

## **A TEST OF HOWARD- SHEATH’S CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF SHOPPING BEHAVIOR ON SPORT CONSUMERS IN IRAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present study aims to test Howard- Sheath’s conceptual model of shopping behavior from the perspective of sports consumers in Iran. Likert’s five grade scale was used as the main tool for data collection. The statistical population includes the consumers of sporting goods in Iran in 1393. The population of consumer goods and sporting goods is the country in 1393. Due to the number of population is infinite, the sample size was determined 385 participants by using Morgan table, and the random sampling method is used. Descriptive, inferential statistics, modeling and structural equations using SPSS software and Amos and LISREL were used to analyze the data. The purpose of this research is applied and the method of collecting information is survey. The results showed that among 18 straight routes in the study, 14 routes have significant impact factors and only 4 routes have no significant impact factors. After removal of routes with the least impact factors and adding 6 other routes to the prototype, ultimately final model was presented.

**Keywords:** *Conceptual Model, Huard- Sheath’s Shopping Behavior, Sports Consumers*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In a world full of change today, companies and institutions will be successful if they care about rapidly evolving world, the rapid developments in the market, competitive conditions, distribution systems, mass media, new technologies and marketing and market management.

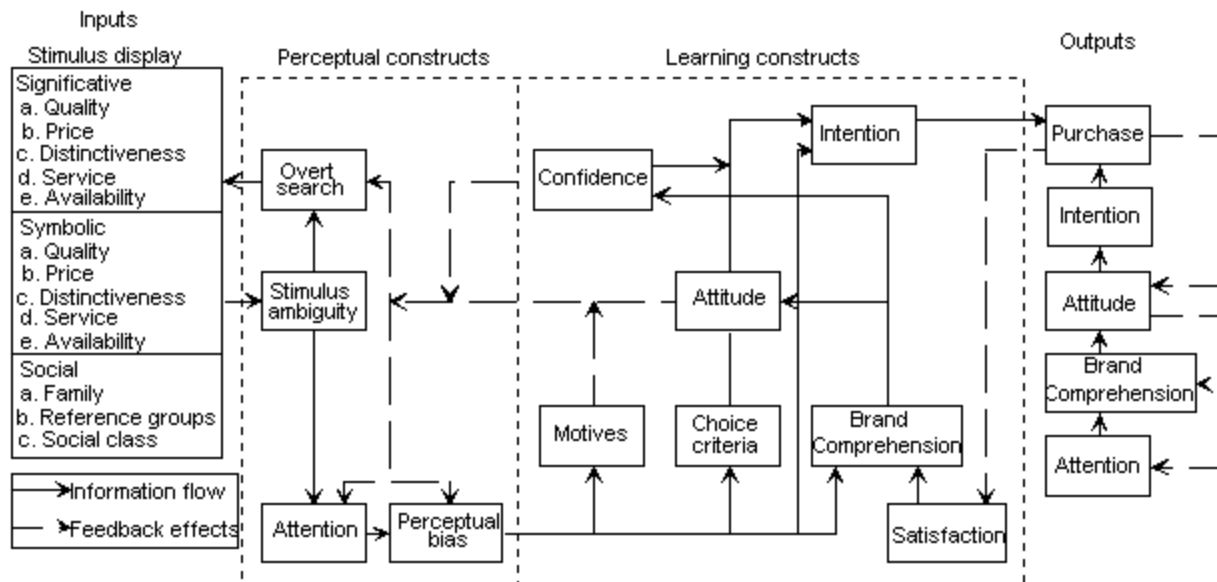
Companies will gain the reputation if they pay attention to customer satisfaction and through better satisfying their needs and as well as minding social welfare and macro interests of society, they can get ahead of their competitors (Meamari, 2007). The prerequisite of costumers’ satisfaction is to fully meet their needs, accurately identify their wants, expectations, intentions, capabilities and limitations in the products which they buy. With access to such information, the factors that influence consumer’ behavior can be recognized and use it in taking decisions on marketing of companies. Therefore products must comply with the expected benefits of customers. In this regard, recognizing different dimensions of stimulus and their impact on behavior of Sporting goods consumers is essential (Salar, 2007).

