

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mohamed Khaider University - Biskra-

Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences



Theme:

The Role of Information and Communication Technology

In Enhancing Exporting

Case study: TOLGA AGRO FOOD

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements to get a master degree in
commercial sciences

Specialty: Finance and International Trade

Supervisor:

Student:

Izzrech Kamilia

Bechar Mohamed Wajih

Committee Members	Rank	Status	University
Ben abid farid	Professor	Chairperson	Biskra
Izzrech Kamilia	Master assistant	supervisor	Biskra
Guechari Yasmina	Segnor Lecturer	Examiner	Biskra

Scholar year: 2022/2023

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Dedication

I am immensely grateful to the Almighty Allah for His abundant blessings bestowed upon me.

I dedicate this work to my beloved mother and father, who planted the seeds of knowledge and instilled in me the drive for success. You have been my unwavering support throughout the challenges of studying and countless nights, and I am forever grateful for your guidance.

To my dear brothers and sisters, who have walked alongside me on the path to success, from the very first step to the last, I extend my heartfelt gratitude. Your presence and encouragement have been invaluable.

To my cherished friends, who have been there for me through thick and thin, I express my deepest appreciation. Your unwavering support and assistance have meant the world to me.

To my esteemed teachers, especially my supervisor Izzrech Kamilia, who never gave up on me and always extended a helping hand, I am truly grateful. Your guidance and mentorship have played a pivotal role in shaping my academic journey.

Acknowledgment

First, I thank Allah the Almighty for his countless blessings and guidance.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has played a role in guiding and assisting me throughout the process of conducting this research.

Each one of you has contributed to its completion, and I am truly grateful.

Lastly, I would like to thank my supervisor, the administration, and professors at Mohamed Khider, especially those in the Finance and International Trade department, for their contributions to the successful completion of this work.

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on various aspects of the exporting process, focusing on TOLGA AGRO FOOD as a case study. The study aims to explore the influence of ICT tools on market research, product adaptation, supply chain management, export documentation, online marketing, and customer support. By employing a descriptive methodology in the form of an interview with a TOLGA AGRO FOOD representative, the research uncovers valuable insights about ICT integration in exporting. The results highlight the significance of ICT tools in streamlining processes, expanding market reach, improving data analysis and decision-making, enhancing communication and collaboration, and enriching customer experiences. The study also addresses challenges associated with ICT adoption and considers future developments in artificial intelligence, e-commerce platforms, decentralized trade technologies, and data security. By effectively utilizing ICT tools, businesses can optimize exporting operations, gain a competitive edge, and foster growth in the global marketplace.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Exporting, Market research, Supply chain management.

ملخص:

تحقق هذه المذكرة من تأثير تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال (ICT) على جوانب مختلفة من عملية التصدير، مع التركيز على شركة TOLGA AGRO FOOD كدراسة حالة. تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف تأثير أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات على أبحاث السوق وتكييف المنتجات وإدارة سلسلة التوريد وتوثيق التصدير والتسويق الإلكتروني ودعم العملاء. من خلال استخدام منهجية وصفية في شكل مقابلة مع ممثل لشركة TOLGA AGRO FOOD، يكشف البحث عن رؤى قيمة حول دمج تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال في عمليات التصدير. تسلط النتائج الضوء على أهمية أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال في تسهيل العمليات وتوسيع نطاق السوق وتحسين تحليل البيانات واتخاذ القرارات وتعزيز التواصل والتعاون وتحسين تجارب العملاء. تناقش الدراسة أيضًا التحديات المرتبطة بتبني تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال وتأخذ في الاعتبار التطورات المستقبلية في مجال الذكاء الاصطناعي ومنصات التجارة الإلكترونية وتقنيات التجارة المتمركزة وأمان البيانات. من خلال استخدام أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات بشكل فعال، يمكن للشركات تحسين عمليات التصدير وتحقيق الميزة التنافسية وتعزيز النمو في السوق العالمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال، التصدير، دراسة السوق، إدارة سلاسل التوريد.

I- Introduction

In today's globalized economy, international trade has become a crucial driver of economic growth and development for nations around the world. As countries seek to expand their presence in the global market, exporting has emerged as a vital strategy for businesses to achieve sustainable growth and competitive advantage. In this context, the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing exporting has garnered significant attention from scholars, policymakers, and industry practitioners alike.

The advent of ICT has revolutionized the way businesses operate, transforming traditional trade practices and enabling companies to overcome geographical barriers, streamline processes, and reach new markets more effectively. The integration of ICT tools and platforms in export activities has opened up immense opportunities for businesses to enhance their competitiveness, optimize supply chain management, and foster innovation. However, despite the growing recognition of ICT's potential impact on exporting, there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of the specific mechanisms and strategies through which ICT can facilitate and augment export performance.

This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by examining the role of ICT in enhancing exporting and exploring the various dimensions through which ICT can contribute to export success.

To achieve this objective, the research will employ a descriptive approach using an interview with the company's Sales Manager.

The findings from this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the role of ICT in export performance and provide practical implications for businesses and international trade stakeholders.

Overall, this study recognizes the transformative potential of ICT in the context of exporting and acknowledges the need for a comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms and strategies that can use ICT tools effectively. This research aims to provide valuable insights that can help businesses thrive in the global marketplace and contribute to economic growth and development.

II- Literature review:

- The Role of Modern Information and Communication Technology in Improving the Performance of Economic Institutions - A Case Study of African Glass Company, Ouled Salah, Taher, Jijel, Saliha Kharbouch, Fadila Hamouda, 2017

The case study focuses on the African Glass Company in Taher, Jijel, examining the role of ICT in enhancing their exporting activities. It explores how ICT tools and technologies have contributed to improving the company's export performance, streamlining processes, and expanding market reach. The study highlights the positive impact of ICT adoption in enhancing

operational efficiency, communication, market intelligence, and customer relationship management, ultimately leading to improved exporting outcomes.

- "Towards ICT Impact Framework: Private and Public Sectors Perspective" by R. Gatautis, A. Medziausiene, A. Tarute, and E. Vaiciukynaite 2015.

This study proposes an ICT impact framework that considers the perspectives of both the private and public sectors. It emphasizes the need for a comprehensive framework to assess the influence of ICT on various domains. The authors highlight the importance of understanding the unique characteristics and challenges faced by each sector in order to develop effective ICT adoption strategies that enhance organizational performance, service delivery, and overall socio-economic development.

- "Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Firm's Export in Indonesia" by Amzul Rifin, Dahlia Naully 2021. This research investigates the relationship between ICT adoption and firm-level export performance in Indonesia. The study examines how ICT usage facilitates market expansion, improves operational efficiency, and enhances competitiveness in the global market. The findings suggest that firms with higher ICT adoption levels tend to achieve higher export growth rates and market diversification.
- "Literature Analysis on Determinant Factors and the Impact of ICT in SMEs" by Domenico Consoli 2012. This literature analysis explores the determinant factors and impact of ICT adoption in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It identifies key factors influencing ICT adoption decisions and discusses the potential benefits, such as improved productivity, competitiveness, innovation, and market expansion. The study emphasizes the need for supportive policies, resources, and infrastructure to encourage SMEs' effective utilization of ICT.
- "ICT Usage Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises and Their Exporting Activity in Malaysia" Noor Al-Huda Abdul Karim, Norasibah Abdul Jalil, Norimah Rambeli Ramli, Normala Zulkifli, Shahrin Nizam Abdul Aziz and Zainizam Zakariya 2019 . This study examines the relationship between ICT usage performance and exporting activities of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia. It investigates how ICT adoption influences the export intensity, market diversification, and export performance of SMEs. The findings suggest a positive correlation between ICT usage performance and SMEs' exporting activity, indicating the role of ICT in enhancing international business engagement.
- "ICT Adoption and ICT Literacy on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises' Performance" by Dewi Kusuma Wardani, Laurensia Claudia Pratomo, and Riska Wulandari 2022. The research focuses on the impact of ICT adoption and ICT literacy on the performance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). It examines how MSMEs' adoption and effective utilization of ICT tools, combined with ICT literacy, contribute to their operational efficiency, market competitiveness, and overall performance. The study emphasizes the importance of both ICT adoption and the ability to leverage ICT tools and knowledge effectively.
- "The Effect of Information and Communication Technology on Export Performance of Iranian Firms" by Kamal Ghalandari 2013. This study investigates the effect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the export performance of Iranian firms. It explores how

ICT adoption and utilization impact export volume, market diversification, and export growth. The findings suggest a positive relationship between ICT adoption and export performance, indicating that firms that effectively leverage ICT tools and strategies tend to achieve better export outcomes.

- This study employs a descriptive case study approach, utilizing qualitative methods of data collection and analysis to explore the impact of ICT on enhancing exporting operations within TOLGA AGRO FOOD.

The study focuses on various dimensions related to the role of ICT in enhancing exporting operations within TOLGA AGRO FOOD. These dimensions include streamlined processes, market reach, data accuracy and analysis, communication and collaboration, and customer experience. The study investigates how ICT tools streamline processes, expand market reach, improve data accuracy and decision-making, enhance communication and collaboration, and elevate customer experience and satisfaction. By exploring these dimensions, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of ICT on different aspects of exporting operations in TOLGA AGRO FOOD, highlighting the potential benefits and challenges associated with ICT adoption in exporting.

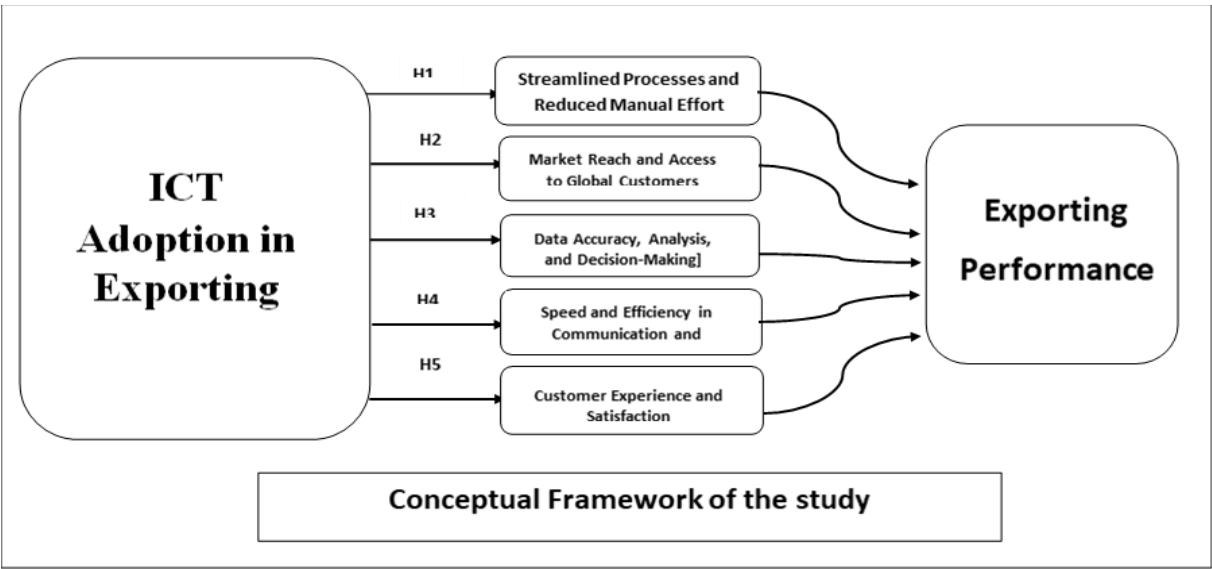


Figure 1: the conceptual framework of the study

III- Background of the study

Exporting plays a crucial role in fostering economic growth and development worldwide. In recent years, the emergence of information and communication technologies (ICT) has opened up new ways for businesses to enhance their exporting activities. By taking advantage of the power of ICT tools such as e-commerce platforms, online marketplaces, and digital payment systems, businesses can optimize their supply chains, minimize transaction costs, and expand their market reach with greater efficiency.

Despite the potential advantages offered by ICT tools in the realm of exporting, numerous challenges persist in their adoption and implementation. Scarce resources, inadequate digital skills, and limited infrastructure act as impediments for exporters aiming to embrace ICT tools. Furthermore, the existing research on leveraging ICT tools for exporting, particularly within developing countries, remains limited.

This study seeks to enrich the literature by examining how ICT tools can effectively optimize exporting for businesses. Specifically, the research will explore the benefits of utilizing ICT tools for exporting, the barriers hindering their adoption, and the strategies that businesses can employ to overcome these challenges.

IV- Statement of the Problem

Exporting has emerged as a key driver of economic growth and development in numerous countries across the globe. The advent of information and communication technologies (ICT) has revolutionized the exporting landscape by offering businesses new opportunities to optimize their operations. Through the utilization of ICT tools such as e-commerce platforms, online marketplaces, and digital payment systems, businesses can streamline their supply chains, reduce costs, and expand their market reach with enhanced efficiency.

Despite the potential benefits that ICT tools brought to exporting, businesses often encounter problems when it comes to their adoption and implementation. Factors such as limited resources, inadequate digital skills, and infrastructure constraints can hinder the widespread use of ICT tools among exporters.

The exporting sector in Algeria faces significant challenges that hinder its growth and potential for international trade. The country's economy heavily relies on oil and gas exports, with limited diversification in other sectors. This overreliance poses a challenge in developing a robust exporting ecosystem beyond traditional commodities. Additionally, Algerian companies encounter obstacles such as complex bureaucratic procedures, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to financing, and a lack of awareness about international markets and customer preferences. These challenges impede the competitiveness and expansion of Algerian exporters in the global marketplace. There is a pressing need to address the exporting challenges faced by Algerian companies to develop strategies that enhance their competitiveness, market reach, and sustainable growth, which is why TOLGA AGRO FOOD is a fitting case study for investigating the role of ICT in the exporting sector.

