

## **Assessment and Ranking the Effects of Marketing Mix on Flower and Plant Sale Volume**

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**DOI Link:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v1-i1/100>

**Published Date:** 11 October 2011

### **Abstract**

In order to optimize source allocation and decision making about marketing mix in flower and plant (F&P) industry field and in order to reach to benefit goals, this research estimate the effects of five elements included product, price, place, promotion and Sale Labor Traits on F&P sale volume. On this base, the effect of each of these elements on F&P sale volume is hyphenised and essential information is been collected from flower sellers' population in city Tehran by a questionnaire. We used random sample method and content of sample members has computed about 130 stores. The one sample t test in order to confirm or reject those hypothesizes has been used. All of hypothesizes was supported with 95 percent confidence interval, Then we ranked amount of effect of each element with Friedman's test.

**Keywords:** Marketing Mix, Sale Labor Traits, Flower & Plant Industry

### **Introduction**

In competitive world, today, costumers place in focus of firms' attention and their satisfaction is major factor of organizations competitive advantage. The necessity of inviting costumers' satisfaction is completely fulfillment of their needs and accurately recognition of their desires, expectances, capabilities, and their limitation of purchase. By access to this information, it can correctly identify influence factors of consumers' behavior and use it to take corporations marketing decisions (Salar, 2009, p.2).

After selecting a target market, marketing managers should design a systematic plan for selling and making long-term relationships with costumers. Marketing plan apply decisions about product, price, place and promotion (4p). Product must be corresponded with costumer expectancy benefit and its price must be harmonized with buyer capabilities. This product must be place on costumer accessibility until not faced with problem in procurement and finally, essential promotion has been prepared in order to potential consumers were known from existence of such product and they were proceeded to buy it. These are the most important proceedings that marketing managers allocate corporate resource to reach sale and benefit goals. Then, in order to survey the effect of each one of these factors ( or all of these factoes) on F&P sale volume, as for this that accomplished studies show that floriculture industry is become one of the most important industry proposed in world by the approach of occupation and income, and now, annually, more than 100 milliard dollars sprouts of decorative F&P produce and trade in the world, while this section is not expanded in a country such as Iran due to longstanding familiarity and solidarity as well as a variety of F&P, As Iran share of global floriculture has been estimated about 2.1 percent and flower consumption capitacion is fewer than 10 shrub (agriculture organization, 2008), the base of this research has been constituted, meanwhile the impressments of marketing mix elements on F&P sale volume is determined and their effects also are ranked.

#### **Statement of problem**

F&P industry, today, is amongst industries that are been considered in deferent countries. There is remarkable content of F&P manufacture and commerce in the world where the role of marketing is very important in F&P industry because manufacturers seek frequently their consumers' preferences and tastes and they offer product similar to their favorites (Ozakan, 2003, p.4).

Iran country has vastly diversity of climate and has 12 types of 14 recognized climates in world, therefore this country has natural capacity for producing decorative F&P. moreover Iran has high potential for producing and selling F&P to obviate home needs and flower export because Iran has home sizeable market, fertile soils, inexpensive labor, vicinity to local and global market.

Despite of this cultural and historical background enjoyment of economic and natural advantages, Iran can't obtain suitable position in this industry, whereas according to agriculture ministry statistics, Iran is seventeenth F&P manufacturer in the world. Flower usage per capita is very low (less than 10 sprouts) in Iran and it is in situation that this per capita is higher in countries which have same crowd mass.

Accomplished researches related on F&P produce and marketing show that the reasons of Iran unsuccessful are discussable in two manners:

1. Tactical aspect that related on F&P production quality problems.
2. Problems that related on F&P marketing (shadmehri & shaban, 2006). The important of F&P marketing is considerable in Iran because experts cite a lack of marketing system that is vital artery of Iran F&P industry (shafiei & mostofi, 2006).

The factors such as spoiling and short longevity of decorative plants, being deluxe, and diversity seeking consumers have redoubled the important of marketing in this industry. The vital artery of marketing is marketing mix whereas its notice is essential. Then, in this order, main question of this research has been expressed such:

«What is the effect of every one of the marketing mix components on F&P sale volume in retailer system?»