The general impression is that consumer’s behavior means how to buy goods by individuals, but in fact consumer’s behavior is something more than the purchase of goods and services by individuals (Ghasemi, 2005).

Anderson (1965) has offered one of the first models of consumer’s behavior. This model recognizes the importance of information in decision making process of the consumer and stresses the importance of their attitude in terms of repeating purchase behavior. The second model, which is focused on the decision to buy a new product, was proposed by Nicosia (1976). This model emphasizes on companies’ efforts to communicate with the consumer, and help consumers choose a particular product (Abdullatt & Emam, 2012). Shopping behavior model of Howard - Sheath is the most important model of all the models of consumer behavior, because it emphasizes on the importance of consumer’s shopping process and it guides us to better understand winding path of consumer’s behavior. This model which involves the most economic, psychological, social behavior of consumer when he or she takes decision, has composed of 4 parts and it has set based on the form of inputs and outputs. The data includes the collection of information which is composed of numerous variables that can affect the decision-making process. Outputs are the

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actual consumer purchase. The process of decision making in order to buy goods or services by consumers is located between inputs and outputs (Peter and Olson, 2005).



**Figure 1: Factors influencing consumer's purchasing behavior based on HOWARD SHETH**

This model shows three levels of decision-making:

1. The first level describes how to solve widespread problem: consumer has no basic information about a brand at this level. In this situation, a consumer acquires information about the different brands in the market before to buy.
2. The second level describes how to solve limited problem: the situation is dedicated to consumers who have little information about the market, or they have little knowledge about what they want to buy.
3. The third level is about the behavior of permanent answer: in this level a consumer has enough information about different brands and he can distinguish between different features of each product, it means that he decides to buy a particular product. According to the model Howard - Sheath, there are four large set of variables such as: (input, cognitive structure, learning structure, output, and display of stimulus) (Schiff and Kanuk, 2004).

### A) Input

Input variables have been composed of three types of stimulus (information sources) within the consumer environment. Marketer provides information about brand features (marker stimulus) and product features (symbolic stimulus) verbally or visually.

### B) Understanding and Learning Structure

The main part of this model deals with the involved psychological variables, when the consumer is thinking about decision making.

### C) Output

Outputs are the results of learning and cognitive variables and how consumers respond to attention variables, brand perception, attitudes and intentions (Schiff man, and Kanuk, 2004).

### D) External Variables

External variables have no direct impact on the decision making process. However, some effective external variables include the importance of shopping, consumer personality traits, and religion and time pressure. Bajayan *et al.*, (2014) in a study evaluated the effect of five internal factors, namely, the character, culture, materialism, desire of the joy of shopping, and intention to buy and stimulate the buying behavior and stimulus, using structural equations modeling. The results showed that three structures of materialism,

