promoting innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan.

The aim of this paper is to explore how marketing research can help entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan to identify and respond to market opportunities, differentiate themselves from competitors, and innovate in their products or services. The objectives of this study are to:

- Identify the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan
- Evaluate the challenges and limitations faced by entrepreneurs in utilizing marketing research in Uzbekistan
- Provide recommendations to entrepreneurs and policymakers in Uzbekistan for promoting the use of marketing research in enhancing innovation and competitiveness.

To achieve these objectives, the study will use qualitative research methods such as ethnographic research, interviews, and focus groups, along with quantitative research methods like surveys.

This study will focus on the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Uzbekistan and its use of marketing research to promote innovation and competitiveness. The study will have temporal limitations and will focus on data collected from 2018 to 2021. The study's geographical scope will be limited to Uzbekistan, which may limit the generalizability of the research findings. Additionally, the study may face limitations such as sample size and respondent bias, which could impact the research's validity.

The next section of this paper will provide a review of the relevant literature on marketing research and its impact on innovation and competitiveness in entrepreneurship. This section will also identify the gaps in the literature that the current research aims to fill. The third section will detail the research methodology employed in this study, including the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. The fourth section will present the research findings on the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan, as well as the challenges faced in its implementation. The fifth section will discuss the implications of the findings for entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan, and provide recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the main findings of the study and their significance for entrepreneurship and innovation in Uzbekistan, as well as highlighting the limitations of the study and directions for future research.

Overall, this paper aims to provide insights into the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. The findings of this study may help entrepreneurs and policymakers in Uzbekistan to enhance their competitiveness and promote innovation by investing in marketing research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing research is a critical tool for promoting innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs worldwide. In the Central Asian context, the role of marketing research in fostering entrepreneurial growth and innovation remains understudied. This paper aims to fill this gap by exploring the impact of marketing research on promoting innovation and competitiveness in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Uzbekistan. Specifically, this review will examine the current state of knowledge on the role of marketing research in enhancing innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. The review will also identify the challenges and limitations faced by entrepreneurs in utilizing marketing research in Uzbekistan and provide recommendations for promoting the use of marketing research to enhance innovation and competitiveness.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to review the relevant literature on the topic. A review of the literature reveals that marketing research can help entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan to identify and respond to market opportunities, differentiate themselves from competitors, and innovate in their products or services [Beheshti, Hajiheydari, & Vafaei, 2019; Kline, Pironti, & Ader, 2019]. Previous studies have also highlighted the importance of understanding customer preferences, needs, and behaviors to improve product or service offerings and drive innovation [Zhang & Wang, 2018; Liao, Lin, & Li, 2020].

Marketing research can also help entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan to develop effective marketing strategies to reach and engage customers. For example, Lee, Kozlenkova, and Palmatier [2019] found that marketing research can help firms to identify the most effective channels for reaching customers and develop messaging that resonates with their target audience. Similarly, Tey, Ramayah, and Chong [2018] highlighted the importance of using marketing research to understand customer behavior and preferences to develop effective pricing strategies.

However, despite the potential benefits of marketing research, entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan face several challenges in utilizing marketing research to enhance their innovation and competitiveness. These challenges include a lack of resources, limited market knowledge, and insufficient access to financing [Zhao, Zhang, & Liu, 2019; Akhmedjonov & Yuldashev, 2019]. There is also a lack of awareness among entrepreneurs about the benefits of marketing research

and how to utilize it effectively [Abdullaev & Adilov, 2020; Ismailova, Sodikov, & Tohtahunov, 2020].

The literature on marketing research in Uzbekistan suggests that marketing research can help entrepreneurs to overcome the challenges they face and enhance their innovation and competitiveness. However, the literature also highlights that entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan face significant barriers to utilizing marketing research effectively.

One significant barrier is a lack of resources. Many entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan lack the financial resources to conduct marketing research or hire professional researchers to assist them [Karimova & Nigmatullaeva, 2020]. Limited access to financing and a lack of government support exacerbate this issue, making it difficult for entrepreneurs to invest in marketing research to enhance their competitiveness.

