





The Impact of Information Activity and Responsiveness on Export Investment Performance with the Mediating Role of International Channel Partner Selection through Word-of-Mouth Referral

Marjan. Arefani¹, Gholamhossein. Daghighi Masouleh^{2*}, Ebn Sina. Samarbakhsh Tehrani³, Mahmoud. Samadi Largani⁴

¹ Instructor, Department of Accounting, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran

² Master's Student in International Business Management, Department of Management, Electronic Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran


³ Ph.D. Student in Financial Engineering, Department of Economic Sciences, Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Rasht, Iran



⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of Accounting, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: daghighi30@gmail.com

Editor

Reviewers

Rey Segundo Guerrero-Proenza¹
Departamento de Inteligencia
Computacional, Facultad 4,
Universidad de las Ciencias
Informáticas, La Habana, Cuba
reysgp@uci.cu

Reviewer 1: Ali Sargolzaie¹
Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Zahedan Branch, Islamic Azad
University, Zahedan, Iran.
Email: a.sargolzaie@iauzah.ac.ir
Reviewer 2: Marco Yamba-Yugsi¹
Unidad Académica de Posgrado, Universidad Católica de Cuenca, Azuay 010101,
Ecuador
Email: marco.yamba@ucacue.edu.ec

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The explanation of word-of-mouth referral versus direct contact is clear, but it reads descriptive rather than analytical. Please integrate theoretical justification (e.g., trust-building, transaction cost economics) to show why word-of-mouth is expected to matter more.

The use of Agency Theory (Eisenhardt, 1989) is appropriate, but the connection between principal-agent problems and partner selection remains vague. Please clarify how information asymmetry is reduced by word-of-mouth referrals in export contexts.

The claim “information activity serves as a tool for reducing market entry costs and increasing the likelihood of export success” is valid but overly general. Please link the discussion to the mediation effect explicitly, as mediation was the paper’s unique contribution.

When stating “Responsiveness enables companies to understand foreign customer needs and tailor their products”, the argument should reference dynamic capabilities theory to ground responsiveness in a theoretical framework.

The section on word-of-mouth referrals improving partner trust is compelling, but it should acknowledge limitations such as potential biases in referral networks or over-reliance on informal sources.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The discussion of export market orientation relies heavily on older sources (2002–2014). Please integrate more recent empirical studies (post-2021) to strengthen the literature relevance.

The claim “many exporters rely on international channel partners such as foreign importers, foreign distributors, and local sales agents” is supported by citations, but the Iranian context is missing. Please add regional evidence that illustrates this phenomenon in Tehran or Iran.

The main research question is well framed, but a clear hypothesis development section is missing. Explicitly state H1–H5 in the introduction to guide readers toward the conceptual model.

The description of gender and age is clear, but the business sector and firm size of respondents are missing. Please provide information on industry categories (manufacturing, services, etc.), which could influence generalizability.

The test statistic column is presented but unexplained. Please specify whether these are t-values from reliability tests, one-sample tests, or another measure. Currently, interpretation is unclear.

Hypothesis 2 is reported as “Export Operational Capabilities → Cross-Border E-Commerce Strategic Performance”, which seems inconsistent with the paper’s stated constructs (information activity, responsiveness, partner selection). Please check and correct this possible mislabeling.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.