

The Relationship between Informational, Utilitarian and Value-Expressive Influences of Reference Groups with Sport Consumers' Purchase Decision Making Process with SEM-PLS

*Maryam Yousefi Paskeh**

Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

Farshad Tojari

Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

Zinat Nikaeen

Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of research was analysis of relationship between informational, utilitarian and value-expressive influences of reference groups with sport consumers' purchase decision making process. The present research is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlation nature. The research statistical population was all physical education students in Guilan University which were selected samples from random classification method. For gathering data was used researcher-made questionnaire and its validity was confirmed by experts (12 people). Also, its reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha (0.95) and combined reliability. For analyzing data and check fit model has been used structural equation modeling and PLS3 and SPSS24 software. The results indicated that informational influence (0.10), utilitarian influence (0.64) and value-expressive influence (0.22) have positive and significant relationship with purchase decision making process directly. Reference groups can be determinative in consumers purchasing behavior through informational, utilitarian and value-expressive influences. It is necessary that sport stores focus on the factors and paths that influence on consumer purchase behavior in marketing strategy and customer oriented.

Keywords: purchase decision making, informational influence, utilitarian influence, value-expressive influence, consumers

Introduction

Global complex and quick developments in the field of science and technology, values and criteria have led organizations, successful global institutions to direct their goals and methods to better cognition from consumers. In decision making process, actions and even the formation of human attitudes in society, there are factors that their most important are people or groups who place as basis of judgment and assessment of social actors. They are reference groups. Many sport companies use from name of sport stars for advertising their products and this matter indicates that the concept of reference groups has benefits for professional marketers as an instrument for winning on their competitors (Yang et al,2007). From the point of view consumer behavior, reference group is important because they inform people from special products and brands. They create opportunities for people until compare their thought with group

behavior and attitudes and influence on their product choice, information searching, forming attitude and purchasing behavior and coordinate their behavior with group norms (Vilcekova & Sabo, 2013). Marketers consider extensive spectrum from consumer activities such as thinking to product, acquiring information, pay attention to advertising, purchasing and applying until satisfaction and returning consumer consider (Tojari et al,2014). Consumer behavior doesn't reflect person behavior. Decision making about purchasing a car or house are behaviors which can include friends idea or all members of family (Mohammadpouri et al, 2015). Reference groups influence into three types of influences which are information, utilitarian and value-expressive. Informational influence happens when consumers want to make an informative decision. Under the uncertain situation, consumers will search for more knowledge from available sources of information. The information source will be more accepted if it comes together with credibility and expertise. In utilitarian influence, buying an individual may comply with others' expectations or preferences in order to avoid punishment or to receive rewards. Consumers will be willing to meet others' expectations under the condition that their behaviors might lead them to receive rewards or avoid the punishment. In value-expressive influence, one individual follow others' behaviors and opinions since these behaviors and opinions can fulfill his/her self-defining relationship. People would adjust themselves in the similar way as reference groups, which they desired to belong, did in order to express themselves in the society (Jin and Punpunich,2011). Reviewing studies indicated that informational, utilitarian and value-expressive influences have different effects on purchasing decision making of sport consumers (Reza & Valeecha,2013; Rahman & Jamil,2016; Nagarkoti et al, 2009; Yang et al,2007; Latif et al, 2011). At last, different researches consider purchasing process in consumers. The results indicated that friends group is the largest informational resources for buying people. Also, male/female consumers help more than male reference groups in searching information. In product choice stage, male consumers impress more than male members in family and their friends and media and female friends influence more on female responses in this stage. Finally, female consumers try more in analyzing and searching complete information about sport products, whereas male consumers don't have complete analysis from information (Yu,2005; Jin & Punpunich,2011; Bae & Miller,2006). The most previous researches is about reference groups influences on consumers purchase decision making process (Yang et al, 2007) but a few researches have been done about reference group influences in preparing consumers for purchasing (Jin & Punpunich, 2011; Tamboli,2008). Recognition of consumption pattern and effective factors on selection or non-selection of products by consumer is main strategy for planning strategic of producers and companies. In previous researches of marketing, accept or reject a product by consumers was limited to recognition of product and rate of quality and price or service after sailing and etc, but this research try to consider more generally in social psychology and sociology field. In this research, we shift the focus from consumer to reference group, because it might somehow effect on different types of reference group as well as consumer purchase decision making process. According to purchase decision making process is divided to 5 stage: 1) problem recognition, 2) information research, 3) evaluation of alternatives, 4)product choice, 5)post-purchase evaluation. During the process of consumers' purchase decision making, the importance of reference group has been showed in first stage of information research and stage of product choice. These two stages have been selected as the main stages that our research will draw attention to (Jin & Punpunich, 2011). According to importance of matter, in this research is answered to this question that how much informational, utilitarian and value-expressive influences of reference groups will influence on sport consumers purchase decision making process?

