

**Research Article**

## **STUDYING THE EFFECT OF EXPECTATIONS OF THE IRANIAN EXPORTERS FROM IRANIAN COMMERCIAL ATTACHES IN THE UNITED ARABIC EMIRATES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

We know that export promotion is one of the most significant economic goals of governments which are realized through establishment of grounds and mechanisms for effective attendance at export markets. The main goal of this survey is to study the expectations of the exporters from the commercial attaches and to evaluate the performance of the said commercial attaches based on the said expectation from the viewpoint of the exporters in the Arabian nations by emphasizing the United Arab Emirates. The statistical population of this research consists of 70 Iranian exporters, merchants and tradesmen who are involved in export to the United Arab Emirates in the nation. The required data has been collected by using a questionnaire consisting of 30 questions. All of the research hypotheses have been tested by using different statistical methods such as factor analysis and average comparison test by using SPSS software. The research findings reveal that we suffer from certain weak points within the area of Communication, information, legal and counseling expectations and marketing expectations in Iran and the model put forth in this research has been confirmed accordingly.

**Keywords:** *Export, Foreign Trade, Commercial Attaches and Export Promotion*

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the most important elements involved in achievement of sustainable economic growth and development is export booming. It constitutes the most significant goal of policymaking at foreign trade sector (Taheri, 2004). Nowadays, commercial attaches are regarded as analysts of export and assistants of exporters in export market all over the world. Benefiting from their knowledge-experience and physical attendance at export market and agent orientation with economic-social-cultural and political environment of target market, they may assist with export promotion. However, the most important point to be taken into consideration is to what extent the commercial attaches are qualified and how they may help exporters, what the critics are made by the exporters against commercial attaches and how it must be assessed.

Commercial attaches who are now considered as commercial attaches gather together as the customs of the trade promotion organization require in the recent years in order to share their experiences and information and indicate the results of their market knowledge for private sector. Furthermore, they may inform their requests and the process of cooperation and advising proceeds in this way (Kabiri, 2014).

Beside 20000 trade diplomats are active in the world, in order to have a bigger share at target markets and increase of foreign exchanges, Iran must increase number of commercial attaches accordingly (Kabiri, 2014).

Some of duties of branches or exterritorial representative offices of Iran Trade Promotion Center are given as follows: study of the market of the country as the place of establishment in terms of attraction of goods and goods that may exported from Iran and drawing up list of goods that may be offered, informing to exporters of the Iranian services and goods and potential importers of goods and serves from Iran, providing consultative services about economy and commerce of Iran to the applicants at target market, providing information about characteristics of the market where the representative offices or branches of the organization to the Iranian tradesmen and craftsmen and organizations, guiding the foreign investors who are willing to invest in Iran and vice versa, presenting corresponding bids to the Iranian exporters or manufacturers immediately, assistance with introducing and advertising for the Iranian goods and services

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that may be exported, providing consultative comments for the Iranian exporters in this regard, facilitating travel of economic or commercial committees proceeding to Iran or commercial and economic committees who are dispatched from Islamic Republic of Iran to the said Center in order to assist with solving the country where the branch or the representative office is active and to provide consultative comments with respect to their combination and characteristics, settlement of commercial disputes raised between the Iranian exporters and their commercial parties, collaboration for erection of Iranian private or specialized exhibitions at target market, assistance with convention of joint conferences and collaboration for commercial contracts and intended letters of understanding, study of economic activities of commercial competitors of Iran within the territory of activity of branch/representative office and presenting the results to Export Promotion Trade Center (2014).

However, state budget deficit for dispatching the commercial attaches who shall receive their salary in Dollars is one of reasons for less number of the Iranian commercial attaches. An organization as large as Trade Promotion Center that holds a license for establishment of 10 branches and offices abroad, does not have enough budget to dispatch commercial attaches to target nations of the Iranian trade exchanges. Meanwhile, the process of identifying and accepting these individual is really difficult. This slows down the procedure. Hard and complicated bureaucratic system where professional stages, specialized language, specialized training and general eligibilities are intended, make the case difficult. Thus, about 2.5 years take along from the time when an individual becomes a candidate for being a commercial attache until he is dispatched. There is a possibility that sometimes the eligibility of the respective person is confirmed during this process, however, due to prolongation of the said process, the intended person becomes a candidate for another position. Consequently, the individual who has passed all stages and completed the required training shall be lost.