V- Aims of the Study

This study aims to explore the role of ICT in enhancing various aspects of the exporting process. Specifically, it aims to investigate the impact of ICT tools on market research and intelligence gathering, product adaptation and customization, supply chain management and logistics optimization, export documentation and compliance, online marketing and sales, and customer support. The study also aims to identify the enhancements and improvements facilitated by ICT

in terms of streamlined processes, expanded market reach, improved data analysis and decision-making, efficient communication and collaboration, and enhanced customer experience. Additionally, the study aims to address the challenges and considerations associated with the adoption and utilization of ICT tools in exporting.

VI- Research Questions

- 1- What is the impact of ICT on exporting in TOLGA AGRO FOOD Biskra?
- 2- How does the utilization of ICT tools affect the effectiveness of market research in the exporting process?
- 3- What is the relationship between the adoption of ICT tools for product adaptation, pricing, and customization?
- 4- How do the effective utilization of ICT tools in supply chain management and logistics optimization impact operational efficiency and process improvement in the context of exporting?
- 5- What is the impact of incorporating ICT tools for export documentation, compliance, and risk management on the accuracy of export-related processes, error reduction, and compliance enhancement?
- 6- How does leveraging ICT tools for online marketing, sales, and customer support influence market expansion, customer engagement, and export growth for businesses?

VII- Hypotheses

The integration and effective use of ICT tools in exporting will lead to improved market research
H1: ICT enhances the streamlined processes and reduces the manual effort in Agrofood exporting

H2: ICT enhances TOLGA AGRO FOOD market reach and access to global customers

H3: ICT improves data accuracy, analysis and decision-making in TOLGA AGRO FOOD exporting

H4: ICT increases speed and efficiency in communication and collaboration in TOLGA AGRO FOOD exporting

H5: ICT enhances customer experience and satisfaction with TOLGA AGRO FOOD exporting.

VIII- Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing the process of exporting. By examining the integration and utilization of ICT tools within the exporting process, this study addresses a critical knowledge gap and offers valuable insights for businesses and policymakers.

Firstly, the study explores the benefits and challenges associated with exporting, highlighting the importance of efficient market research, logistics management, compliance, and customer support. By recognizing these key components, the study underscores the need for effective utilization of ICT tools to optimize exporting operations.

Secondly, the study examines the key concepts and technologies within ICT that are relevant to exporting, such as e-commerce platforms, data analytics, and communication tools. Understanding the significance of these ICT tools equips businesses with the knowledge to make informed decisions about their implementation.

IX- Research Methodology and Tools

The methodology employed in this research is descriptive and involves conducting an interview with a representative from a TOLGA AGRO FOOD. The interview will be structured around a set of predefined questions designed to gather insights and perspectives on the role of ICT in enhancing according to TOLGA AGRO FOOD's experiences.

Chapter 1

An Overview of Exporting

CHAPTER ONE: An Overview of Exporting

1-Definition and importance of exporting

1-1-Definition of Exporting:

Export refers to the act of selling products that have been produced or changed in a specific area to destinations beyond its borders. It signifies a nation's and its businesses' capacity to facilitate the movement of goods, services, and information from the domestic level to international markets and countries. The main objectives of exporting are to generate profits, add value, foster expansion, promote growth, disseminate products, create job opportunities, promote cross-cultural understanding, and acquire new technology. Exporting involves the permanent transfer of goods and services from residents of a particular economic jurisdiction to non-residents, serving as the most straightforward approach for institutions to enter foreign markets. Initially, many institutions commence their international endeavors by engaging in export activities. In another definition, export is the sale of goods abroad according to Keynesian theory. Exports represent an injection into the economic cycle, and their positive changes result in increased income and employment. (2018/2017, سهام)

1-2- Importance of exporting:

Exports play a crucial role in both domestic and global economies, and their importance can be attributed to several factors. For domestic businesses, exporting offers opportunities to enter new markets, increase profits, and diversify investments, reducing reliance on a single sector. By expanding into international markets, businesses can benefit from economies of scale, lower production costs, and gain valuable knowledge and experiences from foreign countries. Exporting also stimulates economic activity, creating jobs and driving consumer spending, which further supports business growth. Moreover, exports contribute to raising the standard of living by increasing individuals' purchasing power and improving the overall quality of life. Additionally, exports affect a country's foreign exchange reserves, allowing for currency stabilization, increased competitiveness, liquidity, debt repayment, and control of inflation. Finally, a country's decisions regarding exports and trade agreements can have diplomatic implications, influencing international relations and potentially leading to trade disputes or political tensions.. (what are exports, 2023)

2-Benefits of exporting:

Advantages of exporting include the significant expansion of markets, reducing dependency on any single market. This expansion allows for greater production, leading to economies of scale and improved profit margins. Additionally, exporting enables the optimization of research and development budgets, as existing products can be modified to cater to new markets.

3-Key Concepts and Components of the Exporting Process

3-1-Market research and selection:

Market research plays a critical role in the selection of initial export markets. It assists in the identification of marketing opportunities and constraints in foreign markets, as well as potential buyers and customers. Market research encompasses various methods to determine the potential of different foreign markets. The results of this research provide valuable information, including the identification of the largest and fastest-growing markets for the product, market trends and outlook, market conditions and practices, and competing companies and products. There are two main types of market research: primary market research and secondary market research.

Primary market research involves directly collecting data from the foreign marketplace through interviews, surveys, and direct contact with representatives and potential buyers. This method allows for tailored data collection to address specific questions but can be time-consuming, expensive, and may not provide comprehensive results.

On the other hand, secondary market research involves collecting data from various sources such as trade statistics for a specific country or product. This method is less expensive and helps companies focus their marketing efforts. However, it has limitations as the most recent statistics may be outdated or the data may be too broad to be highly valuable to the company.

Developing a customized export plan is a valuable strategic and operational tool for expanding the export side of the business. It provides a comprehensive roadmap for successful export activities. (Methods-of-Market-Research, s.d.)

According to Williamson, companies that systematically explore export opportunities tend to achieve higher export performance compared to those that do not. The study highlights specific performance-related benefits resulting from effective export market selection, including scale and experience effects derived from a larger base of export sales. Additionally, exporters of a particular product can benefit from market diversification by catering to the needs of different countries at varying stages of the product's life cycle. (Nicholas C. Williamson, 2006)

The process of export market selection involves three key stages: screening, identification, and selection. During the screening stage, macrolevel indicators such as political stability and sociocultural factors are utilized to eliminate countries that do not align with the firm's objectives. One commonly used macrolevel indicator in this stage is the convertibility of the potential importing country's currency. If a country's currency is not freely convertible with other currencies, the exporting company's management may exclude it from consideration.

In the identification stage, management employs variables specific to the industry and product to create a shortlist of countries that warrant further investigation in the selection stage. These variables may include the size and growth of the import market for the product in the country and the competitiveness of the import market concerning the product.

In the final stage of the export market selection process, known as the selection stage, management applies firm-specific criteria such as profitability and the impact of the foreign

market opportunity on the exporting firm's portfolio of exports. Based on these criteria, one or more export markets are chosen from the shortlist generated during the export market identification stage. (Nicholas C. Williamson, 2006)

3-2-Product adaptation and customization:

Product adaptation and customization play a crucial role for companies venturing into new markets. A deep understanding of local requirements, regulations, cultural nuances, and buyer preferences is essential for successful market entry and sustainable growth.

Several important aspects should be considered when implementing product adaptation and customization strategies:

- 1- **Compliance with Regulations:** Adapting products to align with government regulations and standards is vital. Non-tariff barriers, including product standards, are increasingly prevalent worldwide. Localization or adaptation may be influenced by legal, economic, political, technological, and climatic factors.
- 2- **Geographic and Climatic Considerations:** Products may require adjustments to suit local geographic and climatic conditions. Factors such as topography, humidity, and energy costs can impact product performance and usage. For instance, automotive manufacturers might need to modify filters and clutch systems to cater to hot and dusty climates.
- 3- **Infrastructure and Distribution:** Adapting products to match the level of infrastructure and distribution capabilities in target markets is crucial. Packaging, warranties, sizes, and service levels may need to be modified. Simplified and robust products may be necessary in areas with limited post-sale servicing facilities.
- 4- **Buyer Preferences:** Differences in buyer preferences drive the adaptation of value propositions. Local customs, religion, sensory impact, and visual impressions influence market acceptance. Companies may redesign packaging specifically for certain markets or offer products in smaller, affordable units for less-developed countries.
- 5- **Product Guarantees:** Expectations regarding product guarantees vary across markets. Warranty requirements are influenced by the level of development, competition, consumer activism, and quality standards. Strong warranties may be necessary for entering new markets and building trust.
- 6- **Packaging Design:** Packaging design should align with customer needs. Functional packaging for industrial products focuses on storage, transportation, protection, and reuse. Consumer product packaging should be protective, informative, appealing, and reflective of buying habits.
- 7- **Cultural Considerations:** Cultural differences between the home and host countries necessitate adaptation. Brands, labels, and packaging may require adjustments to avoid

cultural misunderstandings. Color symbolism varies worldwide and can evoke different emotions or meanings.

Standard of Living and Purchasing Power: The standard of living and purchasing power influence product adaptation. Income levels, education, and energy availability impact product acceptance. Companies may need to develop less-sophisticated or affordable product models for markets with limited purchasing power. (Mariadoss, 2019),

Market-Specific Opportunities: Market opportunities may require the development of entirely new products or the adoption of an "up-market strategy" to meet world-class standards. Understanding local needs and tailoring products accordingly can unlock potential demand.

3-3-Pricing and cost considerations:

Pricing strategy refers to the approach adopted by a firm to determine the pricing of its products and services. These strategies can be broadly categorized into three main types: cost-based pricing, perceived value pricing, competition-based pricing, and penetration pricing.

Perceived value pricing is a strategy employed by many companies to establish prices based on the perceived value by the buyers. The objective is to maximize the value that customers associate with the product, taking into account both tangible and intangible factors. Tangible factors include the price of complementary goods and the product's usefulness, while intangible factors encompass aspects such as product quality, service, and brand attributes.

Competition-based pricing involves setting prices relative to competitors. This strategy is commonly used by companies with a medium market share competing against high-share competitors or for products with low differentiation, such as local hotels competing with international chains or gasoline.

Penetration pricing entails temporarily setting prices below the market price or even below the cost price to quickly enter new markets or introduce new products. This strategy was widely employed in the early days of mobile telephony and by dot-com companies to establish a customer base for generating revenue through other means, such as selling the company or generating income from advertising. (Channon., 2015)

Cost considerations when exporting Consist of:

Determining the actual cost of an export product involves considering various factors, including both market and non-market costs. Non-market costs, such as tariffs and customs fees, are taken into account, while elements that do not contribute to the export function, such as domestic advertising costs, are excluded. Additionally, there are other important factors to consider when developing an export pricing strategy, such as transportation expenses, taxes and duties, sales commissions, insurance, and financing.

To establish an appropriate price range for their product or service, companies are advised to evaluate all variables that may impact pricing through thorough market research. Traditional

components that play a role in determining the proper pricing include costs, market demand, and competition. Each of these components should be compared with the company's objective in entering the foreign market, ensuring alignment with their overall goals and objectives. (pricing-strategy, s.d.)

3-4-Payment methods and risk management in exporting:**Cash in advance:**

Cash in advance is considered the most secure and favorable payment method for exporters in international trade. In this arrangement, exporters ship goods to the buyer only after receiving payment from them. Bank transfers and credit cards are commonly used as prepayment options by exporters. Opting for cash in advance mitigates the risk of default since payment is received before the transfer of ownership. However, importers may have concerns about timely delivery and potential damage to the products. Accepting credit card payments can be a competitive alternative for exporters.

Letter of credit:

Letters of credit (LC) are highly reliable methods for international merchants. The buyer's bank issues a written commitment, guaranteeing that the buyer's payment will be settled according to the agreed terms and conditions. The buyer pays their bank to provide this service, ensuring that payment is not obligated until the goods are delivered as promised. An LC involves an importer, an exporter, an issuing bank, and a confirming bank. Confirmed LCs can be considered when importers request extended payment terms, as they enhance the creditworthiness of the transaction. It is crucial for exporters to ensure that all documents align with the LC's terms and conditions.

Open account:

In the face of intense competition in export markets, buyers often exert pressure on exporters for open account terms. Providing credit to the buyer is a common practice, with a fixed credit period, such as 30 to 60 days. Exporters may accept open account payment if there is an established trust between the parties or for small amounts. To manage the risk, exporters should offer competitive conditions while reducing the likelihood of non-payment. Export credit insurance can be utilized for additional protection. Exporters may choose to opt for this payment method, particularly when dealing with a reliable importer with potential for high future volumes.

Consignment:

Consignment is another form of open account method in the trade business, recommended for trustworthy distributors and suppliers. Consignment sales offer significant benefits to exporters, including enhanced competitiveness through improved engagement and faster delivery of goods. However, exporting on consignment carries risks since the exporter has no guarantee of payment, as the stock is in the possession of someone outside their control. Adequate insurance coverage is crucial to protect the goods throughout transit until final sale. (nbn_admin, s.d.)

