An Investigation of Effective Factors on Consumers' Purchase Intention toward Foreign Merchandise (Case study: Customers Esfahan Foreign Clothing Industry)

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Abstract

This study entitled "Analysis of effective factors on consumers' tendency to purchase the foreign products" investigates the effective factors on consumers' tendency to purchase the foreign products in apparel industry. In this study there is a main hypothesis (which investigates the significance of the impact of the effective factors on consumers' tendency to purchase the foreign products) and there are seven lateral hypotheses (which investigates the significance of the impact of appearance maintaining, group endorsement separately on attitude and the significance of the impact of appearance maintaining, group endorsement, attitude, subjective norm and Perceived behavioral control on foreign products purchase intention).This study, from the purpose point of view can be considered as an applicable study and survey in terms of method of execution with correlation approach.Study samples consumers of foreign apparel which selected on the simple random sampling method from unlimited number of this industry consumers.Data collection tool in this study is24 question questionnaire designed by researcher and its validity was acknowledged by supervisor and advisors professors and management experts.The reliability of questionnaire was also confirmed by the Alpha index of 96%. The questions of questionnaire are divided into demographic and main questions for testing hypotheses.From the 200 distributed questionnaires 189 were back (rate of return= 94%) and used to analyze data. Collected data were analyzed by SPSS and AMOS software through two levels of statistical tests: descriptive level which involves frequency, percentage, cumulative percentage,mean and standard deviation and perceptive level which involves regression modeling,ANOVA,nonparametric

test of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and nonparametric test of Friedman. Study findings based on structural equation outputs suggested appropriate goodness of fit indices GFI and DF.According to the results,all of study hypotheses were Apart from the seventh hypothesis supported. Study results also showed that second lateral hypothesis (Face Savingon the purchase of foreign goods) has the most effect with path coefficient (regression weight) of 0.385 and 7th (Perceived behavioral control on intention to purchase foreign goods) lateral hypothesis with path coefficient (regression weight) of 0.053 has the least effect.

Keywords: Subjective norm, Perceived behavioral control, Appearance maintaining, Purchase intention, Group endorsement, Attitude

Introduction

Globalization of the markets results in many opportunities and challenges for marketers. Indeed, the managers who have successful responsibilities in the international markets face this issue that why and how allocate their marketing resources. Since many target customers accustom to competitors' marketing efforts. This is why that many marketers interest in understanding customers' evaluations and preferences toward products characteristics. The competition between internal and external (foreign) products in the global markets is increasing. Customers' interest in products with global brands is an inevitable reality in developing countries. The companies should understand the effective factors on the consumers' purchase decision. It is inevitable especially for which companies compete in the global markets. There is a reality that consumers purchase imported products based on their quality. On the other hand, some consumers prefer domestic unqualified products to foreign qualified products and vice versa. This why that the present study was aimed to investigate the effective factors on the consumers' desire for purchasing foreign products. This study also has been aimed to investigate the relationship between these factors and consumers' desire for purchasing foreign products.

Review of literature

Attitude

it is considered as one of the practical concepts in social psychology from 1950. Generally, we have especial attitude toward things and thoughts. This derives from our knowledge and feeling toward them. They determine our attitude toward these things and thoughts. Attitude refers to a combination of cognitions, emotions, and preparations of doing an action. Attitude is a continuous system that includes cognitive, emotional, and conative components (Dehdashti et al., 2010: 120).

Attitude to product purchase

attitude is not important for marketers unless it does not influence consumers' purchase behavior. Purchase intention refers to the consumers' tendency for purchasing products in the future times and preventing brand switching behavior. Purchase intention is an appropriate concept in predicting actual purchase behavior. The results of different studies revealed that there is a significant relationship between attitude toward foreign products and purchase intention (Dehdashti et al., 2010: 126).

Group influence processes

Reference group is a group that has the most influence on consumers. The influences of reference groups can be categorized in one of the following three aspects.

Informational influences: when this influence is created that a person imitates the reference group members' behaviors and believes as a data with high informational value. This influence is created based on the similarities of reference group members and person's expertise and skills. This is why that a person may understand that the members of an especial group use a certain cloth brand. Based on this data, the person may decide to use that brand because his/her friends use it.

Normative influences: this influence is known as utility influence. When this influence happens that the person satisfies the group's expectations for receiving rewards and avoiding punishment. You may use an especial product for accepting in friend group. On the other hand, you may avoid an especial cloth for avoiding others' punishment. When the normative influences will be maximized that the person has powerful and strong relations with group and the product usage is explicit. This happens especially among young consumers. The TV advertisement, which is based on the use of an especial product, is created based on the normative influences. This is why that the advertisements which focus on denial by group members.