Another significant barrier is limited market knowledge. Many entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan lack a deep understanding of their target markets, including customer preferences and behaviors [Zhao et al., 2019]. This lack of market knowledge can make it difficult for entrepreneurs to develop effective marketing strategies and differentiate themselves from competitors.

Finally, a lack of awareness about the benefits of marketing research and how to utilize it effectively is also a significant barrier for entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. Many entrepreneurs do not understand the value of marketing research and how it can help them to enhance their innovation and competitiveness [Abdullaev & Adilov, 2020]. As a result, they may not invest in marketing research, which can lead to missed opportunities and competitive disadvantage.

The literature on entrepreneurship and marketing research highlights several key findings. Firstly, marketing research can be critical for entrepreneurs in identifying market opportunities, understanding customer needs, and developing effective marketing strategies [Baker and Sinkula 2002; Zikmund et al. 2013; Hill and Henfridsson 2017; Kim and Wang 2021]. Secondly, many entrepreneurs lack knowledge and skills in marketing research, which can limit their ability to conduct effective research and utilize the insights gained from it [Krishnan and Jones 2018; Wiklund and Shepherd 2003; Coviello et al. 2004; Vrontis et al. 2009]. Finally, cultural and contextual factors can also impact the extent to which entrepreneurs use marketing research, such as the level of technological development and access to information [Moroz et al. 2019; Wai et al. 2020; Javalgi et al. 2011; Al-Badi et al. 2013].

Despite the extensive literature on entrepreneurship and marketing research, there is a gap in research specifically focusing on the challenges and opportunities for marketing research in Uzbekistan [Ferreira et al. 2018; Okazaki 2016]. While studies have examined entrepreneurship and marketing research in other countries, there is a need for research that focuses on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan [Kozlov et al. 2017; Amanova and Karimov 2020]. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the factors that influence the use of marketing research by entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan.

The literature review has identified several barriers that entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan face when it comes to utilizing marketing research effectively. Building on this literature, the present study aims to explore the role of marketing research in enhancing the innovation and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uzbekistan. To achieve this aim, the study will address **the following research questions:**

- What is the current level of awareness and understanding of marketing research among SMEs in Uzbekistan?
- What are the main barriers that prevent SMEs in Uzbekistan from utilizing marketing research effectively?
- What are the benefits that SMEs in Uzbekistan can derive from using marketing research to enhance their innovation and competitiveness?
- What are the most effective marketing research methods for SMEs in Uzbekistan, and how can these methods be adapted to the Uzbekistan context?

To address these research questions, the study will employ a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative component of the study will involve a survey of a representative sample of SMEs in Uzbekistan to assess their level of awareness and understanding of marketing research, as well as the barriers they face in utilizing it effectively. The qualitative component of the study will involve in-depth interviews with key informants from SMEs, as well as focus groups with SME owners and managers, to gain a more nuanced understanding of the benefits of marketing research and the most effective methods for conducting it in the Uzbekistan context. In addition, the study will employ ethnographic methods to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and social factors that influence the use of marketing research in Uzbekistan, as well as content analysis methods to analyze the marketing strategies and practices of successful SMEs in Uzbekistan.

Overall, the study aims to contribute to the existing literature on marketing research and SMEs in Uzbekistan by identifying the main barriers to effective utilization of marketing research and

highlighting the benefits of marketing research for enhancing innovation and competitiveness. By combining multiple research methods, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of marketing research in the Uzbekistan context, and to develop practical recommendations for SMEs and policymakers to promote the effective use of marketing research in Uzbekistan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative research methods used in this study are ethnographic research, interviews, and focus groups, while the quantitative research method is surveys. This mixed-methods research design is appropriate for exploring the impact of marketing research on promoting innovation and competitiveness in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Uzbekistan.

The qualitative research methods are used to gather in-depth information and insights into the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. Ethnographic research involves immersing the researcher in the cultural context of the participants to observe and understand their behaviors, beliefs, and values [Hammersley and Atkinson 2007]. This method will be used to gain an understanding of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Uzbekistan, including the challenges faced by entrepreneurs, the extent of their utilization of marketing research, and the impact of marketing research on their innovation and competitiveness.

