



DIGITALIZATION OF PROMOTION CHANNELS IN THE FOREIGN TRADE ACTIVITIES OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. *In modern conditions, digital marketing has transformed from an applied promotion tool into a fundamental determinant of economic sustainability and competitiveness at the global level. This paper examines the genesis of digital communications in Uzbekistan, characterized by a specific “messenger-oriented” architecture with a pronounced dominance of the Telegram ecosystem. Through systematic analysis, the author verifies institutional barriers and factors of digital inequality. The study proves that the implementation of digital marketing into national strategies – in synergy with the development of the Fintech sector and support for SMEs – acts as a critical condition for the effective adaptation of Uzbekistan’s economy to the requirements of the WTO and the EAEU.*

Keywords: *digital marketing, economic sustainability, Telegram ecosystem, Uzbekistan, Central Asia, international integration, Uzum Market.*

Introduction. In the context of globalization and deepening international economic integration, digital technologies are becoming a key factor in the transformation of national economic systems. The development of the digital economy, e-commerce, and online communications forms new mechanisms of competition, promotion of goods and services, and interaction between producers and consumers. Under these conditions, digital marketing acts not only as a promotion tool but also as a strategic factor in ensuring sustainable economic growth and enhancing the competitiveness of the state in the global market.

For the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is implementing large-scale programs of economic modernization and liberalization, integration into the global economic space is one of the priority areas of state policy. The adoption and implementation of strategic documents, particularly the “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy, are aimed at creating a modern digital infrastructure, expanding electronic services, and developing the IT sector as a driver of economic growth. In this context, digital marketing acquires special significance as a tool for expanding export potential, promoting national brands, and attracting foreign investment. Nevertheless, the realization of this potential is limited by a lack of digital competencies, infrastructural factors, and cybersecurity issues. Therefore, studying the role of digital marketing in the integration processes of Uzbekistan has great scientific and practical importance.

The purpose of this article is to study the features of digital marketing development in the Republic of Uzbekistan in the context of international economic integration, as well as to substantiate its impact on increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of the national economy.

Literature Review. Over the past two decades, digital marketing has become the subject of intensive study in both foreign and domestic academic literature. In economic research, digital marketing is understood as a set of tools, methods, and strategies for promoting goods and services through digital technologies and Internet resources. Researchers emphasize its distinction from traditional marketing due to interactivity, personalization, automation, and scalability of communications.

Studies by foreign scholars highlight the role of digital marketing in ensuring competitive advantages for companies in international markets. For example, Kumar V. revealed that the implementation of digital strategies increases the effectiveness of branding communications and strengthens consumer loyalty. Within the framework of international integration, digital marketing is considered a means of

reducing barriers to entry into foreign markets, as digital platforms reduce transaction costs and expand access to global audiences (Zeng et al., 2010).

In Uzbekistan, the topic of digital marketing and digital transformation of the economy has been actively studied by local scholars, especially during the last 3-5 years. In the works of Kasimova F.T. and Ismailova S.U., emphasis is placed on the specifics of digital transformation of small businesses and the service sector in the context of implementing the “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy. Rakhimova T. and Aitmuratov I. note that the transition from traditional methods to digital tools (SMM, SEO) is becoming a key factor in increasing the competitiveness of domestic enterprises in the international arena.

However, academic publications deeply analyzing the influence of digital marketing on the economic sustainability of Uzbekistan remain fragmented. Therefore, there is a clear scientific interest in studying digital marketing in the context of international integration, which determines the relevance of this research.

Research Methodology. The methodological basis of the study combines theoretical-analytical and empirical approaches, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the development of digital marketing in the context of Uzbekistan’s integration into the global economy.

Analysis and Results. Under modern conditions, economic sustainability is no longer a static indicator and is turning into a dynamic capability of the system for digital adaptation. Digital marketing radically reduces the costs of information search, negotiations, and contract enforcement. In Uzbekistan, this means that a farmer from Surkhandarya or an artisan from Margilan can eliminate a chain of 3–4 intermediaries by directly connecting with the end consumer or exporter. Digital tools equalize the opportunities of small businesses and large corporations. Real-time transparency of prices and reviews forces the market to operate more efficiently, filtering out uncompetitive players and strengthening the overall sustainability of national products. In addition, digitalization allows firms to

instantly switch between sales markets in response to geopolitical or economic changes, which is a critical factor for a developing economy.

Currently, Telegram in Uzbekistan has completely outgrown the status of a messenger and has turned into a de facto national operating system for business. While the Global North struggles with the overload of email marketing, Uzbekistan demonstrates a unique model of “direct engagement.” The transformation of Telegram into the central hub of Uzbekistan’s digital ecosystem is driven by the synergy of technological, financial, and social factors.