Identity influences: when this type of influences is created that the group members internalize group values and norms for themselves. Internalization of values and norms leads to direct behaviors regardless of group members' rewards and punishments. As a result, the person depends on group values and accepts them like personal values. Such a person behaves in accordance with group values, as his/her values re consistent with group values (Hawkins et al., 2006: 293).

Mental norms

it refers to the person's believes about reference group members' attitude and thought about doing an especial behavior. It also refers to the person's following from reference group members' behavior in terms of doing an especial action. Many psychological studies revealed that mental norm is a determinant factor in behavioral intention and perception utility (Ashtiani et al., 2011: 69). Indeed, mental norms are reflection of social pressure that is perceived by person and forms a certain behavior. In other words, mental norms refers to the person's understanding from this fact that reference group members confirm an especial behavior or not. This means that whether people's perception of social normative pressures or others' believes are determinant factors in the person's behavior or not. Therefore, mental norms depend on the person's awareness from important and prominent believes of reference group members (Nakhaei and Kheyri, 2012: 111).

Mental norm is a social factor that results in the perceived social pressure for doing or avoiding a certain behavior. Based on the mental normative believe, consumers may influenced by others such as friends, relatives, or family members in buying times. On the other hand, friends and relatives may be a motivator or preventive factor in products consumption. Indeed, it depends on the extent of this behavior acceptance by others. It can be said that the consumers whose friends and relatives confirm and encourage their product

buying behavior and are influenced by mental norms, have better and more positive attitude toward buying that product (Ebrahimi et al., 2012: 11).

Consumer behavior

refers to the study of process in which individuals or groups buy, consume, and dispose products, services, ideas, and experiences in order to satisfy their needs and wants. Consumer behavior,as study of purchase units and exchange processes, includes acquisition, consumption, and disposal of products, services, ideas, and experiences. Transaction process is considered as a main component in consumer behavior. Consumer is placed in a side of transaction in which benefits of two sides are secured. In addition, there other benefits that are exchanged such as emotions, information,and positions. Based on the definition of consumer behavior, buying unit is used rather than consumer or customers. This means that buying can done by a person or a group of people (Mowen and Minor, 2002: 21).

Consumer behavioral style

many marketing companies effort to understand consumers' buying behavior, buying style, buying number, and buying reason so that find appropriate answers for them. Although finding response for such questions can be examined relatively, but finding the main behavioral reasons of consumer behavior is not simple in a time period. The main question which marketing professionals seek to answer is that "what are customers and consumers' reaction and response in front of company's marketing efforts? Answering such a question helps the company to proceed its competitors and achieve competitive advantages (Kotler and Armstrong, 2000: 25).

The reasons of consuming foreign products

- Much capital: this means that rich people has ability of buying foreign products.
- Expressing higher social class: this refers to self-expression and social prestige
- Existence of inappropriate culture in the society.
- Lack of using new technologies in domestic products and lack of appropriate packaging (lack of unique attraction and appropriate appear)
- Producers and sellers' inattention to new marketing methods.
- Inappropriate efforts of public institutes such as schools and family in introducing domestic products
- Lack of appropriate rules and regulations.
- Unfavorable performance of domestic producers (low quality and lack of diversity in domestic products)
- Lack of customer knowledge and his/her wants and desires.
- Inattention to necessary and modern products
- Lack of global standards.
- Lack of quality, performance, durability, and proper pricing
- Lack of competition between domestic and foreign products
- Introducing and advertising domestic products inappropriately.
- Lack of competition in the domestic products market
- Poor and rich students' competition for compensating mental shortages.
- Family educations

- Imitating others and influencing by high social class people (Mowen and Minor, 2002: 40).