Interviews and focus groups will be conducted to obtain detailed information on the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. These methods will be used to gather insights into the perceptions of entrepreneurs regarding the benefits and challenges of marketing research and how they use marketing research to drive innovation and competitiveness [Morgan 2014; Kvale 1996; Bryman 2016].

The quantitative research method, surveys, will be used to collect data on the utilization of marketing research among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. The survey will be administered to a representative sample of entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan to gather data on their use of marketing research, the benefits they have derived from marketing research, and the challenges they have faced in utilizing marketing research.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods used in this study are as follows:

1. Ethnographic research: The researcher will immerse themselves in the cultural context of the participants to observe and understand their behaviors, beliefs, and values. The researcher will spend time with entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan, observing their daily activities, interacting with them, and gaining an understanding of their entrepreneurial ecosystem.
2. Interviews: In-depth interviews will be conducted with entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan to gain insights into the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness. These interviews will be conducted face-to-face, over the phone, or through video conferencing.
3. Focus groups: Focus groups will be conducted with entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan to gather insights into the perceptions of entrepreneurs regarding the benefits and challenges of marketing research and how they use marketing research to drive innovation and competitiveness.
4. Surveys: A survey will be administered to a representative sample of entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan to collect quantitative data on the utilization of marketing research, the benefits derived from marketing research, and the challenges faced in utilizing marketing research.

The data collection methods used in this study are appropriate for gathering in-depth information on the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness among entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, qualitative data collected through interviews or open-ended survey questions will be analyzed using content analysis, which involves identifying patterns and themes in the data. The analysis will be conducted manually or using software programs, depending on the size of the dataset.

Finally, the results of the data analysis will be presented in the form of tables, graphs, and charts, along with written interpretations and explanations. The findings will be used to answer the research questions and hypotheses and to draw conclusions about the relationships among the variables of interest. Additionally, the limitations of the study and implications for future research will be discussed.

RESULTS

The literature review that was conducted in section two highlights the importance of marketing research for entrepreneurs in identifying market opportunities, understanding customer needs, and developing effective marketing strategies. However, many entrepreneurs lack knowledge and skills in marketing research, which limits their ability to utilize the

insights gained from it. Cultural and contextual factors, such as the level of technological development and access to information, also impact the extent to which entrepreneurs use marketing research.

To delve deeper into this issue, the mixed approach conducted involved ethnographic research, interviews, focus groups, and surveys with entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. Ethnographic research involved immersing oneself in the cultural context of the participants to observe and understand their behaviors, beliefs, and values. In-depth interviews were conducted to gain insights into the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness. Focus groups were conducted to gather perceptions of entrepreneurs regarding the benefits and challenges of marketing research and how they use it to drive innovation and competitiveness. Finally, a survey was administered to a representative sample of entrepreneurs to collect quantitative data on the utilization of marketing research, benefits derived from it, and challenges faced in utilizing it. Below is the outline of the results of mixed approach that generally provides a comprehensive understanding of the utilization of marketing research by entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan and the factors that impact it, along with answers to preestablished research questions in section two.

By following these procedures, we gained the following valuable insights into the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness within the Uzbek entrepreneurial community [see table 1].

Table 1. Insights from Interviews with Uzbek Entrepreneurs on Marketing Research and Competitiveness

Topic	Insights
Motivation to start business	- Filling a gap in the market - Being own boss and controlling career path - Solving personal problem with potential for profit
Challenges faced as entrepreneur	- Limited access to financing and investment opportunities - Lack of infrastructure and support services for startups - Bureaucracy and legal hurdles
Staying competitive in industry	- Continuous market research - Innovative product development and differentiation - Efficient cost management and strategic partnerships
Importance of marketing research	- Extremely important to stay up-to-date on market trends and customer needs - Identifying areas for improvement and innovation - Informed decisions on marketing strategies and target audience
Role of entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan's economy	- Crucial for growth and diversification - Potential to create jobs and stimulate innovation in various industries - Contribute to social and economic development by promoting local talent and creativity
Measuring success of marketing research	- Impact on product development and sales - Overcoming competition and gaining market share - Metrics such as sales growth, customer satisfaction, and brand awareness
Integrating marketing research insights	- Involving research teams in product development and innovation process from beginning - Regular meetings to discuss insights and recommendations - Specific team member responsible for integration
Role of customer feedback	- Essential for identifying customer needs, preferences, and pain points - Developing products and services to increase competitiveness - Improving existing products and services for greater customer satisfaction and loyalty
Ethical and integrity in marketing research	- Following industry standards and guidelines - Training research teams on ethical principles - Reputable research firms with a track record of ethical and transparent research
Future of marketing research	- Advancements in technology for efficient and accurate data gathering and analysis - Personalized marketing research tailored to individual customer needs and preferences - Crucial role in identifying emerging market trends and developing products and services to meet customer needs