Export risk management involves the identification, evaluation, and mitigation of various risks associated with international business. The focus is not on eliminating risks entirely but rather on effectively understanding and managing them. Risks encompass political, legal, credit and financial, quality, transportation and logistics, as well as language and cultural factors.

To strengthen export risk management, businesses generally follow these steps:

1. Identifying potential risks: This includes considering macroeconomic, political, and business-specific risks.
2. Ranking risks: Each risk is assessed based on its likelihood and severity.
3. Evaluating mitigation strategies: Strategies for managing and mitigating different types of export risks are evaluated, such as customized payment terms and insurance coverage.
4. Monitoring risks: Risks are monitored over time, and risk management approaches are adjusted as circumstances change.

Adopting a robust export risk management approach enables companies to expand their international partnerships and confidently extend credit and favorable payment terms. For instance, purchasing credit insurance can help mitigate the risk of nonpayment by customers and expedite credit approvals.

Various types of export risks exist, including political risks arising from changes in the political environment, legal risks related to customs, contracts, and intellectual property rights, credit and financial risks associated with nonpayment or customer default, quality risks concerning product complaints, transportation and logistics risks during shipment, and language and cultural risks in international business interactions.

Mitigating these risks involves closely monitoring political situations, seeking advice from legal advisors, utilizing export credit insurance, implementing quality control measures, and partnering with transportation and logistics experts. Understanding language and cultural differences is also crucial for preventing misunderstandings and fostering strong relationships.

Exporters should evaluate each risk and consider obtaining insurance coverage for specific risks, weighing the cost against potential benefits. Insurance coverages like export credit insurance, political risk insurance, and transportation and logistics coverage can provide protection and confidence for expanding and diversifying business operations. (Export Risk Management, s.d.)

3-5-After-sales service and customer support in exporting:

Good after-sales service is essential for exporters to succeed in foreign markets. It plays a crucial role alongside quality and price in determining the outcome of export endeavors. Neglecting service can lead to failure, while prioritizing it can lay the groundwork for growth.

Service encompasses various aspects, including timely product delivery, helpful sales staff, tailored user manuals, accessible service facilities, cost-effective maintenance and repair, dealer

support, and effective communication with customers. Service requirements may vary based on factors like product type, quality, price, and distribution channels. Some products may only require service until distribution channels and return policies are established, while others, such as consumer durables, necessitate ongoing after-sales service.

Foreign buyers, especially those of industrial goods, often prioritize service when making purchasing decisions. It is crucial for exporters to ensure that their service performance matches or exceeds that of competitors in foreign markets. Offering superior service alongside factors like product quality, price, promotion, and delivery can help establish a strong competitive position.

While some exporters may choose to exclude after-sales service from their strategy, this approach may yield short-term success but hamper long-term prospects. Buyers who recall inadequate service levels are less likely to respond positively to future offerings. Thus, market development efforts may result in one-time sales only.

Exporters have various options for delivering after-sales service. Sending products back to the exporting country for service or repair is costly and inconvenient. Utilizing local partners and facilities is a preferred approach as it saves time and money. For companies selling through distributors, selecting representatives who can effectively sell and service the products is crucial. Joint ventures or partnerships with overseas partners can provide existing service capabilities. Contracts should outline provisions for repairs, maintenance, and warranty service.

Direct sales to end-users require timely on-site service. This can be arranged through local service organizations or by sending company personnel to the buyer's location. Contracts should specify the level of on-site service and associated costs. Past performance and service history can guide estimations for service and warranty requirements in export sales.

As export activities grow in a region, establishing a branch or subsidiary in the foreign market may become cost-effective. This allows for control over sales and service quality and the ability to serve multiple markets. However, it entails significant costs and requires ongoing personnel training. Tax and currency implications should be thoroughly investigated when operating a foreign branch office.

In the absence of partners or joint ventures, exporters must be prepared to accept returns of merchandise refused by foreign buyers. This is less likely in cash-in-advance or confirmed letter of credit orders. In open-account or documentary collection transactions, buyers can refuse delivery without financial consequences. If alternative buyers cannot be found or goods cannot be abandoned, exporters will incur fees and charges associated with returning the goods.

When forming representative agreements, it is important to specify repair or service facility requirements, staff size, inspection provisions, training programs, and costs associated with maintaining suitable facilities. Warranty terms should align with the available service facility in each market. Agreements may also outline training provided to foreign representatives.

In summary, exporters should recognize the importance of providing good after-sales service. It contributes to a company's reputation and success in foreign markets. By understanding customer

expectations, utilizing local partners, and considering legal and contractual aspects, exporters can establish a strong foundation for delivering effective after-sales service and fostering long-term customer satisfaction. (Providing-After-Sales-Service, s.d.)

Chapter 2

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Exporting

CHAPTER TWO: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Exporting

1-Definition and significance of ICT:

ICT stands for Information and Communication Technology and includes computers, the Internet, and electronic delivery systems such as radios, televisions, and projectors among others (ICT in Education: A Critical Literature Review and Its Implications)

Another description provided by UNESCO UIS states that ICT refers to a varied collection of technological instruments and resources utilized for the transmission, storage, creation, sharing, or exchange of information. These technological instruments and resources encompass computers, the Internet (websites, blogs, and emails), live broadcasting technologies (radio, television, and webcasting), recorded broadcasting technologies (podcasting, audio and video players, and storage devices), as well as telephony (fixed or mobile, satellite, visio/video-conferencing, etc.). (information-and-communication-technologies-ict, s.d.).

HERBERT SIMON argues that these technologies help to make: "All information available to men in verbal or symbolic form, also in computer-readable form; books and memories are stored in semiconductor memories ..." As information technology and communication can be defined as: "the set of computer and telecommunications technologies, they are the result of a convergence of technologies, they allow the exchange of information, and their treatments, they also offer new ways and methods of communication. (MOKHEFI Amine)

2-Key Concepts and Technologies within ICT

2-1-Internet and web-based technologies

The Internet functions as a network comprising multiple interconnected computer networks. It operates through the utilization of the standard Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to establish global connectivity among devices. This vast network facilitates the transmission of a wide array of information resources and services, including interlinked hypertext documents and applications within the World Wide Web (WWW), electronic mail, telephony, and file sharing.

The advent of the Internet has brought about a transformative impact on the realms of computer technology and communication that surpasses anything witnessed previously. Previous inventions like the telegraph, telephone, radio, and computer played pivotal roles in setting the foundation for this unparalleled integration of capabilities. The Internet serves as a global broadcasting platform, enabling widespread dissemination of information. It also acts as a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers, irrespective of geographical boundaries. (al., 1997)

Web-based technologies encompass a range of technological tools and services that are accessed through a web browser via the Internet. These technologies consist of web applications, web services, and cloud computing. Web applications are software programs that operate on a web server and can be accessed through a web browser. Web services are software components that enable different applications to exchange data over the Internet. Cloud computing involves the provision of various computing services over the Internet, encompassing servers, storage, databases, networking, software, analytics, and intelligence.

Enabling a desirable digital workplace involves leveraging four key technologies, as described by White. These technologies include mobile technology, big data, cloud computing, and search-based applications. By implementing these technologies, organizations can create a digital environment that revolutionizes the way work is accomplished, enhancing individual and organizational productivity and competitiveness. (Digital Transformation: An Overview of the Current State of the Art of Research, 2021)

2-2-Data analytics and business intelligence:

Business intelligence (BI) is software that ingests business data and presents it in user-friendly views such as reports, dashboards, charts and graphs. BI tools enable business users to access different types of data - historical and current, third-party and in-house, as well as semi-structured data and unstructured data like social media. Users can analyze this information to gain insights into how the business is performing.

Business intelligence gives organizations the ability to ask questions in plain language and get answers they can understand. Instead of using best guesses, they can base decisions on what their business data is telling them - whether it relates to production, supply chain, customers or market trends.

Business intelligence helps organizations become data-driven enterprises, improve performance and gain competitive advantage. They can:

- 1- Improve ROI by understanding the business and intelligently allocating resources to meet strategic objectives.
- 2- Unravel customer behavior, preferences and trends, and use the insights to better target prospects or tailor products to changing market needs.
- 3- Monitor business operations and fix or make improvements on an ongoing basis, fueled by data insights.
- 4- Improve supply chain management by monitoring activity up and down the line and communicating results with partners and suppliers. (business-intelligence, s.d.)

2-3- E-commerce platforms and online marketplaces

“Electronic commerce is sharing business information, maintaining business relationships and conducting business transactions by means of telecommunications networks” (Wigand, 1997).

Another definition of e-commerce is “the conduct of a financial transaction by electronic means” (Introduction to e-commerce)

E-commerce and online marketplaces are two distinct concepts. E-commerce involves the online buying and selling of goods or services using electronic data or currency. On the other hand, online marketplaces operate as third-party platforms like Amazon, eBay, Walmart, or Etsy. They offer an alternative means of participating in the traditional e-commerce environment without the need for individuals to have their own website. In online marketplaces, sellers can display and sell their products or services, while buyers can browse and make purchases from a wide range of sellers. (ecommerce-vs-online-marketplace, s.d.)

2-4- Mobile applications and IoT (Internet of Things)

Every mobile application (app) is software that is designed to be installed on a mobile device. Typically, these apps are small and have less features than those designed for computers and laptops. (Angelova, 2019, p. 855)

There are several reasons why businesses benefit from having mobile applications. Firstly, mobile apps provide constant visibility to customers, allowing businesses to reach them anytime and anywhere. They serve as a direct marketing channel, providing convenient access to information, reminders, product brochures, and customer service with just a few taps. By digitalizing loyalty programs through a company mobile app, businesses can offer added value to loyal customers, resulting in increased app downloads. Mobile apps also help in building brand recognition, increasing consumer awareness of the business. Moreover, they improve customer engagement by offering quick and easy access to the business. Lastly, creating mobile apps for small businesses is a way to stand out, be innovative, and keep up with new technologies, setting them apart from competitors. (Angelova, 2019, pp. 856-857)

The Internet of Things (IoT) describes physical objects embedded with sensors and actuators that communicate with computing systems via wired or wireless networks—allowing the physical world to be digitally monitored or even controlled.

3-Types and Categories of ICT Tools Relevant to Exporting

3-1- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) is a software system that automates and manages core business processes to optimize organizational performance. It facilitates data flow and integration among various business functions, serving as a centralized platform. Traditionally, ERP systems operated separately, requiring complex and customized coding that hindered the adoption of new technology and process optimization.

Today's ERP software stands apart by bringing together diverse processes into a cohesive system. It not only enables connectivity within the ERP system but also with productivity tools, e-commerce platforms, and customer engagement solutions. This comprehensive integration allows businesses to harness data for valuable insights, optimizing processes across the entire organization.

Modern ERP solutions offer flexible deployment options, enhanced security, privacy, sustainability, and the ability for low-code customization. Moreover, they promote continuity and resilience by providing insights that fuel innovation and prepare businesses for future challenges.

There are three key ways in which an ERP system can enhance a business:

- 1- Drive optimal performance: AI-powered solutions deliver insights that enhance decision-making and identify opportunities for operational improvement.
- 2- Accelerate operational impact: By connecting processes and data, ERP systems provide visibility and flexibility to employees, enabling swift action and delivering increased value across the organization.
- 3- Ensure business agility: Adaptable ERP solutions empower businesses to proactively prepare for and effectively respond to operational disruptions and market changes.

These benefits highlight the significance of ERP systems in enhancing business efficiency and competitiveness in today's dynamic landscape.

An ERP system plays a crucial role in integrating various core functions within an organization, bridging the gap between the front office and back office. It also offers the flexibility to adapt to evolving business priorities. Here are some key business functions that can be effectively managed with an ERP system:

- 1- Commerce: In the realm of retail, ERP systems provide comprehensive omnichannel solutions that unify back-office operations, in-store activities, and digital experiences. With AI-powered recommendations, customers enjoy personalized and seamless shopping experiences, while retailers enhance employee productivity, reduce fraud, and foster business growth.
- 2- Finance: Modern ERP systems drive profitability and compliance by offering intuitive dashboards and AI-driven insights that provide real-time financial overviews. Automating daily tasks minimizes manual data entry, while tracking capabilities assist with regulatory compliance, empowering businesses to make informed financial decisions anytime and anywhere.
- 3- Human Resources: ERP solutions streamline employee management tasks, including payroll, hiring processes, and data management. By effectively managing employee-related data, businesses can enhance employee retention, recruitment, and empowerment. Additionally, ERP systems facilitate tracking employee performance and identifying potential HR issues before they arise.
- 4- Manufacturing: ERP capabilities significantly improve business communication, automate daily processes through robotic process automation, and enable manufacturers to fulfill customer demands by accessing real-time data. Furthermore, ERP systems optimize project management, cost management, and production planning.
- 5- Supply Chain: By automating manual processes and implementing ERP systems, companies can save time and reduce costs associated with inventory management. Modern ERP solutions offer dashboards, business intelligence, and IoT technology,

enabling businesses to gain better control over their supply chain and inventory management.

- 6- These functionalities highlight the value of ERP systems in enhancing operational efficiency, improving decision-making, and driving growth across multiple facets of an organization. (what-is-erp, s.d.)

3-2- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems

Customer relationship management (CRM) refers to the principles, practices, and guidelines that an organization follows when interacting with its customers.

From the organization's point of view, this entire relationship encompasses direct interactions with customers, such as sales and service-related processes, forecasting, and the analysis of customer trends and behaviors. Ultimately, CRM serves to enhance the customer's overall experience. (customer_relation_management.asp, s.d.).

