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## IMPACTS OF DOMESTIC MARKETING CAPABILITIES ON INTERNATIONAL MARKETING GROWTH CONSIDERING THE ROLES OF INFORMATION AVAILABILITY, INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC ORIENTATION, AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORK CAPABILITIES: CASE STUDY OF ALBORZ DRIED FRUIT EXPORT COMPANIES

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### ABSTRACT

Marketing capabilities enable an organization to identify customers' requirements and present its solution via planning marketing, investment, and implementation activities. Managers of organizations can see the result of their decisions on strategy selection through performance criteria. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of domestic marketing capabilities on international marketing growth considering the roles of information availability, international strategic orientation, and international network capabilities. The sample pool of this study included all the technicians, senior officers, middle managers, executive officers, marketers, and the board of directors of dried fruit export companies in Alborz, who were experts and in charge, in order to meet the required objectives. The sample consisted of 80 companies. Due to the limited number of participants, up to two marketing specialists were chosen from each company to make up the final 80 companies and 97 participants. A standard questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability was verified by Cronbach's alpha test. Data analysis was done by LISREL8.5 and SPSS24 using structural equation modeling. The findings of this study support its main hypotheses and the proposed model was fit.

**Disciplinary:** Multidisciplinary (Mathematics (Statistics), Business Management (Marketing, International Trade)).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, internationalization has required business corporations to start seeking new opportunities in international markets along with their own domestic and traditional markets (Sosa et

al., 2013). Since international market growth represents the key to economic reinvention (Taheri et al., 2017), international market growth is among the first government priorities and policies in almost every developing country as there are also awareness and attention to exports in developed countries (Moshabaki et al., 2012). The main concern of international companies is international market growth. One of the critical factors determining international market growth is domestic marketing capabilities (Aron, 2013). Accordingly, in the current complex, dynamic, and extremely changing conditions, companies need to develop and adopt strategies that enable them to improve their performance day by day; as in such a competitive environment, only those companies are able to survive that is not left behind the competition and adapt themselves with the changing and dynamic conditions of the competitive market (Bastani, 2015; Hosseini & Jamshidinavid, 2019). Marketing capability is among the factors that impact a company's performance. This capability is an integrated process with which companies employ tangible and intangible resources to discern the complexity of specific requirements of customers, achieve a relative product distinction for competitive advantage, and finally achieve a fit brand quality. Therefore, it is considered a valuable resource for a company's competitive advantage improvement (Zadeh et al., 2009). International marketing plays a central role as multinational companies look for market opportunities and expand internationally (Yang, 2018). The thing that makes marketing capabilities valuable is not their mere development and existence, it is the amount and the way they impact the performance (Deac et al., 2015). A company can combine its personnel's skills and personal knowledge with available resources by enhancing its marketing capabilities. A company that expends more resources in interaction with customers is able to enhance its market recognition capabilities (Nath et al, 2017). In better words, marketing capability enables companies to better understand their customers' current and future needs, better serve these needs, attract new customers, and also analyze the competition and competitors efficiently (Fahy et al., 2000). There are different and contradictory findings regarding the relationship between international marketing capabilities and international market growth in international literature. Some studies show that employing domestic marketing capability of normalization results in an increase in export performance (Ghasemi et al., 2015). The prime focus of domestic marketing capability is appropriate allocation and alignment of marketing practices and resources to determine the company's operational objectives for a specific market-product. A well-designed strategy, which consists of five components namely domain, general objectives and operational objectives, resource allocation, competitive advantage identification, and synergy, can have a great impact on international market growth (Shahrokh et al., 2014). The relationship between domestic marketing capabilities and international market growth is less discussed. Many study findings suggest that domestic marketing capability is a proper tool for international market growth and result in enhanced market performance. Usually, governments expend a lot of resources in export improvement plans for small and middle-sized companies since the exports of these types of companies play a vital role in the country's national economy. Therefore, considering the importance of this subject, the main question of the study is what impact domestic marketing capabilities have on international marketing growth of dried fruit export companies in Tehran while taking the roles of information availability, international strategic orientation, and international network capabilities into account.

