



## The Effect of Social Media Marketing Programs in the Online Retail Industry on Purchase of Sporting Goods

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The current study investigates the effect of social media marketing programs on brand attitudes and consumers' purchase intention of sporting goods in the online retail industry. The case study of this research is Anik online shop.

**Methodology:** A researcher-made questionnaire was designed in this research distributed to the research sample after verifying content validity and structure and its reliability. The statistical population in this research includes members of at least one of the Anik brand social media. Data collection was performed by selecting 559 people using a simple nonprobability sampling method. Structural equation modeling was used in the SPSS and LISREL software.

**Findings:** Results showed that all six research hypotheses are acceptable at a 95% confidence level. The restudy results came showed that the social media marketing program has a significant impact on the retail industry of sports products by influencing consumers' attitudes toward the brand and their shopping tendencies.

**Originality:** Few studies have been done on the social media sports retail industry. Thus, the research results showed us consumers' attitudes toward the brand and their purchasing plans on these platforms.

### Keywords

Anik Online Shop  
Promotional Campaigns  
Purchase Intention  
Relevant Content

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## 1. Introduction

The emergence of the internet as a new and fast tool has changed different aspects of communications (Richter & Koch, 2008). Social media is a phenomenon that has currently been noticed due to the development of the internet. Social media, useful applications, platforms, and online media are used to simplify communication, cooperation, and content sharing (Mishra, 2019). Social media has become an important source to empower, support, and inform customers and to share information with them. Therefore, it has been noticed by marketers a lot (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In fact, the increasing use of social networks has had active organizations in industries and various businesses reflect on new ways to communicate with their customers (Cheong & Morrison, 2008). Due to the fact that social networks are an inseparable part of modern society and are increasingly developing, proper business management and being cautious in investment in the social networks develops companies' businesses and is a tool to achieve loyal customers (Simkhah & Mohamadkhani, 2019). Social networks provide the opportunity for businesses to communicate directly with their customers with low cost and high impact. And, it provides a higher level of efficacy in comparison to traditional marketing communication tools (Berthon et al., 2008). By the increasing expansion of using social media, improving the brand position in the customers' minds using social media is one of the raised topics noticed by many organizations and companies (Weber, 2009). The brand is an intangible asset that reflects the true value of a company and reveals the source of sustainable competitive advantage. Brands provide value-added both for the company and for the consumers (Rajagopal, 2011). Social media is a new strategy that has the capacity of changing public opinion – every hour, minute, even a second (Weber, 2009). Why not change customers' brand attitudes?

Social media provide the opportunity for the companies to present the value of their brand to their consumers directly and without intermediaries and to communicate with them faster. Branding has a significant relation with social media. When an organization uses social media for branding purposes, it should have a proper strategy to professionally use and implement its social media marketing program. A vital matter for marketers and retailers is to be aware of the factors that affect consumers' attitudes and motivations because consumers are increasingly producing content about brands nowadays, which was previously done only by the organizations themselves (Heinonen, 2011). As a result, it is important to know which aspects of the social networks affect consumers' attitudes and motivation. Customers' brand attitude is the basis of consumers' practical actions and plays a vital role in the success and profitability of the company. Because a strong brand leads to company competitive advantage and achieving market leadership in a special sector (Kim & Park, 2005). Brand attitude is the consumers' general evaluation of the brand (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017) and due to the great impact that it has on the final purchase decision, it is noticed by the marketers. Generally, the main factors that bring buying motivation can be consumers' brand attitude, evaluation, and perception of the brand (Moreira et al., 2017).

Now, more than two billion people in the world are members of social networks and spend an average of three hours a day on them. Based on the researches research Iranian

Students Polling Agency), in Iran, 53 percent of the people are members of at least one social network (Farbodium et al., 2017). This considerable growth of the internet penetration rate and use of social media in Iran provides an opportunity for online retailers and organizations. The point that should be considered by the retailers and organizations in which activities in social media are necessary for businesses to be successful and which strategy should be used. Therefore, since any research that would have investigated the effect of social media on brand attitude and consumers' purchase intention of sporting goods in this way could not be found, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of social media marketing programs on brand attitudes and consumers purchase intention of sporting goods in the online retail industry. Investigating the role of social media and its impact on the consumer brand attitude and purchase intention can provide a good insight for organizations so that they can predict customers' behavior with the help of this information and can have a better understanding of the status of their brand in the mind of their customers and in comparison, to their competitors and can make better decisions to improve their marketing programs including their advertising campaigns.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. Social Media and its Types

Nowadays, social media is considered by most business managers in their main programs. Managers and decision-makers of organizations and also business consultants try to realize how they can use these media to increase profitability (Richter & Koch, 2008). Growing companies use social media to release their advertising messages and to collect complete information about the market, customers, visions, and competitors. Social media is creating, releasing, or sharing content by one person to the people by providing horizontal interactions among people (Mishra, 2019). Social media types include collaborative projects, weblogs, content communities, virtual social worlds, virtual game worlds, and social networks. This study focuses on social networks among social media types. Social media is an opportunity, not a threat. Considering social networks as a threat, over the past years in Iran has deprived us of the opportunities that these networks could have provided in educational, public diplomacy, informing, entertainment, and development areas (Ziaeiparvar, 2016).

