
Almatourism

Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development

Investigation of Persian Handmade Carpet Brand Positioning in View of European Customers

Shafiee RoodPoshti, M.*

University of Tehran (Iran)

Davoodi, Z.†

Science and Art University, Yazd (Iran)

ABSTRACT

The handmade carpet industry has a long lifetime in Iran. It was as one of important and key industries in some provinces for far decades, such that most of our export goods was carpets and rugs before oil discovery. However, handmade Persian carpet has the top position in global world market yet. Thus, this work tries to investigate the brand position of handmade Persian carpet from view of point of European customers. The research method is operational as goal. Statistical population of this research includes elites of branding and marketing of handmade carpet production in qualitative phase, and tourists and customers of some European countries in quantitative phase. Sampling method in the quantitative phase is proportional to the size of the population and based on the Cochran formula, about 384 persons were selected. The handmade carpet industry has a long lifetime in our country. It was as one of important and key industries in some provinces for far decades, such that most of our export goods was carpets and rugs before oil discovery. However, handmade Persian carpet has the top position in global world market yet. Thus, this work tries to investigate the brand position of handmade Persian carpet from view of point of European customers. The research method is operational as goal. Statistical population of this research includes elites of branding and marketing of handmade carpet production in qualitative phase, and tourists and customers of some European countries in quantitative phase. Sampling method in the quantitative phase is proportional to the size of the population and based on the Cochran formula, about 384 persons were selected.

Keywords: Brand Management; Brand Positioning; Persian Handmade Carpet; European Customers

* E-mail address: maysam.shafiee@ut.ac.ir

† E-mail address: davoodicarpet@gmail.com

Introduction

Nowadays, the increasing expansion of competition in industries and services has made the competition as a major issue among policy makers at different levels (country, industry and corporations). In the area of competition, business strategies are developed to help companies to determine the way of moving from their current competitive position to a new stronger position (Farhangi, 2015). Brand can lead to higher incomes, lower costs, and higher profits, and has direct effects on the organization's ability to make appropriate decisions about rising service prices, the effectiveness of marketing communications, and success in business development (Keller, 2003). Some brands are firmly tied to the name of their original country, and Persian carpet is one of them. The developing strategy designed for these type of brands should be more precise, because the brand value goes back to the general image of the brand owner (Picotitic and Ward, 2007).

Positioning is considered by both academics (Aaker & Shansby, 1982; Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986; Arnott, 1993, 1994; Arnott & Easingwood, 1994; Myers in Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Porter, 1996; Kotler, 1997; Hooley, Greenley, Fahy & Cadogan, 2001; McKenna, 1986; Bainsfair in Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Dovel, 1990; Trout & Rivkin, 1996) to be one of the key elements of modern marketing management. Despite this acknowledged central role, it is surprising to uncover a general paucity of documented, empirically based and consumer/customer-derived studies positioning strategies. Dovel (1990) contended that positioning shouldn't be just a part of the strategy, but should be the backbone of any business plan. This was echoed by F. E. Webster, Jr. (1991) who declared that positioning was a relevant strategic concept, a development in consumer marketing, but with equal applicability for industrial products and services. Webster even referred to it as the positioning of the company's value, which he defined as the unique way the firm delivered value to its customers.

Brand positioning is the heart of marketing strategy that provides an image of distinction and value of a product or service in the mind of target customers. In this sense, brand positioning is to find a suitable position in the mind of a group of customers and the target market in order to maximize the company's potential profit. Advanced Persian carpet designs is one of the most important factors influencing the added value of handmade carpets in the country and gives it the ability of competing in the global market. Nevertheless, Persian carpet brand is not in a desirable position in international markets due to inadequate advertising, lack of governmental support for exporters, absence of global registering the carpet designs of any geographic region, global economic downturn and recent political pressures. Certainly, in a healthy competition, the Persian carpet will first acquire the domestic market and then the global market, and especially its European ones. According to the aforementioned issues, Persian carpet position analysis is considered as the most important variable in the study of strategic management. In this sense, meeting the needs of customers will lead to the long-term improvement of the organization of production and distribution of the Persian carpet. This study tries to use the existing theoretical and experimental

literature on the status of Persian handmade carpet brand in the view of customers of some European countries and provide the necessary tasks.

1. Theoretical bases

The brand positioning as the key to a marketing strategy involves identifying similarity points and differences to identify brand identity and creating a brand-specific image. Rice and Trove, who first introduced the concept of brand recognition, believed that finding is not something that is done for a product or service, but something that is done with the client's mind.

They emphasized on locating the communication/promotional dimensions. According to Cutler (2003), the brand position is in the competitive advantage of the company's products over competing products. This position is transmitted through the components of the marketing mix to the customer's mind.

Therefore, Cutler's approach focuses more on product roles in brand positioning. Researches done in the field of brand positioning have been categorized in the form of two consumer-centric approaches and organization/management axis.