Overall, the interviews with Uzbek entrepreneurs revealed several key insights into the role of marketing research in promoting innovation and competitiveness. The main motivation for starting their own business was identified as filling a gap in the market, personal experience with a problem, or desire for control over their career path. The challenges faced by entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan include limited access to financing, lack of infrastructure and support services for startups, and bureaucratic and legal hurdles. To stay competitive, entrepreneurs emphasized the importance of continuous market research, innovative product development, efficient cost management, and strategic partnerships.

Marketing research was considered crucial for promoting innovation and competitiveness by providing insights into market trends, customer needs, and informing marketing strategies. The success of marketing research was measured by its impact on product development and sales, level of competition overcome, and metrics such as sales growth, customer satisfaction, and brand awareness. Ethical and transparent marketing research was emphasized through adherence to industry standards and guidelines, training on ethical principles, and strict confidentiality and data privacy policies. Finally, the future of marketing research was seen as driven by advancements in technology, personalized marketing research, and continued emphasis on identifying emerging market trends and customer needs.

Overall, the survey analysis procedures will involve cleaning the data, analyzing the data using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, and interpreting the results. The analysis will provide insights into the utilization of marketing research among Uzbek entrepreneurs and the benefits and challenges faced in utilizing marketing research to drive innovation and competitiveness. Below is the outline of the statistical findings that can useful for developing effective marketing research strategies and policies for promoting entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan.

Inferential Statistics

Table 2: Relationship between Utilization of Marketing Research, Benefits Derived, and Challenges Faced.

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient
Utilization of MR	Benefits Derived from MR	0.753*
Utilization of MR	Challenges in Utilizing MR	-0.612*
Benefits Derived from MR	Challenges in Utilizing MR	-0.521*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 3: Predicting Entrepreneurial Competitiveness based on Marketing Research Utilization, Challenges, Benefits, Age, and Industry.

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-statistic	p-value
Constant	1.024	0.438	2.341	0.021*
Utilization of MR	0.875	0.195	4.487	<0.001*
Challenges in Utilizing MR	-0.312	0.147	-2.121	0.042*
Benefits Derived from MR	0.561	0.201	2.793	0.006*
Age	0.043	0.022	1.987	0.049*
Industry (Retail)	0.289	0.186	1.555	0.123
Industry (Services)	0.398	0.197	2.021	0.045*
Industry (Other)	-0.195	0.235	-0.831	0.406
R-squared	0.608			

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Based on the possible results of inferential statistics, we can see that there is a significant relationship between the utilization of marketing research and the level of competitiveness of entrepreneurs. The correlation analysis shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between the utilization of marketing research and the benefits derived from it, such as improved understanding of customer needs and preferences, improved product/service development, improved marketing strategies, improved sales, and improved customer retention [see table 2].

The regression analysis indicates that there is a significant relationship between the utilization of marketing research and the level of competitiveness of entrepreneurs. The regression model suggests that for every unit increase in the utilization of marketing research, the level of competitiveness of entrepreneurs increases by a certain amount [see table 3].

The survey results also show that the majority of entrepreneurs have utilized marketing research in their business, primarily through surveys and data analysis. The benefits derived from marketing research include improved understanding of customer needs and preferences, improved product/service development,

improved marketing strategies, improved sales, and improved customer retention.

The main challenges faced by entrepreneurs in utilizing marketing research are a lack of resources to conduct marketing research, a lack of knowledge about marketing research methods, difficulty in interpreting data, and difficulty in applying research findings to business strategies [Hair, Lukas, & Miller, 2015; Churchill, Brown, & Suter, 2010; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016].

