Measuring the Effect of Marketing Tools on Customers' willingness to purchase

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Abstract

The recognition of factors influencing a customer's purchase decision is one of the trending topics that has received growing attention of marketers. These factors, especially those that wield influence on the customer's willingness to purchase, have been the subject of considerable attention, partly because this impact has broad implications for customers. Some of the factors affecting customers' willingness to purchase include brand reputation, production technology, advertising, and the role of sales experts. In this study, attempts have been made to measure the degree of this effect. Since this paper investigates theoretical constructs in real and practical context, it is classified as applied research. A survey method has been adopted for data collection. The statistical population of this study consisted of the customers of human resource management software, and the sample was chosen from among the customers of Raybin Software Company.

For descriptive analysis of the data, charts, tables and dispersion indices were used. Moreover, for the analysis of descriptive statistics, various statistics and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were used in the SPSS software. The inferential analysis of hypotheses was conducted using structural equation modeling in LISREL software.

The results suggested that all of the above factors exerted influence on customers' willingness to purchase, but given the competitive nature of the today's market, the efficacy of advertisement has tapered off to some extent, giving its place to brand reputation and production technology.

Keywords: Willingness to Purchase, Brand Reputation, Advertising, Production Technology, Sales Expert

Introduction

Today, the customers' willingness to purchase has received growing attention. Companies have faced extensive advertising campaigns launched by competitors to draw consumers, so that each consumer is bombarded by advertising on a daily basis (Story & French, 2004). Only a few of these ads are noticed and even fewer are analyzed by consumers. It is obvious that consumers tend to go through a decision process before they understand a message. As a result,

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strategies used in the past will no longer be effective and companies need to look for new and innovative techniques in order to retain their market share and exploit competitors' market share (Gao, 2014).

Understanding and predicting a customer's mindset has always been a marketing dream. Once customers' thoughts, desires and predilections are known, we will be in a better position to offer a certain product or service that suits their needs and demands. This prepares a foundation for improved brand development. Customers' willingness to purchase is an important subject that has been examined over and over again from diverse angles and viewpoints. The extent to which certain factors influence a customer's willingness to purchase is a key issue and must be studied in details. Marketing researchers have always strived to identify factors that drive customers towards buying a certain product. Once a customer's desires are known, the manufacturer can recognize their customer's demands and produce its product according to their wishes (Sadeghi, Keshgar and Kargar, 2012). There has been extensive research on detection of these factor, and the results have introduced brand reputation as one of the major components influencing a customer's willingness to purchase. Research has shown that brand reputation has a bearing on the selection of products and increases the chances of a product being selected by customers. Production technology can also draw the attention of customers and boost their willingness to purchase by upgrading a product and resolving its defects. Advertising is another factor and has always assumed a special place in marketing. There has been a bulk of research into the impact of advertising on sales, all of which reflecting the positive and significant correlation between advertising and buying. It should be noted that sales expert also plays a role in the customer's willingness to purchase. A salesman is a key player in marketing and can put his communication skills to use in a bid to raise sales.

Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

In industrial marketing planning, once marketing goals and budget are established, it is essential to identify appropriate tools and means to achieve the results. In consumer and retail marketing, these tools and means take a different form. In industrial marketing, however, marketing tools are of paramount importance due to the direct connection and prolonged sales process on the one hand, and the need to convey sufficient information about specifications, applications and how to use a product on the other. In fact, marketing tools represent opportunities sized by organizations in industrial marketing to advance their business and communication with their customers.

Based on the researcher's experience, and the analysis of companies active in the ICT industry, the role of a sales expert as a human embodiment of customer relationship, brand reputation, product catalogs and advertising has been the most notable marketing tools. What does prompt a customer to purchase a brand? Price might be a variable, but it is not the only factor affecting customers' willingness to purchase. Sometimes customers prefer to buy products that are too expensive and refuse to purchase low-priced goods. The purchase is a highly complicated issue. In some cases, customers prefer to buy goods that are not affiliate to a certain brand. The question is how people decide to buy a

product or pay a higher price to certain products or goods?

