WAYS TO DEVELOP MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR FISHING INDUSTRY PRODUCTS IN THE REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. *This article analyses the importance of marketing strategies in the fisheries industry and examines mechanisms for their effective implementation. The study demonstrates the necessity of applying modern marketing instruments — including quality assurance, sustainability certification, branding, digital marketing, social media engagement, and data analytics — to strengthen competitiveness and market positioning of fishery enterprises. The article proposes a consolidated marketing framework tailored to the characteristics of the fisheries sector and emphasises the role of corporate social responsibility, packaging innovation, and loyalty programmes in building lasting consumer relationships.*

Keywords: *fisheries, marketing strategy, digital marketing, branding, sustainability, competitive positioning, aquaculture.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The global fisheries and aquaculture sector represents one of the most economically significant segments of the food production industry. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the sector directly employs over 600 million people worldwide and generates annual trade flows exceeding USD 164 billion [1]. Despite this scale, many fishery enterprises — particularly those operating in Central Asian and emerging markets — continue to rely on underdeveloped or outdated marketing frameworks that limit their growth potential, export reach, and consumer trust.

In Uzbekistan, the fishery sector has experienced notable production growth, with total fish output rising from 28.4 thousand tonnes in 2020 to 51.8 thousand tonnes in 2024 [2]. However, production growth alone does not guarantee market success. As competition intensifies and consumer preferences shift toward transparency, ecological responsibility, and value-added products, fishery businesses must transition from production-centric to market-oriented business models. Marketing strategy, therefore, becomes a critical determinant of long-term competitiveness and sectoral sustainability.

The concept of marketing strategy in the fisheries context encompasses not merely promotional activities, but a systemic approach to understanding and responding to market dynamics — including consumer behaviour analysis, product differentiation, brand identity construction, digital channel management, and international market development.

2. METHODS

The study employs a mixed methodological approach combining systematic literature review, comparative analysis, and secondary data analysis. Literature sources include peer-reviewed

publications on agricultural marketing, fisheries economics, and digital marketing strategy, complemented by FAO technical reports, national statistical data from the State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and results from a marketing strategy survey of 120 fishery enterprises conducted across Uzbekistan's major fish-producing regions in 2023–2024 [1, 2].

The effectiveness of marketing strategy approaches was evaluated using a revenue index methodology, where the baseline year (2020) is set at 100 and subsequent years reflect percentage change in revenue relative to baseline. Three strategy archetypes were compared: (1) integrated digital strategy — companies deploying social media, SEO, e-commerce, influencer marketing, and data analytics simultaneously; (2) traditional-only strategy — enterprises relying exclusively on trade shows, printed catalogues, and direct sales; and (3) hybrid strategy — businesses combining selective digital channels with established traditional methods.

SWOT analysis was applied to synthesise sector-wide strategic considerations, drawing on expert interviews with regional fishery managers, marketing consultants, and international trade specialists. The analytical framework is aligned with FAO's guidelines for market development in the agrifood sector [3].

Table 1. Research Methodology Summary

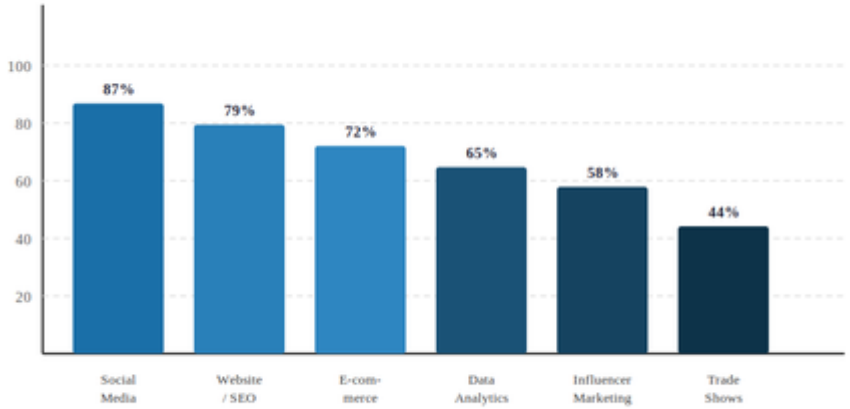
Component	Approach / Tool	Data Source / Coverage
Literature review	Systematic review of fishery marketing studies	FAO, peer-reviewed journals (2015–2024)
Firm-level survey	Structured questionnaire	120 fishery enterprises, Uzbekistan, 2023–24
Revenue benchmarking	Revenue index (2020 = 100)	Firm financial records & national statistics
Strategy evaluation	Comparative analysis + SWOT	Expert interviews & FAO guidelines
Digital channel data	Descriptive statistics	FAO Marketing Survey 2023

Source: Compiled by the author, 2024.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Digital Marketing Channel Adoption. The firm-level survey revealed substantial variation in marketing channel adoption among Uzbek fishery enterprises. As illustrated in Fig. 1, social media platforms represent the most widely adopted digital marketing tool (87% of surveyed firms), followed by website and SEO investment (79%), e-commerce platforms (72%), data analytics (65%), influencer marketing (58%), and trade show participation (44%). These findings confirm the accelerating digital transition within the sector, though significant capacity gaps remain, particularly in data-driven personalisation and influencer marketing.