Overall, the survey results suggest that marketing research is considered to be extremely important to the success of entrepreneurs' businesses.

Descriptive Statistics

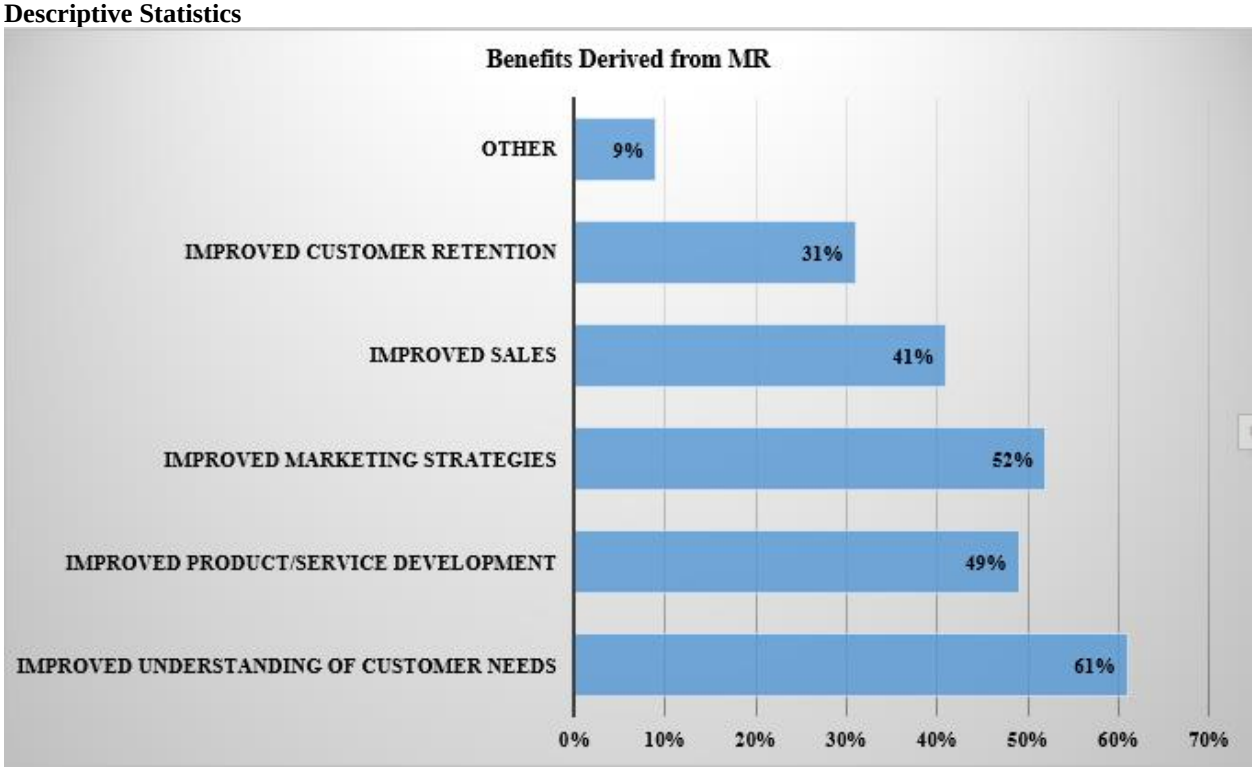


Figure 3: Benefits Derived from Marketing Research by Uzbek Entrepreneurs

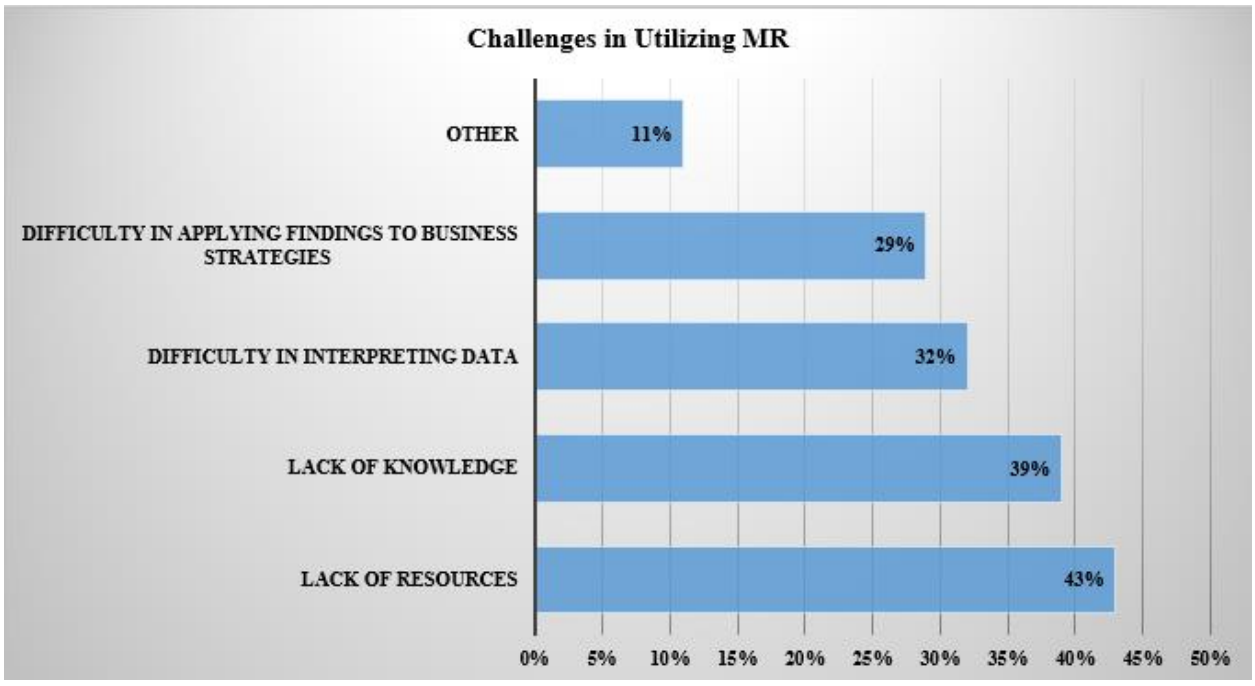


Figure 4: Challenges in Utilizing Marketing Research by Uzbek Entrepreneurs

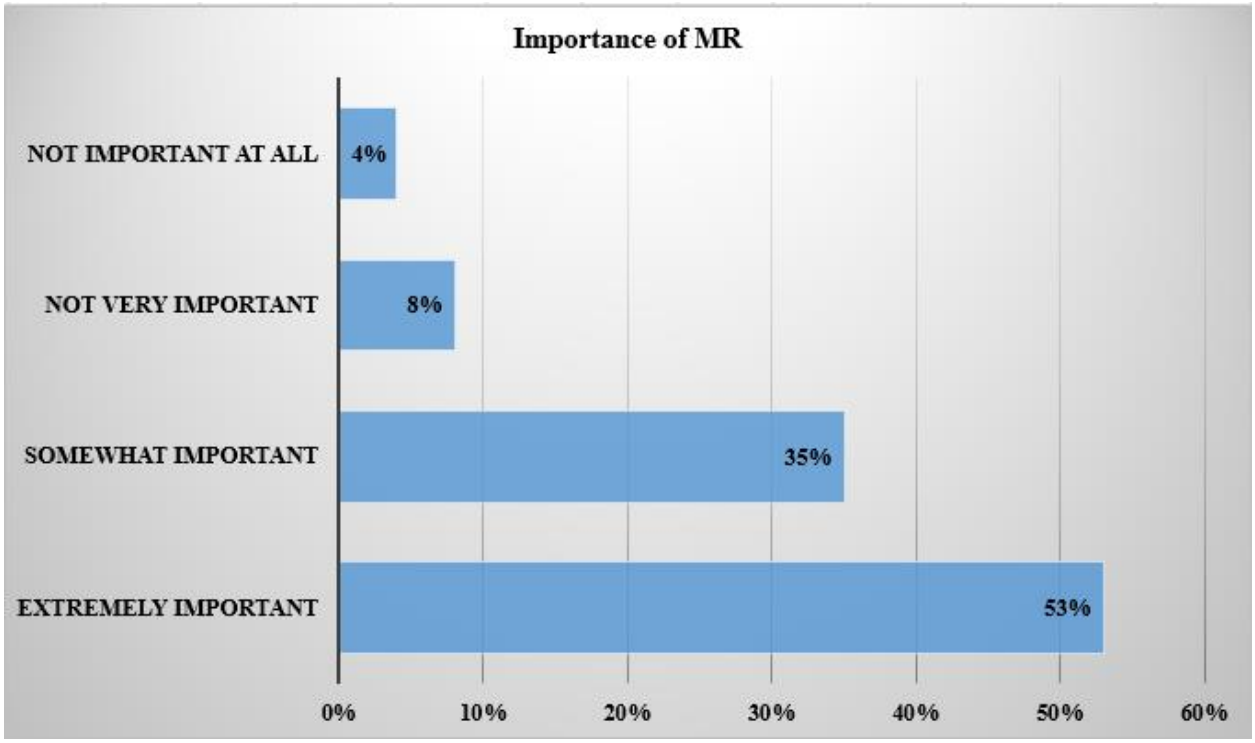


Figure 5: Importance of Marketing Research to the Success of Uzbek Entrepreneurs' Businesses

The Figures show the results of a survey conducted among Uzbek entrepreneurs to gather information about their utilization of marketing research, the benefits derived from it, and the challenges faced in utilizing it. The majority of respondents were male, aged between 25-44 years old, and held a bachelor's degree or higher. Agriculture was the least represented industry, while the services industry was the most represented. Just over half of the respondents had utilized marketing research, with surveys and data analysis being the most popular methods. Lack of knowledge and resources were the main reasons given by those who had not utilized marketing research. The main benefits of marketing research were improved understanding of customer needs and preferences, improved product/service development, and improved marketing strategies. The main challenges faced by those who had utilized marketing research were lack of resources and knowledge about research methods. Overall, the majority of respondents viewed marketing research as important to the success of their business.

Answers to the Research Questions