At the beginning, we discuss the fundamental concepts of this research. There are various definitions of customers' willingness to purchase. In this context, one of the best definitions was offered by Phau, Sequeira, & Dix (2009), who used the term customers' willingness to purchase as an alternative to purchase intention, and the reinforced willingness to purchase as an indicator of purchase behavior (Phau, Sequeira, & Dix, 2009). The willingness to purchase, in the relationship between attitude and behavior, describes the efforts made to perform a certain behavior.

Another variable in this research is brand reputation, which refers to people's attitude of a brand. Perhaps this is the simplest definition of brand reputation. Brand is particularly important for products that have a higher risk of purchase. Consumers are more likely to buy a product when they recognize a brand name. Brand reputation is a complex issue that is influenced by a variety of factors. Here, the impact of brand reputation of Raybin Co. as an independent variable has been considered in the research model. It was measured through items 11 to 15 of the questionnaire.

Production technology describes changes that lead to the modification of current goods. Since there is always a new generation of products to replace previous goods, production technology is of utmost importance, and if a company fails to keep up with technological advances, there will experience a drop in their products sale and eventually lose their market share. Technology used in the production of Raybin Software Co. was considered as the independent variable of production technology in the research model and measured through items 31 to 35 in the questionnaire.

Advertising has long been a vehicle to reach a large number of people. Today, mass advertising is not as popular as it used to be, and companies look for a mechanism to distribute targeted ads. The crucial role of advertising is known to anyone. Today there are many creative advertising methods. Targeted ads refer to specific ads aimed at a certain audience to deliver a particular message. The impact of various forms of advertising such as advertising at exhibitions and conferences, on the Internet and print advertising in Raybin Co., as an independent variable of advertising, was considered in the research model and measured by items 16 to 30 in the questionnaire.

In the following, we look into the role of the sales experts. They can guide a buyer to purchase a certain product. Technical advices offer ideas and suggestions for addressing customer problems. They further persuade a customer to buy a product, or to buy a product that better meets their needs. Given the importance of customer's willingness to purchase, the main question of the present study is "What is the effect of four variables of brand reputation, production technology, advertising and sales expert on customer's willingness to purchase. The role of sales expert in Raybin Co., as an independent variable, was included in the research model and evaluated through items 1 to 10 of the questionnaire.

There have been extensive studies on customers' willingness to purchase, with each research addressing a specific community or set of factors. In the following

section, a review of studies about factors dealt with in this study is presented. The customers' willingness to purchase in Raybin Co. was considered as the dependent variable in the research model and measured by items 36 to 39 in the questionnaire.

In Zielke & Dobbelstein's (2007) study, 990 subjects filled out a questionnaire about brand perception and domains of shopping behavior and customers' willingness to purchase. The interesting point in this study was that the price had a slight and nonlinear effect. The results suggested that purchase from a particular brand had a huge impact on the customer's willingness to purchase. (Zielke & Dobbelstein, 2007) Brand reputation is a major factor in customers' willingness to purchase. Png & Reitman (1995) pointed out that the brand is a symbol of the quality of a product experience. It implies that a product used repeatedly by different customers has maintained the same quality (Png & Reitman, 1995) In today's society, brands have forged their own personality, and there are many customers who care about brand reputation. For example, there are plenty of people who refuse to buy from brands that use underage laborers or brand that exploit animal skins by violating animal rights or illegal hunting may lose their popularity with customers. According to research by Bournet and Houghton (2007) customers are constantly changing and their priorities are in a constant state of flux. They opt for green brands, animal right advocates and human rights defenders, and if a brand violates these rules, its reputation will be compromised. (Burnett & Hutton, 2007) Reputation is not easily earned or established overnight. One embarrassing day for brands working in the apparel industry was April 24, when the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh collapsed. In the wake of this disaster, 1134 people lost their life and 2500 were injured. The victims were in the age range if 13 to 30 and all laborers worked for famous textile brands. Despite multiple warnings and severe obvious cracks, workers were still not permitted to evacuate the building, and at the height of the rush hour, as the generators kicked in, the building collapsed. Brands such as Adidas, Benton and HNM, which were all involved in the incident, strived to improve the conditions of Bangladeshi workers, and they launched extensive advertising campaigns to protect their brand reputation. However, Walmart's brand refused to pay compensation and as a result it suffered further damage for its stained reputation. Many human rights defenders stopped buying from this brand.