According to available reports, an authorization for 30 advising positions has been ratified by the former Minister of commerce, Mr. Mohammad Shariatmadari. However, Ministry of Commerce had dispatched some representatives as commercial attaches to different nations before. However, they did not work within the framework of corresponding regulations and ratifications. Another point is that 30 positions have been predicted for commercial attaches in the Ratification of 2009. However, no target nations have been identified. The first countries to which the Iranian commercial attaches were dispatched were namely Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and England where the first Iranian advising offices were established. The number of the said offices were changed (decreased or increased) in terms of exchange and political fluctuations. No constant advising offices existed in some of the said nations. Presently, Iran has commercial attaches in 11 countries namely Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, India, United Arab Emirates, Amman and Aljazeera and it shall dispatch such commercial attaches to Lebanon and China in the near future. Moreover, such countries as Vietnam, Indonesia, South Korea, and European countries namely Serbia, Germany, Spain and Italy are included in dispatch plan of the Iranian commercial attaches accordingly (Kabiri, 2014).

Masoud Daneshmand, Chairman of Iran and Emirates Joint Chamber of Commerce and member of the delegating party of Iran Chamber of Commerce in export states: “If we don’t want to lose or no losing economy, we must lie in an equal balance with other nations in global exchanges. I do not agree to the viewpoint stating that we do not have production focused on export. We have had scientific investment in petrochemical products. Presently, we are one of the largest producers of Ethylene in the world. This is not raw sale. Instead, it is industrial production of our nation. We have some products for export in different fields. If we join World Trade Organization (WTO), we are able to change our potentials to actual facilities. Thus, we must overcome the sanctions and get out of the separating area of mechanisms. If we enter worldwide area of economy, suitable ground is established for export; production will be promoted and macroeconomic indices will grow in our nation accordingly. We must enter into interaction with international mechanisms and benefit from the worldwide space for development of our insurance and banking system. This is an exceptional opportunity both for economic activists involved in goods production and exporters as well as those who are engaged in commercial services such as transportation, insurance and inspection (Iran and Emirates Chamber of Commerce, 2014).

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### Research Literature

Foreign trade and its relation with economic growth is one of the very controversial subjects especially in choosing development strategies in under development countries. There is still no agreement among economists on the case how commercial policies relate to the rate of economic growth.

In economic literature it has been emphasized that there is a relationship between international trade and reciprocal growth. There are two fundamental issues about the effect of economic growth on international trade: A. The effect of growth on exchange conditions. B. The effect of growth- through the effect of international trade on economic welfare (Shown, 1992).

Sheehey (1990) and Salehi (1991) indicated the positive effect on export promotion on production growth. Relying on studies conducted, no desirable academic and scientific researches have been conducted about the said subject either inside or outside the nation and what has existed more was duty description and activities of the commercial attaches of different nations that have been studied. However, corresponding documents of the Iran Trade Promotion Center have completely been studied and proper information has been obtained in the field of commercial attaches accordingly.

In this research, a model has been used to indicate expectations. In this model, the expectations of exporters from the commercial attaches are divided into four general classes:

- Information Expectations: Commercial attaches must collect all economic, financial, industrial, and commercial and trade information of the target market and provide the said information for exporters.
- Communication Expectations: The commercial attaches provide the grounds for visitations, communication and conclusion of contracts between the exporters and the foreign party.
- Legal Expectations: Commercial attaches help the Iranian tradesmen upon occurrence of disputes and legal problems.
- Marketing Expectations: Providing marketing counseling, the commercial attaches assist the Iranian tradesmen and exporters for penetration, maintenance and promotion of market.