Conceptual model
Table 1 shows the conceptual model of this study. The relations of these variables refer to the research hypotheses.
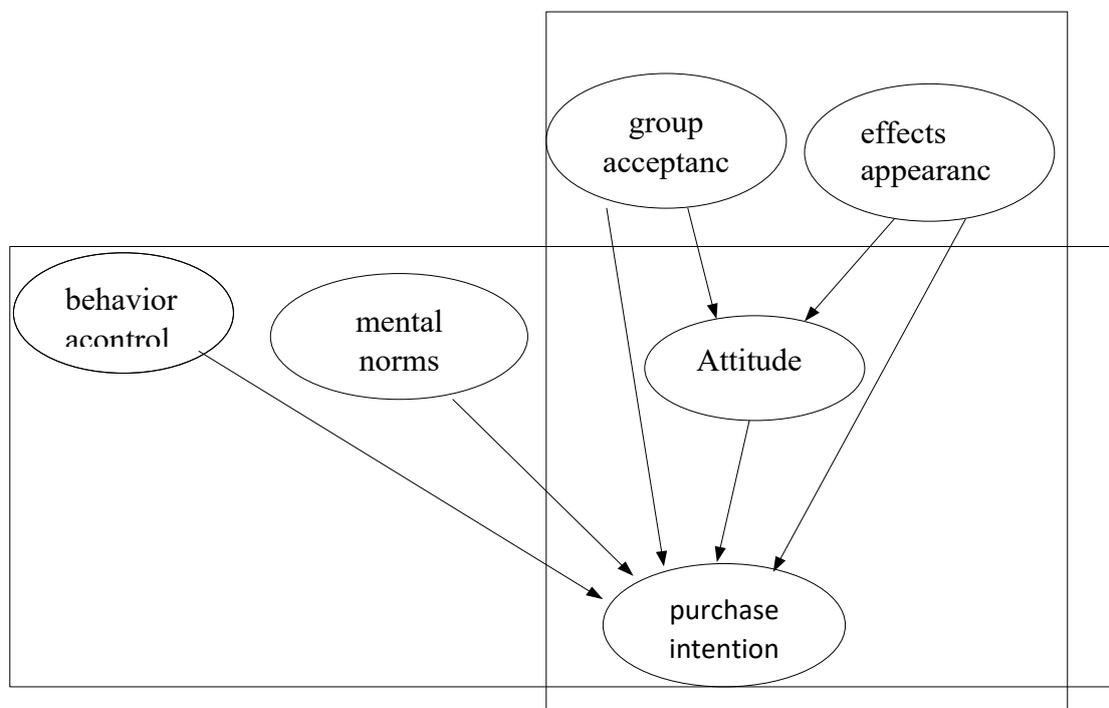
Hypotheses development
Main hypothesis: investigating the effects of appearance, group influence, attitude influence, mental norms, and perceived behavioral control on the foreign products purchase intention.
Secondary hypotheses
1. Investigating the effects of appearance on the foreign products purchase intention.
2. Investigating the effects of group influence on the foreign products purchase intention.
3. Investigating the effects of attitude influence on the foreign products purchase intention.
4. Investigating the effects of mental norms on the foreign products purchase intention.
5. Investigating the effects of perceived behavioral control on the foreign products purchase intention.
6. Investigating the effects of group acceptance on the foreign products desire.
7. Investigating the effects of group acceptance on the foreign products purchase intention.

Research methodology
This study regarding the methodology is descriptive survey. Also from the purpose point of view, this study is an applied- scientific research and regarding the nature, it is type of correlation. In this kind of research the relationship between variables is analysed based on study objectives. Also, in this study existence or non-existence of relationship or correlation, magnitude and type of relationship between independent variables and dependent variables

are tested. Since this study uses library method, review of related texts and also survey based method like questionnaire and its objective recognizing society people characteristics, preferences and behavior through referring to them, we can say that this study regarding the nature of methodology is a field research. The sample of this study is limited and consists of Customers esfahan foreign clothing industry. Due to limited size of study's sample, 200 samples including males and females were selected using simple random sampling method. For identifying the sample size a primary study with 30 samples carried out. By calculating standard deviation and putting this value in the Cochran's limited sample size formula the appropriate sample size was achieved.

$$n = \frac{N \times Z^2_{\alpha/2} \sigma^2}{d^2(N-1) + Z^2_{\alpha/2} \sigma^2} \quad \text{Cochran's limited sample size formula}$$

n: desired sample size, α: level of significance (5%), d: standard error (5%), σ^2: variance of statistical sample and N size of sample. After estimation of standard deviation primary sample calculated as follows:

$$n \geq \frac{Z^2_{\alpha/2} \sigma^2}{d^2}$$

$$n \geq \frac{(1.96^2) \times (0.721^2)}{(0.1^2)} = 199.702 \approx 200$$

From 200 distributed questionnaires 189 were back (return rate= 94.5%).

Method and tool of collecting data

As mentioned before for collecting required data in order to test the hypotheses and model, this study used a 28question closed questionnaire. In this questionnaire 4 questions allocated to demographic characteristics such as gender, age, job position, level of education and job duration and there are 30 question designed for measuring study variables. Number of 200 questionnaires were distributed directly between .Customers   foreign clothing industry.Among these questionnaires 189 questionnaires were back and recognized suitable for analyzing

Validity and reliability of measuring tool

Measuring tool in this study designed regarding the theoretical principals and considering study objectives. In order to investigating the validity of questions opinions of supervisor and advisor professors and related experts were used and after final acknowledgment from them questionnaire printed and distributed between samples.