When it comes to technology, there are always some pioneers in the adoption of new products. When these market leaders begin to use a product, they bring it into the mainstream markets. Biswas, Biswas, & Das (2006) reported that technology-based or high-tech products increase the customers' willingness to purchase customers when they are approved by experts. (Biswas, Biswas, & Das, 2006) For a high-tech product to be easily welcomed by the market, it needs to possess several features. It has to be able to communicate easily with the user and present itself to the customers. Some products, despite their convenience, are not well received by the general public. People likes products that suit their needs and provide values for them.

Advertising plays a vital role in shopping, and customer are more likely to purchase a product when they heard a brand name. Raghupathi & Fogel (2013) revealed that advertising plays a major role in shopping.

They worked on social media as a platform of marketing. This study examined how advertising could increase customers' willingness to purchase. (Raghupathi & Fogel, 2013) We are all influenced by advertising. There are of course various dimensions that have changed in advertising. For instance, constant texting to the customer not only fails to increase customers' willingness to purchase, but also diminishes their attention. Many people are sensitive to paper advertising, arguing that it harms the environment. One innovative advertising technique implemented in some stores is using paper envelopes instead of plastic with the motto of environmental protection. There are plenty of campaigns that are overly sensitive to environmental issues, and if a brand takes a wrong step in this regard, it will be severely punished by opposing campaigns. Targeted advertising plays a pivotal role in customers' willingness to purchase. Getting the end customer to know what they are buying, and designing advertising campaigns that are compatible with reality will improve brand reputation, and when a brand releases a new high-tech product, it is more likely to be welcomed by the public.

Dehghani & Tumer (2015) investigated the impact of advertising on customer purchase intention. They used online advertising on Facebook. An 11-item questionnaire was designed by the researchers with the results exhibiting that advertising wielded a huge impact on the customers' purchase intention. The study found that consumers believe social media advertising is more realistic and reliable than advertising launched by brands. (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015)

What is the role of sales expert in customers' willingness to purchase? Naylor and Frank (2000) showed that salespersons wield huge influence on customers' willingness to purchase. This study illustrated that sales experts can significantly increase brand value. In this study, sales experts' attitudes were even rated higher than sales services. (Naylor & Frank, 2000). Chaudhuri, Micu, & Micu (2017) examined different components of customers' willingness to purchase. In this study, factors were split into two categories of logical and emotional factors. In their research, the willingness to purchase was considered as a function of individual and situational characteristics. The findings of this study revealed that individual and shop characteristics (brand reputation and sales experts) had a bearing on customers' willingness to purchase. (Chaudhuri, Micu, & Micu, 2017) All of the above studies have only addressed a single dimension of the subject. Many other studies in different countries considered a diversity of variables and factors. It is only natural for customers to be drawn to personable and affable salesmen. The attractiveness and skills of the salesman go a long way in convincing customer to buy from a brand.

In the study by Ardakani, Sanei and Menati (2019), a set of variables affecting consumer's willingness to purchase Iranian goods was investigated. The researchers argued that factors other than quality and price affect customers' purchase intention. This study was designed to investigate the role of mediating variables of attitude and cognitive engagement. The study population consisted of 370 students at Yazd University. The results illustrated that attitude and cognitive engagement had a bearing on customers' willingness to purchase Iranian goods. Most consumers posit that reasonable price (fair price) is a major factor in customers' willingness to purchase. Also, the

adoption of the latest technologies in a product design has a great impact on lowering the its price, which results in greater consumer willingness to purchase. The researcher admitted that there were several other important variables in this area not accounted for in their research. (Ardakani, Saneiyan and Menati, 2019)

Mahmoudi, Vaziri Zanjani, and Khalili Yadegari (2012) examined personality types and customers' willingness to purchase. They found that there was a significant relationship between personality type and purchase intention. Moreover, the consumer's attitude of a brand image can also make a significant difference in their willingness to purchase. (Mahmoudi, Vaziri Zanjani, and Khalili Yadegari, 2013).