### 2.2. Social Media Marketing

Marketers have realized the great potential of social media and use it as an important part of their marketing strategy to communicate with customers. Using social media in marketing is known as social media marketing. Social media have the capacity to make customers as marketers and advertisers of an organization, a brand, goods, and services. In this new method of marketing, social media acts as a source of word-of-mouth marketing. Word of mouth marketing is any kind of positive or negative comments about an event, a product, a service, a brand, or a company that consumers share through

the internet (for example, websites, social networks, instant messages, and news feeds) (Mishra, 2019). They talk online about a product or a brand and engage in a marketing activity without realizing it. Organizations can communicate with their individual followers through social network sites. This direct personal communication can gradually create loyalty in followers and potential customers (Weber, 2009).

### **2.3. Internet Retailing**

Retailing is indeed being intermediary which facilitates exchanges between producers and consumers. In the real world, retailing happens in stores or factory outlets. Nowadays, internet retailing is a term that has become common in retailing. Online retailers are those engaged in online retailing. The purpose of online retailers is to sell products or services to people. In today's retailing world, online shopping has become one of the main growing trends, especially in developed countries. Statistics show that the number of people who shop online and also the quantity of online shopping is significantly increasing (Perea Y Monsuwé et al., 2004). The process of this significant change has started in the 90s, at the same time with the emergence of electronic commerce, and has changed the vision of retailing environment (Chen & Chang, 2003). Consumers use the internet not only to buy products and services but also to search online stores and get information about their possible purchases (Demangeot & Broderick, 2007).

### **2.4. Brand Attitude**

In today's competitive market, companies should gain the most positive brand attitude in the consumers' minds to be able to make their brand distinct in comparison to other brands (Alcañiz et al., 2010; Tian & Yuan, 2013). Brand attitude is one of the most important subjects of marketing research and is the consumers' general assessment of the brand, which is an assessment of favorable or unfavorable responses to brand-related stimuli (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). Indeed, brand attitude shapes consumer behavior tendencies in consumers' minds, such as the tendency to buy (Hooker et al., 2019). Attitude is an important concept not only in psychology but also in branding. Some of the researchers have paid special attention to it, and some of the most prominent of them have claimed that brand attitude is a vital element in creating brand equity (Keller, 2001). Customers' brand attitude plays a vital role in the success and profitability of companies because a strong brand leads to the company's competitive advantage and achieving market leadership in a special sector (Kim & Park, 2005). Many researchers have investigated brand attitude to realize its formation process of it. sportswear apparel manufacturers may plan and apply these components to increase the popularity of their brand. The sportswear industry could improve along with brands increasing their market share in competitive markets through the affection of consumers and implementing other components of brand popularity (Saatchian et al., 2021).

Keller (2001), in his paper "Building Customer-Based Brand Equity", developed a model with the same name, which can be a good guideline for marketers to create brand

equity. In this brand attitude model, the main stimulus is brand equity. This model consists of four stages. To reach the next stage, it is necessary to be successful in the previous stage. In the first stage, it should be ensured that the brand is known in the customers' minds. In the second stage, the meaning of the brand should be explained to the customers through tangible or intangible evoking. In the third stage, customers react to the brand based on recognition and brand meaning. At the last stage, the relation between the customer and the brand or loyalty is created. The third stage of this model is related to the brand attitude, which consists of two dimensions of feeling and judgment (Keller, 2001). This model is used in this research to investigate brand attitude (see Figure 1).

### 2.5. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is an important concept because understanding customer behavior is a key factor for companies in customer attraction and customer retention, especially for luxury brands (Salehzadeh & Khazaei Pool, 2017). In brand managing, purchase intention is one of the important factors to predict customer behavior (Soenyoto, 2015). Purchase intention is a concept that shows the assessment of consumers' interests in a product and the probability of purchase.