Customer relationship management comprises a set of software tools that command the three axes of firm-customer relations: sales, marketing, and services. (Hermenegildo Gil-Gomez, 2020)

3-3- Supply Chain Management (SCM) software

A definition of Supply Chain Management which is very close to the mission of logistics is proposed by Simchi-Levi et al.: “Supply Chain Management is a set of approaches utilized to efficiently integrate suppliers, manufacturers, warehouses, and stores, so that merchandise is produced and distributed at the right quantities, to the right locations, and at the right time, in order to minimize systemwide costs while satisfying service level requirements”

(Stadtler, 2014)Supply chain management software (SCMS) is used to automate and optimize the range of activities required to plan, control and execute product flows, traditionally in manufacturing or production industries (supply-chain-management-scms, s.d.).

SCM platforms play different roles depending on the size of the company, the scope of the individual software, and what other applications an organization uses to manage goods and shipping. In general, supply chain management processes follow this basic pattern:

1. Demand forecasting based on sales and customer data
2. Data analytics and logistics
3. Ordering raw materials
4. Assembly of raw materials at a manufacturing plant or factory
5. Product inventory and barcode services done at plant or warehouse
6. Order fulfillment and shipping

7. Continued customer relationship and returns

SCM software vs. ERP software: SCM features are also contained within enterprise resource planning systems. ERP systems don't only include SCM but also encompasses HR, accounting software, or CRM features. ERP software is the most comprehensive iteration of enterprise management software; it manages overall enterprise processes, not just supply chains. In contrast, supply chain management platforms largely focuses on product assembly, management, and fulfillment.

The top SCM software vendors include:

- NetSuite (ERP)
- Oracle SCM Cloud
- Epicor
- Microsoft Dynamics GP ERP (Supply Chain Management Software, s.d.)

3-4- E-commerce platforms and online marketplaces

E-commerce platforms and online marketplaces are software systems that allow companies to sell their products and services online. E-commerce platforms provide tools for managing product catalogs, processing orders, and handling payments, while online marketplaces connect buyers and sellers and facilitate transactions.

(Zwass, s.d.)

Electronic data interchange (EDI): EDI has been defined as computer-to-computer exchange of structured data for automatic processing. EDI is used by supply chain partners to exchange essential information necessary for the effective running of their businesses. These structural links are usually set up between organizations that have a long-term trading relationship. For example, some multiple retailers will supply electronic point-of-sale (EPOS) data directly to suppliers, which in turn triggers replenishment of the item sold. As a consequence of this type of strong link, suppliers will be able to build a historical sales pattern that will aid their own demand forecasting activities. In this context, EDI has many benefits. It is providing timely information about its customers' sales, it is highly accurate and it is very efficient because it does not require staff to collate the information manually. EDI is used to send invoices, bills of lading, confirmation of dispatch, shipping details and any information that the linked organizations choose to exchange.

3-5- Tracking and monitoring systems and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Use technology to improve transportation performance. Managers must use information technology to decrease costs and improve responsiveness in their transportation networks.

Software helps managers do transportation planning and modal selection and build delivery routes and schedules. Real-time tracking allows carriers to communicate with each vehicle and identify its precise location and contents. These technologies help carriers lower costs and become more responsive to changes. (Sunil Chopra, 2013, p. 424)

The development of a network of geo-stationary satellites located in space has opened up possibilities for communicating with people, remote installations and equipment virtually anywhere on the Earth's surface. Where there are no mobile or fixed-line telephone facilities it is possible to use satellite telephones. Mobile assets such as road vehicles, ships and containers may be tracked through the use of satellites. It is even possible to send operating instructions via satellite to remote equipment. Access to the internet may also be achieved using this network. This ability to send and receive data via the satellite system has dramatically improved the ability of supply chain managers to manage their networks and assets wherever they may be located. (Alan Rushton, 2014)

These systems assist transport managers in the task of monitoring the effectiveness of their vehicle fleet. Information regarding vehicle activities will be collected, which are likely to include:

- mileage/kilometres travelled;
- vehicle details – age, gross vehicle weight, type of body, axle configuration, engine capacity, etc
- tonnes carried;
- idle time;
- maintenance details;
- fuel used;
- driver details;
- tachograph details and analysis;
- details of deliveries made.

This information may be manipulated to produce key performance indicators (KPIs) for the vehicle fleet. The following are typical examples:

- miles/kilometers per gallon/liter;
- vehicle utilization in terms of time in use and vehicle fill;
- tons per mile;
- average drop size;
- average drop miles;
- costs per mile/kilometer;
- tyre costs;
- maintenance costs;
- fuel costs;

- costs per tonne;
- whole life costs of the vehicles.

Very often, computerized fuel monitoring equipment controls and records fuel dispensed to each vehicle. This information may be transferred automatically into the fleet management system. In a similar way, tachograph records can be analysed and the information downloaded into the main system.

IT also comes into play in the use of global positioning systems (GPS) for tracking realtime location of vehicles and electronic notification of impending arrivals. The availability of current information also allows for real-time dynamic optimization of transportation routes and deliveries. Electronic notifications and tracking improve customer service and preparedness throughout the supply chain. (Sunil Chopra, 2013)

3-6-Automated export documentation and compliance software

Many companies in the market offer software programs for managing the export process. These programs assist in various aspects, such as order taking, generating export documentation, ensuring compliance with export control regulations, calculating transportation charges and duties, and identifying trade leads. Leading business software companies provide these solutions, but it is important to note that not all software programs are identical. Therefore, it becomes crucial for businesses to review and compare different programs to determine the most suitable option for their current and future needs, as well as the ability to stay up-to-date with industry requirements.

Implementing software enables companies to process import and export documentation more efficiently. However, it is essential to recognize that the legal responsibility for accuracy in documentation always rests with the importer or exporter, irrespective of the use of software. While software can streamline the document processing, businesses must remain diligent in ensuring compliance and accuracy throughout the export process.. (BADE, 2015)

These software solutions can help reduce risk, manage licenses, lower costs, and replace error-prone manual export activities with automation

3-7-Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) applications in exporting

Some areas of SCM that have been explored for AI applications include inventory control and planning, transportation network design, purchasing and supply management, demand planning and forecasting, order-picking problems, customer relationship management (CRM), and e-synchronized SCM.

In inventory control and planning, AI techniques such as expert systems have been used to capture inventory patterns and make accurate inventory decisions. For example, an expert system called the Inventory Management Assistant (IMA) was developed to aid the US Air Force Logistics Command in improving inventory management.

In transportation network design, AI techniques like genetic algorithms (GAs) and ant colony optimization algorithms have been used to solve combinatorial problems such as the traveling salesperson problem (TSP) and vehicle routing and scheduling problems.

For purchasing and supply management, AI tools like expert systems and agent-based systems have been developed to assist in decision-making processes, such as evaluating suppliers, automating the ordering process, and selecting between make-or-buy options.

In demand planning and forecasting, AI techniques have been introduced as alternatives to traditional forecasting methods. Agent-based systems and GAs have been used to predict future demand, especially for new or innovative products that lack historical data.

Order-picking problems, which involve selecting items for customer orders, have been addressed using AI techniques such as intelligent agent-based systems that optimize worker assignments and minimize queuing time.

CRM is an important aspect of SCM, and AI has been applied to build long-term relationships with customers. Agent-based models have been developed to simulate customer interactions and assess the return on investment in CRM efforts.

In e-synchronized SCM, machine learning techniques like web mining and text mining are used to extract patterns and insights from the abundance of information available through electronic media, such as websites and electronic data interchange.

Overall, AI and ML have shown promising potential in addressing complex SCM problems and improving decision-making processes in various SCM areas. (Min, 2009)

Chapter 3
The Role of ICT in
Enhancing Exporting

Chapter Three: The Role of ICT in Enhancing Exporting

1-Overview of the Role of ICT in Exporting

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools into the exporting process has revolutionized the way businesses operate in the global market. By leveraging advanced technologies and software solutions, companies can streamline various aspects of exporting, leading to increased efficiency, competitiveness, and growth. (Eva Hagsten, 2014)

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) plays a significant role in exporting by facilitating internationalization in small and medium-sized enterprises. It can reduce entry costs to foreign markets and per-unit cost of exporting once presence on the market is established. (Tao Zhang, 2022)

One way that ICT can reduce costs and improve efficiency is through digital technology, which reduces production, transaction, and management costs by enabling zero-cost replication and transmission of knowledge, information, and experience. Digital technology also improves resource allocation, reduces transaction costs caused by information asymmetry, and meets personalized consumer needs more effectively.

In addition to cost reduction and efficiency improvement, ICT can also facilitate better data analysis and decision-making through intelligent systems, control systems, and digital platforms. This can enhance the intelligence and automation of production activities, improve the efficiency of capital use, and strengthen independent innovation capabilities. (Manamathela, 2023)

The use of ICT may reduce the fixed entry cost into a market and thus stimulate exports. These fixed costs include the costs of finding out information about the market (search cost), advertising, and establishing a distribution network. Furthermore, ICT development significantly contributes to international trade and can stimulate exports and increase the volume of trade between countries. The effects of ICT on trade vary across industries and service categories.

The relevant innovation of the Internet is that it lowers entry costs into a new market through organized exchanges with numerous buyers and sellers, and through powerful search engines, which enable sellers and buyers to find each other at a low cost. (Caroline L Freund, 2004)

In an increasingly globalized environment, the trade landscape has profoundly changed and been reshaped by ICT-based innovations that give firms access to larger markets, allowing them to expand their customer base, increase their scale, and raise profits. This improved communication and collaboration can enhance marketing and sales for businesses engaged in exporting.

Better access to modern ICT and adoption of e-commerce applications can stimulate bilateral trade flows at various levels. The efficient use of ICT equipped with high-speed internet and secured servers is a crucial milestone for unlocking the e-trade potentials for developing- and least-developed countries. The level of ICT infrastructure and network readiness for e-commerce adoption play an important role in boosting export growth by encouraging (Xing, 2018)

firms/producers/exporters to increase trade in response to the proliferation of global e-commerce platforms.

2-Enhancements and Improvements Facilitated by ICT in Exporting

2-1- Streamlined processes and reduced manual effort

Streamlined processes and reduced manual effort: ICT can help businesses streamline their processes and reduce manual effort by automating tasks and enabling zero-cost replication and transmission of knowledge, information, and experience. This can lead to increased efficiency and productivity in their exporting operations. (imda, 2022)

2-2- Enhanced market reach and access to global customers

ICT can help businesses expand their market reach and access global customers through the use of online sales channels, social media, and e-commerce platforms. By leveraging digital technologies, businesses can tap into the global demand for digital products and services, reaching customers worldwide with minimal barriers. (Kituyi, 2020)

2-3- Improved data accuracy, analysis, and decision-making

ICT tools provide exporters with advanced capabilities for data collection, analysis, and decision-making. By leveraging technologies such as big data analytics, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, exporters can gather and analyze vast amounts of data to gain valuable insights. These insights help businesses understand customer preferences, identify market trends, and make data-driven decisions. ICT tools also enable exporters to monitor key performance indicators (KPIs), track sales metrics, and assess the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, empowering them to make informed strategic choices. (Nada Elgendya, 2022)

2-4- Increased speed and efficiency in communication and collaboration

ICT tools have revolutionized communication and collaboration in the exporting process. With the advent of email, video conferencing, and collaboration platforms, exporters can connect with international partners, suppliers, and customers in real-time. These tools facilitate seamless communication, enabling exporters to quickly address inquiries, resolve issues, and negotiate agreements. Additionally, cloud-based collaboration platforms enable remote teams to work together efficiently, share documents, and collaborate on projects regardless of their geographic locations. This increased speed and efficiency in communication and collaboration contribute to smoother exporting operations and improved customer service. (Mixel Cotarelo, 2017)

2-5- Enhanced customer experience and satisfaction

ICT tools play a vital role in enhancing the customer experience throughout the exporting journey. Online customer support systems, chatbots, and self-service portals provide customers with quick and convenient access to information and assistance. Exporters can offer personalized recommendations, respond to inquiries promptly, and address customer concerns effectively. Furthermore, ICT tools enable exporters to track and manage customer interactions, ensuring a seamless and consistent experience across different touchpoints. By delivering a superior

customer experience, exporters can build strong relationships, foster customer loyalty, and drive repeat business. (Todd Piper, 2021)

the integration of ICT in exporting brings numerous enhancements and improvements to businesses. From streamlining processes and reducing manual effort to expanding market reach and improving customer satisfaction, ICT tools empower exporters to operate more efficiently, make data-driven decisions, and connect with global customers in a seamless manner. Embracing ICT in exporting is essential for businesses looking to thrive in today's interconnected and technology-driven global marketplace.