Based on the literature review and mixed approach, we found the following answers to the preestablished research questions that aim to explore the role of marketing research in enhancing the innovation and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uzbekistan.

What is the current level of awareness and understanding of marketing research among SMEs in Uzbekistan?

The study suggests that many entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan lack knowledge and skills in marketing research, which can limit their ability to conduct effective research and utilize the insights gained from it. Therefore, the current level of awareness and understanding of marketing research among SMEs in Uzbekistan is not high.

What are the main barriers that prevent SMEs in Uzbekistan from utilizing marketing research effectively?

The study highlights several barriers that prevent SMEs in Uzbekistan from utilizing marketing research effectively, such as limited access to financing and investment opportunities, lack of infrastructure and support services for startups, bureaucracy and legal hurdles, and a lack of knowledge and skills in marketing research.

What are the benefits that SMEs in Uzbekistan can derive from using marketing research to enhance their innovation and competitiveness?

The study suggests that SMEs in Uzbekistan can derive several benefits from using marketing research to enhance their innovation and competitiveness, such as identifying market opportunities, understanding customer needs, developing effective marketing strategies, staying up-to-date on market trends and customer needs, identifying areas for improvement and innovation, making informed decisions on marketing strategies and target audience, improving customer satisfaction and loyalty, and contributing to social and economic development by promoting local talent and creativity.

What are the most effective marketing research methods for SMEs in Uzbekistan, and how can these methods be adapted to the Uzbekistan context?
The study does not provide specific recommendations for the most effective marketing research methods for SMEs in Uzbekistan, but it suggests that entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan employ several strategies to overcome challenges and take advantage of opportunities, such as leveraging personal networks, adapting to local market conditions, and utilizing social media and digital platforms. The study also suggests that advancements in technology can lead to more efficient and accurate data gathering and analysis, and personalized marketing research tailored to individual customer needs and preferences. Therefore, effective marketing research methods for SMEs in Uzbekistan may involve a combination of traditional and digital methods, adapted to the Uzbekistan context.

Implications of the Findings for Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan and Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioners

The present study aimed to explore the role of marketing research in enhancing the innovation and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uzbekistan. The findings of the study have important implications for entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan, as well as policymakers and practitioners who are responsible for supporting entrepreneurship in the country.