Methodology

This purpose of this research is applied and in terms of nature, descriptive-correlation, which has been done field by field. Statistical population were all physical education students of Guilan University (n=3270). Statistical sample was selected in sufficient quantity using Morgan's table (n=346) randomly and categorical. For receiving more answers, questionnaires were distributed among 430 people. At last, 426 questionnaires were collected from this number which 399 questionnaires were complete and they were analyzed. Questionnaire is from Jin & Punpunich questionnaire (2011) and researcher has added questions to it. This questionnaire includes 3 sections. The first section was demographic features of

research samples questionnaire. Second section included three variables of informational influence (1 to 7 question) , utilitarian influence (8 to 13 question) and value-expressive influence (14 to 21 question). In third section, purchase decision making included two dimensions of information research (22 to 26) and product choice (27 to 31). The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by 12 experts. Also, its reliability was measured by Cronbach's alpha (0.95) and combined reliability. At last, for describing research has been placed research conceptual model in below:

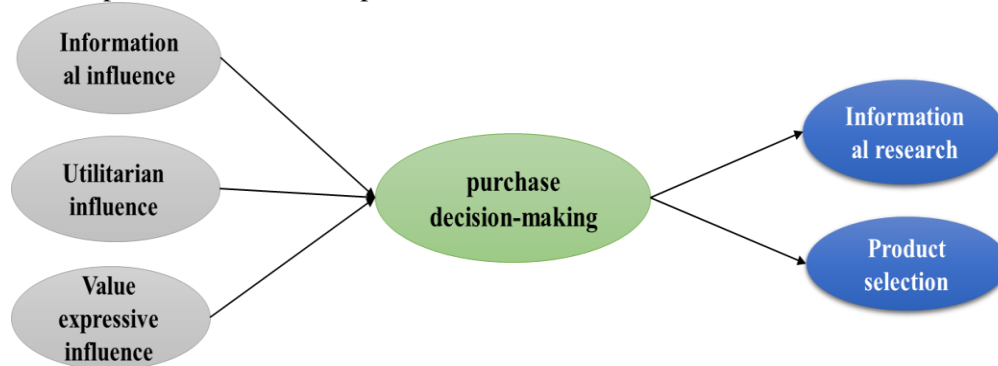


Fig. 1: Research conceptual model

Research findings were analyzed in two sections descriptive and inferential. In descriptive section has been indicated some demographic features. In table 1, frequencies and percentage of gender, age and educational of research samples has been indicated separately.

Table 1: Samples statistical description

Variable		Frequency	Percentage of frequency
Gender	Male	215	53/88
	Female	184	46/11
Age	20-25	149	37/34
	26-30	120	30/07
	31-35	59	14/78
	36-40	46	11/52
	41-45	25	6/26
Educational Level	Associate degree	46	11/52
	undergraduate	173	43/35
	M.Sc.	152	38/09
Income	Ph.D.	28	7/01
	Less than 10million Rials	129	32/33
	Between 10-20 million Rials	83	20/80
	Between 20-30 million Rials	137	34/33
	More than 4 million Rials	50	12/53

For determining the normal distribution of data was used Kolmogrov- Smirnov test. The results of this test showed that all research variables have abnormal distribution. The results of this test have been presented in table 2.

Table 2 : To be normal test of research variables

Variables	Z	P
Product choice	0.102	0.001
Informational influence	0.101	0.001
Value-expressive influence	0.094	0.001
Utilitarian influence	0.072	0.001
Information search	0.124	0.001

*p≤ 0.05 n=399

To determine the reliability of questionnaire was used PLS. The results of reliability were determined by convergent and divergent validity that is for modeling structural equations. Fitting of measurement models includes determining of reliability and validity of research structures. Test reliability relates to the

accuracy of measurement and stability. Fornel and Larker suggest three criteria for determining reliability of structures: a) the reliability of each item, b) the combined reliability of each structures, c) average variance extracted (AVE). According to algorithm of models analysis in PLS-SEM method, for determining fitting of measurement models was used three criteria reliability, convergent validity and divergent validity and below results obtained. In this stage, for evaluating convergent validity was used AVE that this criteria results has been showed for research variables in table 3:

Table 3: Combined Reliability, Average Variance Extracted And Cronbach's Alpha For Research Variables

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Informational influence	0.867	0.872	0.898	0.559
Informational research	0.809	0.842	0.870	0.580
Product choice	0.868	0.869	0.905	0.656
Utilitarian influence	0.875	0.878	0.906	0.616
Value expressive influence	0.864	0.880	0.892	0.511
purchase decision-making	0.905	0.914	0.923	0.549

After determining reliability criteria, second criteria is fitting of measurement models of convergent validity. Hair et al (2017) introduced average variance extracted (AVE) for measuring convergent validity. According to above table, all numbers AVE related to structure is more than 0.5 and this matter is acceptable for research convergent validity. In divergent validity is used AVE square root of each structure with numbers of correlative coefficient among structures. If structures had more correlative with their indicators would have confirmed to divergent validity related to model. As it is observed in table 4, amounts of matrix main diameter is more than low amounts that this matter show acceptable structures of divergent validity.

Table 4: Matrix of comparison AVE root and structure correlative coefficients

Fornell-Larcker Criterion	Informational influence	Information research	Product choice	Utilitarian influence	Value expressive influence	purchase decision-making
Informational influence	0/748					
Information research	0/653	0/792				
Product choice	0/692	0/778	0/810			
Utilitarian influence	0/708	0/594	0/616	0/785		
Value expressive influence	0/689	0/753	0/710	0/672	0/785	
purchase decision-making	0/714	0/736	0/750	0/642	0/775	0/741

Table 4 compares correlation of research structures with questions and other structures. For example, in first column that is related to product choice, rate of this structure is 74% with its questions. This number is more than amounts of below column that it shows rate of correlation among production choice structures and other structures. This statement is true about other columns, so research divergent validity is confirmable. The relationship between informational influence, utilitarian influence, value-expressive influence, purchase decision making, information research and product choice has been measured in structural model. At first, for confirming research hypothesis and also relationship among questions with dimensions was used Smart PLS software that output indicates T coefficient or significant coefficient (Fig 2). If the values of T are greater than 1.96 in the interval, they indicate the significance of the relevant variable, and after confirmation of the research hypotheses, and the significance of all questions and relationships between the variables at the 95% confidence level (Vinzi et al, 2010). According to below figure, all T significant coefficients of questions with their structures are more than 1.96. This matter indicates that all present research questions are significant. Also, Fig 2 indicates significant and some relations among research main structures in confidence level 95%. It means that some research hypothesis are acceptable.

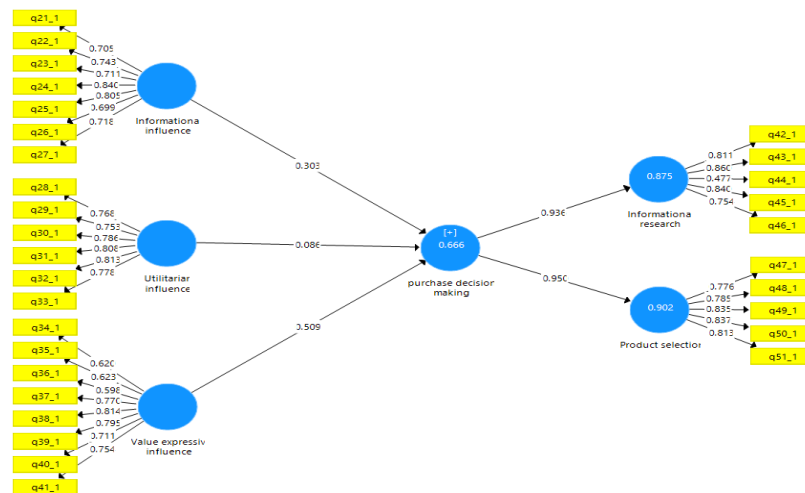


Fig. 2: Significant coefficients for determining research main hypothesis

The findings indicated that informational influence variables (0.30) and value-expressive influence (0.50) has significant and positive relationship with purchase decision making but utilitarian influence variable (0.08) has no significant and positive relationship with purchase decision making.