## **1.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Domestic Marketing Capabilities: The capability-based theory indicates that companies can

achieve a competitive advantage through certain and distinct capabilities like marketing capability and suggests companies should invest continuously in order to maintain and improve current capabilities and prevent competitive emulation. Because when a company has a strong marketing capability, it can achieve its objectives and have a better brand situation compared to its competitors by showing its predominance in identifying customers' needs and comprehending effective factors on their selection behavior. This would result in a greater profit margin and subsequent predominant financial performance for the company (Nasimi and Amiri, 2017; Chew et al., 2008).

A company's success is dependent on improving the capabilities and relationships that are specific to it and are maintained for middle to long terms. Day (1994) divides company capabilities into four categories:

- 1) **Inside-Out Capabilities:** These capabilities allow the company to keep its expenses low or distinguish its supplies from competitors' supplies.
- 2) **Outside-In Capabilities:** These capabilities provide critical information for the company and allow it to better respond to changes in customers' needs. These capabilities allow the company to utilize the inside-out capabilities more efficiently.
- 3) **Marketing Capabilities:** These capabilities allow the company to gain advantages from inside-out and outside-in capabilities by efficiently implementing marketing plans.
- 4) **Information Technology Capabilities:** These capabilities allow the company to promote the market information among all functions.

Shahri et al. (2015) define marketing capabilities as including sales capability, marketing management capability, market research capability, product development capability, pricing capability, distribution capability, and promotion capability. Morgan and Strong (2003) and Hajipour et al. (2012) have divided marketing capabilities into two categories of specialized marketing capabilities and architectural marketing capabilities. Specialized marketing capabilities include factors such as advertisement and promotion, personal selling, public relations, pricing, and distribution. These capabilities include routine tasks based on the marketing mix (Chang et al., 2009). Architectural marketing capabilities reveal themselves as specialized marketing capabilities and are efficiently deployed to meet an organization's strategic requirements (Vorhies et al., 2009).

**International Marketing Growth:** International marketing is defined as business activities to deliver a country's goods and services to customers in other countries in order to make a profit (Soltani Bahabadi, 2017). Moreover, it includes goods and services production and sales in more than one country while no goods cross the actual borders of a country (Babaie & Zakliki, 2006). International marketing growth is the amount a company earns while exporting its products to the foreign market (Taheri Kia et al., 2017).

**Information Availability:** The structure of information availability is defined and conceptualized as a company's capacity and capability to obtain information related to international activities (Mathews et al., 2014).

**International Strategic Orientation:** Strategic orientation is defined as implementing a company's strategic orientation to create behaviors in line with the ever-excellent performance of the business. The main parameters of strategy selection in an international environment include international paradigm, business network, competitive intelligence, business capabilities, strategic orientation, international market entry mode, knowledge and awareness of the international business environment, a product's position in the life-cycle, and local elements. In fact, selecting the strategy

in an international environment requires exchanging information and analyzing these parameters rather than the mere result of a simple analysis of the local and foreign environments. The conceptualization of these parameters is as follows, based on the theoretical definitions and background (Naldi et al., 2014):

- International Paradigm: The logic of the emergence of compatibility between internal elements of the business and the international environment.
- Business Network: The relationships and exchanges between a business and its same-level or non-same-level businesses.
- Competitive Intelligence: The ability to provide apropos and thoughtful reactions considering market conditions and competitors' actions.
- Business Capabilities: Tangible and intangible resources of a business.
- Strategic Orientation: The framework and principles defining the business orientation while facing the external environment.
- Knowledge and Awareness of The International Environment: The knowledge related to the conditions of working in international areas and awareness of the business playing rules.
- A Product's Position in The Life-Cycle: A product's position in the manner of being in one of the stages of introduction, growth, maturity, and decline.
- International Market Entry Mode: The way of organizing products, technology, human capital, and resources for international market entry.
- Local Elements: Local business elements include political, social, economic, technological, and competitive pressure groups (Rahim Nia et al., 2016).

