, T. L., & Loyka, J. J. (2010). Adaptation of marketing mix elements in international business. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 23(2), 170–185. <https://doi.org/10.180/08911761003673520>
22. Stanton, W. J., Etzel, M. J., & Walker, B. J. (1994). *Fundamentals of Marketing* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
23. Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3151312>
24. Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.