Table 5: Direct path coefficient and T value related to research variables (research hypothesis test)

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	T-value	Hypothesis result	
Purchase decision making	Information search	0.936	122.366	Confirmed
	Product choice	0.950	183.254	Confirmed
Informational influence	Informational → Purchase decision	0.303	6.040	Confirmed
Utilitarian influence	Utilitarian → Purchase decision	0.086	1.640	Rejected
Value-expressive influence	Value-expressive → Purchase decision	0.509	10.034	Confirmed

Base on Fig 3 and table 5, it is determined first in field of purchase decision making respectively, both components product choice (0.950) and information search (0.936) had meaningful role in explaining purchase decision making. According to path analysis, it was determined that the variables of informational influence and value-expressive influence with purchase decision making have significant and positive relationship directly and explain changes of this variable respectively (30,50%), but between utilitarian influence with purchase decision making has no significant and positive relationship directly (8%). Also, purchase decision making variable has significant and positive relationship with information search and product choice directly and explains its changes respectively (93 and 95%).

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is investigating the relationship between informational, utilitarian and value-expressive influences of reference groups with purchase decision making process (information search and product selection) of sport consumers. The results of path analysis indicated that informational influence and value-expressive influence variables has significant and positive relationship with purchase decision making directly. The results of present research has consistent with Sogania and Bina findings (2017), Kadiaghloo et al (2017), Rehman and Jamil (2016), Kumar (2014) and it wasn't consistent with Reza and Valeecha (2013) results. Based on previous research summaries, in general purchase decision making is result of informational and value-expressive influences. Kadiaghloo et al (2017) understood that families who had lower income and lower job, they have more value-expressive influence on adolescence

purchase decision making and families who had fathers with higher educations, they have more informational influence on purchase decision making. Rehman and Jamil (2016) indicated that for purchasing, teachers and housewives have more sensitivity than students in informational influences, whereas value-expressive influence has more sensitivity on students and housewives. Also, results indicated that utilitarian influence variable has no significant and positive with purchase decision making. Rehman and Jamil (2016) indicated that teachers have more sensitivity than students and housewives in utilitarian influence. Reza and Valeecha (2013) indicated that value-expressive influence is more important than informational and value-expressive in stimulating people in purchase decision making. Based on results of Latif et al research (2011), value-expressive influence is more important than two kinds of the other influences. Jiakin et al (2007) concluded that informational influence is more important than two kinds of the other influences in stimulating people in purchase decision making. In this way, the provision of well-known benefits based on information, the value and profits expected of individuals to a large extent can be sufficient to make purchasing decisions and this anticipation has direct, positive and significant effect from three kinds of informational, utilitarian and value-expressive influence on purchase decision, it is a confirmed hypothesis. The other results indicated that information search and production choice can explain changes of purchasing decisions well as dimensions of its psychological structure explaining. The present research result was consistent with Rehman and Jamil (2016), Nagarkoti (2009) and Lee et al (2007). Search and selection are two main aspects in decision making and purchase behavior is the main stage of decision making in purchase process and consumption can be largely analyzed in terms of these two components. Jin and Punpunich (2011) indicated that in information searching stage, male and female consumers help more than male reference group, male respondents prefer to acquire information from male friends, whereas female respondents prefer to help from family male members. Also, in product choice, male consumers impress from family male members and their friends and media and female friends effect more in female respondent in this stage. Laroch et al (2000) found that female consumers try more in analyzing and searching general information about sport goods, whereas male consumers have no complete process from information. Female and male consumers show different information processing strategies by demonstrating different consumer behavior than advertised products. Yoo (2005) research about informational resources for buying sport shoes in university students, he found that the same age groups are the largest informational resources for buying people. Since, selected components of the purchase behavior structure are endorsed and supported by prior scientific findings and the examined hypotheses are reliable on the basis of which they are discussed. The overall result of research is that it is better to focus on the effects of the variables of information influence and the value-expressive in consumer marketing behavior and research. Generally, it can be stated that consumer behavior is directly affected by informational and value-expressive influences of reference group that these influences can be short time and long time. Hence, consumer behavior is affected by social factors, such as family members, small groups and social role of consumers, therefore; companies must consider to these factors when they will edit marketing strategies because these factors influence on reactions of consumers. With regard to the managerial implications of this study, consumer purchase behavior can be affected by many stimuli, such as information impact which greatly affects the value of consumer behavior. At last, in basis of above findings is suggested that sport products vendors and marketers in the segmentation of their target markets pay attention to the benefits of in-group dynamics and collective behavior including information scenes and value chain. As such, the main focus is on consumer relationship management and consumer knowledge management on the basis of profits and perceptible effects that have direct effect on purchasing. The present research has been done in Guilan Province and among Guilan customers. As a result, the generalizability of the results is limited to Guilan province. Since it is suggested that other researchers research in other provinces this matter. In this research have been used quantity methods for modeling and measurement. Also, it is suggested to researcher use quality methods and techniques such as interview and observation for modeling and theorizing in this matter.