**International Network Capabilities:** International network capabilities refer to the active use of the Internet and combining it with the influence of market-specific and advertisement marketing activities, online sales, and supports and after-sale services, market research, and international market management in line with international marketing objectives (Mathews et al., 2015).

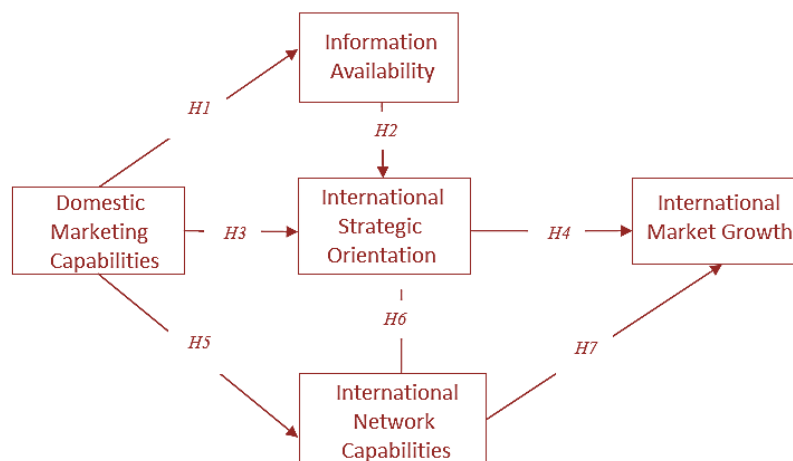
## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Taheri Kia et al. (2017) investigated the impacts of domestic marketing capabilities on international market growth (a case study of small and middle-sized export companies in Mazandaran) and all eight hypotheses were verified. Soltani Bahabadi (2017) found a positive and significant relationship between marketing capabilities and the international growth of tour companies in Mashhad. Sorayaie et al. (2016) studied the impact of Internet marketing capabilities on international marketing parameters using data of the members of the export union in Mazandaran, and the findings of the study confirmed a significant relationship between Internet marketing capabilities on strategic international orientation information availability and international network capabilities. Rahim Nia and Khakzadan (2015) studied the moderating role of the internationalization level and the export environment and the intermediacy of the match between marketing mix and market-oriented exports in export performance. The findings indicated that the internationalization level and export environment and marketing mix and market-oriented exports have a positive impact on the exports performance. Karolos-Konstantinos et al. (2018) studied the mutual impacts of strategic green marketing orientation and domestic green marketing on competitive advantage. The findings based on the contemporary literature of green marketing show that there is a significant relationship between the strategy and individuals which results in a competitive advantage. This, in turn, improves financial performance. In the end, this study uses an updated approach based on the current literature for strategic green marketing drivers and its results. This provides some approaches to “environment-based competitive advantage” for managers. Takata (2016) studied the impacts of

marketing orientation and marketing capabilities on the performance of small and middle-sized businesses. The findings showed that marketing capabilities had a stronger effect on business performance compared to other marketing factors and had an intermediary role in the relationship between market orientation and business performance. Mathews et al. (2015) studied Internet marketing capabilities and international market growth. The findings show that companies that possess Internet marketing capabilities are able to benefit from reduced information uncertainty and improved capacity in international network capabilities. Moreover, Internet marketing capabilities can directly result in international market growth and this happens when a company enjoys greater levels of international strategic orientation and international networking capabilities. Generally, Internet marketing capabilities can also enhance a company's capability in developing other capabilities which in turn will have a positive effect on international market growth of the company. Hoang (2015) studied the relationship between market-orientation, export strategy, and export performance. The findings showed that there is a relationship between market-orientation and the selected export strategy and export performance of 142 small export manufacturers. Cadogan et al. (2013) studied the facilitating and impeding factors of exports market-oriented behavior development. The findings showed the importance of export alignment, export environment, and export history on determining the level of export market-oriented behavior.