3-Challenges and Considerations in Adopting and Utilizing ICT Tools for Exporting

3-1-Integration challenges and interoperability issues

Integration challenges and interoperability issues: Adopting and utilizing ICT tools for exporting can present challenges related to integration and interoperability. Businesses need to ensure that their ICT systems are compatible with those of their partners, suppliers, and customers in foreign markets. This can involve addressing technical issues related to data exchange, system integration, and communication protocols. Additionally, businesses need to consider the potential impact of differences in regulatory frameworks, data protection standards, and cultural norms on their ability to effectively utilize ICT tools for exporting. (Johann Schütz, 2020)

3-2- Data security and privacy concerns

Businesses need to ensure that they have adequate measures in place to protect data security and privacy when using ICT tools for exporting. This includes implementing secure data storage and transmission protocols, as well as complying with relevant data protection regulations. Data security threats can come from a variety of sources, including hackers, malicious insiders, or accidental data breaches. Additionally, businesses need to consider the potential impact of differences in regulatory frameworks, data protection standards, and cultural norms on their ability to effectively utilize ICT tools for exporting. (OECD, Risks and challenges of data access and sharing, 2019)

3-3- Cost considerations and return on investment

Businesses need to carefully consider the costs associated with adopting and utilizing ICT tools for exporting, as well as the potential return on investment. This includes assessing the upfront costs of acquiring hardware or software, as well as ongoing costs such as maintenance or training. Additionally, businesses need to consider the potential impact of ICT investments on their overall financial performance, including factors such as revenue growth, profitability, and market share. Conducting a thorough investment appraisal can help businesses make informed decisions about whether to invest in ICT tools for exporting. (GEORGE WILLIE, 2020)

3-4- Training and skill development requirements

Businesses need to ensure that their employees have the necessary skills to effectively use ICT tools for exporting. This may require investing in training or skill development programs. Several types of skills are needed, including technical and professional skills such as ICT specialist skills,

ICT generic skills for workers to be able to use digital technologies, and ICT complementary “soft” skills such as leadership, communication, and teamwork skills. Additionally, businesses need to consider the potential impact of technological change on their workforce, and be prepared to invest in ongoing training and skill development to keep their employees up-to-date with the latest technologies. (OECD, Skills for a Digital World, 2016)

3-5- Technological obsolescence and the need for continuous adaptation

Technological obsolescence can be thought of as a devaluation of an item due to technological progress, and thus, it usually happens when a new technology or product replaces an older one which need not necessarily be dysfunctional. (Tojeiro-Rivero, 2022). Obsolescence hinders a firm’s ability to adapt to the unprecedented changes in the environment, which may lead to deteriorating performance and viability. As such, the capacity to manage technological obsolescence is becoming strategically important for firms to survive and thrive in today’s rapidly changing environment. (Acur, 2022)

In conclusion, while ICT tools bring numerous benefits to exporters, several challenges and considerations must be addressed. Overcoming integration challenges, ensuring data security and privacy, carefully evaluating costs and ROI, investing in training and skill development, and adapting to technological advancements are critical for successful adoption and utilization of ICT tools. By proactively addressing these challenges, exporters can harness the full potential of ICT tools, gain a competitive edge in the global marketplace, and drive sustainable growth in their exporting endeavors.

Chapter 4

Case study:

TOLGA AGRO FOOD

Chapter Four: Case Study: Tolga Agrofood

1-Presentation of SARL Tolga Agrofood Biskra

The Food-Agro Tolga Company was established in 2003 in Tolga city. It is situated on an area of approximately 3600 square meters. The company's capital is 100,000,000 Algerian dinars, and it employs 90 workers. The company operates within the small and medium-sized enterprise sector and is located in the administrative district of Tolga in the Biskra province. It produces around 2000 tons annually.

The founder of this company is Mr. Sadok Qaisaran, a businessman from the region. He inherited several palm groves distributed in various areas of Biskra. The region, especially Tolga and its surroundings, is known for producing high-quality dates, particularly the famous "Deglet Nour" variety. This led Sadok Qaisaran to consider exporting this product abroad, and he successfully started exporting and packaging dates, gaining access to the international market.

It is worth mentioning that the company's success relies on its infrastructure and the necessary facilities to maintain the freshness of the product throughout the year. The company has 10 spacious refrigerated rooms with a storage capacity of 1000 tons. Additionally, Annex No. 03 provides the technical specifications of the company.

The objectives of the company are as follows:

- Achieving progress and economic growth.
- Increasing profits.
- Providing job opportunities.
- Preserving and enhancing the reputation and status of the company.
- Expanding into new markets.
- Maintaining its market share.
- Developing the product and adopting modern marketing strategies.
- Promoting Algerian dates and improving their image at the international level.

1-1-Organizational Structure of the Company and its Various Departments

The organizational structure of the company illustrates the different departments within the organization:

1-1-1 Quality Department:

The company strives to implement strict and intensive quality control over its products. The department plays a role in achieving the best possible quality. The company has obtained various certifications that regulate and ensure the quality of its products. These certifications include ISO/FSSC/IFS/HACCP/22000, which require compliance with specific conditions. The objectives of implementing the ISO 22000 standard include assisting the company in integrating customer requirements and food safety systems into its overall operations. It also focuses on continuous improvement and transparency. Some European distributors require BRC or IFS certification from their suppliers for specific products. IFS was developed by German and French retailers to enhance transparency throughout the entire supply chain and reduce audit costs. Many stakeholders wonder which of these different specifications to choose and ask themselves about the essential integration for synergy and shared elements. Unlike most available standards today, ISO 22000 is a management system standard that is similar to IFS and BRC auditing standards.

ISO 22000 sets performance requirements like any other management system standard without specifying resource requirements. The purpose of these auditing standards is to determine the means to be implemented. ISO 22000 does not include detailed lists of best practices, but they will be identified in an additional attached document, which will take the form of technical specifications that are currently being prepared.

ISO 22000 targets all stakeholders in the entire food chain and aims to provide them, upon adoption, with a wide-ranging international agreement. The implementation is in accordance with a regulated system and is based on the company's management culture. The dedicated food safety management system outlined in ISO 22000 relies on continuous improvement and the company's ability to identify, evaluate, and control food safety risks. Through all these advantages, ISO 22000 is likely to offer a satisfactory response to stakeholders' expectations.

1-1-2 Steps for Qualification, Implementation, System Accreditation, and Certification:

- Strategic decision-making by top management in the organization to establish, implement, and obtain ISO system certification.
- Application for services from the technical institution.
- Submission of an offer by the technical institution to the client organization.
- Signing of a formal contract for service provision.
- Gap analysis based on the system specification and its application to the organization.
- Training and workshops.
- Analysis of organization processes.
- Development of documents, procedures, and relevant system documentation.

- Implementation of the system documented by the client organization.
- Internal audit implementation.
- Management review of the system.
- External audit.
- Certification issuance by an accredited ISO certification body.
- The duration of the project implementation varies from 3 months to a year, depending on the size of the organization and the complexity of its operations.

1-2- The importance of implementing the HACCP system in the institution:

Implementing the HACCP system is a recognized international method for identifying food safety hazards and managing them. When it is central to an active food safety program, it can provide customers, the public, and regulatory agencies with assurance that food safety is well-managed. The HACCP system is a management system that addresses food safety by analyzing and controlling biological, chemical, and physical hazards from the procurement and handling of raw materials to manufacturing, distribution, and consumption of the final product. Many reputable manufacturers and vendors in the food industry use the HACCP system as a foundation for their food safety management programs and compliance with auditing schemes like GFSI. However, food safety programs are not limited to the HACCP system alone. To be effectively implemented, they should also include the development and implementation of prerequisite programs such as pest control, traceability and recall capabilities, sanitation and hygiene, as well as addressing the issue of ensuring that suppliers and distributors have food safety programs and guarantee the quality of the products they provide.

1-3- Policies followed in the institution:

Pricing policy:

The company determines its prices based on costs, considering the demand for the product and its competitive price, with an added profit margin. The pricing strategy aligns with the market competition conditions and the prevailing market price of the purchased product from suppliers based on seasons.

Distribution policy:

The journey of the product from storage or production centers to reaching the customer requires prior preparation based on conducting an objective and economic evaluation of the distribution channel used. Regardless of the selected channel(s), it is the responsibility of the marketing manager to distribute the company's products through the appropriate channel. The marketing department ensures timely and appropriate delivery of goods to customers according to the agreement. The marketing department covers three main functions:

Storage:

The company has large warehouses for storing its products until they are delivered to customers. The products stored in the warehouses are continuously monitored.

Transportation:

Transportation is an essential element in the distribution process. It is the means through which the company's products are moved from storage locations to customers. Refrigerated vehicles or devices are used to maintain the products, ensuring that the dates are kept at the appropriate temperature until they reach the final customers.

Receipt:

After the product arrives in the customer's country, it is delivered either at the port or at the customer's warehouses, depending on the contract between the company and the customer.

Promotion policy:

Promotion is a key element in any marketing program, and it can take various forms to introduce the product to potential customers and persuade them to choose it over others to satisfy their needs. The company relies on various means and tools to promote its products and communicate with customers abroad. These include:

Personal selling:

Face-to-face contact with potential customers to engage in the selling process and convince them to purchase the company's products. The company's sales representative may be responsible for this task.

Public relations:

The company participates in various local and international exhibitions to strengthen its relationships with customers. It also maintains some public relations to establish communication with foreign customers and the institution.

1-4-Types of company products:

The company stands out for the diversity of its products, which depends on customer preferences and their compatibility. It also depends on the quality of the dates purchased. Some of the most important types include:

- Daghla Noor Dates
- Mawaddah Dates
- Tafozoin Dates
- Tahmhourt Dates
- Mish Daghlah Dates

1-5- The nature of the company's activity and its export market:

The company specializes in the production and export of dates. Dates are the primary product on which the company relies for its operations. Some dates are produced in the company's own palm groves, while others are purchased from local producers to meet the demands of the export market.

Tolga Agrofood Company markets its products in the domestic market, with a percentage ranging between 90% and 95%, while the remaining percentage, ranging between 10% and 5%, is directed towards the international market.

The company has adopted marketing strategies for its products by participating in various international and local exhibitions, aiming to expand into international markets. Since its first exhibition, Tolga Agrofood has successfully secured deals with customers.

Some of the exhibitions in which Tolga Agrofood Company has participated include:

- Algiers Fair
- Russia
- Turkey
- France
- United Arab Emirates
- Germany
- United States

As a result, the company has been able to establish several business deals with countries, including:

- Africa: Tunisia, Morocco
- Europe: France, Belgium, Turkey
- Middle Eastern countries: United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Lebanon
- North America: Canada, United States

Furthermore, the company is actively seeking to enter Asian markets as a new policy to explore additional international markets.

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2-Methodology of the study:

In the conducted research, a descriptive methodology was employed, focusing on a single interview conducted with a representative from TOLGA AGRO FOOD, a company operating in the agro food exporting industry. The interview was structured around a set of predefined questions specifically designed to gather insights and perspectives on the role of ICT in enhancing exporting operations within the context of TOLGA AGRO FOOD.

The collected data from the interview was analyzed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and valuable insights pertaining to TOLGA AGRO FOOD's utilization of ICT tools and their impact on various aspects of the exporting process. This approach allowed for a comprehensive

understanding of how ICT tools are integrated and utilized within TOLGA AGRO FOOD's exporting operations.

By adopting a descriptive and interview-based methodology, the research provided in-depth and consistent insights into TOLGA AGRO FOOD's adoption and utilization of ICT tools in their exporting activities. The focus on a single interview ensured a detailed examination of the specific experiences and practices of TOLGA AGRO FOOD regarding the integration and impact of ICT in their exporting operations.

3- Findings and Analysis:

3-1- Interview questions and answers:

1. Can you provide an overview of your company's exporting activities, clients and the products you export?

A: SARL Tolga Agrofood is among the exporting companies to several countries and has been active in the field of exports since 2013. It has gained practical experience in this field due to its diverse range of products, including:

- Seedless dates
- Daglat Nour dates
- Date paste
- Date tahini
- Date pieces (coarse, medium, thin)

2. What are the major challenges your company faces in the exporting process?

(For ex: navigating international regulations, managing logistics and customs procedures...etc.)

A: The main challenges facing the company include a shortage of refrigerated containers, which are supposed to be available when the customer places an order, but unfortunately, this service is not provided.

3. How does your company identify potential export markets and evaluate their viability?

A: Our Company identifies potential markets for exports by studying the market and understanding its requirements and pricing.

4. Can you explain the steps involved in preparing and packaging your products for export?

A: The steps involved in the production process include receiving the raw material (dates), storing, washing, moistening, and drying them. Then they are taken to the production area for further

processing, resulting in the final product. The final product is weighed according to customer specifications, passed through a metal detector, packaged, and finally shipped.

5. What ICT tools or software does your company utilize to manage and streamline the exporting process?

(ex: supply chain management software, shipment tracking systems...etc.)

A: Our company utilizes a customized software program for export management and facilitation. This program is specifically designed to meet our institution's requirements and follows the guidelines of our export process. It includes supply chain management software, shipment tracking systems provided by specialized and efficient companies in this field, etc.

6. Can you discuss any investments or upgrades made in your company's ICT infrastructure to support exporting activities, such as improved network connectivity or hardware capabilities?

A: We employ technological tools to communicate and collaborate with international customers, distributors, or partners. This includes websites dedicated to the export process or import process, where each website differs in terms of tools and information provided for the service. We have our own company website, which we use to interact with customers, as well as an email inbox dedicated to the company. Each factory service has its own dedicated website, through which we communicate based on the type of service required.

7. How do you use ICT tools to communicate and collaborate with international clients, distributors, or partners?

A: Yes, we use social media platforms to interact with international customers and promote our export products. These platforms include websites of export organizations and associations that represent and express all export institutions. These websites facilitate exporters in various aspects through a platform where everything related to export operations, recipients, and meetings held by interested countries in exports is published.

8. does your company utilize social media platforms to engage with international customers and promote your export products? If so, can you give an example?

A: Our Company utilizes electronic platforms and e-commerce on several company-specific platforms, such as the company's website and social media platforms."

9. Can you describe how your company utilizes e-commerce platforms or online marketplaces to facilitate sales and transactions with international customers?

A: Definitely! Many companies use e-commerce platforms or online stores to facilitate sales and transactions with customers from different countries. These platforms provide a safe and reliable environment for conducting online business, making it easier for companies to connect with customers worldwide. These online platforms act as virtual shops where companies can showcase

their products for export, provide detailed descriptions and images, and offer convenient purchasing options. By utilizing e-commerce platforms, companies can reach a global customer base, accept international payments, and streamline the order fulfillment process. This enables smooth international transactions and allows companies to efficiently expand their export operations.