References

- [1] Abraham, K (2011). A Study of Consumer Behavior, *International Journal of enterprise computing and business systems*, 1(2), 2230-2249.
- [2] Bae, S., & Miller, J. (2009). Consumer Decision-Making Styles For Sport Apparel: Gender Comparisons Between College Consumers. *Journal of Research*, 4(1), 40–45.
- [3] Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling*. 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- [4] Hoonsopon, D., & Puriwat, W (2016). The effect of reference groups on purchase intention: Evidence in distinct types of shoppers and product involvement. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 24(2), 157–164.
- [5] Jin, R. & Punpanich, W (2011). Influence of gender difference in reference group on Smartphone users purchasing decision-making process, Thesis of doctoral dissertation.
- [6] Kadioghlo, C., Sahin, A. & Dogrul, U (2017). Adolescent influence on family purchasing decisions, *Eurasian Journal of Bussiness and management*, 5(2), 29-37.
- [7] Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G (2009). *Principles of Marketing*. Pearson Education. Thirteenth Edition. New Jersey.
- [8] Kumar, H., Franklin, S. & Senith, S (2014). A study on factors influencing consumer buying in cosmetic products, *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 4(9), 225-231.
- [9] Kumar, R (2014). Impact of Demographic Factors on Consumer Behaviour – A Consumer Behaviour Survey in Himachal Pradesh, *Global Journal of Enterprise Information System*, (6), 3-13.
- [10] Laroche, M., Sadd, G., Cleveland, M., & Browne, E (2000). Gender differences in information search strategies for a Christmas gift. *The Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 17(6), 500-524.
- [11] Latif, M., Akhtar, N., Ain, Q., Siddiqi, U. & Ashraf, A (2016). Impact of a Brand Equity on Consumer Purchase Decision in L'Oreal Skincare Products, *International Review of Management and Bussiness Research*, 5(3), 808-816.
- [12] Martin, C. A., Bush, A. J (2000). Do Role Models Influence Teenagers Purchase Decisions and Behaviour?. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 17(5), 441-454.
- [13] Mohammadpoori, M., Tojari, F. & Esmaeili, M (2015). Investigating differenced between functions of brand association among consumers of sport bicycles according to demographic features. *Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences*, 5(S2), 2449-2459.
- [14] Nagarkoti, B (2009). Factors influencing consumer behavior of Smartphon users, Degree Thesis, *International Bussiness*.
- [15] Rehman, A. & Jamil, S (2016). Influence of Income and Occupation on Consumers' Susceptibility to Reference Group Demands on Brand Choice Decisions. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 6(2), 376-382.
- [16] Reza, S. & Valeecha, S (2013). Influence of Social Reference Groups on Automobile Buying Decision – Research on Young Executives, *World Review of Business Research*. 3(4), 197 – 210.
- [17] Solomon, M. R., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S., & Hogg, M. K (2010). *Consumer Behaviour, a European perspective*. Essex: Pearson Education.
- [18] Suganya. S. & Beena, J. M (2017). A Study on factors influencing impulsive on buying behavior among woman in Thanjavur district, *International Journal Of Applied Research*, 3(1), 35-37.
- [19] Swarna, B (2012). Impact of gender on consumer purchase behavior. *Journal of commerce and management*, 1 (9), 10-18.
- [20] Tamboli, S (2008). *Buying behavior*, Master Thesis, University of Aarhus.
- [21] Tojari, F., Abodarda, Z. & Esmaeili, M (2014). The Impact of Trust and Commitment to the Sport Consumption behaviors, *Advances in Environmental Biology*, 8(10), 1494-1498.
- [22] Vilčeková, L. & Sabo, M (2013) The influence of demographic factors on attitudes toward brands and brand buying behavior of Slovak consumers, *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1 (11), 18-28.
- [23] Vinzi, V. E. Trinchera, L. & Amato, S (2010). PLS path modeling: from foundations to recent developments and open issues for model assessment and improvement. *Handbook of Partial Least Squares*, 47-82.
- [24] Yang, J., He, X., & Lee, H (2007). Social reference group influence on mobile phone purchasing behaviour: a cross-nation comparative study. *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, 5(3), 319.
- [25] Yang, J., He, X., & Lee, H (2007). Social reference group influence on mobile phone purchasing behaviour: a cross-nation comparative study. *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, 5(3), 319-338.
- [26] Yoo, S., Cho, K. M., & Chon, S. S (2003). The effect of customer satisfaction or repurchases intention at golf practice ranges in South Korea. *Korean Journal of Sport*.