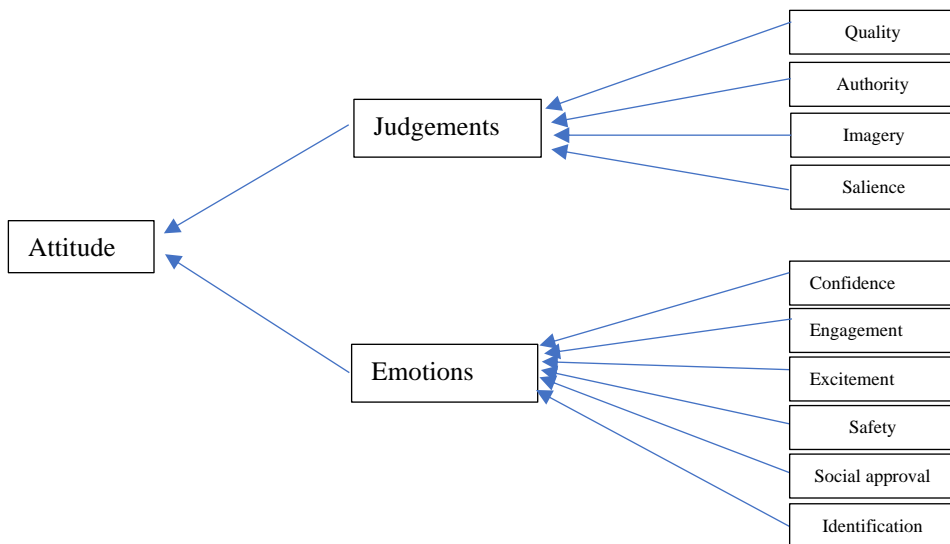


Figure 1. Keller's brand equity model (Reference).

Consumers tend to buy from a brand through which they can get maximum satisfaction (Park et al., 2010). This tendency can be defined as consumers' efforts to buy the products of a brand. The main factors of purchase motivation are consumers' brand attitude, evaluation, and perception. For example, the perceived quality of a brand can improve consumers' evaluation (Moreira et al., 2017). Making purchase intention

in consumers to buy from a particular brand needs a general evaluation of all the brands of a particular product. Based on the multidimensional tendencies model of Laroche et al. (1996), consumers' tendency to choose to buy from a particular brand is based on their evaluations of all the brands in the same category and in the same period of time (Teng et al., 2011).

## 2.6. Conceptual Model and Research Hypotheses

A customer loyalty program is a method in marketing that leads to enhancing the customer's natural and credit personality, which finally results in the customer's further purchases (Lee & Lee, 2019). It has been for many years that customer's loyalty program has become one of the constant and useful methods to increase the number of times the customer visits the place of purchase. For this reason, many shopping centers consider it. In today's competitive world, a loyalty program is sometimes known as a rewards program and is a program to reward customers in order to increase the rate of customer retention and customer satisfaction and to offer them higher value (Bolton et al., 2000). Research has shown that customers refer to the social media websites of the companies to update their information about the products of a brand and also to know about promotional campaigns (Knight, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Therefore, the first hypothesis of the research is as follows:

**Hypothesis 1:** Promotional campaigns in social media has a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude.

Currently, some phrases such as relevant content and content marketing have become popular in the digital marketing world. Content marketing is a strategy in that the company presents valuable and relevant content to attract consumers to their brand, which is done in social media (Human et al., 2018). Relevant content can have different meanings depending on the field in which it is used. When a search engine optimization (SEO) professional talks about relevant content, he means selecting accurate keywords that make a website rank better on the SEO search results page. It may be a sales specialist who defines relevant content as content that increases the value of the products and services of a brand and increases sales. But in marketing jargon, especially in digital marketing, relevant content means the content which is useful for users and contains useful information. In other words, in social media, being relevant means offering a proper message, to a proper person, at a proper time and through a proper communication channel (Brito, 2011). One of the important reasons people use social networks is to search for information. Tracking and searching information explain why people use brand-relevant content in social networks, and the more the content presented by the brand is accurate and relevant, the more it affects consumers' brand attitude and trust (Human et al., 2018; Muntinga et al., 2011). Therefore, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

**Hypothesis 2:** Relevant content of a brand in social media has a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude.

Furthermore, customers see social media sites as service channels where they can have real-time communication with businesses (Knight, 2010). Customers prefer to see

updated content on social media. Therefore, Google has made changes to its search engine algorithm so that updated content tops the search list (Friedman & Friedman, 2013). One of the factors that make people return to social network pages is updated and relevant content. So, in this study, we have:

**Hypothesis 3:** Periodical updates about a brand in social media have a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude.

The popularity of social media and its content among friends is another reason that customers are engaged with the brands. A fun aspect of social networks is also an important reason to use them (Cheung et al., 2011; Dholakia et al., 2004; Lin & Lu, 2011; Park et al., 2009). Fun results in people are making, using, and sharing online brand-relevant content (Muntinga et al., 2011). Advertisements that are recognized by audiences as exciting, interesting, and glamorous have a positive effect on audiences' attitude towards advertisement (Taylor et al., 2011) audiences' brand attitude, and their willingness to return to the page (Raney et al., 2003). Therefore, the research hypothesis is as follows:

**Hypothesis 4:** Popular content about a brand in social media has a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude.

