

# Role of Marketing Information Systems in Supporting Decisions of Business Managers: Verification Test on the Case of Agribusiness in Agadir City, Morocco

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**Abstract:** *The management practices of business marketing have seen an important change in recent years, also on the marketing level through the adoption and development of Marketing Information Systems (MIS). The relationship between these systems and decision-making has become among the subjects occupying a central place in researches for several years. This article examines the impact of MIS on decision making by business managers. To do this, on the basis of an empirical study conducted within agribusinesses in Agadir City, we will analyse the role of SIM in improving business decisions and marketing companies.*

**Keywords:** Information Systems (IS), Marketing Information Systems (MIS), making decision.

## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization has increased the international trade in all sectors. For the agri-food industry, these exchanges have revolutionized the eating habits of a good part of the world. Moroccan companies working in this sector were, like all others, subject to the requirements of the international market, and they found themselves faced with the need to review their management practices to improve their offerings and increase their competitiveness, especially as the globalization of exchanges has brought new technologies and made the necessary flow of information in time for better performance. That is how information systems today are spreading in Agribusiness; they serve primarily to facilitate the storage, processing, analysis and flow of information in a timely manner.

In addition, good information easily accessible and available is crucial for decision making and development of the organizations, especially as the pace of traffic information has become much accelerated nowadays. In marketing, the information about customers, suppliers or competitors are essential. The exploitation of these data would only be possible through better information processing, such action could only be considered using an appropriate SI: Marketing Information System.

## 2. Interests and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to analyse how the use of marketing information systems can contribute to improving the quality of decisions made by sales manager's agribusinesses of Agadir City. To response to this problem, we will try, at first, to briefly recall some definitions and concepts related to decision support information systems and marketing information systems to show their roles and participation in business management. In a second step, we will try to identify the relationship between these systems and the decision-making by managers and decision makers

of organizations. Finally, we shall have to check our words on a case study in the agroBusiness sector, taking as scope: enterprises of food industry in Agadir City.

Our problematic therefore revolves around the following question: **"How important is information marketing systems in agribusinesses of Agadir City, and what role could they play in improving decision-making by Business Leaders of these companies?"**

## 3. Research Hypotheses

- The marketing information systems are essential for decision making by business managers.
- The use of Marketing Information Systems allows an improvement of the decisions taken by decision makers.

## 4. The Marketing Information Systems

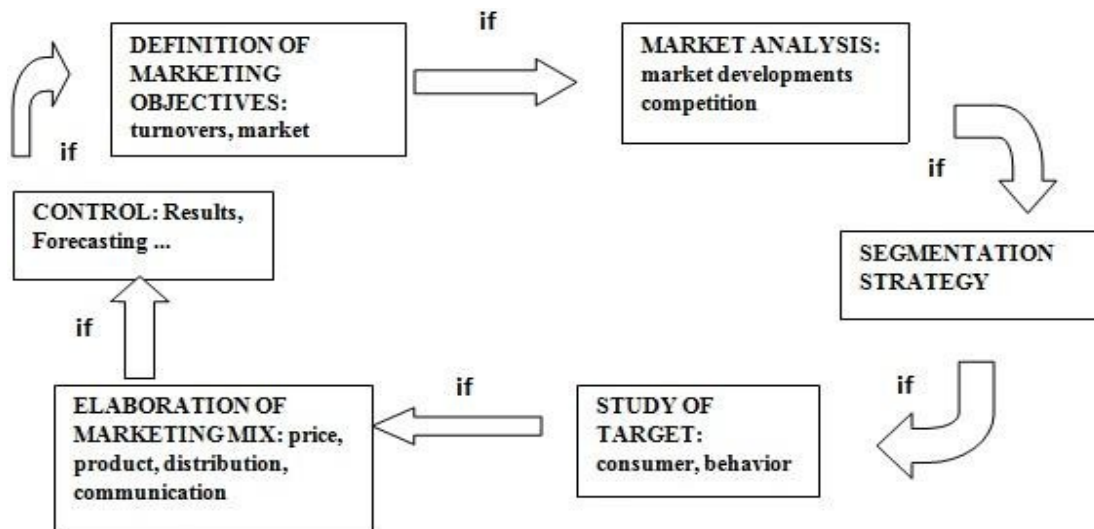
As defined by le Moigne, an Information System indicates "a set of methods and means collecting, managing, storing and distributing the information necessary to the exercise of the activity of any point of the organization"[14].