### 3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Considering the theoretical background and the aforementioned subjects, the conceptual model of the study is proposed in Figure 1 based on Mathews et al. (2015):



**Figure 1:** Conceptual model of this study.

#### 3.1 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Considering the conceptual model of the study, the research hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on information availability.

Hypothesis 2: Information availability has a positive and significant impact on international strategic orientation.

Hypothesis 3: Domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international strategic orientation.

Hypothesis 4: International strategic orientation has a positive and significant impact on international market growth.

Hypothesis 5: Domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international network capabilities.

Hypothesis 6: International strategic orientation has a positive and significant impact on international network capabilities.

Hypothesis 7: International network capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international market growth.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This is an applied, field study using a descriptive approach in data collection. Also, the research variables have a correlational relationship. Since structural equation modeling is used for hypotheses testing in this study, it is considered a correlated matrix analysis study. For data analysis, a complete structural equation model is used comprising a combination of a flowchart and confirmatory factor analysis. The sample pool of this study included all the technicians, senior officers, middle managers, executive officers, marketers, and the board of directors of dried fruit export companies in Alborz, Iran, who were experts and in charge in order to meet the required objectives. The sample population consists of about 80 companies the list of which is acquired from Alborz Organization of Industry, Mine, and Trade. These companies are categorized as dried fruit export companies according to the Organization's criteria. The number of participants is calculated using the Cochran formula by taking the sample population into account using simple random sampling. According to the aforementioned formula, the population of the sample is 80 companies. However, due to the limited number of participants, up to two marketing specialists were chosen from each company to make up the final 80 companies and 97 participants. Therefore, 97 questionnaires were distributed to the participants and the information obtained was analyzed by SPSS. The instrument of the study was a questionnaire. The final version of the questionnaire contained 27 questions after applying the necessary changes. A five-point Likert scale was used for questionnaire evaluation ranging from extremely disagree to extremely agree. The research questions were designed based on the questionnaire in Mathews et al. (2015). The questionnaire was verified. The questionnaire reliability was tested with Cronbach's alpha test. The reliability of all parameters has been calculated separately in table 1 which shows it was greater than 0.7 for all variables considering both factors of Cronbach's alpha and combined reliability coefficient that shows the appropriate reliability of the instrument. The values of Cronbach's alpha for all research variables are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Validity and Reliability Values of The Questions of The Questionnaire Divided by Variables

Variable	The Number of Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Domestic Marketing Capability	6	91.0
International Market Growth	5	95.0
International Strategic Orientation	6	94.0
International Network Capabilities	5	75.0
Information Availability	5	87.0
Questionnaire Overall	27	88.0

#### 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this section, after the completion of the research data collection, the collected data were transferred to SPSS, descriptive statistics were used to prepare the tables, and diagrams were used to describe the findings resulted from the sample population. LISREL, which is a structural equation method, was also used to investigate the research hypotheses and test the model.

## 5.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS RESULT

According to Table 2, it can be seen that the highest frequency of sex belongs to males with 0.842 percent, the highest frequency of education belongs to graduates with 36 percent, and the highest frequency of age belongs to the 41-50 age group.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics

Variable		Freq.	Percentage
Sex	Female	16	16.49
	Male	84	83.50
Education	High School Graduate	13	13.40
	Undergraduate	25	25.77
	Graduate	35	36.08
	Postgraduate	24	24.74
Age	Under 40	25	25.77
	41 - 50	46	47.42
	Over 50	26	26.80

## 5.2 FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULT

In the confirmatory factor approach, an attempt is made to statistically test the significance of a hypothesized factor model and determine if the sample data confirm the model. Table 3 shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis in two modes.