### Research Hypotheses

Commercial attaches have not been successful in realization of the expectations of the Iranian exporters in the country subject of study. The expectations of exporters from the commercial attaches are divided into four general classes:

- Hypothesis1: Exporters expect that commercial attaches collect market information and provide the said information for the exporters.
- Hypothesis2: Exporters expect that commercial attaches establish a relation among them, the buyers and the customers of target market.
- Hypothesis 3: Exporters expect that commercial attaches help them with legal issues.
- Hypothesis 4: Exporters expect that commercial attaches help them with marketing.

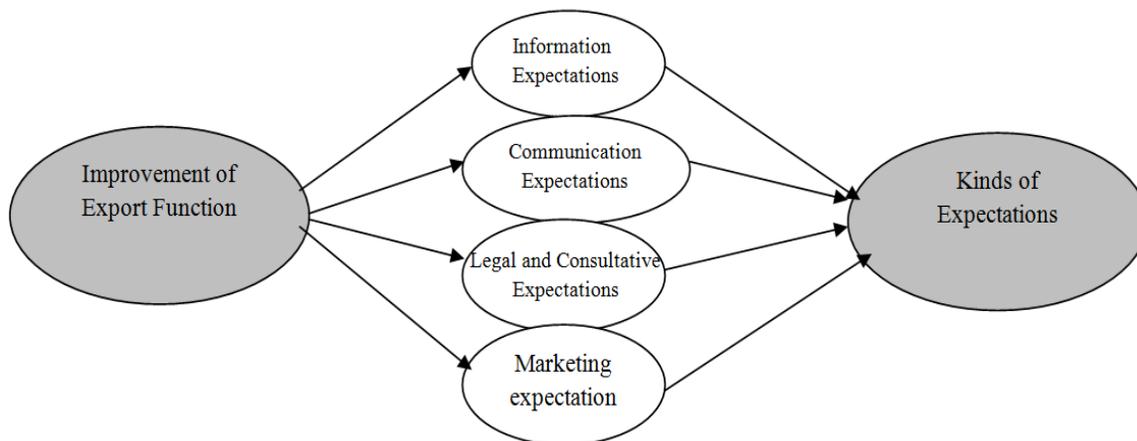


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Model

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### **Research Method**

Since its goal is to study the expectations of the Iranian exporters from the commercial attaches of the Arabian nations by emphasizing on the United Arab Emirates and considering its goal, this research is of applicable type and with respect to data collection, it is of descriptive- correlative-survey type respectively.

### **Statistical Population (Time and Location Area), Sample and Sampling Method**

The statistical population of this research consists of all Iranian businessmen, tradesmen and exporters involved in export to the United Arab Emirates. In order to choose the primary statistical sample that identified and selected exporters, classified sampling method has been used. In order to choose any of repliers to the questionnaire, the said repliers were selected from the primary sample and random sampling method has been used as well. In this research, 150 persons were selected as the members of the statistical sample. 150 questionnaires were distributed among the said persons. Finally, 70 questionnaires were collected.

### **Data Collection Means**

For qualitative analysis of data, collection and using the viewpoints and attitudes of the exporters in connection with export performance of the commercial attaches, the questionnaire was used for this purpose.

The said questionnaire consists of two parts. Part one questions demographic information of repliers. The second and main part comprises 30 multiple-choice questions (five options) using Likert's five-option scale that questions defined operational variables.

### **Validity and Reliability of Assessment Means**

In order to assess reliability, internal validity of the said questionnaire was calculated for an initial sample by Chronbach's Alpha. The value of 0.96 was obtained for the entire questions. This figure shows that the questionnaire used in this survey enjoys the required reliability or in other words validity accordingly.

The method used to determine the reliability of the research questionnaire was conceptual reliability one that was confirmed by some professors and elite. After assurance about validity and reliability of the existing questionnaire as fundamental means for data collection, the said questionnaire was distributed among the statistical sample. Thus, primary raw data was collected for processing, analysis and assessment of correctness or incorrectness of the research hypotheses. Summary of results obtained from these tests are given as follows.

### **Findings**

Considering the educational background, the most frequency is at bachelor's degree level as 51.4% and the least frequency is at associate's degree level given as 2.9% of repliers. Regarding record of involvement in export, the most frequency refers to the record of more than 10 years given as 37.1% and the least record is less than 1 year as 4.3% respectively. With respect to record of activity in the Persian Gulf nations, the most frequency is the record over ten years as 17.1% and the least frequency is given as 7.1% for record less than one year.