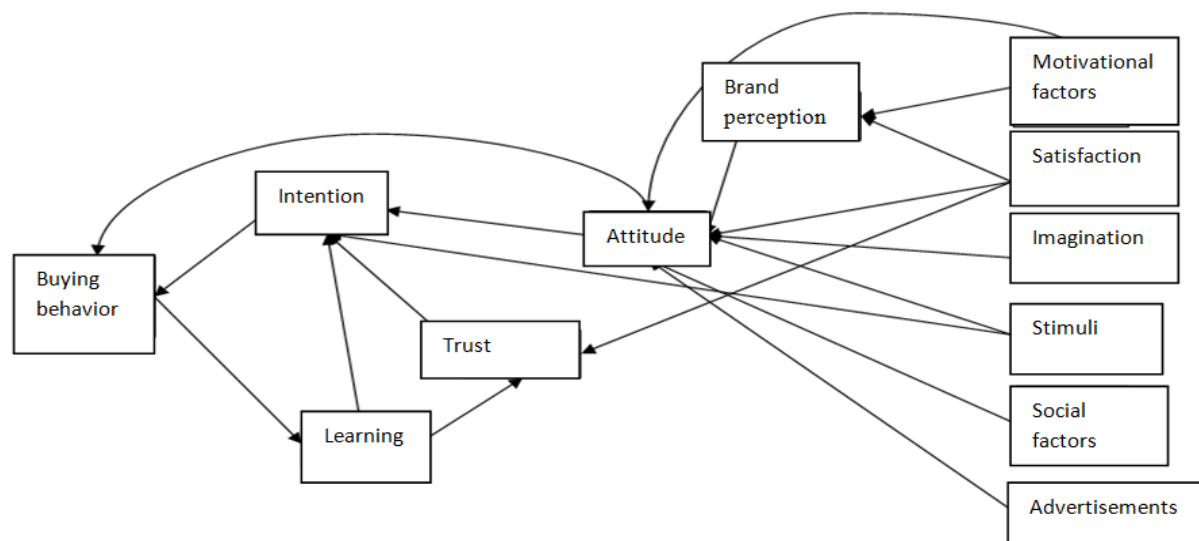
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tending to enjoy shopping, and intend to buy and stimulus, have a significant and positive relationship with immediate buying behavior and there was a significant relationship between cultural structure of pluralism and the structures of extraversion and conscientiousness. Importantly, their findings showed that the influence of internal variables on buying behavior and immediate buying among different genders is different (Bajbyan *et al.*, 2014). Yoshida *et al.*, (2013) in a study entitled "Innovation of the sports event: concept, measurement and its impact on consumer behavior," offered the concept of innovation of sporting event consisting of six dimensions (the player's performance, access to respect, Dining technology, environment of aesthetics, support community, and loyalty programs), and studied their relationships and their impact on consumer behavior. The results showed that the effects of these six dimensions on general innovation are contingent on consumer age (Yoshida *et al.*, 2010). Lang *et al.*, (2012) in a study entitled "The Impact of store image and perceived value of the product on the consumer's purchase intention" achieved these results: 1) store image has a major impact on the perceived value of the product. 2) The perceived value of the product has the impact on the customer's purchase intention. 3) Store image affects on purchase intention of customers. 4) The perceived value of the product has intermediary influence on the relationship between store image and purchase intention of the customer (Lang *et al.*, 2010). Tejari and Torkfar (2011) examined the "influence of friends, social and family status and creating of motivation of the audience to attend in the games of the Premier League of Iran". Face validity of the findings of the structural equation modeling showed that the activities of friends, both directly and through other intermediary factors have the most influence in attracting spectators to the tournament whereas community pride is the least influential factor. In general, the results showed that due to the deep cultural tissue, factors such as family and friendly relations in various age groups play an important role in attracting the audiences and this requires the attention, comprehensive and more accurate planning to attract them to the tournament. Also, community pride which has the least important role in attracting audiences in our country, because of the importance and value of prejudices and national measures affecting on the spectators' attendance at the sporting events should be enhanced (Tejari and Torkfar, 2011). Ramezaninejad *et al.*, (2013) in a study evaluated the 'motivation and satisfaction of the spectators of freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling in Premier League of Iran ". The findings showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between all aspects of motivation and satisfaction of the spectators. The more motivational factors are strengthened and the conditions of the audiences' presence are provided, the more they will be satisfied and the possibility of their presence will be increased (Ramezaninejad *et al.*, 2013). Mehrabi *et al.*, (2013) "reviewed and prioritized the motives of spectators and athletes in the local exercise of Chookhe wrestling". The results showed that the most important motivational factors of spectators includes team affiliation (the presence of star wrestlers, watching favorite wrestlers) and recreation (enjoy of sports, beauty of Chookhe wrestling) and the most important motivational factors of athletes is psychological factor (coping with negative emotions, improve self-esteem and value to life) and physical factors (health promotion and weight control) is (Mehrabi *et al.*, 1392). Funk *et al.*, (2012) studied "sports consumer motivation: autonomous orientation and having control on the behavior of fans". Incentives of sports consumer explained more than 60% of the variance in the game, using the media, wearing team's clothes and buying team's products. The results showed that motivation of sports consumer, including the behavior with intrinsic motivation that imagines the consuming behavior of physical activity as a final goal for itself as well as the behavior with extrinsic motivation as participating in sports activities is to achieve instrumental result apart from its activities (Funk *et al.*, 2012). Kim *et al.*, (2010) conducted a study entitled "Barriers and stimulus and providing a new model to explain sports consumer behavior ". The results showed that joining a team for the first time as an internal stimulus has been included within the model and explain the variance about 21 percent in attendance of spectators. Team's failure has been included in the model as internal barriers and almost explained variance about 10 percent. Based on these results, the ability to correctly assess the barriers and incentives gives sports marketers the opportunity to more effectively provide services to their fans and attract new fans (Kim *et al.*, 2010). Nabil (2013) conducted a study to "examine the buying behavior of consumers in the tablet computer market in Moscow". In this study he used consumer behavior model of Cutler (2001), SOR, model of response-organisms and the response. According to this model, two types of