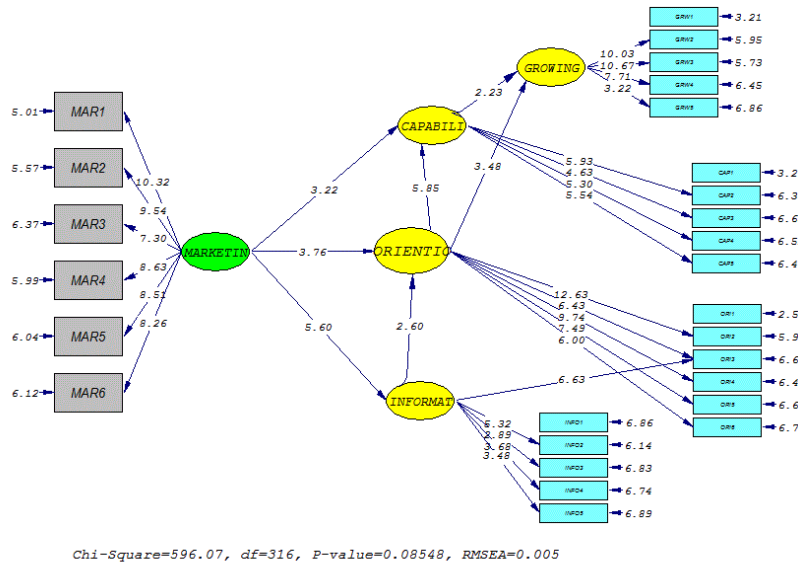
Table 3. Analysis of Research Variables Measurement Models

Variables	Questions	Normality	Significance
<b>Domestic Marketing Capability (IMC)</b>	IMC1	86.0	32.10
	IMC2	82.0	54.9
	IMC3	63.0	30.7
	IMC4	77.0	63.8
	IMC5	76.0	51.8
	IMC6	74.0	26.8
<b>International Market Growth (IMG)</b>	IMG1	93.0	14.11
	IMG2	78.0	03.10
	IMG3	81.0	67.10
	IMG4	67.0	71.7
	IMG5	33.0	32.3
<b>International Strategic Orientation (ISO)</b>	ISO1	96.0	63.12
	ISO2	83.0	64.6
	ISO3	64.0	01.11
	ISO4	74.0	74.9
	ISO5	63.0	49.7
	ISO6	54.0	0.6
<b>International Network Capabilities (INC)</b>	INC1	94.0	32.6
	INC2	63.0	89.2
	INC3	60.0	63.03
	INC4	31.0	48.03
	INC5	40.0	29.04
<b>Information Availability (IAV)</b>	IAV1	88.0	93.5
	IAV2	59.0	63.4
	IAV3	48.0	30.5
	IAV4	53.0	54.05
	IAV5	56.0	62.5

From Table 3, the confidence level of 0.95 indicates that the factor loading of all statements is greater than 0.30. Therefore, all the questions related to the research variables were able to evaluate the model appropriately. It is specified that all the factor loadings are within the acceptable range and a correlation is evident between the observed variable and the factor under study.