Considering record of involvement in export to the United Arab Emirates, the most frequency is the record over ten years as 15.7% and the least frequency is for the record between 1 and 5 years and 5 through 10 years as 10% each.

The working fields obtained from the questionnaire were: Petrochemistry, rubber and plastic, foodstuffs, handicrafts, automotive parts manufacturing, mining industries, agricultural products and metal industries. From among the aforesaid working fields, the most frequency was for foodstuff given as 14.3% and the least frequency was for the three fields of automotive manufacturing, metal industries and agricultural products given as 1.4% respectively.

Here in this research, for study of authenticity and falsehood of research hypotheses, different statistical methods and models such as factor analysis, average comparison test of several populations, Freidman Prioritization Test and the ones were used.

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**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics**

Characteristics	Separating the characteristic	Frequency	Percentage of Frequency
<b>Educational background</b>	High School Diploma	6	%8.6
	Associate's Degree	2	%2.9
	Bachelor's Degree	36	%51.4
	Master's Degree	18	%25.7
	Ph.D.	4	%5.7
	No reply	4	%5.7
	Total	70	%100
<b>Record of involvement in export</b>	Less than one year	3	%4.3
	1-5 year(s)	16	%22.9
	5-10 years	16	%22.9
	Over ten years	26	%37.1
	No reply	9	%12.9
	Total	70	%100
<b>Record of involvement in export to the Persian Gulf nations</b>	Less than one year	5	%7.1
	1-5 year (s)	10	%14.3
	5-10 years	6	%8.6
	Over ten years	12	%17.1
	No reply	37	%52.9
	Total	70	%100
<b>Record of involvement in export to the UAE</b>	Less than one year	8	%11.4
	1-5 year (s)	7	%10
	5-10 years	7	%10
	Over ten years	11	%15.7
	No reply	37	%52.9
	Total	70	%100

**Table 2: Working field of repliers:**

Working field in export	Frequency	Percentage of frequency	
Petrochemistry	4	5.7	
Rubber and plastic	6	8.6	
Foodstuffs	10	14.3	
Handicrafts	3	4.3	
<b>Options</b>	Automotive parts manufacturing	1	1.4
	Mining industries	5	7.1
	Agricultural products	1	1.4
	Metal industries	1	1.4
	No reply	39	55.7
Total	70	100.0	

Explorative factor analysis of the 1<sup>st</sup> rank was conducted for four types of expectations. Considering Bartlett's Test and KMO figure for all four cases, it was found that relying on the result obtained as the figure >0.8 and significant figure of Bartlett's test (sig <0.05), corresponding data is suitable for fulfillment of factor analysis. Corresponding results are given in the following table in brief:

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**Table 3: Variance and Bartlett’s Test Results:**

Expectations	KMO	Sig.	Bartlett’s Test Result	Total variance	Total number of questions
Information	0.890	0.000	Confirmed	75.73	9
Communication	0.870	0.000	Confirmed	70.66	6
Legal	0.837	0.000	Confirmed	68.013	7
Marketing	0.816	0.000	Confirmed	60.622	8

Fitness of all questions in the said four areas of factory analysis process has been confirmed since common figure of questions was >0.50.

Relying on the above table, the variance clarified for information expectations shows that these questions constitute one factor in general and this clarifies a factor for about 75.73% of variance within the area of information expectations. It actually reveals good validity of questions in this area accordingly.