10. What role do ICT tools play in market research and identifying export opportunities?

A: Technological tools play a crucial role in market research and identifying export opportunities. These tools provide data and information that can be used to understand the target market, analyze trends, and identify business opportunities. Here are some technological tools used in market research and identifying export opportunities:

- Online research: Companies can use search engines and specialized websites to gather information about the target market, competitors, and changes in demand. Online research provides access to market research reports, economic analyses, current studies, customer feedback, and industry forecasts.
- Analytical tools: Analytical tools such as data analysis software and artificial intelligence tools help understand data and extract important insights. These tools can be used to analyze available information, identify trends, forecast future expectations, and discover new opportunities.
- Online surveys: Companies can conduct online surveys to assess the interests, preferences, and requirements of international customers. Online survey tools can be used to collect feedback and comments and analyze them to improve services and identify export opportunities.
- Social media: Social media platforms contribute to gathering market information and analyzing trends. Companies can monitor social media platforms to understand customer opinions, preferences, and emerging market trends.

11. How do ICT tools assist in managing logistics, such as tracking shipments and coordinating transportation?

A: Technological tools play a crucial role in logistics services management and facilitating shipment tracking and transportation coordination. These tools provide technological solutions that help improve efficiency and effectiveness in transportation operations and shipment tracking. Here are some ways in which technological tools assist in logistics services management:

- Supply chain management systems: Supply chain management systems use technology to improve the organization and coordination of material and product flow across the chain. These systems help enhance a company's visibility into its logistics operations, enable shipment tracking, and manage inventory.
- Shipment tracking systems: Shipment tracking tools utilize technologies such as barcodes and RFID to locate and track shipments at various transportation stages. Companies and customers

can know the real-time location and status of shipments, facilitating storage and distribution operations.

- Warehouse management systems: Warehouse management tools employ technologies like barcode-based warehouse management systems and automation to improve processes of receiving, storing, and picking materials in warehouses. These tools contribute to enhanced accuracy and efficiency in warehouse management.
- Transportation planning and coordination: Logistics planning tools and transportation management systems use technology to improve the organization and coordination of transportation modes.

12. What ICT tools or systems do you utilize to facilitate customs documentation and compliance?

A: There are numerous technological tools and systems that can be utilized to facilitate customs procedures and compliance with international trade regulations. Here are some examples of these tools and systems:

- Electronic customs management systems: These systems allow for the online submission of necessary documents and data to customs securely and reliably. These tools enable the rapid and efficient submission of import and export declarations and the determination of customs duties and fees.
- Customs compliance management systems: These systems are used to ensure compliance with international trade regulations and requirements. These tools assist in monitoring the taxation system, international trade, identifying risks, and implementing necessary actions for compliance.
- Advanced data and analytics: Advanced analytics and data tools help analyze customs data, identify trends, patterns, and potential risks. These tools can be used to predict changes in trade policies, international trade, and make strategic decisions.
- Electronic communications and messaging: Electronic communication means such as email, electronic portals, and dedicated applications facilitate communication between traders and customs authorities. These tools facilitate the exchange of information and provide the necessary documents for compliance.

13. Can you discuss the role of ICT tools in ensuring compliance with international trade regulations and documentation requirements?

A: Certainly! Technological tools play a crucial role in ensuring compliance with international trade regulations and document requirements. Here are some examples of how these tools contribute to compliance:

- Electronic automation: Technological tools help improve processes and procedures related to trade documents and facilitate electronic trading of documents. These tools include creating,

filling, and sending necessary documents online, reducing human errors, and ensuring document compliance with international regulations.

- Electronic document management systems: These systems allow companies to securely store and manage the documents necessary for compliance with international trade regulations in an organized manner. Key documents such as shipping invoices, certificates of origin, and customs documents are stored in centralized electronic systems, making them easily accessible and verifiable.
- E-commerce: Technological tools such as email, electronic signatures, and electronic communication between business stakeholders can be used to authenticate and exchange official trade documents, ensuring their safety and integrity during international business operations.
- Smart risk identification solutions: Modern technological tools like big data analytics and artificial intelligence are used to analyze documents and identify risks to track and organize all customer details and communicate with them. This system records contact information and interaction history with customers, helping understand their needs, preferences, and providing personalized service.

14. How do you leverage ICT tools for effective customer relationship management (CRM) in the context of exporting?

A: To track and organize all customer details and communicate with them, this system allows recording contact information and interaction history with customers, helping understand their needs, preferences, and providing personalized service to them.

- Social media communication: Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn can be effectively used to communicate with international customers. These platforms facilitate interaction with customers, advertising export products, and providing support and technical assistance.
- Data analytics and artificial intelligence: Data analytics and artificial intelligence tools can be used to better understand customer behavior and needs. Analytical analysis enables the analysis of big data available from multiple sources and converts it into valuable information that helps in making strategic decisions.
- Email and text messaging communication: Email and text messaging tools can be used for direct communication with international customers. Promotional messages, reminders, and product updates can be sent to customers quickly and effectively.
- Online technical support: Technological tools can be used to provide online technical support to customers.

15. What ICT tools do you utilize for market analysis, including competitor analysis and market trends monitoring?

A: There are several technological tools available for market analysis, competitor monitoring, and market trends. Here are some common tools used by companies in this context:

- **Data analysis tools:** These include data analysis tools such as Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics, and Tableau. These tools enable tracking and analyzing data related to user behavior across websites and mobile applications. They can be used to understand visitor details, interests, and patterns.
- **Social media monitoring tools:** Social media monitoring tools like Hootsuite and Sprout Social allow monitoring activities and discussions related to your brand on social media platforms. You can monitor customer opinions, competitor posts, and emerging market trends.
- **Predictive and artificial intelligence tools:** Tools based on predictive and artificial intelligence such as TrendSpottr and Brandwatch enable tracking and analyzing market trends and predicting the future. These tools can help discover future trends, emerging opportunities, and your main competitors.
- **Competitor monitoring tools:** Tools like SEMrush, Ahrefs, and SimilarWeb provide information about the content strategies, keywords, and traffic of competitor websites. You can use these tools to analyze the performance of your competitors and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

16. How do you encourage the adoption of new ICT tools within your company?

A: To encourage the adoption of new technological tools within our company:

- **Awareness and training:** Provide awareness sessions and training for your team regarding the new technological tools and their benefits. Present practical examples and successful experiences of other companies that have adopted these tools and reaped the benefits. Make sure to clarify the value and advantages of the new technological tools and how they can contribute to improving efficiency and enhancing success.
- **Proof and practical experience:** Provide a trial period for the new technological tools to the team that will be using them. Offer trial licenses or specified trial periods to ensure the effectiveness of these tools in a real work environment. Through hands-on experience, the team can see for themselves how the tools can improve their performance and contribute to achieving desired goals.
- **Support and follow-up:** Provide continuous support to the team regarding the adoption of new technological tools. Offer opportunities for ongoing training, workshops, and individual lessons to assist the team in effectively using these tools. There should also be an opportunity to receive feedback and suggestions from the team regarding improving the use of the tools and addressing any challenges or issues that arise.
- **Incentives and rewards:** Provide incentives and rewards for the team that adopts and utilizes the technological tools.

17. How do you ensure that your employees are adequately trained and skilled in utilizing ICT tools for exporting purposes?

A: Ensuring employee training and skill development in using technological tools for export purposes, through:

- Needs assessment: Analyze the technological skill requirements for your team and employees regarding export purposes. Identify the technological tools used in the industry that they need to learn and acquire skills in.
- Selecting training programs: Research training programs that cover the required technological tools. You can seek the assistance of specialized training providers in these tools or take advantage of online training courses.
- Interactive training: Make the training as interactive and practical as possible. Provide hands-on workshops and practical applications for employees to practice using the technological tools. You can also customize individual training sessions to help employees understand and apply the tools in their daily work context.
- Continuous training: Ensure that training on technological tools is not a one-time event but rather continuous. Provide regular training sessions to update employees on the latest practices and improvements in technological tools.
- Actual usage: Encourage employees to use the technological tools in their daily tasks and apply the skills they have acquired during training.

18. Can you provide examples of how ICT tools have improved your company's efficiency and productivity in the exporting process?

A: Certainly, there are many examples that illustrate how the efficiency and productivity of your company can be improved through technological tools in the export process:

- Process automation: By using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, Supply Chain Management (SCM) systems, and e-commerce solutions, you can automate key processes in the export process, such as order management, inventory management, and shipping. This reduces errors, improves delivery speed, and enhances coordination between different departments.
- Enhanced communication and collaboration: Utilize communication and collaboration tools such as email, cloud platforms, and chat applications to improve communication between internal work teams, international partners, and customers. These tools can facilitate information exchange and real-time collaboration, improving the company's responsiveness to customer needs.
- Data analysis and artificial intelligence: By utilizing data analysis and artificial intelligence tools, you can derive valuable insights from the available data about market trends, customer

needs, and product performance. These tools can help improve marketing strategies and make more intelligent decisions regarding products and target markets.

- Digital marketing: Use social media, online advertising, and search engine optimization techniques to reach a wider audience and promote your export activities.

19. How do you integrate ICT tools with other systems, such as accounting or inventory management, to facilitate exporting operations?

A: Technological tools can be integrated with other systems, such as account management or inventory management, to facilitate export operations through information exchange and process unification. Here are some ways to achieve that:

- Integration with financial and account management systems: Technological tools can be linked with financial and account management systems to record transactions and track invoices and financial payments related to export operations. This ensures accurate recording of financial information and achieves alignment between different departments.
- Integration with inventory management system: Technological tools can be linked with the inventory management system to achieve better coordination in supply operations, shipping, and inventory management. Inventory information is automatically updated when export transactions are made, helping to avoid stock shortages or excess.
- Logistics system integration: Technological tools can be integrated with logistics systems to improve supply chain management and shipment tracking. These tools can provide real-time information about the status of shipments and the expected delivery time, enabling logistics teams to deal with any challenges that may arise in the export process.
- Integration with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems: Technological tools can be integrated with CRM systems to provide comprehensive insights into customers and their interaction history. Customer information and notes are recorded, allowing for better customer relationship management.

20. What payment methods do you typically accept from international customers? Are there any specific digital payment platforms or systems that you rely on?

A: There are several commonly accepted payment methods by international clients. Among the common methods:

- Bank transfer: Bank transfer is considered one of the most common and secure payment methods. It involves sending the financial amount from the client's account in their country to the company's account in the source country. Bank transfers may require processing time and payment confirmation.
- Credit and debit cards: Many companies accept international credit and debit cards such as Visa, Mastercard, and American Express. The financial amounts are directly transferred from the client's account to the company's account through the credit card terminal.

- Digital currency wallets: With the increasing prevalence of digital currencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum, companies can accept payments using these currencies. The financial amounts are transferred from the client's wallet to the company's wallet.
- Digital payment platforms: There are various digital payment platforms available that provide secure and convenient payment methods for international clients. Platforms such as PayPal, Stripe, Skrill, Amazon Payments, and others are common examples. Clients can use their accounts on these platforms to make online payments.

The available payment methods may vary based on the company, geographical location, and customer preferences. The company should determine the preferred methods that meet the needs of its international clients.

21. Have you experienced any specific benefits or advantages from using ICT tools in your exporting activities?

(ex: expanded market reach, real-time data visibility...etc.)

A: Yes, the use of technological tools in export activities can provide several benefits and advantages. Here are some examples:

- Increased market reach: Technological tools help expand and reach new markets. Through the use of the internet, social media, and e-commerce platforms, companies can communicate with international customers more effectively and attract new customers from around the world.
- Real-time data insights: Technological tools provide accurate and real-time data insights, helping companies understand customer needs and guide export strategies based on data-driven analytics.
- Improved communication and collaboration: Modern technological tools enable improved communication and collaboration with international customers and partners. Email, instant messaging, and video conferencing can be used to communicate with customers easily, exchange information, and documents quickly.
- Enhanced efficiency and productivity: Technological tools provide automation and streamlining of export processes. Many routine tasks, such as order processing and shipment tracking, can be automated, saving time and effort and increasing efficiency and productivity.
- Enhanced customer experience: Technological tools can help companies provide a better customer experience through personalized marketing, tailored product offerings, and efficient customer support.

22. How do you address cybersecurity and data protection concerns when utilizing ICT tools for exporting?

A: When using technological tools in export operations, data protection and information security must be top priorities. Here are some measures we take to address information security concerns and data protection:

- Establishing security policies and procedures: Strict policies and procedures should be put in place to protect data and secure technological systems. This includes defining permissions, setting strong passwords, implementing encryption, updating malware software, and applying intrusion prevention measures.
- Dealing with trusted technology providers: Research and select reputable technology providers who have a good reputation in information security. Ensure that they follow strong security standards and provide regular security updates.
- Training and awareness: Train your employees on best practices regarding information security and data protection. Increase awareness of hacking, fraud risks, and securing sensitive data.
- Using encryption and secure protocols: Encrypt sensitive data and use secure protocols when transferring information between different systems. Use secure protocols such as HTTPS to secure web communications and VPN for remote connections.
- Double verification and continuous monitoring: As part of intrusion prevention measures, double verification can be used to ensure the legitimacy of actions. Continuous monitoring helps to identify and respond to security threats promptly.