**Framework and research model**

Due to scientific and technologic progressives and remarkable transition in entire of aspects of human life, costumer purchase behavior and how their decision making changes unmistakable too. Then organizations and corporations that are able quickly answer to costumers changing needs will success (hart, 2001, p.48).

Modern corporations and institutes achievement due to deeply recognize costumer and market influence factors. Mix marketing concept determines organization performance path by using controllable variables in where it has many uncontrollable factors (e.g., market) (darani, 2010, p.5). Costumer purchase persuasion can be stimulant or synthetic of under control or out of control stimulants (Agrawal & Schmidt, 2003, p.34). Costumers’ loyalty is the result of strategic and favorites marketing activities as well as the environmental impacts and marketing affairs potentially lead to alter costumer behavior (Taylor, 2004, p.218). This loyalty, on one hand, causes to repurchase that expands the product market share, and on the other hand, provides situations that lead to higher pricing brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p.92).

Sale and marketing concepts often are fumbled with others. Sale concept looks from inside to outside. This attitude commences from factory, looks after to firm existent goods and products, and pursuits to obtain benefit sales, seek remarkable promotion advertisements and sale efforts. Marketing concept, vis-à-vis, have a viewpoint from outside to inside. This attitude starts with a defined market, emphasizes to costumers requirement, coordinates all marketing activities such a moving the costumers, and makes benefit by securing costumers satisfaction. Affected corporations by this concept produce goods that costumers want them. Figure 1 shows the difference of two concepts (Venus & et.al, 2010 and Kotler, 2003).

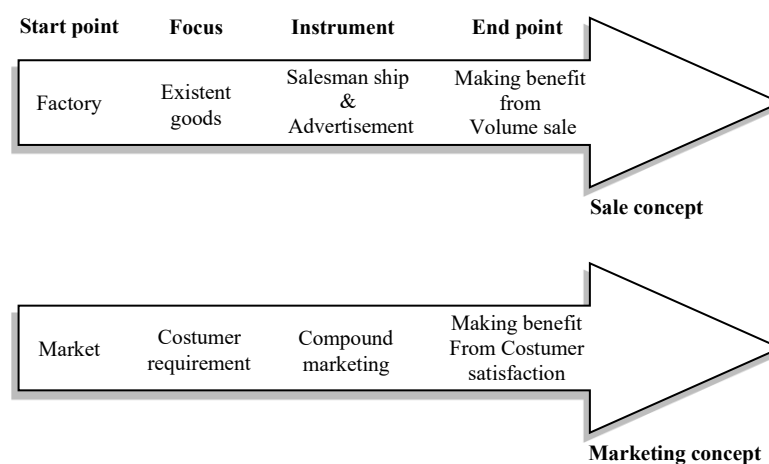


Figure.1: comparing sale & marketing concept

Marketing use instruments for eliciting favorite react of target market that constitute marketing mix. In other word, corporations apply a set of marketing techniques that classify in 4 groups such product, price, place and promotion (4p) in order to progress their goals in target market (Kotler, 2002). Researches show that different firms apply different levels of every one of these elements in marketing mix. These differences are also seen from one country to other country which liaises on can be referred to differences between nations culture, economic growth, product standards, distribution channels, communication strategy and pricing strategy (darani, 2010, p.15).

Beside of these four elements, it can be added other factor with the subject “sale labor traits”. Of course, it often stands in subset of distribution channels. Therefore, research conceptual model has been proposed in figure 2 by attention to recognized marketing components. In present paper, Assay and ranking the relation of these components with F&P sale volume as a conceptual model is main goals.