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stimulus: 1. marketing stimuli, including P4 (price, place, promotion, and product) and 2. Environmental stimuli including technological, political, cultural and economical factors enter the consumer's black box, i.e. his mind and his cognition and finally affect on the response and final decision of the buyer. The results showed that the buyers of computers in Moscow prefer to buy the tablet products on the basis of the best price / quality ratio. Men are the biggest buyers of this type of computers and Apple Pad companies are the most popular tablets brand in Russia. Other brands like Samsung and Asus Pad are also becoming popular brands because of having good appearance and cheaper price (Ashrfvl, 2013).

According to literature of the research and review of numerous studies in the field of consumer behavior, particularly consumers of sporting goods, general and primary research model is presented.



**Figure 2: Localized Conceptual Model of the study based on Howard Sheath Model and literature review of research**

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

The purpose of this research is applied and the method of collecting information is survey and the method of research is descriptive. The researcher-made questionnaire is used to collect the data. To analyze this model, according to the conceptual model of the study, variables of social factors, motivational factors, brand satisfaction, mental perception of the brand, stimuli and advertisements as exogenous variables, brand perception, brand satisfaction, trust, learning and experience, and purchase intention as the dependent variable or mediator variables, and variable of buying behavior as a final dependent variable or endogenous were considered.

### Population and Sample

As the statistical population of the study is unlimited, according to Morgan Table and Cochran relationship sample size of the study is considered 385 participants. For this purpose, 400 questionnaires were distributed among sports consumers in 2014 and subjects voluntarily completed the questionnaire of the study. Before analyzing the data, the defaced questionnaires and more than 10 unanswered items have been identified and 21 cases were eliminated. So, for a final analysis, samples decreased from 400 cases to 379 cases.

### The Method of Analysis of Research Data

Two-step approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was used to check the model of the study.

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**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of study variables**

Alpha coefficient	The standard deviation	Mean	variation range	Number of items	variables of study
0.66	2.26	11.82	10	3	Social factors
0.83	3.40	19.39	16	6	Motivational factors
0.70	3.90	27.25	21	7	Stimuli
0.58	1.59	7.72	7	2	Advertising
0.70	3.73	21.65	18	6	Brand satisfaction
0.71	3.32	18.87	15	5	Mental perception of the brand
0.64	2.42	15.58	11	4	Perception
0.72	3.80	17.43	18	6	Attitude
0.61	2.54	15.23	11	5	trust
0.65	3.29	21.67	18	5	shopping intention
0.63	2.41	14.79	13	4	Learning and Experience
0.60	1.49	3.22	7	3	Buying behavior