There are many platforms on social media, so it is impossible to be active in all of them. Therefore, marketers should analyze their target audience and decide how to connect with them through the most effective platform. In addition, providing mobile applications allows customers to engage with brands on a daily basis which leads to their brand loyalty (Kim & Alder, 2011). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

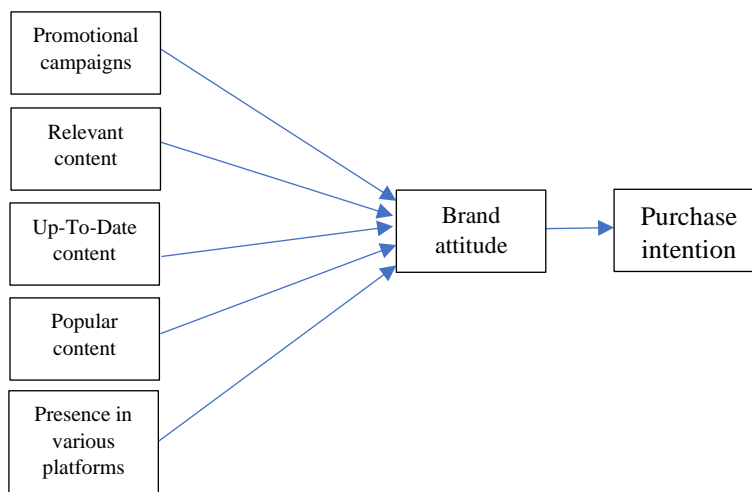
**Hypothesis 5:** Providing dedicated applications and presence on various social media platforms have a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude.

Purchase intention refers to the possibility that customers will buy a particular brand of a product category in a shopping situation (Singh & Banerjee, 2019). In general, purchase intention is an interfering psychological variable between attitude and actual behavior (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). The results of various studies indicate that there is a positive relationship between purchase intention and buying behavior. If the consumers have a positive brand attitude, it affects their buying behavior (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Taute et al., 2017). Brand attitude is the most important factor for decision-making (Lee et al., 2017). Therefore, it can be said that since brand attitude is the most important determiner of consumers' purchase behavior, it has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Taute et al., 2017). Therefore, as a final hypothesis, we have:

**Hypothesis 6:** consumers' positive brand attitude has a positive and significant effect on their purchase intention.

According to the empirical research and the above hypotheses, the theoretical framework of the research is as shown in Figure 2.





**Figure 2.** Conceptual model of research.

### 3. Methodology

Research methodology is the study of a set of principles, rules, and explorations that lead us to scientific cognition. This research seeks to develop applied knowledge in the field of social media marketing program design, so it is applied research. In terms of data collection, the research is descriptive, using covariance matrix analysis and structural equation modeling, and is also survey research. The statistical population in this study includes members of at least one of the social networks of the Anik brand. The library research method is used to collect information related to the literature of this research and theoretical topics related to the subject. In order to obtain the facts about the past, present, and predict future events, field studies using an online questionnaire have been used whose questions are extracted from the base articles related to each variable. Because the population is unspecified and having the complete list of members of the population (those who are on at least one Anik brand social network page) is impossible, nonprobability sampling is used. In structural equation modeling, one important question is used in the analysis of determining the minimum size of the sample. From James Steven's point of view, considering 15 observations for each predictor variable in the multiple regression analysis with the standard method of least squares is a good rule of thumb (Hooman, 2018). In this study, the number of items is 38, and the number of completed and received questionnaires is 559. Approximately 15 samples were received for each item. The questionnaire designed in this research consists of two parts. The first part is related to demographic and basic information, which includes six questions, and the second part is related to the main questions, which include 38 questions. To check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, their validity was reviewed and verified by marketing experts and their comments were used to improve the questionnaire. In addition, factor validity of the questionnaire is confirmed by factor analysis. The reliability of the questionnaire used in this study was



measured using Cronbach's alpha. In Table 1, the results of Cronbach's alpha test of variable dimensions are presented separately. As you can see, all dimensions of the research have appropriate reliability (above 0.7). Cronbach's alpha of the whole criterion is 0.973, which confirms the reliability of the questionnaire.

**Table 1.** Assessing the reliability of research dimensions.

Variables	Dimensions	Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Social media marketing programs	Promotional campaigns	3	0.789
	Relevant content	3	0.832
	Updated content	3	0.836
	Popular content	3	0.718
	Presence in various platforms	3	0.748
Brand attitude	Cognitive	14	0.956
	Emotional	4	0.934
Purchase intention	-	5	0.944

#### 4. Results and data analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the questionnaire data. SPSS software has been used to provide descriptive statistics and since the data were collected for observed variables of the theoretical model, LISREL software version 8.8 was used to fit the model and test the research hypotheses. LISREL is designed to fit models that include latent variables, measurement errors in each of the dependent and independent variables, two-way causality, concurrency, and interdependence (Hooman, 2018). The fitness of the structural and measurement model has been investigated. The highest frequency of respondents with 63.5% belongs to women and 36.5% belongs to men. Frequency distributions of other demographic data are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Demographic characteristics of the sample.