Also in order to investigating the reliability of questionnaire Cronbach's Alpha coefficient were used. As a result, reliability index by distributing and collecting 30 primary questionnaires was calculated using SPSS and the achieved Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.96 Since the minimum required reliability coefficient for a questionnaire should be 0.70 as a result we can say that study questionnaire has desired reliability. Also, in order to ensure that questionnaire has the required reliability Cronbach's Alpha coefficient were investigated for each of study factors (table 1).

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for investigating questionnaire reliability

variable	Number	Cronbach's Alpha
mental norms	1-4	.90
behavioracontrol	5-8	.86

purchase intention	9-12	.87
effects appearance	13-16	.83
group acceptance	17-20	.83
Attitude	21-24	.92
Questionnaire total		.96

Findings

Before testing hypotheses, mean, standard deviation and variance of study variables should be considered (table 2). Among the variables new product performance has the highest value and the contingency reward appropriate for developing product has the lowest value.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for study variables

variable	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance
mental norms	1-4	3.1085	.88846	.789
behavioracontrol	5-8	3.0317	.76946	.592
purchase intention	9-12	2.664	.76419	.584
effects appearance	13-16	2.9735	.72975	.533
group acceptance	17-20	2.9775	.80669	.651
Attitude	21-24	2.8902	.82846	.686

Measuring model

In the model of structural equations it is required to test two models. First model includes measuring models for each latent variable. Measuring model represents factor weights of observed variables (factor) for each latent variable. Common goodness of fit indices in measuring models for 6 study latent variables are representing in following table. As observed, main goodness of fit indices of all of latent variables are in the acceptable range.

Table3. Goodness of fit indices for latent variables measuring models

fit indices	Index	Basic model
	NPAR	20
	DF	1
	P greater than(/0/05)	.087
absolute	CMIN (Chi Square)	2.924

	AGFI) greater than (0/9)	.893
	GFI greater than (0/9)	.995
Comparative or relative	TLI greater than (0/9)	959.
	NFI greater than (0/9)	996.
	CFI greater than (0/9)	997.
thrifty	PNFI greater than(0/5)	066.
	PCFI greater than(0/5)	066.
	RMSEA) smaller than(0/08)	080.
	CMIN/DF smaller than(0/5)	2.924

Structural model

After testing the measuring models, it is time to test and represent structural model that representing the relationship between study's latent variables. Using structural model we can test study hypotheses. Structural model of this study is analysed by AMOS software. Figure 1 shows the tested conceptual model. In outcome of structural equations, primary tested model of this study regarding the standard naming effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables represents with the (γ) symbol and effect of endogenous variables on each other represents with(β) symbol. In order to investigating the extent of significance of γ and β coefficients it is required to show t value of each path. t value of paths shows that all of paths are significant (t-value>2) and as a result all of paths were acknowledge.
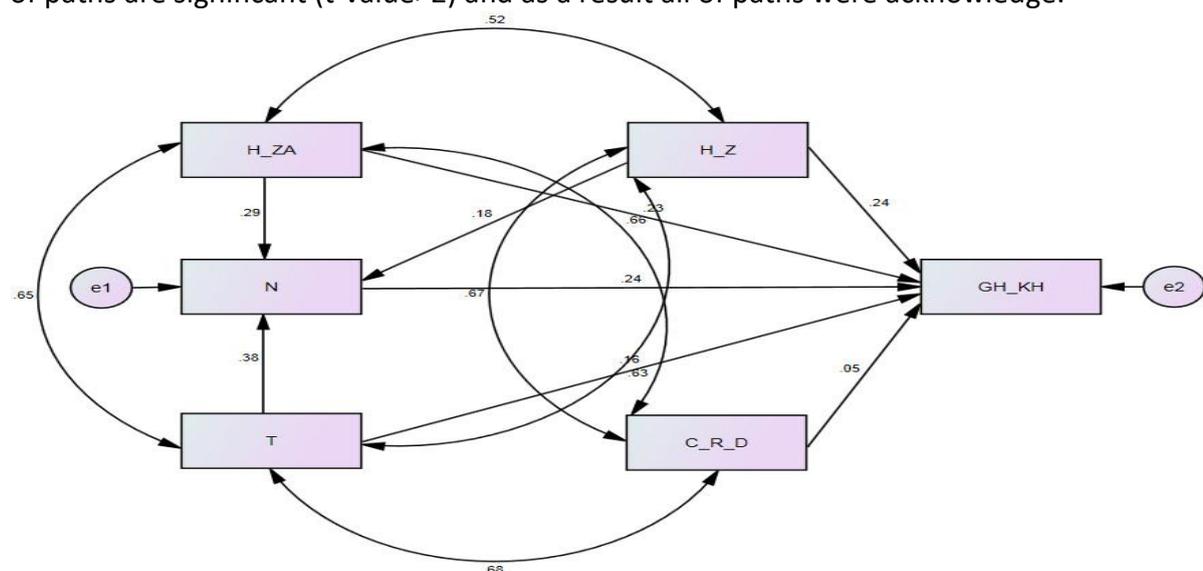