**Table 2: The correlation between two variables of the study**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Social factors</b>	1											
<b>Motivational factors</b>	0.21	1										
<b>Stimuli</b>	0.14	0.35	1									
<b>Advertising</b>	0.33	0.24	0.08	1								
<b>Brand satisfaction</b>	0.15	0.31	0.30	0.10	1							
<b>Mental perception of the brand</b>	0.11	0.08	0.18	0.12	0.10	1						
<b>Perception</b>	0.22	0.25	0.17	0.17	0.25	0.276	1					
<b>Attitude</b>	0.11	0.24	0.20	0.08	0.19	0.360	188	1				
<b>trust</b>	0.16	0.15	0.18	0.09	0.24	0.397	0.51	0.22	1			
<b>shopping intention</b>	0.04	0.33	0.28	0.21	0.24	0.095	0.21	0.10	0.13	1		
<b>Learning and Experience</b>	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.24	0.12	0.136	0.19	0.04	0.14	0.32	1	
<b>Buying behavior</b>	-	0.13	0.06	0.08	0.15	0.010	0.11	0.19	0.12	0.32	0.07	1

$P < 0.01, p < 0.05$

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Then the developed model due to the nature of the discussed concepts in this study was tested using structural equation modeling. It is worth noting that the analysis was carried out by using statistical software eighteenth version of SPSS, structural equation modeling software nineteenth version of AMOS and structural equation modeling software version 8.8 of LISREL. It was shown in Table 1.

Results Table 1 shows that the reliability coefficients of the variables (Cronbach's alpha) are in the desirable range. According to the above table, variables of motivational factors have the highest alpha coefficient (0.83) and variables of advertising have the lowest alpha (0.66). In addition to this, stimuli variables having the mean and standard deviation ( $3.90 \pm 27.25$ ) and variable of purchasing behavior with the mean and standard deviation ( $3.22 \pm 1.49$ ) have the highest and lowest mean and standard deviation respectively. Table 2 shows the correlation between two variables of the study.