Respondents' age range	Under 18 years	1.4%	Respondents' level of education	Less than high school diploma	0.9%	Respondents' monthly income level	Under 1 million Tomans	44.9%
	18 to 24 years	30.8%		High school diploma	11.4%		1 to 2 million Tomans	28.1%
	25 to 34 years	46.3%		Associate degree	6.4%		2 to 3 million Tomans	12.9%
	35 to 44 years	15.7%		Bachelor Degree	46%		3 to 5 million Tomans	10%
	45 to 54 years	4.5%		Master Degree	31.1%		More than 5 million Tomans	4.1%
	Over 54 years	1.3%		PhD and higher levels	4.1%		Total	100%
Total	100%	Total	100%					
Anik's social pages visit frequency	Everyday	27.7%	Purchase frequency from Anik store	Every week	0.7%			
	Several times a week	7.3%		Every month	2.7%			
	Once or twice a week	9.7%		Several times a year	12.9%			
	Several times a month	19%		Once a year	10.7%			
	Several times a year	36.3%		I only follow the pages but do not buy	73%			
	Total	100%		Total	100%			

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation testing (SEM) using LISREL software have been used to achieve the main purpose of the research (hypothesis testing). To perform factor analysis, it must be ensured that the available data can be used for analysis. In other words, is the amount of data required for factor analysis appropriate? For this purpose, KMO index and Bartlett's test were used.

**Table 3.** Results of KMO and Bartlett spherical adequacy test

<b>KMO sampling adequacy ratio</b>		0.97
<b>Bartlett's test of sphericity</b>		Chi-square 18244/321
		Degrees of freedom 703
		The significance level 0.0

According to [Table 3](#), the results show that the KMO value is equal to 0.97, which is greater than 0.6 and is significant according to the Bartlett test significance level (0.0). Therefore, due to the adequacy of sampling and the significance of Bartlett test, the data correlation matrix is possible to enter the structural equations.

#### 4.1. Investigating the Normality of the Data and the Validity of the Model

In the model for measuring the normality of data, the validity of the model (based on factor loads) and the fitness of the model (based on goodness-of-fit indices) are examined. The normality of the data was assessed by examining the skewness and Kurtosis indices. According to experts, the acceptable amount of skewness is +3 to -3 and the amount of Kurtosis is +5 to -5 and all the data of this research have the condition of being normal ([Ryu, 2011](#)). In order to check the validity of the model, the factor loads of each question are considered. Scales larger than 0.4 indicate that the observable variable is a reliable scale for calculating the hidden variable and if they are between 0.3 and 0.4, although they are relatively weak, they are enough to continue the analysis. In [Table 4](#), the factor loads of the questionnaire items are stated, all of which are quantifiable.

**Table 4.** Investigation of factor loads of structural model.

Item	Factor load	Item	Factor load	Item	Factor load	Item	Factor load	Item	Factor load
1	0.79	9	0.66	17	0.76	25	0.93	33	0.93
2	0.83	10	0.53	18	0.58	26	0.92	34	0.93
3	0.84	11	0.85	19	0.74	27	0.86	35	0.96
4	0.86	12	0.73	20	0.73	28	0.8	36	0.95
5	0.75	13	0.8	21	0.85	29	0.83	37	0.94
6	0.93	14	0.75	22	0.78	30	0.97	38	0.93
7	0.96	15	0.73	23	0.78	31	0.95		
8	0.95	16	0.49	24	0.84	32	1		

Investigating Model Fitness: To check the proper fitness of the model, the software provides indicators. If at least 3 of these indicators are within the acceptance range, the model is properly fitted. Table 5 shows the fitness indicators of the measurement model of the variables as well as the structural model of the research. Acceptable indicators are marked in green and out-of-range indicators in red. As we can see, for each row, there are more than 3 indicators in the acceptance area; therefore, the measurement model of research variables as well as the structural model has a suitable fit.

**Table 5.** Fitness indicators of the measurement and structural model.

Indicator	RMSEA	RMR	NFI	NNFI	CFI	RFI	IFI	GFI	AGFI
Acceptable amount	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	8
Social media marketing	0.083	0.046	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.96	0.98	0.92	0.87
Brand attitude	0.11	0.043	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.98	0.83	0.79
Purchase intention	0.15	0.026	0.98	0.97	0.98	0.96	0.98	0.96	0.87
Structural model	0.073	0.047	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.98	0.81	0.78

#### 4.2. Investigation of Research Hypotheses

The results of the hypothesis test based on structural equations are shown in Table 6 as well as Figures 3 and 4.