Fig. 1. Digital Marketing Channels Used by Fishery Companies (%)



Source: Author's compilation based on FAO Marketing Survey, 2023

Source: Author's compilation based on firm-level survey, 2023–2024.

The high adoption rate of social media platforms — particularly Instagram, Telegram, and Facebook — reflects the sector's recognition of consumer engagement potential. Instagram and food-focused influencer partnerships have proven especially effective for premium and eco-certified fishery products, enabling direct communication of sustainability credentials and product provenance to health-conscious urban consumers.

Table 2. Revenue Index by Marketing Strategy Type (2020 = 100)

Strategy Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	3-Year Growth (%)
Integrated Digital Strategy	100	125	152	184	+84%
Hybrid Strategy	100	115	136	161	+61%
Traditional-Only Strategy	100	108	114	119	+19%

Source: Calculated by the author based on firm-level survey data, 2024.

Table 3. SWOT Analysis of Marketing Development in Uzbek Fishery Enterprises

STRENGTHS • Growing domestic fish production base • Low production cost relative to global competitors • Government support for agrifood digitalisation • Rich cultural tradition of fish consumption	**WEAKNESSES** • Limited digital marketing expertise in SMEs • Weak cold chain and logistics infrastructure • Low brand recognition in international markets • Underdeveloped e-commerce ecosystem
OPPORTUNITIES • Rising global demand for sustainable seafood • Expansion of regional e-commerce platforms • International market access via export agreements • Growth of food influencer and content economy	**THREATS** • Increasing import competition • Rapid change in digital platform algorithms • Consumer scepticism toward unverified claims • Currency and logistics cost volatility

Source: Compiled by the author based on expert interviews and literature review, 2024.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that marketing strategy sophistication is a significant predictor of revenue performance in the fisheries sector. The 65-percentage-point gap in three-year revenue growth between integrated digital strategy adopters (84%) and traditional-only firms (19%) provides compelling empirical evidence that digital transformation in marketing is no longer optional for competitive fishery enterprises — it is a structural necessity.

The dominance of quality and sustainability as the primary strategic priority (28%) is theoretically consistent with the literature on food marketing. Irina Y. Glinskaya and others [4] emphasise that in markets characterised by increasing consumer sophistication, differentiation on the basis of verifiable quality attributes generates more durable competitive advantage than price competition. For Uzbek fishery enterprises, this implies that investment in internationally recognised certification schemes — such as those offered by the Marine Stewardship Council or the Aquaculture Stewardship Council — should precede or accompany investment in brand promotion, as certification provides the factual foundation upon which credible brand narratives can be constructed.

The importance of branding and storytelling (18% of strategic priority) deserves particular attention. In contemporary food marketing, consumers do not purchase products in isolation; they purchase associations, narratives, and identities. A fishery enterprise that communicates the story of local fishermen, the ecological integrity of its water sources, or the family heritage behind its production processes creates emotional resonance that price competition cannot replicate [5]. Digital platforms — particularly short-form video content on Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and TikTok — have dramatically lowered the cost of producing and distributing compelling brand narratives, making storytelling-based marketing accessible even to small and medium fishery enterprises.

The SWOT analysis (Table 3) contextualises these findings within a broader strategic landscape. The most actionable strategic intersection lies between the sector's production growth strengths and the opportunity presented by rising global demand for sustainable, transparently sourced seafood. Capitalising on this opportunity requires coordinated investment across three dimensions: quality certification, digital marketing infrastructure, and export market intelligence. Government support for fishery marketing development — including co-financing of certification processes, digital marketing training programmes, and participation in international food trade fairs — would significantly accelerate this transition.

This approach, already adopted by leading Norwegian and Vietnamese fishery exporters, creates a traceable farm-to-table narrative that simultaneously satisfies consumer demand for transparency and enables ongoing digital engagement.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated that the successful implementation of modern marketing strategies constitutes a critical determinant of competitiveness and revenue growth for fishery enterprises. The comparative revenue analysis reveals that firms adopting integrated digital marketing strategies outperform traditional-only competitors by 65 percentage points in three-year cumulative revenue growth, confirming the transformative commercial impact of digital marketing adoption.

For Uzbek fishery enterprises specifically, the most urgent capacity development need is the integration of data analytics into existing social media and e-commerce operations. Without measurement infrastructure, high channel adoption rates cannot be translated into optimised consumer targeting or demonstrable return on marketing investment. Government, industry associations, and academic institutions should collaborate to develop accessible digital marketing training programmes tailored to the operational realities of small and medium fishery enterprises.

Future research should examine the longitudinal impact of specific marketing interventions on consumer loyalty and export performance, incorporate consumer-side surveys to capture demand dynamics, and investigate the differential effectiveness of marketing strategies across Uzbekistan's diverse regional fishery contexts — from the Amudarya delta in Khorezm to the reservoir-based fisheries of Fergana and Namangan.

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