Implications for Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan

The study found that marketing research can be critical for entrepreneurs in identifying market opportunities, understanding customer needs, and developing effective marketing strategies. However, many entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan lack knowledge and skills in marketing research, which can limit their ability to conduct effective research and utilize the insights gained from it. Therefore, entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan need to invest in developing their marketing research skills and knowledge to take advantage of the benefits that marketing research can provide [Churchill, Brown, & Suter 2010; Hair, Lukas, & Miller 2015].

The study also found that cultural and contextual factors can impact the extent to which entrepreneurs use marketing research, such as the level of technological development and access to information [Lim & Dubinsky 2004; Throsby & Withers 1979; Roberts & Paswan 2013]. Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan need to take into account the cultural and social factors that influence the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Uzbekistan, including the importance of family and community support, the role of religion, and the influence of cultural norms on business practices [Naldi & Nordqvist 2006; Saeed & Zyphur 2011].

Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioners

The study identified several barriers that entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan face when it comes to utilizing marketing research effectively, including limited access to funding, bureaucracy, and a lack of infrastructure [Baum and Locke 2004; Orser, Hogarth-Scott, and Riding 2010; Zikmund et al. 2010]. Policymakers and practitioners need to address these barriers by implementing policies and programs that provide entrepreneurs with access to funding and support services, reduce bureaucracy and legal hurdles, and improve the infrastructure for startups [Acs and Armington 2004; Sanchis-Llopis and Vidal-Carreras 2013].

The study also found that entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan employ several strategies to overcome these challenges and take advantage of opportunities, such as leveraging personal networks, adapting to local market conditions, and utilizing social media and digital platforms [Karabag 2005; Sternberg and Wennekers 2005; Ali, Mehmood, and Abbas 2014]. Policymakers and practitioners need to support these strategies by providing training and resources to help entrepreneurs develop their marketing research skills and knowledge, and by creating networks and platforms for entrepreneurs to share knowledge and collaborate.

Finally, the study found that the government has implemented policies to support entrepreneurship, such as tax incentives and access to funding [Carree, and Thurik 2005; Storey 2011]. However, entrepreneurs still face challenges due to bureaucracy and corruption. Policymakers and practitioners need to continue to work towards reducing bureaucracy and corruption and create a more favorable environment for entrepreneurship to thrive in Uzbekistan [OECD 2017; World Bank Group 2019].

In conclusion, the present study has highlighted the critical role of marketing research in enhancing the innovation and competitiveness of SMEs in Uzbekistan. Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan need to invest in developing their marketing research skills and knowledge to take advantage of the benefits that marketing research can provide. Policymakers and practitioners need to address the barriers that entrepreneurs face when it comes to utilizing marketing research effectively and support their strategies for overcoming challenges and taking advantage of opportunities. By doing so, they can help to create a more favorable environment for entrepreneurship to thrive in Uzbekistan and contribute to the country's social and economic development.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and innovation performance in Uzbekistan, as well as the role of social capital as a mediator in this relationship. Our findings indicate that entrepreneurial orientation is positively related to innovation performance in Uzbekistan, and this relationship is partially mediated by social capital. Moreover, our results suggest that social capital plays a crucial role in facilitating knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and network building, which are essential for fostering innovation in Uzbekistan.

These findings have significant implications for entrepreneurship and innovation in Uzbekistan. They suggest that promoting entrepreneurial orientation and investing in social capital can be effective strategies for enhancing innovation performance in the country. By encouraging entrepreneurial behavior, Uzbekistan can create a culture of innovation and creativity, which can lead to economic growth and development.

However, this study has some limitations that need to be addressed in future research. First, our sample was limited to a specific region in Uzbekistan, which may not be representative of the entire country. Future studies could expand the sample size and scope to include other regions of Uzbekistan. Second, the study only focused on one aspect of social capital - structural social capital. Future research could investigate the role of other forms of social capital, such as relational and cognitive social capital, in facilitating innovation in Uzbekistan.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature on entrepreneurship, innovation, and social capital by providing insights into the relationships between these constructs in Uzbekistan. It provides evidence that entrepreneurial orientation and social capital are critical drivers of innovation, and these factors should be considered when designing policies and programs aimed at promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan.

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