**Table 6.** Hypothesis test results.

Hypothesis	Relation	Path coefficient ( $\beta$ )	T-value	Total
1	Promotional campaigns → Brand attitude	0.59	17.51	Confirmed
2	Relevant content → Brand attitude	0.62	20.44	Confirmed
3	Updated content → Brand attitude	0.63	20.69	Confirmed
4	Popular content → Brand attitude	0.68	21.52	Confirmed
5	Presence in various platforms → Brand attitude	0.77	32.01	Confirmed
6	Brand attitude → Purchase intention	0.83	56.00	Confirmed

According to the results of path coefficients (Carey, 1998) and the amount of T value (significance level), it can be said that the variable of promotion campaigns with a path coefficient of 0.59 and T value of 17.51 has a positive and significant effect on brand attitude. The second hypothesis of the research, which expresses the relationship between relevant content and brand attitude with a path coefficient of 0.62 and a value of more than 1.96, is accepted. The third hypothesis of the study examined the effect of updated content on brand attitude and was confirmed with a path coefficient of 0.63 and an at-value of 20.69. The popular content variable with a path coefficient of 0.68 and an at-value of 21.52 t is also acceptable. The variable of presence in various platforms with an impact factor of 0.77 and t-value of 32.01 has the greatest effect on brand attitude.

The last hypothesis of the study, which examines the effect of brand attitude on purchase intention, is accepted with a path coefficient of 0.83 and a T-value of 56.

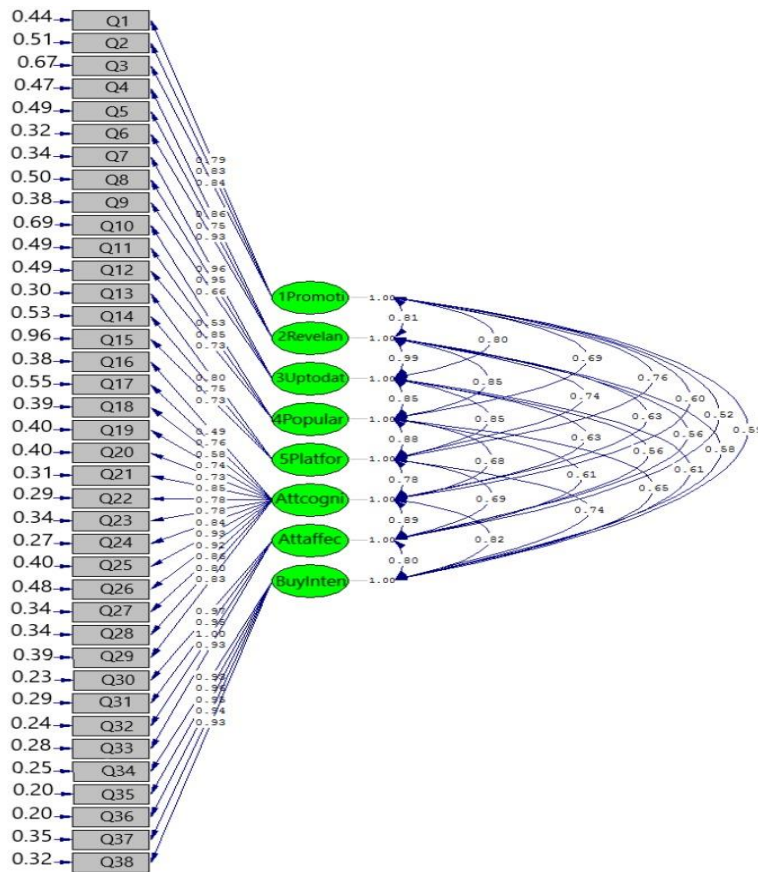


Figure 3. Structural model of research (standard estimate).