Sabagh, Ghaffari and Ashtiani (2018) explored the role of media advertising in drawing customers to new markets. As a popular form of mass media, television draws people of different ages, educational backgrounds and occupations. The study was conducted in Tehran and its sample consisted of 381 subjects. The results of this study revealed that television advertising has an enormous effect on purchase decision and persuasion of customers (Sabagh, Ghaffari and Ashtiani, 2018).

Heidarzadeh, Henzai and Bahrami Jah (2015) surveyed the attitude of 400 students of Qazvin city about purchase and explored the variables affecting Iranian consumers' purchase. Buyers seem to be motivated by diverse incentives to buy, which they may not be fully cognizant of. (Henzai, Kambiz Jah, & Azadeh, 2015) As noted earlier, shopping is much more complicated than it appears and it is influenced by a wide range of factors. For example, good-looking salespersons draw in more customers, professional sales experts can easily convince buyers to make a purchase decision. The fashion leaders and fashion pioneers can easily persuade their fans to buy a high-tech product. Media advertising, social media advertising and word of mouth advertising can influence customers' willingness to purchase. Here, we briefly review studies that explore factors comparable to those of our research. It should be noted that though we did not find any study that addresses all of variables adopted in our study.

Hypotheses and Conceptual Model
The following theoretical model has been used in this study. This model lies at the heart of customers' willingness to purchase.
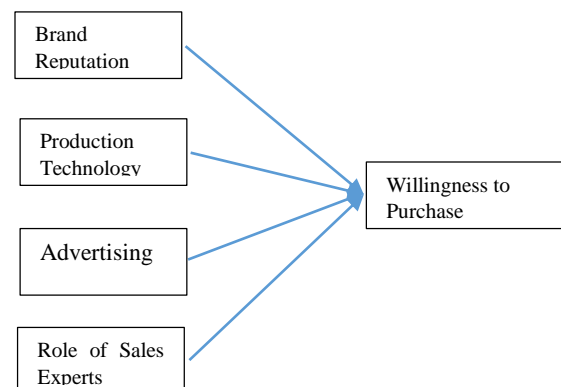

Figure 1- Conceptual Model of Research (Lori, Jirki, Jarmu, Trini & Yousi, 2014)

This independent variable is affected by four dependent variables, with each of these arrows positing a hypothesis:

- H1 Brand reputation has a positive and significant effect on consumers' willingness to purchase.
- H2 Product production technology has a positive and significant effect on consumers' willingness to purchase.
- H3 Advertising has a positive and significant effect on consumers' willingness to purchase.
- H4 Sales expert has a positive and significant effect on customers' willingness to purchase.

The question that arises is whether brand reputation has a positive and significant effect on customers' willingness to purchase. Borent and Houghton (2007) and Zileki and Dobstein (2007) have shown that there is a significant relationship between brand reputation and customer purchase intention. Studies in this area assume a positive and significant connection between brand reputation and customers' willingness to purchase.

Research on production technology of goods (e.g. Biswas, Biswas & Das (2006)) have exhibited the link between production technology and customers' willingness to purchase. The literature on advertising including studies by Ragupti and Fogil (2013) and Dehghani and Numir (2015) and Sabagh, Ghaffari and Ashtiani (2018) have demonstrated that targeted advertising can positively boost the customers' willingness to purchase.

The last variable is the role of sales expert. Previous studies by Naylor and Frank (2000) and Chaudori, Mikko and Mikko (2017) and Heidarzadeh Henzai and Bahrami Jah (2015) has depicted that sales experts can play a positive and significant role in promoting customers' willingness to purchase. According to studies in this field, four positive assumptions were presented. It is worth noting that no study (as far as the researcher is concerned) has so far examined these factors in a single study.

Research Methods
There is no doubt that research method is of paramount importance in any study. A method refers to a set of activities that are required to achieve a specific purpose, and the research method describes a means through which a researcher can find the answer to research questions. Given the diverse nature of phenomena and issues that arise, they all need to be addressed in a particular manner. The probable outcomes of a research, its applications and generalizability determine the type of research. In terms of objectives, research could be divided into basic research (which is sometimes referred to as pure research), applied research and practical research (which is sometimes called clinical research, particularly in medical sciences, etc.)