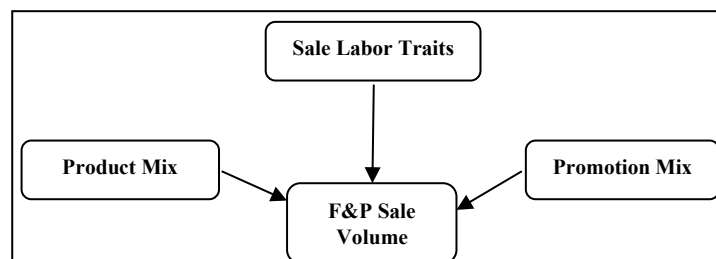


Figure.2: research conceptual model

It is essential to mention that every one of the marketing mix elements is potential source for competitive advantages as needed differentiation of them in dissimilar situation of market. For example, price will be important for prospering in some market. In other some, distribution may be important and in some cases, reputation and reliability can be the best base for competition. Marketer duty is to observe customer and competitor and develop mix or synthetic of activities which both they have competitive advantages and they presume quite utilization from organizational capabilities.

Economic and generative managers must be sensitive toward these elements and consider to each factor that cause to increase or decrease production, degrade or upgrade product quality, decelerate and accelerate distribution, increase or decrease price, stop or grow sale and lose or gain brand validity.

### Previous researches

Shafiei and mostofi (2006) know that people culture and taste are main effectiveness factor of F&P sale. And they enumerate effectiveness factors of F&P sale such in existing a marketing system, increase people purchase power, persuasive activities in order to motivate people to buy F&P. The result of this research illustrate that creation of one or two intensive places are necessary for exhibiting F&P in country, providing that exhibited F&P must be priced and sold by experienced experts and considering all technical specification and quality evaluation. In this system, brokers and intermediaries are eliminated and manufacturers vend their production without any broker and this cause to clear transactions and prevent off increasing F&P price in wholesale and retail bargains. Utilization of species of advertisement requires in inside and outside of territory for attraction and persuasion the foreign and interior buyers as well as allocation of sufficient budget need to accomplish marketing research in order to know consumers tastes and demands.

Soroush (2006) pursued the answer of two fundamental questions in his research:

1. Which one of the marketing mix elements does contribute more in F&P export volume?
2. Which one of the variables of marketing mix elements does contribute more in F&P export volume?

This research accomplished by spotting 4p marketing mix model. Its results reveal that product element has the most important role in F&P export volume. Pricing style, distribution channels, and promotion activities place in subsequent grade. Quality traits from product variables, credit sale from price variables, aerial transport regular system from of distribution

channels variables, and be present in foreign exhibition from promotion variables have the most important role in F&P export volume.

Ozakan and et.al (2003) studied the production structure and fundamental problems of F&P export marketing in turkey. The result of this research show that manufacturers often produce and foster flower by using historical method and their production is not industrial. Most generative departments don't use marketing appropriate strategy or method and they try themselves to negotiate directly with importers, despite of no efficient knowledge of market situation.

Yeung and Yee (2010) assayed the effect of marketing mix chosen elements (included of free sample test, distinct package, specific price, and exposition place) on consumer's purchase decision in flower market of Macau. The result of this research show that distinct package has the most effective in stimulating consumers for purchase and healthy product, specific price, free sample test and exposition place had placed in subsequent grade.

**Research hypotheses**

Based on research conceptual model and framework as well as factors which should be considered to estimate these effects, following hypotheses are devised:

**Major hypothesis:**

Marketing mix elements have significant effect on F&P sale volume.

**Minor hypotheses:**

1. Product mix has significant effect on F&P sale volume.
2. Price mix has significant effect on F&P sale volume.
3. Place mix has significant effect on F&P sale volume.
4. Promotion mix has significant effect on F&P sale volume.
5. Sale labor traits mix has significant effect on F&P sale volume.