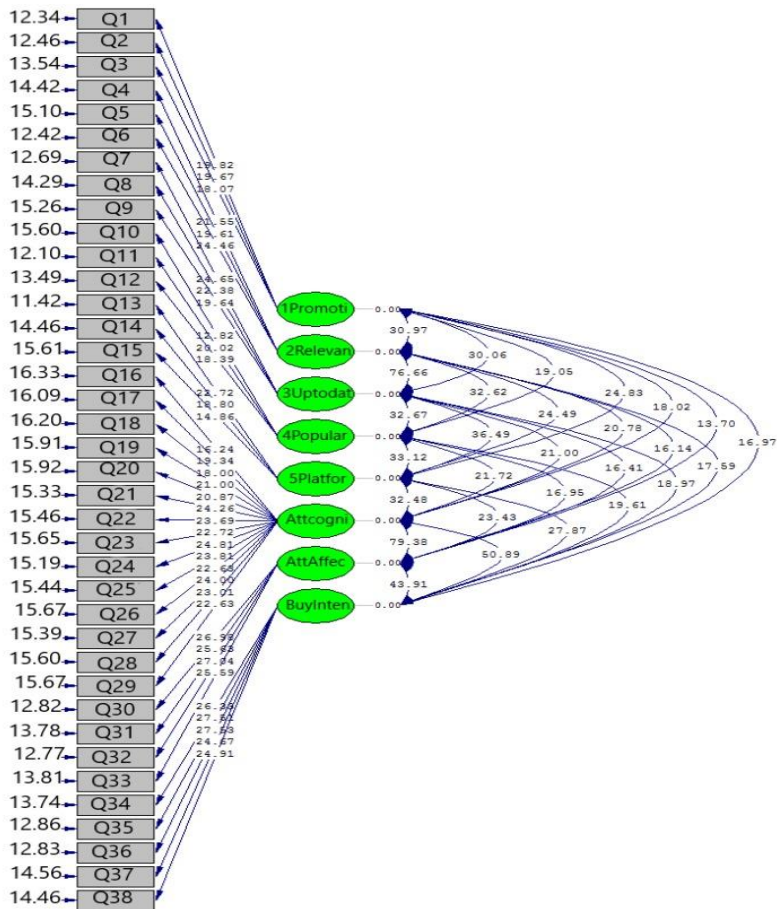


Figure 4. Structural model of research (a significant number).

## 5. Managerial implications

The content presented on a brand's social media pages should also be entertaining for the consumers. Online retail industry marketing managers should pay special attention to social media and have an appropriate and well-written strategy to operate in these media, especially social networks, and consider a suitable budget for this which will be significantly less than the budgets spent on traditional marketing programs. Producing relevant content means that the information provided on social media pages is relevant to the brand's wishes and theme and that scattered, and off-topic information is avoided. The content presented on social media pages of a brand (such as Telegram, Instagram, etc.) should be updated and new, and frequent updates should be presented, so that the information received by the consumers is always up to date. The consumers' positive brand attitude has a positive and significant effect on their intention to buy from the brand. If a person's attitude towards a brand becomes positive on social media, the person's intention to buy changes positively, and vice versa. Thus, the company can

create a positive attitude in the person that the company is her first choice to buy by providing attractive content that shows the quality of the product or by providing after-sales service, gaining consumer trust.

## **6. Discussion and conclusion**

The results of testing the hypotheses and comparing them with previous research are summarized, and at the end, practical, and research suggestions are presented along with the limitations of the research. Based on the estimated results of the structural equation model with a 95% confidence level, creating promotional campaigns on a brand's social media has a positive and significant effect on the consumers' attitudes toward the brand. The results of testing this hypothesis are in line with the findings of (Knight, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The inclusion of customer loyalty programs such as promotion campaigns, offering discount coupons and special offers, holding various competitions, drawing, and awarding prizes on social network pages, and granting special privileges based on previous purchases play an important role in improving the consumers' brand attitude. Due to the high penetration rate of social media in Iran, online retail industry marketing managers should pay special attention to social media and have an appropriate and well-written strategy to operate in these media, especially social networks, and consider a suitable budget for this which will be significantly less than the budgets spent on traditional marketing programs. Presence in various social networking platforms indicates that in well-known and influential social networks, a page dedicated to the retail store of the brand should be created in order to increase the users' access to these pages. Also, since most users are on social networks through mobile phones, providing dedicated mobile software for popular operating systems such as Android and iOS can play an important role in facilitating access to the retail store to buy or search for product information.

According to the second hypothesis of the research, the relevant content in a brand's social media has a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude. This result is consistent with the findings of (Brito, 2011). Producing relevant content means that the information provided on social media pages is relevant to the brand's wishes and theme and that scattered, and off-topic information is avoided. This means that the content presented on social network pages of a brand should contain useful information about the products of the brand, and the consumer should be able to easily find the information he is looking for on these pages. Also, including customer loyalty programs such as promotion campaigns, offering discount coupons and special offers, holding various competitions, draw and awarding prizes on social network pages and awarding special privileges based on previous purchases will play a significant role in improving consumers' brand attitude.

The third hypothesis of the study indicates that the updated content on a brand's social media pages has a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude. This means that the content presented on social media pages of a brand (such as Telegram, Instagram, etc.) should be updated and new, and frequent updates should be

presented, so that the information received by the consumers is always up-to-date. Therefore, the result of testing this hypothesis confirms the findings of (Knight, 2010). In fact, having innovation and dynamism of the company in social media puts the company in a more suitable position in the field of competition and companies can influence the age groups, according to the characteristics and values understood by the group or create value by differentiation strategies and focus on social media to influence media users and also to inform consumers about updating their products and penetrate their minds by interacting with group managers and advertising through them.