Information system uses human and technical means for seizure and recording, and a set of control methods and coding / decoding information, it ensures the collection of information from internal or external sources, and stores a stable and sustainable manner while analyzing them in order to remove those irrelevant or low quality and offer to the company an interesting series of information with a form easily exploitable, this is how "the establishment of an information system should allow the sharing of knowledge and information sharing decisions." [5]. Kotler and Dubois [6], gave a fairly widely accepted, until the present day, a definition of what a marketing information system, they considered it as "a structured, interactive group of people, machines and procedures designed to produce an ordered flow of relevant information from internal and external sources to the company, as a basis

for decision making in the areas of specific responsibility for marketing decision”

To better understand why companies need to develop special information systems for the marketing function, the

following diagram details the relationship between the marketing approach of the company and its information system.



Intervention of the information system in the marketing process [7]

If the information collected on the target and its behaviour were irrelevant or poorly analyzed, their benefits would be enormously serious about the elaboration of MIX, namely the offer of products and services, pricing, distribution and communication. This will affect the profitability of the company but also its brand if it is not its survival. The integration of information system therefore marketing is essential to avoid disappointment market assessments and to provide the essential marketing decision makers in marketing information, and good control databases to develop the best possible strategy.

Different systems are closely related to SIM and facilitate its data feed updates, and to regularly monitor the behavior of competitors, anticipate difficult situations, detect changes in the consumption habits of customers and new business strategies, the company needs to intelligently monitor its environment. It is the vocation of marketing intelligence system [3]. In addition, the Systems Payment Processing also called transaction processing systems, "store and process data created by commercial transactions. Particular, they may perform the processing of sales, purchasing and inventory, resulting in an update databases on customers, stocks and other databases of the company"[4].

Among information systems that are largely related to the marketing function within the company, expert systems in marketing who participate in decision-making situations, solve problems that normally require human expertise. They use programs that draw conclusions from knowledge and answered questions of the user, while reproducing the reasoning of an expert [15]. In marketing, these "Expert Systems focus on marketing knowledge and based on rule. This is a normative approach that seeks the best solution"[8].

The marketing information system appears to be both strategic because it participates in major strategic actions of the company while helping heading to make better decisions, and operational by the daily management that ensures the orderly flow of information from internal and external sources.

## 5. MIS and Decision-Making in the Company

Today, information must be easily accessible and manageable to accelerate the process of decision-making, the access to a relevant, valid and opportune information is supposed to help better to communicate and to decide rationally, while learning from experience, in particular that "acquiring and managing information that facilitates decision-making becomes the necessary condition for the development of business strategies and marketing action plans, whether in national markets and internationally"[12]. The SIM, on its part, is a strategic tool in organizations, the fact that "it plays an important role in increasing the efficiency of the economic and commercial performance in highly competitive markets by providing information needed for the various administrative levels. The success of the commercialization process depends largely on the marketing information system and success in each of its elements" [13]. MIS processes information of commercial type, to facilitate business decision making, and improve performance.

This leads us to conclude that MIS provides a mode of middle management and presents to the decision makers the necessary information for the evaluation of various solutions and examining all alternatives to improve the speed and accuracy of marketing decision making. Indeed, the decision maker, informed by the MIS, makes its decision, then other decisions come before him. Environments change, the information it has in its

possession is altered. So the decision maker consults its new information system and the circle is complete. So it's a process where you have to continually update information for new situations require decisions.

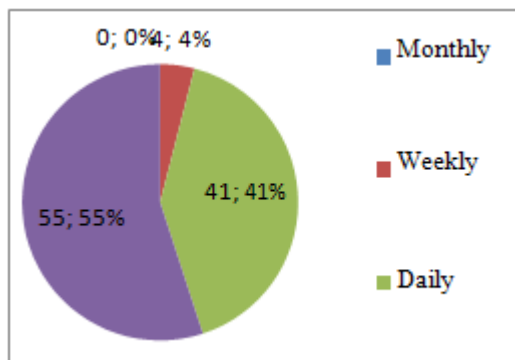
The MIS is then a strategic tool in organizations, because of this, its design must be in harmony with the needs of users and decision makers, in order to fulfil its primary mission which comprises "to enable all those who take decisions to have elements that will allow them to determine the most appropriate actions at the right time "[2]. Lazaniana Ramarotafika [7] tried to verify whether the information systems for marketing decision support contribute to improving business performance. He concluded that the MIS plays a vital role in marketing decision making and obtaining a competitive advantage and that this system influences the level of business performance, he said, "the contribution of this system to improve marketing decision appears act directly on the level of achievement of sales and marketing objectives such variation of the turnover, return on marketing activities and business development, and finally the market share.