23. How do you stay updated on the latest ICT tools and trends relevant to the exporting industry?

A: To stay up-to-date with the latest technological tools and trends relevant to the export industry:

- Participate in exhibitions and conferences: Attending specialized exhibitions and conferences in the export and technology fields can provide an opportunity to discover the latest tools and technological innovations available in the market.
- Regularly follow industry-specific magazines and websites: There are many magazines and specialized websites dedicated to the export and international trade industry. Following these sources can provide the latest information and news about technology and new trends.
- Engage with specialized companies and consultants: Engaging with companies specialized in technology and export, as well as professional consultants, can provide valuable insights and information about modern technological tools and future trends.
- Join online professional communities: There are many online professional communities and forums that bring together experts and enthusiasts in the export and technology fields. Joining these communities allows for interaction with others, sharing experiences, and exchanging knowledge about the latest tools and trends.
- Continuous exploration and hands-on experimentation: Having a principle of continuous exploration and hands-on experimentation is essential to discover new technological tools

24. How do you measure the effectiveness and impact of ICT tools on your company's exporting performance?

(Ex: cost reduction, sales growth, customer satisfaction...etc.)

A: To stay updated on the latest technological tools and trends relevant to the export industry:

- Participate in exhibitions and conferences: Attending specialized exhibitions and conferences in the field of export and technology can provide an opportunity to discover the latest tools and technological innovations available in the market.
- Regularly follow magazines and websites dedicated to the export industry: There are numerous magazines and specialized websites in the field of export and international trade. Following these sources can provide the latest information and news about technology and new trends.
- Engage with specialized companies and consultants: Communicating with companies specialized in technology and export, as well as professional consultants, can provide valuable advice and information about modern technological tools and future trends.
- Join professional communities online: There are many online professional communities and forums that bring together experts and enthusiasts in the field of export and technology. Joining these communities allows for interaction with others and sharing experiences and knowledge about the latest tools and trends.
- Continuous exploration and hands-on experience: Having a principle of continuous exploration and experimentation is essential to discover new technological tools. You can conduct research, try out different tools, and stay curious about advancements.

25. What are the limitations of using ICT tools inside the company?

(Ex: the need for employee training and adaptation, initial implementation costs...etc.)

Using technological tools within the company may face some limitations and challenges. Some of these limitations include:

- Cost: Some technological tools can be expensive to acquire and implement in the company, including purchasing, installation, maintenance, and training costs. Using technological tools may require significant financial investments.
- Compatibility and integration: Difficulties may arise in integrating technological tools with existing systems in the company. Challenges may arise in the compatibility of different software and systems, requiring additional efforts for integration and compatibility.
- Employee capabilities and training: There may be a need to train employees in using the new technological tools. Qualifying and developing employees' skills to make full use of the technological tools can pose challenges.
- Security and privacy concerns: Security and data protection issues must be considered when using technological tools. Necessary security measures should be provided to protect sensitive data and prevent unauthorized access.

- Resistance to change: Challenges may arise in employees' acceptance and adoption of technological changes. The new application may require changes in existing processes and habits, and some employees may resist this change.
- Technological advancements: Keeping up with evolving technology may present a challenge. Technological tools may become outdated, and companies need to adapt and stay up-to-date with the latest advancements.

26. What future developments do you anticipate in the use of ICT tools for enhancing exporting?

A: We expect several developments in the use of technological tools to enhance export operations in the future. Some potential advancements include:

- Improved artificial intelligence and machine learning: Artificial intelligence and machine learning can help analyze massive amounts of data to understand trends, predict behaviors, and guide export strategies. They can also be used to improve operations and provide intelligent decision-making.
- Advancements in e-commerce and decentralized trade: Advanced e-commerce platforms will continue to evolve and provide innovative and personalized shopping experiences for international customers. Decentralized trade technologies like blockchain may be used to achieve more transparency and security in export operations.
- Robotics and automation: Robots and automation can play a bigger role in export operations, including packaging, shipping, and logistics. Advanced technologies such as robotic arms and self-driving vehicles may emerge to improve efficiency and reduce costs.
- Virtual communication and collaboration: Virtual communication and collaboration tools will evolve to enable effective and seamless interaction with international customers. These advancements may include improvements in remote communication technologies, virtual reality, and augmented reality.
- Enhanced data security and privacy: Efforts to improve data security and protect privacy will continue. Measures will be taken to ensure data protection and implement necessary security protocols to safeguard sensitive information.

3-2- Analysis:

1- The company, SARL Tolga Agrofood, has been involved in exporting since 2013 and deals with a diverse range of products, including seedless dates, Daglat Nour dates, date paste, date tahini, and date pieces. This indicates the company's experience and versatility in catering to various export markets and client preferences. The information provided gives an overview of the company's exporting activities, its clients, and the specific products it exports.

2- According to the response, one of the major challenges faced by the company in the exporting process is a shortage of refrigerated containers. This limitation can have a significant impact on the company's ability to meet customer demands and maintain the quality of products during shipment. It highlights the importance of ensuring the availability of refrigerated containers to streamline the exporting process and mitigate potential delays or issues in delivering exports.

3- The company's approach to identifying potential export markets involves market research and understanding the requirements and pricing dynamics of each market. This demonstrates a strategic approach to market evaluation and selection. By considering factors such as demand, competition, regulations, and cultural aspects, the company can assess the viability and potential profitability of entering specific export markets.

4- The explanation provided outlines the steps involved in preparing and packaging the company's products for export. From receiving the raw material (dates) to processing, weighing, quality control, and packaging, the company follows a systematic approach. This information highlights the company's attention to detail and adherence to quality standards throughout the production and packaging process.

5- The company utilizes a customized software program for export management and facilitation. The program includes supply chain management software and shipment tracking systems provided by specialized companies in the field. This indicates that the company recognizes the importance of utilizing ICT tools to streamline the exporting process, enhance efficiency, and ensure effective management of logistics and shipments.

6- The company utilizes technological tools for communication and collaboration with international customers, distributors, or partners. This includes dedicated websites for the export/import process, each offering different tools and information based on the service. The company also has its own website and an email inbox dedicated to company interactions. This information suggests that the company has made investments in its ICT infrastructure to support exporting activities, particularly in terms of communication and collaboration capabilities.

7- The company uses social media platforms to interact with international customers and promote its export products. It leverages websites of export organizations and associations to facilitate exporters in various aspects, such as publishing information related to export operations, recipients, and meetings held by interested countries. This indicates that the company recognizes the importance of utilizing ICT tools, specifically social media, to engage with international clients, distributors, and partners.

8- The company utilizes electronic platforms and e-commerce on its own website and social media platforms to engage with international customers and promote its export products. This demonstrates the company's adoption of online channels to expand its reach, connect with a wider customer base, and showcase its export offerings. By utilizing social media platforms, the company can leverage the power of digital marketing to raise awareness about its products and attract international customers.

9- The company uses e-commerce platforms or online marketplaces to facilitate sales and transactions with international customers. These platforms provide a secure and reliable environment for conducting online business, enabling the company to showcase products, provide detailed descriptions, images, and offer convenient purchasing options. By utilizing e-commerce platforms, the company can efficiently reach a global customer base, accept international payments, and streamline the sales and transaction processes.

10- Technological tools play a crucial role in market research and identifying export opportunities. The response highlights several ICT tools used for market research, including online research through search engines and specialized websites, analytical tools for data analysis and extracting insights, online surveys to assess customer preferences, and social media platforms for monitoring trends and customer opinions. These tools enable the company to gather market information, understand trends, and identify potential export opportunities.

11- Technological tools play a crucial role in managing logistics, including tracking shipments and coordinating transportation. The response mentions supply chain management systems that enhance visibility and coordination of material and product flow, shipment tracking systems utilizing barcodes and RFID technology, warehouse management systems for improved efficiency, and transportation planning and coordination tools. These ICT tools contribute to streamlining logistics operations, enhancing shipment tracking, and optimizing transportation processes.

12- The company utilizes various technological tools and systems to facilitate customs documentation and compliance. Examples mentioned include electronic customs management systems for online submission of documents and data, customs compliance management systems for ensuring adherence to regulations, advanced data and analytics tools for analyzing customs data and identifying risks, and electronic communications and messaging means for facilitating exchange of information with customs authorities. These ICT tools and systems help the company streamline customs procedures and ensure compliance with international trade regulations.

13- Technological tools play a crucial role in ensuring compliance with international trade regulations and documentation requirements. The response highlights several examples of how ICT tools contribute to compliance, such as electronic automation for creating and submitting trade documents online, electronic document management systems for secure storage and accessibility of necessary documents, e-commerce tools for authenticating and exchanging official trade documents, and smart risk identification solutions that utilize big data analytics and artificial

intelligence. These tools help streamline processes, reduce errors, and ensure adherence to international trade regulations.

14- The company leverages ICT tools for effective customer relationship management (CRM) in the context of exporting. The response mentions several ways in which ICT tools are utilized, including social media communication to interact with international customers, data analytics and artificial intelligence tools for understanding customer behavior and needs, email and text messaging communication for direct contact with customers, and online technical support to provide assistance to customers. These ICT tools enable the company to track customer details, understand their preferences, and deliver personalized service, ultimately strengthening customer relationships.

15- The company utilizes various ICT tools for market analysis, competitor analysis, and monitoring market trends. The response highlights specific tools, such as data analysis tools like Google Analytics and Tableau for tracking user behavior, social media monitoring tools like Hootsuite and Sprout Social for monitoring brand activities and discussions, predictive and artificial intelligence tools for analyzing market trends and predicting the future, and competitor monitoring tools like SEMrush and Ahrefs for gathering insights on competitor strategies and performance. These ICT tools enable the company to gather valuable market intelligence, stay informed about competitors, and identify emerging trends.

16- The company encourages the adoption of new ICT tools within its organization through several strategies. The response suggests creating awareness and providing training sessions to the team to showcase the benefits and advantages of the new tools. The company also offers trial periods for the team to experience the tools in a practical work environment. Ongoing support, training, and feedback opportunities are provided to ensure effective utilization of the tools. Incentives and rewards are also offered to incentivize and recognize the team's adoption and usage of the new technological tools.

17- The company ensures that its employees are adequately trained and skilled in utilizing ICT tools for exporting purposes through various approaches. The response suggests conducting a needs assessment to identify the technological skill requirements of the team. Based on the requirements, appropriate training programs are selected, which can include specialized training providers or online courses. The training is designed to be interactive and practical, providing hands-on workshops and customized sessions. Continuous training is emphasized to keep employees updated on the latest practices, and employees are encouraged to apply the skills they acquire in their daily work.

18- The interviewee provides examples of how ICT tools have improved their company's efficiency and productivity in the exporting process. The examples include process automation through CRM systems, SCM systems, and e-commerce solutions, which streamline order management, inventory

management, and shipping. The enhanced communication and collaboration facilitated by communication and collaboration tools like email, cloud platforms, and chat applications help improve responsiveness to customer needs. Data analysis and artificial intelligence tools provide valuable insights for marketing strategies and decision-making. Additionally, digital marketing techniques such as social media, online advertising, and search engine optimization contribute to reaching a wider audience and promoting export activities.

19- The interviewee explains how ICT tools can be integrated with other systems, such as accounting or inventory management, to facilitate exporting operations. They mention integrating with financial and account management systems to track transactions and financial payments, integrating with the inventory management system to improve coordination in supply operations and shipping, integrating with logistics systems for supply chain management and shipment tracking, and integrating with CRM systems to gain comprehensive insights into customers and their interaction history.

20- The interviewee discusses the payment methods typically accepted from international customers. They mention bank transfers as a common and secure method, acceptance of international credit and debit cards such as Visa, Mastercard, and American Express, the use of digital currency wallets for payments with cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum, and the availability of digital payment platforms such as PayPal, Stripe, Skrill, and Amazon Payments. The specific payment methods accepted may vary based on the company, geographical location, and customer preferences.

21- The interviewee acknowledges several benefits and advantages of using ICT tools in exporting activities. They highlight increased market reach through the internet, social media, and e-commerce platforms, real-time data insights that guide export strategies, improved communication and collaboration with international customers and partners, enhanced efficiency and productivity through process automation, and the ability to provide a better customer experience through personalized marketing and efficient customer support.

22- The interviewee addresses cybersecurity and data protection concerns when utilizing ICT tools for exporting. They mention establishing security policies and procedures, dealing with trusted technology providers, providing training and awareness to employees, using encryption and secure protocols for data transfer, implementing double verification and continuous monitoring as intrusion prevention measures.

23- The interviewee explains how they stay updated on the latest ICT tools and trends relevant to the exporting industry. They mention participating in exhibitions and conferences, regularly following industry-specific magazines and websites, engaging with specialized companies and consultants, joining online professional communities, and maintaining a principle of continuous exploration and hands-on experimentation.

24- The interviewee describes how they measure the effectiveness and impact of ICT tools on their company's exporting performance. They mention evaluating metrics such as cost reduction, sales growth, and customer satisfaction to assess the effectiveness of ICT tools in improving performance.

25- The interviewee outlines the limitations of using ICT tools inside the company. These limitations include costs associated with acquisition, implementation, maintenance, and training, challenges related to compatibility and integration with existing systems, the need for employee training and adaptation, security and privacy concerns, resistance to change from employees, and the need to keep up with technological advancements.

26- The interviewee anticipates future developments in the use of ICT tools for enhancing exporting. They expect advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning for data analysis and decision-making, improvements in e-commerce platforms and decentralized trade technologies like blockchain, the increasing role of robotics and automation in export operations, advancements in virtual communication and collaboration tools, and continued efforts to enhance data security and privacy.