Based on the results of the fourth hypothesis, the popular content on a brand's social media has a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude, which is in line with the results of (Raney et al., 2003). This means that the content presented on a brand's social media pages should also be entertaining for the consumers. Popular content in this study refers to entertaining content that users are willing to share with their friends and acquaintances. This content can include creative or entertaining content or visual appeal.

According to the fifth hypothesis, providing dedicated software and presence in various platforms of social media have a positive and significant effect on the consumers' brand attitude which is consistent with the results of (Kim & Alder, 2011) research. This means that a brand should be present in various and mainly influential social networks (Telegram, Instagram, etc.) to increase the ease of access to information for consumers in various social networks. Also, providing dedicated mobile software for popular operating systems (such as Android and IOS) will have a significant impact on the ease of access to information and shopping via mobile phones.

Finally, the sixth hypothesis of the present study indicates that the consumers' positive brand attitude has a positive and significant effect on their intention to buy from the brand. These results are in line with the findings of (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Taute et al., 2017). In fact, they concluded through their research that creating a positive attitude among consumers towards a brand can lead to strong purchase intentions among them. In other words, if a person's attitude towards a brand becomes positive on social media, the person's intention to buy changes positively, and vice versa. Thus, the company can create a positive attitude in the person that the company is her first choice to buy by providing attractive content that shows the quality of the product or by providing after-sales service, gaining consumer trust. This research is a step towards providing appropriate programs and strategies for marketing managers of retailers and online stores in order to be effective in social media as a growing phenomenon and effective in improving the competitive position of organizations. The programs presented in this research for social media activities include participating in various social media platforms and providing dedicated mobile software, producing popular content, providing updated content, producing relevant content, and providing promotional campaigns. Very little research on social media activity strategies as a marketing tool requires researchers to delve deeper into the subject. Future researchers are suggested to study other social media strategies as an effective marketing tool and consider other branding factors such as brand satisfaction, brand awareness, brand



recognition, brand loyalty, brand engagement, brand equity, brand image, and brand development as the dependent variable in their research.

However, in all stages of this research, the utmost care and effort has been done, since each research has its own limitations, this research is no exception and has faced limitations, the most important of which are described below. Due to the newly emergence of the social media, there are not many theoretical foundations in the field of social media marketing programs and there is no known model in this field. In addition, the present study was conducted on the Anik online store, and the results may not be generalizable to other online retail brands.

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## نقش برنامه‌های بازاریابی رسانه‌های اجتماعی در صنعت خرده‌فروشی آنلاین بر خرید کالاها ورزشی

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### کلیدواژه

فروشگاه آنلاین آنیک  
قصد خرید  
کمپین‌های تبلیغاتی  
محتوای مرتبط

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصلی

### چکیده

**هدف:** مطالعه حاضر، با ارائه یک مدل پیشنهادی، به دنبال بررسی تأثیر برنامه‌های بازاریابی رسانه‌های اجتماعی بر نگرش برند و قصد خرید مصرف‌کنندگان از کالاها ورزشی در صنعت خرده‌فروشی آنلاین انجام شد. در این مطالعه موردی لوازم ورزشی فروشگاه اینترنتی آنیک مورد مطالعه قرار گرفت.

**روش:** بنابراین، پرسشنامه محقق ساخته‌ای طراحی و پس از تأیید روایی محتوا و ساختار و پایایی آن، در بین نمونه پژوهش توزیع شد. جامعه آماری در این تحقیق شامل افرادی بودند که حداقل در یکی از شبکه‌های اجتماعی برند آنیک عضویت داشتند. جمع‌آوری داده‌ها با انتخاب ۵۵۹ نفر از جامعه به روش نمونه‌گیری غیراحتمالی در دسترس انجام شد. برای آزمون فرضیه‌ها از مدل‌سازی معادلات ساختاری و برای محاسبات از نرم‌افزارهای SPSS و LISREL استفاده شد.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج نشان داد هر ۶ فرضیه تحقیق در سطح اطمینان ۹۵ درصد قابل قبول هستند. به عبارت دیگر، نتایج مطالعه نشان داد برنامه‌های بازاریابی رسانه‌های اجتماعی با تأثیرگذاری بر نگرش مصرف‌کنندگان نسبت به برند و تمایلات خرید آن‌ها، تأثیر بسزایی بر صنعت خرده‌فروشی محصولات ورزشی دارد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** مطالعات کمی در مورد نقش رسانه‌های اجتماعی در صنعت خرده‌فروشی ورزش انجام شده است. بنابراین، نتایج تحقیق نگرش مصرف‌کنندگان را نسبت به برند و برنامه‌های خرید آن‌ها در این پلتفرم‌ها نشان داد.

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