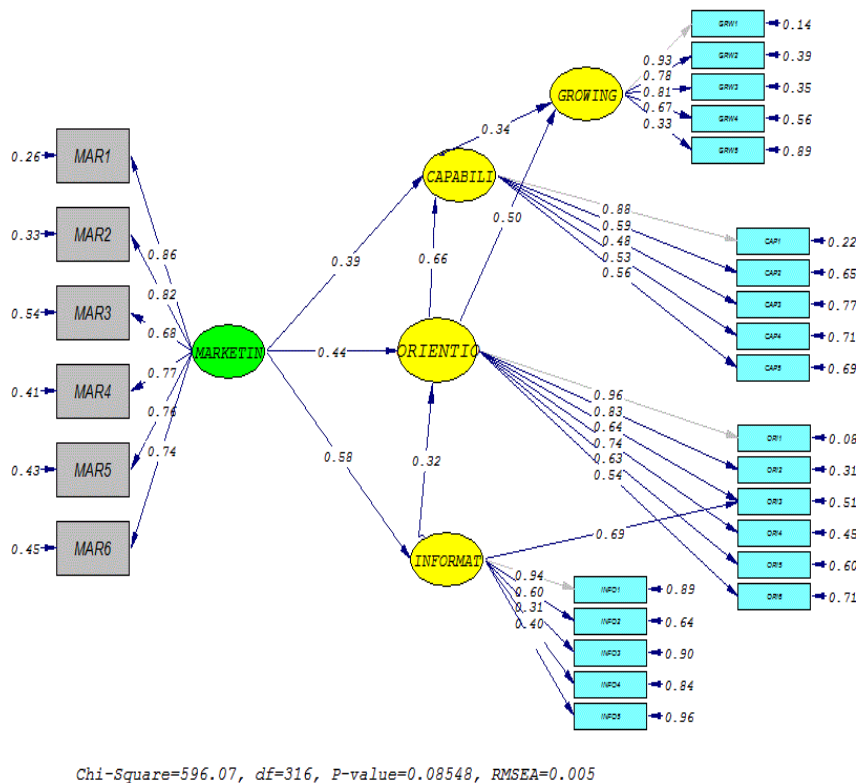
### 5.3 MODEL FIT TEST RESULT

In this study, the research statistical model is presented in two normality and significance modes in order to reject or confirm the research hypotheses. The model fit is also provided. According to Figures 1 and 2 and Table 3, it is specified that the model enjoys desirable goodness of fit.



**Figure 1:** Statistical Model in Significance Mode

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model of the study in the significance mode. Since the value of significance is greater than 1.96 for all relationships, the research hypotheses are confirmed.



**Figure 2:** Statistical Model in Normality Mode.

Table 4, the indices of the model fit are presented including goodness of fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI), non-normed fit index (NNFI or TLI), Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI, also called BL89 or  $\Delta_2$ ), Root Mean Square Error of



Approximation (RMSEA) and relative fit index (RFI or RHO1). And considering that these indices have great values, it can be inferred that the model is fit.

**Table 4:** The Results of the Model Fit Indices

Index	GFI	CFI	NFI	NNFI	IFI	RFI	RMSEA	Chi-Square
Value	96.0	94.0	91.0	94.0	95.0	87.0	005.0	88.1

**Table 5:** Research Hypotheses Results.

Hypotheses	Normality	Significance	Status
Domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on information availability.	39.0	22.3	Confirmed
Information availability has a positive and significant impact on international strategic orientation.	30.0	85.5	Confirmed
Domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international strategic orientation.	44.0	76.3	Confirmed
International strategic orientation has a positive and significant impact on international market growth.	50.0	48.3	Confirmed
Domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international network capabilities.	58.0	60.5	Confirmed
International strategic orientation has a positive and significant impact on international network capabilities.	32.0	60.2	Confirmed
International network capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international market growth.	69.0	63.6	Confirmed

## 6. DISCUSSION

In the first hypothesis, it is stated that domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on information availability. This hypothesis with the significance level of 22.3 was confirmed with the confidence interval of 95 since it falls out of the (-96.1 and 96.1) range. This hypothesis' results are in consistence with the results found in the studies of Taheri Kia et al. (2017) and Mathews et al. (2015). The normality coefficient of this hypothesis was 39.0, which shows there is a direct relationship between these two variables. It means the more domestic marketing capabilities are used, the greater information availability the company will have. In the second hypothesis, it is stated that information availability has a positive and significant impact on international strategic orientation. This hypothesis with the significance level of 85.5 was confirmed with the confidence interval of 95 since it falls out of the (-96.1 and 96.1) range. This hypothesis' results are in consistence with the results found in the studies of Taheri Kia et al. (2017) and Mathews et al. (2015) and Hoang (2015). The normality coefficient of this hypothesis was 30.0, which shows there is a direct relationship between these two variables. It means the greater information availability is, the greater international strategic orientation will be. In the third hypothesis, it is stated that domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international strategic orientation. This hypothesis with the significance level of 73.3 was confirmed with the confidence interval of 95 since it falls out of the (-96.1 and 96.1) range. This hypothesis' results are in consistence with the results found in the studies of Taheri Kia et al. (2017), Nia and Khakzadan (2015), Karolos-Konstantinos Papadas et al. (2018), and Mathews et al. (2015). The normality coefficient of this hypothesis was 44.0 which shows there is a direct relationship between these two variables. It means the more domestic marketing capabilities are, the more international strategic orientation will be. In the fourth hypothesis, it is stated that international strategic orientation has a positive and significant impact on international market growth. This hypothesis with the significance value of 48.3 was confirmed with the confidence interval of 95 since it falls out of the (-96.1 and 96.1)