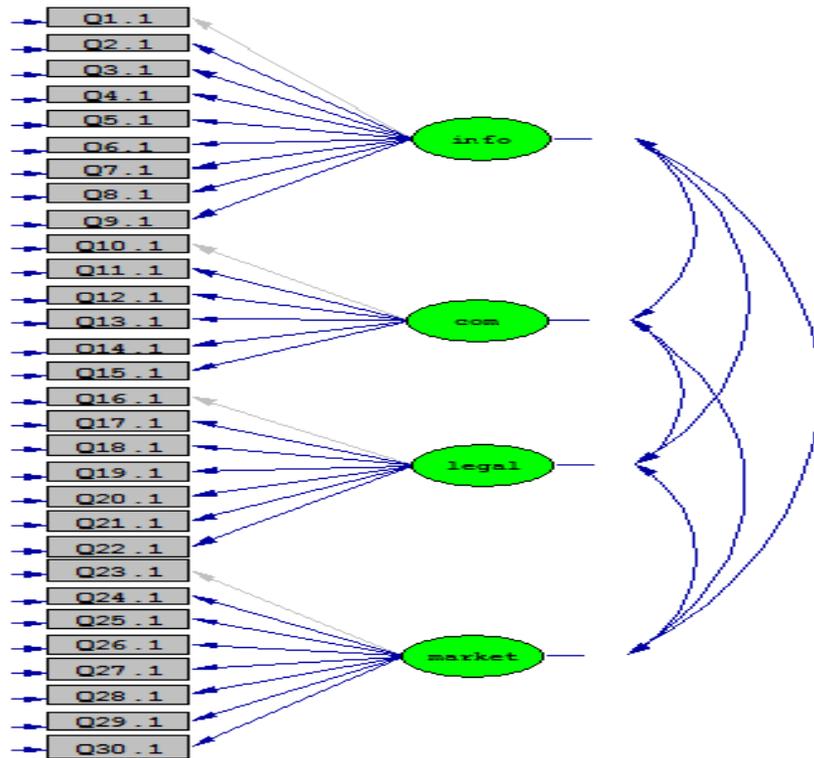
The above table shows that these questions constitute one factor in general. This factor clarifies and covers a factor within a variance of 70.66% in the area of Communication expectations. It reveals good validity of questions in this area accordingly.

According to the above table, with respect to the legal area, the questions constitute one factor in general. This factor covers a variance of about 68.013% within legal area and it confirms good validity of the questions in this area.

Finally, regarding the area of marketing, the questions constitute one factor in general. This factor covers a variance of about 60.622% of area of marketing expectations. In fact, it reveals good validity of the questions in the said area.

According to explorative factor analysis, we came up with similar results and validity of all questions has been confirmed.

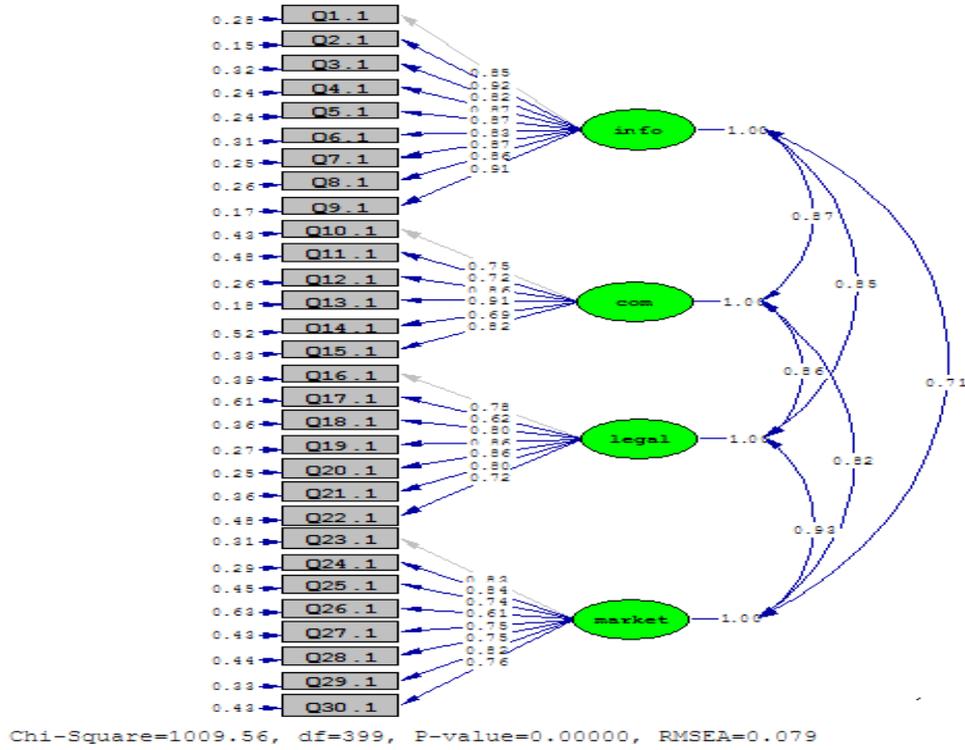
Confirmed factory analysis of first rank of expectations is given as follows:



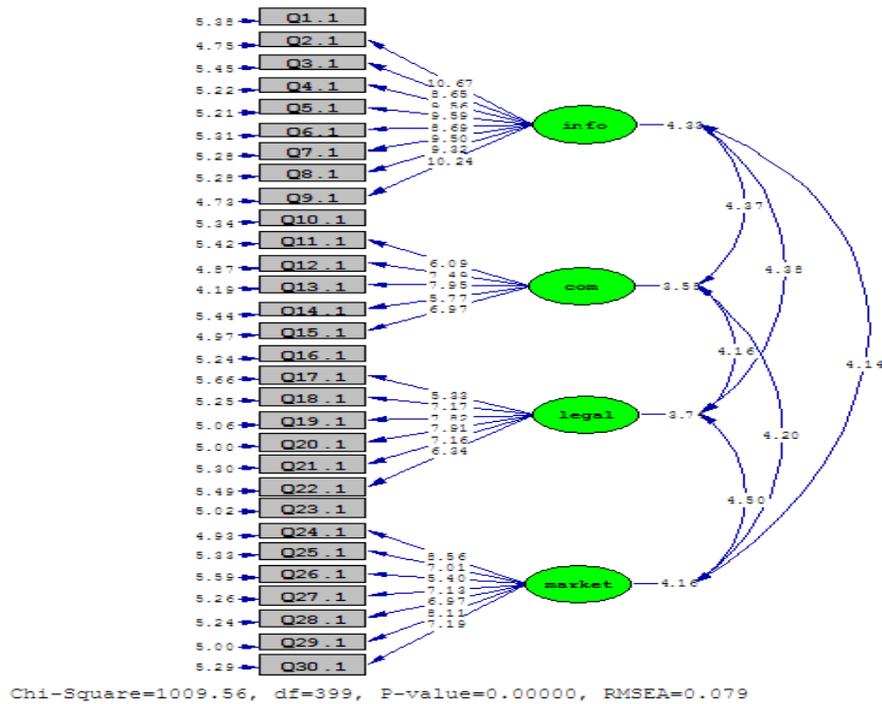
**Figure 2: The conceptual model**

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**Model Hypotheses:** There is a significant and positive relationship between hidden variables and corresponding indices.



**Figure 3: Standard Estimation Model**



**Figure 4: Significant Figures Model**

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As it is seen, the model is in good condition in terms of proportion indices because the ratio of K-2/degree of freedom equals to 2.53 and it is < the permissible value of 3. RMSEA value of the model equals to 0.079 and it is <0.08 accordingly.

As it is seen, all parameters of the said model have been significant because all parameters of the model have become significant because the figure of significance of all parameters are >1.96. Correlations among the components of the expectations have become significant as well. Thus, all model hypotheses are confirmed.

In order to test Hypothesis 1 that implies “Exporters expect the commercial attaches collect market information and provide them with such information”, we have

Hypothesis zero (H<sub>0</sub>): The information performance of commercial attaches has been undesirable from the viewpoint of the exporters.

Opposite Hypothesis: The information performance of commercial attaches has been desirable from the viewpoint of the exporters.