## 6. Working Methodology

In this section, we present the results of a study conducted during the month of April 2014 with a sample of 20 SMEs agribusinesses on Agadir City. We chose to administer our questionnaire to the heads of the said companies, or to policymakers generally subject to availability. We present in the following, the main results of our investigation: they are particularly relevant answers regarding the use of MIS, its role in decision making, and improving the quality of the latter.

## 7. Analysis of Results

**As a decision maker, what is your frequency of use of MIS**



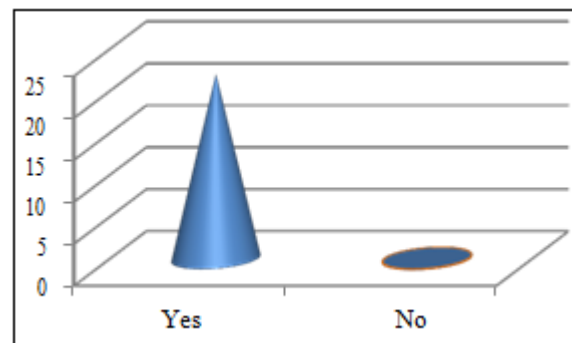
It appears from the analysis of results on the frequency of use of the MIS by commercial makers that this system plays an important role in their daily work process. Indeed, 96% of respondents said that they use the MIS every day (41%) and even with a countless number of times each day (55%). While only 4% of surveyed using the system at least once a week. This reflects the realization of the daily work of these people is strongly linked to the use of MIS.

**As a decision maker, you use your MIS before making any business decision?**



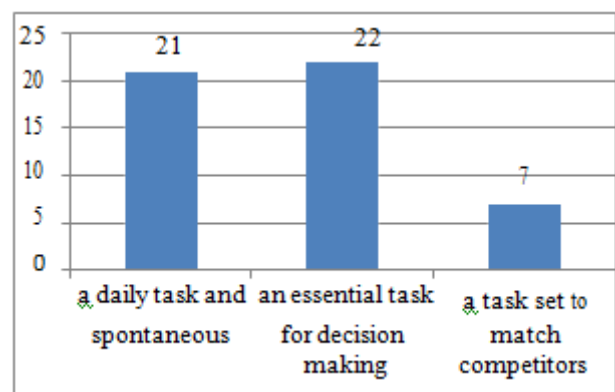
All answers on the use of the SIM before the decision was between "often and always". For business managers interviewed, before making any decision on a commercial level, they necessarily use their marketing information systems, which provides them a detailed idea about the factors relating to the decision, they also offer them all the information that are related updates, and allows them to have a brief history on the client or supplier involved in the so-called decision. The MIS is an indispensable decision-making tool.

**The use of SIM has improved the quality of your decisions made?**



As expected, and as was mentioned in the literature review, all of the surveyed say that the use of the MIS has a lot to improve the quality of their decisions. For them, complete and reliable system that gives them information is that whenever the quality of decisions is better, especially with documents prepared without anomaly, and reaction on time with daily updates provided by the MIS.

**The use of MIS is considered to you as a decision maker as:**



All respondents (22 sales managers) consider the use of the MIS as an indispensable decision-making task, yet this use is for 21 people of this set, a daily task and spontaneous work, while 7 people add that the MIS is used because it is imposed in order to match competitors in technology. Especially the agri-food sector in the Souss Massa Draa Region consists of essentially exporting companies, with competitors in other countries more developed in technological point of view than Morocco, our companies are therefore obliged to have the same means as their rivals in order to be on permanent interconnection with their customers and suppliers.

### In your opinion, what are the benefits that you remove the system as part of the decision making?

By asking an open question about the main benefits that business decision makers have had with the MIS, they have mainly focused on improving the management of customer relationship management due to the historical availability updated and updated data to a last minute decision. They also mentioned that the MIS offers them better communication with their customers and suppliers, and the ability to decide in real time.

## 8. Conclusion

The marketing business decision makers of agribusinesses in Agadir City consider the marketing information system as an important part of decision support for them. In fact, after all the results obtained in this study, it appears that the use of MIS is spontaneous and systematic for commercial and marketing decision makers which have confirmed that this system is essential for decision-making, and that the quality of the latter has improved with this system.

In addition, customer expectations become higher, marketing and business decision makers will thus face new challenges in decision-making, and must continually ask about improving their marketing information system to be update, and make better decisions.

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