range. This hypothesis' results are in consistence with the results found in the studies of Taheri Kia et al. (2017), Sorayaie et al. (2016), Papadas et al. (2018), and Mathews et al. (2015). The normality coefficient of this hypothesis was 50.0, which shows there is a direct relationship between these two variables. It means the greater international strategic orientation is, the more international market growth will be. In the fifth hypothesis, it is stated that domestic marketing capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international network capabilities. This hypothesis with the significance level of 60.5 was confirmed with the confidence interval of 95 since it falls out of the (-96.1 and 96.1) range. This hypothesis' results are in consistence with the results found in the studies of Kia et al. (2017), Sorayaie et al. (2016), and Mathews et al. (2015). The normality coefficient of this hypothesis was 58.0, which shows there is a direct relationship between these two variables. It means the more domestic marketing capabilities are, the more international network capabilities will be. In the sixth hypothesis, it is stated that international strategic orientation has a positive and significant impact on international network capabilities. This hypothesis with the significance level of 60.2 was confirmed with the confidence interval of 95 since it falls out of the (-96.1 and 96.1) range. This hypothesis' results are in consistence with the results found in the studies of Kia et al. (2017), Sorayaie et al. (2016), and Mathews et al. (2015). The normality coefficient of this hypothesis was 32.0, which shows there is a direct relationship between these two variables. It means the greater international strategic orientation is, the greater international network capabilities will be. In the seventh hypothesis, it is stated that international network capabilities have a positive and significant impact on international market growth. This hypothesis with the significance level of 63.6 was confirmed with the confidence interval of 95 since it falls out of the (-96.1 and 96.1) range. This hypothesis' results are in consistence with the results found in the studies of Kia et al. (2017), Sorayaie et al. (2016), and Mathews et al. (2015). The normality coefficient of this hypothesis was 69.0, which shows there is a direct relationship between these two variables. It means the greater international network capabilities are, the greater international market growth will be. Table 5 concludes all hypotheses test results.

## 7. CONCLUSION

From the data collection and analysis, this study found the impacts of domestic marketing capabilities on international marketing growth considering the roles of information availability, international strategic orientation, and international network capabilities. With data analysis via the structural equation modeling, the findings support its main hypotheses and the proposed model was fit.

### 7.1 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Considering the hypotheses were confirmed, it is suggested that:

- Exports managers should necessarily focus their efforts on improving their international strategic level behavior to achieve better performance; export alignment indicates the enhancement of a company's capability in successfully achieving propagation capability and responding to the export market intelligence. It is clear that if a company decides to improve the level of its market-orientedness in exports, it should turn its exports into a part of export norms. Therefore, qualitative factors such as common values, common beliefs, trust in objectives, decrease in functional discrepancies, and assurance are the elements that obligate a company to increase its intrinsic capacity in order to direct the market-oriented exports behavior.

- Managers' attention to learning about a market by means of market recognition development and using that in decision-making and relevant marketing activities.
- Organizations with high market-orientedness achieve high business performance; because they better understand customers' explicit and latent needs, competitors' strategies and capabilities, and environment requirements and changes and help increase the market share, sales growth, customers' satisfaction, and personnel motivation through acquiring appropriate information from customers and competitors.

## 8. DATA AND MATERIAL AVAILABILITY

Relevant information regarding this study is available by request to the corresponding author.

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