**Methodology**

This is a descriptive survey which defing effect of Marketing mix elements on F&P sale volume. For assessing this impression, questionarie was designed with items involve five-item Likert-type scale items. Validity was confirmed by experts. The results in Table I demonstrate that the measures used in the current study all exceed the commonly accepted standard of coefficient alpha . 0.7 Note that this will only support our arguments for measure reliability.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Product Mix</b>	<b>Price Mix</b>	<b>place Mix</b>	<b>Promotion Mix</b>	<b>Sale labor traits</b>
<b>coefficient alpha</b>	.784	.831	.817	.766	.792

Table.1: Reliabilty of study measure (coefficient alpha)

**Statistical Population, sample size, and sampling method**

Data was collected from all natural F&P presentative stores from 22th regions of tehran. Thus, according to the opinion of F&P sellers syndicate, it was clarified that in all Tehran 22 boroughs, there are over 650 stores. And base on sampling formula, Sample size consist of 130 firms which was selected by one-stage cluster sampling. Based on collected data from 30 questionarie distributed, population variance was estimated and then sample size was calculated by following equation:

$$n = \frac{N \cdot \sigma^2 \cdot \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2}{2}}{(N - 1) \cdot d^2 + \sigma^2 \cdot \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2}{2}} = \frac{650 \times 1.96^2 \times 0.15}{(650 - 1) \times 0.06^2 + 1.96^2 \times 0.15} \geq 130$$

**Result And Analysis**

From 130 send questionnaires, we received back 122 usable responses. Then, it's our database for resulting in this research. First we present descriptive and inferential statistics. We will also present test of hypothesis.

- Descriptive statistics: Mean age of respondents was 38.17 years and mean years working were 12.36 years. Education of respondents was 21.3% under diploma, 63.9% diploma, 9.8% higher diploma, 4.9% BSc and higher.
- Inferential statistics: In this section, we address to research hypotheses. Initially, minor hypotheses are analyzed in terms of products and then the major hypothesis is represented. In all steps, SPSS software is used for calculations.

**a. Kolmogorov – Smirnov (K-S) test**

before evaluating research hypotheses, we measure the normality of gathered data by using K – S test.

*H<sub>0</sub>: Variable distribution is normal.*

*H<sub>a</sub>: Variable distribution isn't normal.*

Variables	Product Mix	Price Mix	place Mix	Promotion Mix	Sale labor traits
Z	1.701	2.076	1.514	1.532	2.614
Sig.(2-tailed)	.11	.07	.09	.078	.13

Table.2: Results of (K-S) test for research variable

Result: with regard to table.2, the Z statistic of test at 0.05 determination level is located in statistical null hypothesis level for research variables. Thus, 95% normal distribution for all research model variables is calculated.

**b. Hypotheses test**

To test research hypotheses, one sample t test is used and the results for each hypothesis are shown in table 3. In this order, mean of variables compared with mediocrity of scale of measure tool (e.g., number 3). The statistical hypotheses of on sample t test are as follow:

*H<sub>0</sub>: μ ≤ 3*

*H<sub>a</sub>: μ > 3*

Hypotheses No.	Size	Average	S.d	d.f	t	Sig.	result
1	122	4.058	.438	121	102.28	.000	Support
2	122	4.284	.709	121	66.747	.000	Support
3	122	3.972	.621	121	70.557	.000	Support
4	122	3.442	.659	121	57.742	.000	Support
5	122	4.684	.404	121	128.14	.000	Support
Major	122	4.088	.344	121	34.93	.000	Support

Table.3: Results of one sample t test for research Hypotheses

As you can see in table.3, result of one sample t test for all hypotheses was in significant level. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis were accepted, significant at 5% level. Therefore, all research minor hypothesizes and major hypothesize base on each one of the Marketing mix elements has significant effect on F&P sale volume are supported by 95% confidence level.

**c. Ranking intensity of marketing mix elements effect on F&P sale volume**

Freedman's test was used to rank intensity of marketing mix elements effect on F&P sale volume. Its results are shown in table .4. The statistical hypotheses of Freedman's test are as follow:

$H_{0o}$ : The grades of examined elements is equal.

$H_{aa}$ : The grades of examined elements isn't equal.