**Table 4: T-Test for Information Performance**

Variable	t value	Degree of freedom	Figure of significance	Average difference	95% as reliable distance for difference	
					Low level	High level
					$\mu = 3$	
Information Performance	-5.459	50	0.000	-0.75626	-1.0345	-0.4780

Considering the above table, for an error of 0.05, t value equals to -5.45 which is < than t value of the table at level of 0.05. With respect to the value of figure of significance of the table, the average is <3. Thus, H<sub>0</sub> is hereby confirmed. Consequently, it may be said that at reliability level of 95%, information performance of commercial attaches has been undesirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

The status of every single performance indices is given in the following table:

Indices	t value	Degree of freedom	Figure of significance	Average difference	95% as reliable distance for difference	
					Low level	High level
					$\mu = 3$	
1 <sup>st</sup>	-5.234	50	.000	-.74510	-1.0311	-.4591
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-5.699	48	.000	-.83673	-1.1319	-.5416
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-5.463	50	.000	-.84314	-1.1531	-.5331
4 <sup>th</sup>	-5.261	49	.000	-.76000	-1.0503	-.4697
5 <sup>th</sup>	-5.215	45	.000	-.80435	-1.1150	-.4937
6 <sup>th</sup>	-4.319	49	.000	-.72000	-1.0550	-.3850
7 <sup>th</sup>	-3.685	50	.001	-.62745	-.9694	-.2855
8 <sup>th</sup>	-5.567	50	.000	-.74510	-1.0139	-.4762
9 <sup>th</sup>	-4.024	46	.000	-.70213	-1.0534	-.3509

As it is observed, status of all indices of information performance is undesirable.

Considering H<sub>2</sub>, we have:

H<sub>0</sub>: Communication performance of commercial attaches has been undesirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

Opposite Hypothesis: Communication performance of commercial attaches has been desirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

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**Table 5: T-Test for Communication performance**

Variable Communication performance	t value	Degree of freedom	Figure of significance	Average difference	95% as reliable distance for difference	
					Low level	High level
					$\mu = 3$	
	-4.814	50	0.000	-0.74020	-1.0490	-0.4314

Considering the above table, for error of 0.05, the value of t equals to -4.814. The said value is < than of t value at level of 0.05. With respect to the value of figure of significance of the table, the average is <3. Thus,  $H_0$  is here by confirmed. It may be said that at reliability level of 95%, Communication performance of commercial attaches has been undesirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

The status of every single indices of Communication performance is given in the following table:

Indices	t value	Degree of freedom	Figure of significance	Average difference	95% as reliability distance for difference	
					Low level	High level
					$\mu = 3$	
10 <sup>th</sup>	-4.014	49	.000	-.70000	-1.0504	-.3496
11 <sup>th</sup>	-4.069	49	.000	-.70000	-1.0457	-.3543
12 <sup>th</sup>	-5.575	50	.000	-.92157	-1.2536	-.5895
13 <sup>th</sup>	-4.592	49	.000	-.76000	-1.0926	-.4274
14 <sup>th</sup>	-3.967	47	.000	-.70833	-1.0675	-.3491
15 <sup>th</sup>	-3.771	45	.000	-.67391	-1.0338	-.3140

As it is observed, status of all indices of Communication performance has been undesirables.

In order to test Hypothesis 3, we have:

$H_0$ : Legal performance of commercial attaches has been undesirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

Opposite Hypothesis: Legal performance of commercial attaches has been desirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

**Table 6: T-Test for legal performance**

Variable Legal performance	t value	Degree of freedom	Figure of significance	Average difference	95% as reliability distance for difference	
					Low level	High level
					$\mu = 3$	
	-6.365	50	0.000	-0.88982	-1.1706	-0.6090

Considering the error of 0.05, t value equals to -6.365 which is < than of t value of the table at the level of 0.05. Regarding the value of figure of significance, the average is <3. Thus,  $H_0$  is hereby confirmed. It can be said that at reliability level of 95%, legal performance of commercial attaches has been undesirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

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The status of every single legal performance indices is given as follows:

Indices	t value	Degree of freedom	Figure of significances	Difference of average	95% as reliability distance for difference	
					Low level	High level
					$\mu = 3$	
16 <sup>th</sup>	-6.788	48	.000	-.97959	-1.2697	-.6894
17 <sup>th</sup>	-6.247	47	.000	-.93750	-1.2394	-.6356
18 <sup>th</sup>	-5.912	48	.000	-.95918	-1.2854	-.6330
19 <sup>th</sup>	-4.614	49	.000	-.82000	-1.1771	-.4629
20 <sup>th</sup>	-4.896	48	.000	-.83673	-1.1804	-.4931
21 <sup>st</sup>	-5.564	47	.000	-.89583	-1.2197	-.5719
22 <sup>nd</sup>	-5.304	45	.000	-.89130	-1.2298	-.5528

As it is observed, status of all indices of legal performance is undesirable.