Practical research examines theoretical constructs in real life contexts and situations and culminates in a method (Mirzaei, 2009, pp. 59 and 60). Given that the present research investigates theoretical constructs in real-life situations and contexts, it is classified as practical research. On the other hand, we have adopted a survey method to collect information via a questionnaire. Since the present study employs a questionnaire as the main data collection instrument and different types of behaviors need to be examined, we adopted a field survey method.

The population of this research consists of the private client of Raybin Co. in Tehran. The research steps including design, distribution, collection, and analysis of questionnaire lasted for approximately a year, from June 2017 to June 2018. The distribution of questionnaires and data collection were conducted in February and March 2018. The data analysis and discussions were composed in May 2018. The statistical population consisted of customers of Raybin software Co. who sought consultation to find solutions regarding the procurement of enterprise resource management software. At present, the target population were actual and potential customers of Raybin Co. There were 157 managers and experts of the private companies that worked with Raybin Co. in Tehran, as reported by the marketing team of this company. Thus, according to Cochran formula, a sample size of n= 157 was selected using simple random sampling with 0.05 error. In the end, a sample of 111 subjects was estimated. The research questionnaire consists of two major parts. The first part collected demographic information of the sample and the second part contained main research questions for measuring variables. It comprised 39 items about four research hypotheses, which were evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale.

We used Cronbach's alpha for the first 30 questionnaires as a pre-test in order to assess the reliability of the research questionnaire in SPSS 22 software. The table lists alpha values for each scale used in the questionnaire as follows:

Variable	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Role of sales expert	1-10	0.75
Brand reputation	11-15	0.77
Advertising	16-30	0.78
Production technology	31-35	0.82
Willingness to purchase	36-39	0.72

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha to measure the reliability of the measurement instrument for each variable

The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by a review of relevant books and articles, data collection and revisions based on feedbacks. Questionnaires were then distributed among MA and PhD students of Business Administration and content validity was evaluated based on the opinions of 30 evaluators. In the present study, after validation of a single dimension, zero questions were omitted and finally 39 questions remained. The content validity index (CVI) was estimated at 0.8308, indicating that the designed questionnaire has a validity index of above 0.7 and was therefore within acceptable range.

Results

In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to analyze the data obtained from the samples. Descriptive statistics and descriptive statistics indices such as measures of central tendency (mean, mode and median) and dispersion indices (standard deviation and variance) were used to examine the characteristics of the respondents. To analyze the data and test research hypotheses, one-sample t-test method was used to determine the status of the research variables along with confirmatory factor analysis to assess measurement models using SPSS statistical

software. Finally, considering the abnormal distribution of variables, to test the research hypotheses, after confirming the results of the confirmatory factor analysis, the relationships between research structures were tested. For this purpose, the model was implemented by Lisrel software using structural equation modeling. SPSS and Lisrel software were used for data analysis

Parametric tests (maximum likelihood for covariance-based mode) were adopted to measure the normality of the variables.

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Significance (Sig)	Normality
Role of Sales Expert	0.895	0.725	Normal
Brand reputation	0.578	0.14	Normal
Advertising	0.965	0.87	Normal
Production Technology	0.106	0.67	Normal
Willingness to purchase	0.398	0.122	Normal

Table 2: Normal distribution of variables

The results show that the significance level of the research variables is more than 0.05.

A perquisite of confirmatory factor analysis is to ensure that the research data can be reduced to several hidden factors. KMO and Bartlett tests are used for this purpose. The KMO index examines the slight partial correlation between variables, and determines whether the variance of research variables is influenced by the shared variance of some underlying hidden factors. Since KMO value is 0.871 (above 0.7), the number of samples is sufficient for factor analysis and

path analysis with structural equation modeling. Also, the sig value of Bartlett's test is less than 5%, which indicates a significant relationship between variables and the application of factor analysis for identifying structural model.