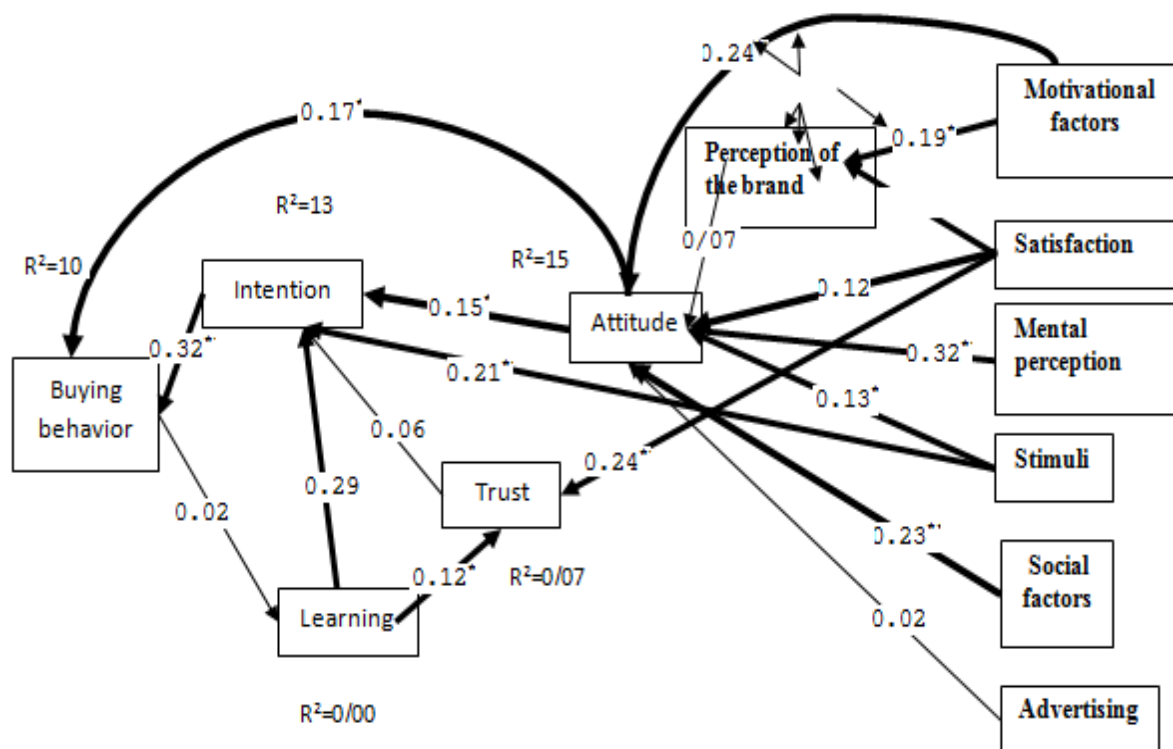
### Test the Conceptual Model

A two-step approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was used to check the model of the study. Figure 3

**Table 3: Overall index of fit of the prototype and the final research model**

SRMR	RMSE	TLI	NFI	CFI	AGF	GFI	K <sup>2</sup> /df	Df	P	K <sup>2</sup>
A					I					
Less than 0.1		Greater than 0.8					Less than 3		Significance of the test	Accepted domain
0.054	0.043	0.81	0.82	0.84	0.85	0.90	2.88	33	0.001	47.32
All indexes of fit of the prototype are in the desirable domain.										
0.047	0.031	0.97	0.94	0.98	0.96	0.98	1.35	29	0.001	39.06
										The final model Condition

All indexes of fit of the final model are in the excellent domain



**Figure 3: Coefficients of the standardized path, Significance and coefficients of determining variables the endogenous model (Maximum likelihood method P < 0.01, p < 0.05)**



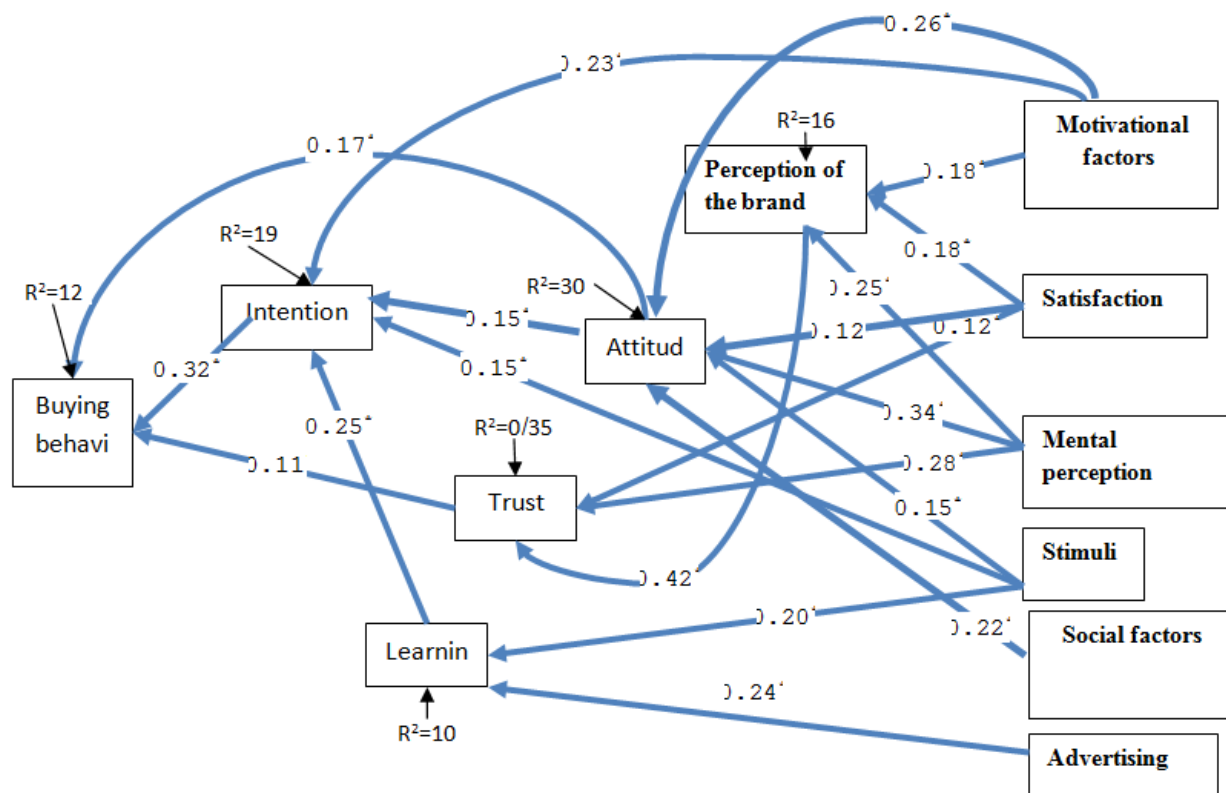
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As Table 3 shows, all indexes of fit of the model are in the desirable domain. Overall index of fit of the model is desirable. At the second level, after the initial analysis, path coefficients of the model and coefficients of determination of endogenous variables were studied. Figure 3 shows these results (significant routes have been highlighted).