Considering Hypothesis 4, we have:

H<sub>0</sub>: Legal performance of commercial attaches has been undesirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

Opposite Hypothesis: Legal performance of commercial attaches has been desirable from the viewpoint of the exporters.

**Table 7: T-Test for Marketing performance**

Variable Marketing performance	t value	Degree of freedom	Figure of significance	Difference of average	95% as reliability distance for difference	
					Low level	High level
					$\mu = 3$	
	-5.468	50	0.000	-0.78560	-1.0742	-0.4970

Regarding the error of 0.05, t value equals to -5.46. The said value is < than of t value of the table at level of 0.05. Considering the value of figure of significance of table, the value of average is <3. Thus, H<sub>0</sub> is hereby confirmed. Consequently, at the reliability level of 95%, marketing performance of commercial attaches has been undesirable from the viewpoint of exporters.

The status of every single indices of marketing performance is given as follows:

Indices	t value	Degree of freedom	Figure of significance	Difference of average	95% as reliability distance for difference	
					Low level	High level
					$\mu = 3$	
23 <sup>rd</sup>	-4.040	47	.000	-.72917	-1.0922	-.3661
24 <sup>th</sup>	-6.301	46	.000	-.95745	-1.2633	-.6516
25 <sup>th</sup>	-6.015	47	.000	-.93750	-1.2511	-.6239
26 <sup>th</sup>	-4.260	48	.000	-.67347	-.9913	-.3556
27 <sup>th</sup>	-4.828	45	.000	-.82609	-1.1707	-.4814
28 <sup>th</sup>	-4.126	43	.000	-.70455	-1.0489	-.3602
29 <sup>th</sup>	-4.000	42	.000	-.72093	-1.0846	-.3573
30 <sup>th</sup>	-3.812	45	.000	-.71739	-1.0965	-.3383

As it is observed, status of all indices of marketing performance has been undesirable.

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### **CONCLUSION**

#### ***Discussion and Conclusion***

Studies reveal that there is a great difference between expectations of exporters (desirable condition) and what has been conducted by the commercial attaches of the Arabian nations by emphasizing on the United Arab Emirates (existing condition). The results of data analysis and studies show that there are many weak points within the area of information expectations including (presenting economic information of target market by a commercial attaches, providing commercial information about target market by the commercial attaches, presenting legal information about target market by the commercial attaches, providing monetary financial information about target market by the commercial attaches, presenting information about export of technical and engineering services to target market by the commercial attaches).

Moreover, there are many weak points with the area of communication expectations (including inviting the Iranian tradesmen and exporters to attend the target markets, establishment of commercial relation of trading and commercial committees of Iran with target markets, establishment of suitable grounds for establishment of relation between Iranian export organizations and unions with the organizations and unions of target market, and utmost efforts made for conclusion of contracts between Iranian exporters and investors of the target market, follow up and efforts made for conclusion of contracts for providing technical and engineering services from Iran at target markets).

The results of data analysis and studies reveal that there weak points within the area of legal expectations (including providing specialized legal consultations with exporters for fulfillment of export, follow up and efforts made for dispute settlement and removing legal problems between the Iranian exporters and the tradesmen of target market, presenting legal recommendations prior to establishment of commercial ties, providing legal recommendations during establishment of commercial ties and presenting legal recommendations after establishment of commercial ties).

The results of data analysis and surveys show that there are weak points within the area of marketing expectations (including providing consultation services in the area of marketing to the Iranian exporters and consultation for economic agencies to use modern marketing publicity methods, providing marketing services for packaging and standardization of the Iranian goods for export to the target market, planning and erection of international exhibitions at target market for introducing the Iranian exportable products, introducing the Iranian goods and services to the target market, making the Iranian exporters become familiar with the fields and effects of the effective penetration and advertising of the Iranian goods at the target market).

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