KMO value	Bartlett's test statistics	df	Level of significance
0.871	1362.080	109	0.00

Table 3. KMO Index and Bartlett Test to Investigate Sample Adequacy

As shown in Figure 2, items 22, 31, 36 and 39 are not significant and thus invalid. Hence, these items were excluded from the final analysis. Also, since convergent and divergent validities were confirmed, the instrument has a construct validity.
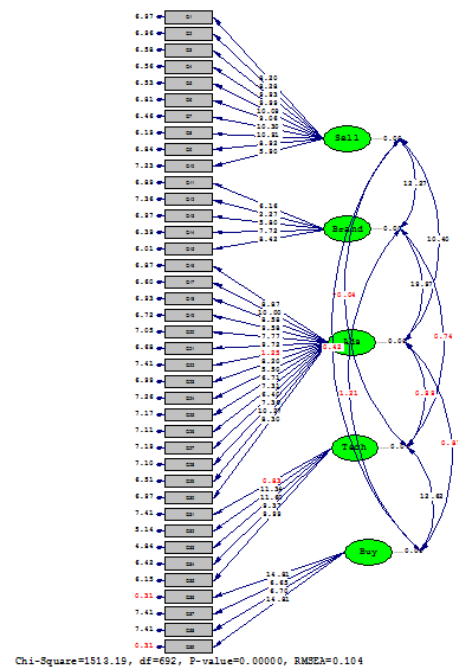

Chi-Square=1513.19, df=692, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.104

Figure 2. Measurement model of research variables

85

According to Table 4, the values of important fit indices of the measurement model of the research variables including χ2 / df and RMSEA are in the acceptable range, so that the estimated parameters in the model and the items compatibility with the desired structures is statistically reliable.

Index	Value	Acceptable range
χ2 (Chi square)	1513.19	-
χ^2/df (Chi square divided by degree of freedom)	2.18	Less than 3
GFI (goodness of fit index)	0.86	More than 0.9
RMSEA (the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.057	Less than 0.09
CFI (confirmatory fit index)	0.97	More than 0.9
AGFI (adjusted goodness of fit index)	0.83	More than 0.8
NFI (normed fit index)	0.95	More than 0.9
NNFI (non-(normed fit index))	0.97	More than 0.9

Table 4: fit indices of measurement model used for research variables

According to Table 4, the values of important fit indices of the measurement model for the research variables including χ2/df and RMSEA are in the acceptable range.. Hence, the estimated parameters of the model and the items compatibility with the desired structures is statistically solid.

In path analysis, after expressing the next step's model, we need to obtain an estimation of free parameters from a set of observed data. Iterative methods such as maximum likelihood or generalized least squares are used to estimate the model. Figure 3 is the conceptual model of research at the significance level, the results of which are presented in Table 5.
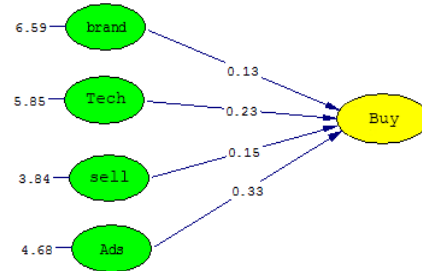

Figure 3. Conceptual model at the significance level

Hypothesis No.	Research hypothesis	Path coefficient (β)	T statistics	p-value	Hypothesis test
H1	Brand reputation affects customers' willingness to purchase.	۰,۱۳	۶,۵۹	۰,۰۰۱	Confirmed
H2	Production technology affects customers' willingness	۰,۲۳	۵,۸۵	۰,۰۰۱	Confirmed

	to purchase.				
H3	Advertising affects customers' willingness to purchase.	٠,١۵	٣,٨۴	٠,٠٠١	Confirmed
H4	Sales experts affects customers' willingness to purchase.	٠,٣٣	۴,۶٨	٠,٠٠١	Confirmed

Table 5: Path coefficients and significance
of estimated parameters

Table 6 lists the structural model fit indices and illustrates the most important of these indices. It indicates that the model is fit so that all of its indices confirms the model fitness with the observed data. Model fit indices reflect the suitability of the measurement model, as the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom is less than 1, RMSEA is less than 0.5 and the rest of the indices are within acceptable ranges. In other words, the overall model and framework is significant and acceptable.