Elements	Product Mix	Price Mix	place Mix	Promotion Mix	Sale labor traits
Rank mean	2.72	3.39	2.69	1.61	4.59
Priority	Third	second	fourth	fifth	first
Test statistic	$\chi^2 = 238.332$		d.f = 4	N=122	Sig. = .000

Table.4: Results of Freedman's test and ranking Elements

As seen in table 4, calculate chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) for all five variables is significant at freedom degree 4 and 0.05 of determination level. Therefore, statistical null hypothesis regarding non-difference between the grades of examined elements is refused with 95% probability. Therefore, elements are ranked in above table based on ranks average.

**d. Ranking intensity of effect of each one of the variables of marketing mix elements on F&P sale volume**

i. Product Mix

Elements	Form	Refurbishment	Color diversity	Durability	Package type	F&P diversity	Package diversity	intercalating specification	brand
Rank mean	6.87	6.77	5.28	5.89	6.48	5.11	3.40	2.30	2.89
Priority	first	second	fifth	fourth	third	sixth	seventh	ninth	eighth
Test statistic	$\chi^2 = 238.332$		d.f = 8		N=122			Sig. = .000	

Table.5: Results of Freedman's test and ranking product mix variables

As seen in table 5, calculate chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) for all variables of product mix is significant at freedom degree 8 and 0.05 of determination level. Therefore, statistical null hypothesis regarding non-difference between the grades of product mix variables is refused with 95% probability. Therefore, variables are ranked in above table based on ranks average. The form of F&P has more important role than other variables while brand and intercalating specification have the least important.

ii. Price Mix

Elements	Price level	discounting	Fair price
Rank mean	6.87	6.77	2.89
Priority	first	second	third
Test statistic	$\chi^2 = 238.332$ , d.f = 2, N=122, Sig.=.000		

**Table.6: Results of Freedman's test and ranking price mix variables**

As seen in table 6, calculate chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) for all variables of price mix is significant at freedom degree 2 and 0.05 of determination level. Therefore, statistical null hypothesis regarding non-difference between the grades of price mix variables is refused with 95% probability. Therefore, variables are ranked in above table based on ranks average. The price level of F&P has the most important of variables.

iii. Place Mix

Elements	Location	Place Size	Holding Volume	Buyers Accessible	Handing Over	Fast Delivery
Rank mean	4.33	3.61	3.33	4.22	2.73	2.79
Priority	first	third	fourth	second	sixth	fifth
Test statistic	$\chi^2 = 112.774$			d.f = 5	N=122	Sig.=.000

**Table.7: Results of Freedman's test and ranking place mix variables**

As seen in table 7, calculate chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) for all variables of place mix is significant at freedom degree 5 and 0.05 of determination level. Therefore, statistical null hypothesis regarding non-difference between the grades of place mix variables is refused with 95% probability. Therefore, variables are ranked in above table based on ranks average. The location of F&P Store has the most important of variables and Handing over of F&P has the least important.

iv. Promotion Mix

Elements	TV & Radio adv.	Street adv.	Internet adv.	Advertisement film & catalog	Seminar & lecture	Layout type	showing up in exhibition	Free sample test
Rank mean	3.99	3.48	3.86	4.20	3.30	6.43	5.39	5.35
Priority	fifth	seventh	sixth	fourth	eighth	first	second	third
Test statistic	$\chi^2 = 210.985$		d.f = 7		N=122			Sig. = .000

**Table.8: Results of Freedman's test and ranking promotion mix variables**

As seen in table 8, calculate chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) for all variables of place mix is significant at freedom degree 7 and 0.05 of determination level. Therefore, statistical null hypothesis regarding non-difference between the grades of promotion mix variables is refused with 95% probability. Therefore, variables are ranked in above table based on ranks average. The information of table show that Layout type, showing up in exhibition and free sample test have the most important of promotion mix variables in F&P sale volume And others stand in ulterior steps.

v. Sale Labor Traits

Elements	Seller behavior	Seller responding	Seller skill & precision	Communicative skill of seller
Rank mean	2.80	2.49	2.48	2.24
Priority	first	second	Third	fourth
Test statistic	$\chi^2 = 34.098,$		d.f = 3,	N=122, Sig. = .000

Table.8: Results of Freedman's test and ranking Sale Labor Traits variables

As seen in table 8, calculate chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) for all variables of place mix is significant at freedom degree 3 and 0.05 of determination level. Therefore, statistical null hypothesis regarding non-difference between the grades of sale labor traits variables is refused with 95% probability. Therefore, variables are been ranked in above table based on ranks average. Hear, Seller behavior is the most remarkable factors that must be attended in order to increase F&P sale volume.