Based on the main results obtained from the interview, the hypotheses can be evaluated specifically as follows:

H1: ICT enhances streamlined processes and reduces manual effort in Agrofood exporting.

The interviewee highlighted the significance of ICT tools in improving efficiency and productivity throughout the exporting process, including order management, inventory management, and shipping. This indicates that ICT enhances streamlined processes and reduces manual effort in TOLGA AGRO FOOD exporting. Therefore, H1 is supported.

H2: ICT enhances TOLGA AGRO FOOD market reach and access to global customers.

The interviewee mentioned the use of digital marketing techniques, including social media, online advertising, and search engine optimization, to reach a wider audience and promote TOLGA AGRO FOOD's export activities. This demonstrates that ICT tools contribute to enhancing market reach and access to global customers for TOLGA AGRO FOOD. Therefore, H2 is supported.

H3: ICT improves data accuracy, analysis, and decision-making in TOLGA AGRO FOOD exporting.

The interviewee highlighted the use of data analysis and artificial intelligence tools for deriving valuable insights about market trends, customer needs, and product performance. This indicates that ICT tools play a role in improving data accuracy, analysis, and decision-making for TOLGA AGRO FOOD in its exporting activities. Therefore, H3 is supported.

H4: ICT increases speed and efficiency in communication and collaboration in TOLGA AGRO FOOD exporting.

The interviewee mentioned the use of communication and collaboration tools such as email, cloud platforms, and chat applications to facilitate effective communication with internal teams, international partners, and customers. These tools enable real-time collaboration and improve responsiveness, thus increasing speed and efficiency in communication and collaboration for TOLGA AGRO FOOD. Therefore, H4 is supported.

H5: ICT enhances customer experience and satisfaction with TOLGA AGRO FOOD exporting.

The interviewee discussed personalized marketing and efficient customer support facilitated by ICT tools, which contribute to enhancing the customer experience. This indicates that ICT tools enhance customer experience and satisfaction with TOLGA AGRO FOOD's exporting activities. Therefore, H5 is supported.

General Results

The analysis of the interview responses provides valuable insights into the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools in enhancing exporting operations. The interviewee highlighted various aspects related to the implementation and impact of ICT tools, as well as the challenges and future developments in this field.

Regarding the use of ICT tools, the interviewee emphasized their significance in improving efficiency and productivity throughout the exporting process. Automation of key processes such as order management, inventory management, and shipping was highlighted as a key benefit. By utilizing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, Supply Chain Management (SCM) systems, and e-commerce solutions, companies can streamline operations, reduce errors, and enhance coordination between departments. Furthermore, communication and collaboration tools such as email, cloud platforms, and chat applications facilitate effective communication with internal teams, international partners, and customers. These tools enable real-time collaboration and improve responsiveness to customer needs.

Data analysis and artificial intelligence were mentioned as essential tools for deriving valuable insights about market trends, customer needs, and product performance. The use of digital marketing techniques, including social media, online advertising, and search engine optimization, helps companies reach a wider audience and promote their export activities.

Integration of ICT tools with other systems, such as accounting and inventory management, was highlighted as crucial for facilitating exporting operations. By linking technological tools with financial and account management systems, companies ensure accurate recording of transactions and alignment between different departments. Integration with inventory management systems helps in coordinating supply operations, shipping, and inventory management. Integration with

logistics systems enables better supply chain management and shipment tracking, providing real-time information about the status of shipments and expected delivery times. Integration with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems provides comprehensive insights into customers and their interaction history, enabling improved customer relationship management.

When it comes to payment methods for international customers, the interviewee mentioned commonly accepted methods such as bank transfers and credit/debit cards. Additionally, they highlighted the increasing prevalence of digital currency wallets and the availability of various digital payment platforms like PayPal, Stripe, and Skrill. The choice of payment methods may vary based on company preferences and customer needs.

The interviewee outlined several benefits and advantages of using ICT tools in exporting activities. These include increased market reach, real-time data visibility, improved communication and collaboration, enhanced efficiency and productivity, and enhanced customer experience through personalized marketing and efficient customer support.

In terms of addressing cybersecurity and data protection concerns, the interviewee emphasized the establishment of security policies and procedures, the selection of trusted technology providers, employee training and awareness programs, encryption and secure protocols for data transfer, and continuous monitoring for intrusion prevention.

To stay updated on the latest ICT tools and trends relevant to exporting, the interviewee recommended participating in exhibitions and conferences, following industry-specific magazines and websites, engaging with specialized companies and consultants, joining online professional communities, and maintaining a principle of continuous exploration and hands-on experimentation.

The interviewee discussed the measurement of the effectiveness and impact of ICT tools on exporting performance. Metrics such as cost reduction, sales growth, and customer satisfaction were mentioned as indicators of the effectiveness of ICT tools in improving performance.

The limitations of using ICT tools within the company were also addressed. These include costs associated with acquisition, implementation, and training, challenges related to compatibility and integration with existing systems, employee capabilities and resistance to change, and the need to address security and privacy concerns.

Regarding future developments, the interviewee anticipated advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning for data analysis and decision-making, improvements in e-commerce platforms and decentralized trade technologies like blockchain, increased use of robotics and automation in export operations, advancements in virtual communication and collaboration tools, and continued efforts to enhance data security and privacy.

Overall, the analysis of the interview responses highlights the significant role of ICT tools in enhancing exporting operations. It underscores the benefits, challenges, and future prospects

of utilizing these tools to improve efficiency, expand market reach, and provide better customer experiences. By addressing cybersecurity concerns, staying updated on technological advancements, measuring effectiveness, and understanding limitations, companies can leverage ICT tools effectively in their exporting endeavors.

Proposals and Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the interview responses and the identified benefits, challenges, and future developments in utilizing ICT tools for exporting, the following tailored proposals and recommendations are provided:

1. **Implement a Comprehensive Integrated ICT Solution:** Tolga Agrofood should consider adopting a comprehensive integrated ICT solution that aligns with its specific exporting needs. This solution should include functionalities such as a robust CRM system, an efficient SCM system, and an e-commerce platform tailored to the company's products and target markets. Integration of these systems will streamline the export process, improve cross-departmental coordination, and enhance real-time visibility into data and operations specific to Tolga Agrofood.
2. **Leverage Data Analysis and Artificial Intelligence:** Tolga Agrofood can benefit from investing in data analysis and artificial intelligence technologies to gain valuable insights into market trends, customer preferences, and product performance. By leveraging these tools, the company can make informed decisions regarding product selection, target markets, and marketing strategies. Tolga Agrofood should explore AI-driven analytics platforms that can provide predictive analytics to optimize its exporting operations and drive sales growth.
3. **Prioritize Cybersecurity and Data Protection:** Given the sensitivity of data in the exporting process, Tolga Agrofood should prioritize cybersecurity and data protection measures. Establishing robust security policies, selecting trusted technology providers with a focus on data security, and regularly training employees on cybersecurity best practices will help safeguard the company's sensitive information. Tolga Agrofood should also implement encryption and secure protocols for data transfer and invest in continuous monitoring systems to detect and respond to potential security incidents promptly.
4. **Stay Informed about Industry-Specific ICT Tools and Trends:** Tolga Agrofood should actively stay updated on the latest ICT tools and trends relevant to the agrofood export industry. This can be achieved by participating in industry-specific exhibitions and conferences, following specialized agrofood magazines and websites, and engaging with technology providers and consultants who specialize in the agrofood sector. By staying informed, Tolga Agrofood can identify emerging technologies, innovative solutions, and industry best practices that can enhance its exporting operations.

5. **Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Measure Impact:** Tolga Agrofood should establish KPIs to measure the effectiveness and impact of ICT tools on its exporting performance. These KPIs can include metrics such as cost reduction in logistics, sales growth in target markets, and customer satisfaction levels. By regularly tracking these KPIs, Tolga Agrofood can assess the success of its ICT initiatives, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions to optimize its exporting operations.

6. **Provide Employee Training and Support:** Tolga Agrofood should allocate resources for comprehensive employee training programs that focus on building the necessary skills and capabilities to effectively utilize ICT tools in the exporting process. Training should cover the specific ICT solutions implemented by the company, as well as cybersecurity awareness and best practices. Additionally, the company should provide ongoing support to employees, fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation to technological advancements.

7. **Foster Collaborative Partnerships:** Tolga Agrofood should actively seek collaborative partnerships with technology providers, industry experts, and fellow agrofood exporters. These partnerships can involve joint projects, knowledge-sharing initiatives, and participation in industry-specific forums or communities. Collaborative partnerships will enable Tolga Agrofood to leverage collective expertise, exchange insights, and stay at the forefront of technological advancements in the agrofood export industry.

8. **Embrace Emerging Technologies in the Agrofood Sector:** Tolga Agrofood should explore and embrace emerging technologies that are specific to the agrofood industry. This includes advancements in precision agriculture technologies, IoT-enabled supply chain monitoring systems, blockchain for traceability

and certification, and virtual communication tools tailored for agrofood exporters. By embracing these technologies, Tolga Agrofood can enhance its competitiveness, improve operational efficiency, and meet the evolving demands of international customers.

By implementing these tailored proposals and recommendations, Tolga Agrofood can effectively harness the potential of ICT tools to optimize its exporting operations, drive growth, and maintain a competitive edge in the agrofood export industry.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of ICT tools in the exporting industry offers significant opportunities for companies like Tolga Agrofood to streamline operations, enhance competitiveness, and expand their global reach. Through the analysis of the interview responses and the identification of benefits, challenges, and future developments, several key findings emerge.

Firstly, ICT tools enable Tolga Agrofood to optimize various aspects of its exporting process, including market research, supply chain management, customer relationship management, and logistics. By adopting integrated solutions and leveraging data analysis and artificial intelligence, the company can make informed decisions, improve efficiency, and enhance customer satisfaction.

However, implementing ICT tools is not without challenges. Tolga Agrofood needs to address concerns related to initial investment costs, compatibility with existing systems, employee training, data security, and resistance to change. By addressing these challenges, the company can ensure a smooth integration of ICT tools into its operations and maximize the benefits they offer.

Looking ahead, the future developments in ICT tools for enhancing exporting present exciting opportunities for Tolga Agrofood. Advancements in e-commerce platforms, decentralized trade technologies, robotics and automation, virtual communication, and enhanced data security and privacy will further transform the export industry. By staying informed about the latest tools and trends, Tolga Agrofood can proactively adapt to these developments and remain competitive.

To capitalize on the benefits of ICT tools, Tolga Agrofood should prioritize cybersecurity and data protection, invest in employee training, establish key performance indicators, foster collaborative partnerships, and embrace emerging technologies specific to the agrofood sector. By doing so, the company can effectively utilize ICT tools to optimize its exporting performance, reduce costs, drive sales growth, and enhance customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, integrating ICT tools into exporting operations can be a game-changer for Tolga Agrofood. The company must embrace the opportunities presented by these tools, overcome the associated challenges, and continually adapt to the evolving technological landscape. By doing so, Tolga Agrofood can position itself as a leader in the agrofood export industry, maximizing its growth potential and delivering exceptional value to its customers.

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APPENDICES

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

بسكرة في: 25 - 05 - 2023
إلى السيد: مدير مؤسسة أقرود فود
طولقة - بسكرة



جامعة محمد خيضر - بسكرة
كلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية
وعلوم التسيير
عمادة الكلية
الرقم: 818 / ك.ق.ت.ت / 2023

طلب مساعدة لاستكمال مذكرة التخرج

دعما منكم للبحث العلمي، نرجو من سيادتكم تقديم التسهيلات اللازمة للطالب:

1 - بشار محمد وجيه

المسجل بالسنة: ثانية ماستر تخصص: مالية وتجارة دولية

وذلك لاستكمال الجانب الميداني لمذكرة الماستر المعنونة بـ:

" The role of Information and Communication Technology in enhancing exporting "

تحت إشراف: أ/ يزغش كميليا

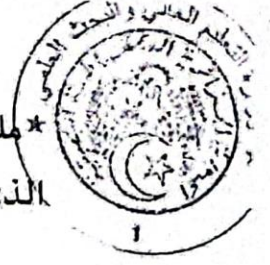
في الأخير تقبلوا منا أسى عبارات التقدير والاحترام

تأشيرة المؤسسة المستقبلة



عميد الكلية
نائب العميد للدراسات والمسائل المرتبطة
بالطلبة
د. د. غربي وهيبية





ملحق بالقرار رقم 10821... المؤرخ في 27 شهر 2020
الذي يحدد القواعد المتعلقة بالوقاية من السرقة العلمية ومكافحتها

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

مؤسسة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي:

نموذج التصريح الشرفي
الخاص بالالتزام بقواعد النزاهة العلمية لإنجاز بحث

أنا الممضي أسفله،

السيد(ة): م. محمد حلال الصفة: طالب، أستاذ، باحث حلال
الحامل(ة) لبطاقة التعريف الوطنية رقم: 207930682 والصادرة بتاريخ 2022/05/23
المسجل(ة) بكلية / معهد العلوم والابتكار بـ قسم العلوم والتكنولوجيا
والمكلف(ة) بإنجاز أعمال بحث (مذكرة التخرج، مذكرة ماستر، مذكرة ماجستير، أطروحة دكتوراه).
عنوانها: The Role of Information and Communication Technology
in enhancing Exporting Case Study: SARL Talga Agro Food
أصرح بشرفي أنني ألتزم بمراعاة المعايير العلمية والمنهجية ومعايير الأخلاقيات المهنية والنزاهة الأكاديمية
المطلوبة في إنجاز البحث المذكور أعلاه .

التاريخ: 2023/06/08

توقيع المعني (ة)