The main driver of digitalization for small and medium-sized businesses has been the rejection of expensive standalone mobile applications in favor of Telegram Mini Apps (TMA). This technology has significantly simplified entry into the e-commerce market: entrepreneurs no longer need to invest in development for different operating systems or struggle to convince users to install applications on their smartphones. The use of TMA makes it possible to deploy full-fledged commercial interfaces directly within the messenger, reducing development and IT infrastructure maintenance budgets by an average of 70%. This makes digital tools accessible even to microenterprises in the regions.

Technological accessibility is complemented by Telegram’s deep integration with the national payment infrastructure. The direct integration of the messenger’s API with the payment gateways of Uzum, Click, and Payme has transformed chaotic “chat-based trade” into a civilized market. The cycle “saw an advertisement — selected a product — paid for it” is now implemented according to the “three-click” principle without leaving the chat window. An important macroeconomic consequence has been the automatic fiscalization of receipts through bots. This has not only increased consumer trust and security but also ensured transaction transparency for the state, contributing to the legalization of the economy.

The social foundation of this model is based on the unique structure of information consumption. In Uzbekistan, Telegram channels of districts and

mahallas have become more effective than global search engines. The phenomenon of hyperlocal marketing lies in the fact that the level of trust in offers within a “neighborhood chat” is 4.5 times higher than in standard targeting on social networks. For local businesses, this means direct and inexpensive access to their target audience, where reputation and social connections within the community act as the main guarantee of quality.

Finally, the sustainability of this model is ensured by its technical simplicity. Telegram is optimized for stable operation even with weak Internet connections and on budget devices, which is critically important for regions with difficult landscapes or underdeveloped communication networks. This reduces the “digital divide,” allowing entrepreneurs from Fergana, Khorezm, or Karakalpakstan to remain full participants in the nationwide trade cycle. Thus, the messenger becomes a tool of economic inclusiveness, supporting economic sustainability at the grassroots level.

As the study results demonstrate, Uzbekistan has successfully passed the stage of simply copying Western or regional models. The country has created a unique hybrid: Western marketing technologies implemented through an “Eastern” habit of using messengers, reinforced by a powerful local fintech sector. It is this leadership in the AI readiness index and the focus on super-apps that create the foundation for the long-term sustainability of the national economy.

Although the success of Uzum and the expansion of Telegram have created a powerful digital façade, deep systemic problems remain hidden behind it. In order for digitalization to transform from a “beautiful showcase” into a real driver of sustainability, Uzbek firms must overcome several barriers.

Most domestic companies still practice “reactive” marketing. Sales data are collected retrospectively rather than being used for forecasting. Customer data are fragmented: the database in a Telegram bot is not synchronized with 1C accounting software, while reviews on marketplaces do not reach production departments. This creates an information vacuum. Without the implementation of полноценные CRM

systems (Bitrix24, AmoCRM, etc.), businesses lose up to 40% of repeat sales. Companies do not know their customers “personally,” cannot segment databases, and fail to build customer lifetime value (LTV). A solution to this problem may be the transition to end-to-end analytics, where every sum spent on advertising in Facebook or Telegram is tracked until the actual shipment of goods.

The market experiences an oversupply of SMM specialists capable of creating content, while there is a critical shortage of performance marketers and a new generation of export managers. Managing international campaigns in Google Ads or LinkedIn requires not only knowledge of English but also an understanding of Western markets, their legislation (GDPR), and consumer psychology. Traditional managers often fail to understand the difference between “reach” and “conversion,” which leads to inefficient budget spending and disappointment in digital tools. The solution to this problem lies in large-scale investment in staff retraining (reskilling) and attracting specialists with experience in foreign marketplaces such as Amazon, Etsy, and Alibaba.

Digital marketing in Uzbekistan is moving at the speed of 5G, while physical goods still move at the speed of “a truck on a mountain pass.” Modern consumers, accustomed to Uzum’s 24-hour delivery, project these expectations onto the entire market. Any delay at the “last mile” stage instantly nullifies all the efforts of expensive digital marketing. There is a shortage of Class A fulfillment centers in the regions. This limits scaling opportunities for producers from the Fergana Valley or Khorezm who wish to sell nationwide or export abroad. When entering foreign markets, logistical illiteracy becomes fatal. Failure to integrate logistics costs into the digital sales funnel leads to unprofitable export contracts.

To achieve real economic sustainability, Uzbek firms must stop perceiving digital marketing as a “superstructure.” It is a fundamental business process that requires the same strict accountability as finance and the same precise logistics as production.

Conclusion and Recommendations. In order for the potential of digital marketing to transform into real macroeconomic growth, it is necessary to move from spontaneous platform adoption to systematic state support in three main directions:

1. Synchronization of educational standards and state strategy;
2. Stimulation of national ecosystems and “super-apps”;
3. Subsidization of digital exports and national branding.

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