Figure 2. Study model

Table 4. Testing study hypotheses

hypothesis	Description of hypothesis	Critical ratio C.R	Standard error S.E.	Standard coefficient	P	coclusion
H1	Investigating the effects of appearance on the foreign products purchase intention	4.482	.074	.292	***	Accepted
H3	Investigating the effects of group influence on the foreign products purchase intention	5.342	.074	.385	***	Accepted
H5	Investigating the effects of attitude influence on the foreign products purchase intention	3.462	.064	.242	***	Accepted
H2	Investigating the effects of mental norms on the foreign products purchase intention	3.318	.072	.227	***	Accepted
H4	Investigating the effects of perceived behavioral control on the foreign products purchase intention	2.105	.071	.158	.035	Rejection
H6	Investigating the effects of group acceptance on the foreign products desire	3.635	.057	.243	***	Accepted
H7	Investigating the effects of group acceptance on the foreign products purchase intention	.706	.075	.053	.480	Rejection
*** indicate that P less than 0/001						

Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that appearance, group influence, attitude influence, and mental norms influences foreign products purchase intention (β= 0.87). The Buying intention model of Fishben includes appearance, group acceptance, and attitude. On the other hand, theory of reasoned action includes two variables. These include mental norms, and perceived behavioral control. Appearance (γ= 0.29) and group acceptance (γ= 0.38) influences attitude positively. Finally, appearance (γ= 0.23), group acceptance (γ= 0.16), and attitude (γ= 0.24) influences buying intention positively. Chang et al. (2000) found that there is a significant relationship between appearance and Korean consumers' attitude and their domestic

products buying intention. On the other hand, they found that consumers with Confucius cultures are influenced by serious limitations and they act so that satisfy others' expectations and maintain their appearance. Jaberi (2012) found that consumers' attitude is an important factor in their behavior. They refer that it is necessary to change consumers' attitude through advertisements and sale promotions. Car (2011) found that Indian Youngers support western values, but family, group, and national values play a critical role in determining brand meaning. He also found that social factor (such as group and family influence) play a critical role in Indian consumers' decision making. Mental norms ($\gamma = 0.24$) influences buying intention significantly. Chang found that there is a significant relationship between gender, mental norms, buying intention, and actual buying behavior in the online environments. The results of our study revealed that perceived behavioral control ($\gamma = 0.05$) influences foreign products buying intentions significantly.

Limitations and empirical suggestions

Every study has its own limitations and shortages regardless of its comprehensiveness and perfections. Every author faces different problems and limitations. These problems and limitations lead that the authors cannot generalize their findings. Understanding these limitations prevent explaining results of study and promoting quality level of future studies. Since the present study has been done in Iran, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other populations. This is why that the results of this study cannot be generalized to other populations such other cities. All in all, all of the field studies have several limitations because of external and internal effective factors on the dependent variable. There are several uncontrollable factors in this study such as culture, life style, income, and age. The authors of this study seek to predict and understand these factors and prevent them. It is suggested that appearance is focused more than other factors. On the other hand, consumers and their social and cultural factors should be attended. Also it is suggested that cloths should be designed based on the society norms. Obviously, consumers buy and use cloths based on their age and consumption conditions of different products. For example, young consumers pay attention to the reference groups and moods in buying cloths. On the other hand, adult consumers select their cloths based on the usage place and cloths quality. All of these factors should be attended in times of cloth design. Since consumers' attitude is an important factor in their behavior, it is necessary to change consumers' attitude through advertisements and sale promotions. It is should be remembered that change in attitude is not continuous and is a temporal phenomenon. Therefore, it is possible to change consumers' behavior through changing their attitude through advertisements and other factors. It is necessary to consider foreign products rules and regulations, clothing styles, administrative and formal regulations, religious regulations, educational plans, sport rules and regulations, customs in designing new products. Indeed, these are considered as important social norms, as these norms are mental and social norms.

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