The results presented in Figure 3 shows that 14 routes out of 18 direct routes in the model has significant coefficients, and 4 other routes are not Significant. Factors determining the endogenous variables of the model are also desirable. Therefore, the fit of structural research model is desirable.

### The Final Research Model

According to research literature in this field and, with the addition of six routes including the route of mental imagery to brand perception, the route of mental imagery to the trust, the route of stimuli to learning and experience, route of the advertising to learning and experience, the route of perception of the brand to trust and the route of motivational factors to the buying intention of the model, the researchers were forced to present their proposed model. So insignificant routes of the model were removed from the model on the basis of the lowest level of significance, and re-analysis was carried out so that the final model could be extracted based on extracted data in Iranian sample. Figure 4 shows the final model.



**Figure 4: Coefficients of standardized route, significance and coefficients of determining endogenous variables of the final model**

(Removal of insignificant routes) (Maximum likelihood method; \*\* $p < 0.01$  / \*  $p < 0.05$ )

### Conclusion and Suggestions

Due to the direct impact of the most important research variables on the attitudes and buying intention and finally on buying behavior of sport consumers, the following suggestions are offered.

1) One of the results of this study was the confirmation of the direct effect of mental imagery on sport consumers' attitudes. So distributors and retailers of the sport goods should try to change customers' perceptions of mental imagery and these changes should be positive and should be in accordance with the

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dimensions that are important for its customers of that market. These changes can be in physical environment, service quality and desirable mental image of Sport brands.

2) The other result of this study was confirmation of a direct impact of experience on buying intention of sports consumers. Experience includes pleasure, entertainment, emerging and consumer involvement with the fashion, therefore, it is recommended that manufacturers and distributors of sports products should provide new experience for their customers and consumers by a variety of products or services.

3) The results showed that personal satisfaction has a direct impact on sport consumers' confidence. Therefore, it is recommended to satisfy customers of the quality of the products and services and make them have a feeling of relaxation, security, joy and happiness and make their trust and loyalty increase and maintain current customers and increase new customers.

4) The results showed that sport consumers' motivations have a direct impact on their perception. So it is recommended to companies and sports organizations and manufacturers and suppliers of goods and services to pay attention to sports consumers' motivations including internal motivation (pleasure, experience, sense of belonging and integration and self-esteem...) and extrinsic motivations (access to goods and services, after-sales service, discounts and bonus) that directly affect their perceptions.

5) The results suggest that social factors affect the attitude of consumers. Sports consumer's behavior is influenced by social factors such as reference groups, family, and the role and social status. Sports marketers should consider these factors when they make marketing policies, because these factors affect on consumer's behavior such as their buying behavior.

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