Index	Value	Acceptable range
χ^2 (Chi square)	2.18	Less than 3
χ^2/df (Chi square divided by degree of freedom)	0.86	More than 0.9
GFI (goodness of fit index)	0.057	Less than 0.09
RMSEA (The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.97	More than 0.9
CFI (confirmatory fit index)	0.83	More than 0.8
AGFI (adjusted goodness of fit index)	0.95	More than0.9
NFI (normed fit index)	0.97	More than 0.9
NNFI (non-(normed fit index))		

Table 6: Structural model fit indices

Results Discussion

H1: Brand reputation influences customers' willingness to purchase

According to the results of Table 6, the effect size of the brand reputation variable on willingness to purchase is 0.13 with a t value of 6.59. Therefore, t value for this parameter was estimated to be 0.001 out of 1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis is confirmed at 95% confidence level. That is, there is a significant relationship between brand reputation and customers' willingness to purchase. Therefore, this research hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the results of Panahi et al. (2014), the latest scientific findings are consistent with the results of this hypothesis.

H2: Production technology influences consumers' willingness to purchase

According to the results of Table 6, the effect size of production technology on the willingness to purchase is 0.23 with a t value of 5.85. Thus, t value of this parameter is estimated to be 0.001 out of 1.96. A s

uch, the null hypothesis is confirmed at 95% confidence level. That is, there is a significant relationship between the production technology and customers' willingness to purchase. Therefore, this research hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the findings reported by Panahi et al. (2014), it can be argued that the latest scientific findings are consistent with the results of this hypothesis.

H3: Advertising influences customers' willingness to purchase

According to the results of Table 6, the effect size of advertising on willingness to purchase is 0.15 with a t value of 3.84. Thus, the t value of this parameter is estimated to be 0.001 out of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is confirmed at 95% confidence level. That is, there is a significant relationship between advertising and the willingness to purchase. Therefore, this research hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the findings of Terry Dockert, Ernst Hoffman, Kathleen Kennedy and Megan Nolan (2017), it can be said that the latest scientific findings are in agreement with the outcomes of this hypothesis.

H4: The role of the sales expert influences customers' willingness to purchase

According to the results of Table 6, the effect size of the role of sales expert on the willingness to purchase is 0.33 with a t value of 4.68. Thus, t value for this parameter is estimated to be 0.001 out of 1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis is confirmed at 95% confidence level. That is, there is a significant relationship between the role of sales expert and customers' willingness to purchase customers. Therefore, this research hypothesis is confirmed.

In light of the results reported by Ahmadi et al. (2012), it can be argued that the latest scientific findings are in keeping with results of this hypothesis.

Conclusion
According to the results obtained from the findings of this study, 18% of subjects were women and 82% were male. The majority of respondents were in the age group of 35 to 45 years. The lowest age frequency was related to subjects in the age group of over 55. The highest frequency in terms of education belonged to participants who held a bachelor's degree (38%) and the lowest to participants with a doctorate degree (10%).

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that competitiveness in today's world has undermined customer loyalty. Emerging organizations and startups have been able to shatter the taboos of industries such as ICTs and gain significant market share by introducing innovative approaches. The most important reason for the success of such startups is the low cost provided by the adoption of advanced and up-to-date technologies, and other organizations have found it challenging to compete. Advertising has gradually lost its effectiveness while its costs have been on

rise. Therefore, it is really important to focus on examining the effectiveness of marketing and advertising tools. Although in industrial markets advertising assumes a smaller share of marketing budget compared to consumer markets, the marketing and branding budgets resulting from investment in the marketing tools of these organizations also constitute a large portion of the organization's expenses.

However, there are still a number of industrial marketing executives who assume an authoritative role in determining the effectiveness of marketing budgets, and therefore allocate enormous budgets annually to trial and error methods. The results of this research recommend such organizations to apply more scientific methods to determine the effectiveness of marketing budget. Furthermore, they can advance their perception of the environment and customers through segmenting customers, identifying each group's interests and preferences and anticipating future demands.

Finally, the results exhibit that fostering an integrated culture in order to reach a common consensus on the central role of customer and respect for customers are key to successful performance in this field.

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