### Conclusion and Discussion

following to research purpose to assay the effects of marketing mix elements on F&P sale volume or increasing it by considering to retailing system, the results reveal that all evaluated factors affect sale volume of this product per determined weak and intense. (with specific Strength and weakness)Tests statistics propone effectiveness analitical tool for evaluating effects of marketing mix strategies on sale enhancement. Nevertheless, the results should be interpreted base on sample size and sampling method. The results provide insight particularly for retailers in order to allocate budget by considering and predicting effect of each strategy on sale enhancement.

As considered in accomplished ranking about the influence of every one of the marketing mix elements on sale volume, It is noticeable that sale labor traits has appropriated first grade for himself. This event will be justifiable when sale labor plays key role in presenting product. This means that behavior and operation skill of sale labor plays momentous role in attraction, maintenance and loyalty attainment of customer as regards to product nature and usage cases of it, and it results in firm productivity by increasing sale. However, between other elements, price, product, place and promotion mix got respectively second, third, fourth and fifth. This ranking may vary across research setting or other industry whereas the results of other accomplished studies evidence it. As Salimi(2008) achieved different ranking in his research about stone industry. He understands that product mix has the most important role in increasing sale of neyriz stone. Kim and Hyun (2011) also imply to high important of place mix performance on total value of brand equity in IT setting, so they propose that managers increase distribution activities in order to purchase ease.

As for the results, stores should consider increasingly to refurbishment, quality, diversity and appropriate package of Flower & Plant, and harmonize with costumer view and taste. Regardless necessity of refurbishment and quality of product in this industry, researches show that stores, which offer more various products, attract more costumers toward those offer single type of product. Also in some cases, consumers make their purchase decisions in site and with seeing the products (Vence, 2007, p.8).

Clement (2007, p.4) declare that packaging as one of the good characteristic has vital role in attracting buyers. Quality of packaging inspires superior quality and different good toward other goods whereupon packaging expenditure assigns itself significant percent of commodity extinct cost in some product such as attire and hygienic products.

Marketing mangers should be sensitive about pricing setting in order to be realized real and fairly by consumer. As Bruce and Daly (2004) declare that price role is vital in high competitive environment and where product has short life cycle, it makes high level of purchase stimulating in costumer. According to research result and marketing literature, the location of F&P Store and buyers accessible to product will be effective cases in increasing sale. Statistics shows auction prices for using a product in specific location will be 16 times more

than a common situation (Yeung & Yee, 2010, p.292). In addition, Layout type of product must to attract customer itself and product exposes costumer attention in F&P exhibition. These will be other ways that cause to increase F&P sale with as for marketing mix elements. Free sample test is amongst manners that sellers use it for costumer absorption As implied customer stimulation and creation tendency for purchase on the effect of free experience of product in marketing literature too (Peck & Childers, 2006). And Neff (2008) signs that product promotion have surplus impression on costumer decision instigation in store.

#### **Future Studies**

According to research, results and studying different researches related on this research issue, subjects are proposed for next studies as following:

1. Survey F&P consumer preferences in different markets.
2. Survey the role of government protection in increasing F&P consume percapita.
3. Survey the effect of F&P importation in increasing F&P consume percapita.
4. Survey Iran position in F&P trade and extension methods of F&P export.

#### **Research Limitation**

During formation and implement the marketing mix strategies, various variables may influence them such as social situation and or government decisions, so it can spot evaluation of the effect of this set of factors as a limitation of present research whereas this effect was assumed invariable.

In viewpoint of industry and location, Research data was collect from F&P stores of geographic circle of Tehran city, therefore as mentioned previously, results may be different in other locations or industries.

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