Most of the past research is about quantitative brand position based on mathematical models and statistical methods. These researches tend to focus on product placement and proves that brand positioning is influenced by the status and characteristics of the product, and customers' perception of brand position is preferable to organizational capabilities. Therefore, the dominant approach in brand positioning research is the customer-centric approach, and is passively influenced by Cutler's views. The purpose of this study was to identify and prioritize the strategic components affecting the position of Persian handmade carpet industry as a national brand in the global market and especially from the perspective of European customers and consumers. Considering the existing problem, the questions asked in this research are as follows:

1. What are the proper components for analyzing the position of the Persian handmade carpet brand?
2. What is the relationship between the components and what structure it have?
3. For the proposed research model, what is the status of the Persian carpet brand among European customers?

2. Research literature

ZineKhan and Balazs (2014) have conducted a research entitled branding potentials in international marketing. Branding has a lot of potential for marketing in the international community, but due to the few empirical studies that have been done in global branding, there is a limited view of it, and branding literature in the international context is somewhat scattered and intolerable.

Positioning theory is based on three propositions (Ries & Trout, 1986). First, we live in an over communicated society, bombarded with information on a daily basis. Second, the mind has developed a defense system against the clutter. Third, the only way to cut through the clutter to reach the mind is through simplified and focused messages. The Brand Positioning Strategies element is considered to be important for the operationalization of the concept. Fill (1999) states that the successful positioning can only be achieved by adopting a customer 's perspective and by understanding how customers perceive products in the class , and how they attach importance to particular attributes that can be grouped under a construct (Sweeney & Soutar , 2001). Soundararaj & Rengamani (2002) have studied the inevitability of positioning in the present marketing scenario, with special reference to Indian marketing conditions. According to them, positioning is not what you do to a product, but what you do to the minds of the prospect customers; that is, you position the product in the mind of the intended client. It is understood that a product's position is the way in which the product is defined by consumers on important attributes and the place the product occupies in the minds of the consumers relative to competing products. Rao & Steckel (1998) define a brand's positioning as the relative perception of it within a significant group of customers. At the same time, both authors argue that segmentation and positioning are often treated as independent concepts, in practice and in the literature. Nonetheless, they claim, positioning is valueless if outside of its target segment. As suggested by Kapferer (2004), brand positioning task is to give the answers to the *four questions*: a) "a brand for what"; b) "a brand for whom"; c) "a brand for when"; and, d) "a brand against whom". According to Kumar (2007), brand positioning is the fundamental concept in brand's strategy that helps in finding a niche in the minds of the target segment.

A major objective of any brand positioning strategy is to reinforce positive image already held by the target audience, correct negative images, or create a new image. Fishbein, (1967) and Fishbein & Ajzen, (1975) argued the importance of distinguishing between an individual's beliefs and attitudes. While beliefs represent information held about an object, attitude is a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the object. Fishbein (1967) proposed attitude comprised cognitive and conative components. Cognition is the sum of what is known about a brand, which may be organic or induced. In other words, this is awareness, knowledge, or beliefs, which may or not have been derived from a previous use of the brand. According to Levy (2009), the products that a customer purchases has a personal and social meaning and boosts the way the consumers think about themselves. Brands are considered to be a key driver of consumer choice as social signs, convergence, and consumer self-regulation. A number of studies have proven that there is a convergence between brand's image/personality and customer's personality. Dollich(1996) examined the relationship between self-image and brand preferences, and it became clear that the addressed brands are consistent with and reinforce the self-concept. Wong and Meriliss (2002) conducted a study titled "Comparison of the indigenous brand position with its position in the international environment." In the international positioning, the native brand position is compared with its in international position and, if necessary, a new position for it in the foreign market is determined. They said that for the organization to have brand-oriented strategies, they should have brand-oriented managers, that is, those who are

committed to developing their own brand strategies. Although this topic and its idea are attractive, with the aim of exploiting internal enthusiasts, this report has been published in one of the native and Persian literary journals (Shafiee & Davoodi 2018).

3. Research method

The research method is applied in terms of purpose, descriptive approach, and in terms of implementation, qualitative and quantitative mixing. In this research, the library method has been used to collect the information. At first, the indices of Persian carpet brand position were identified and extracted and then, in terms of indicators, they were used by experts. Data collection method in qualitative phase is interview checklist and open-ended questionnaire, and in quantitative phase is resource snapshot and closed questionnaire (including 36 questions, resulted of combining 6 brand levels of brand recognition, brand experience, brand expertise, brand leadership, brand quality and brand innovation. Each level consists of 6 questions, each question is related to a single pillar and questions are measured with the Likert spectrum) and the use of social networks to interact with real European customers. The method of implementation is the in-depth interview in the qualitative phase, and the field survey in the quantitative phase. The statistical population of this research are experts in the field of brand and carpet market (with a statistical percentage down) in the qualitative phase, and customers in some European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Italy and Belgium) in the quantitative phase. This research has been carried out in the field of management and productivity research in the spring of 2017 in handmade carpet industry in Iran. The sampling method in qualitative phase is the rule of persuasion and in the quantitative phase, utilizing Morgan's table or Cochran's relation. Given the unlimited statistical population, the number of people required to complete the questionnaire is approximately 384 people. Excel and SPSS programs were used to analyze the data in this study. The model considered in this research is a hierarchical model in which the columns are the pillars of the Persian handmade carpet brand, and the rows are the levels of this brand. The process for conducting this research is shown in Figure 1.

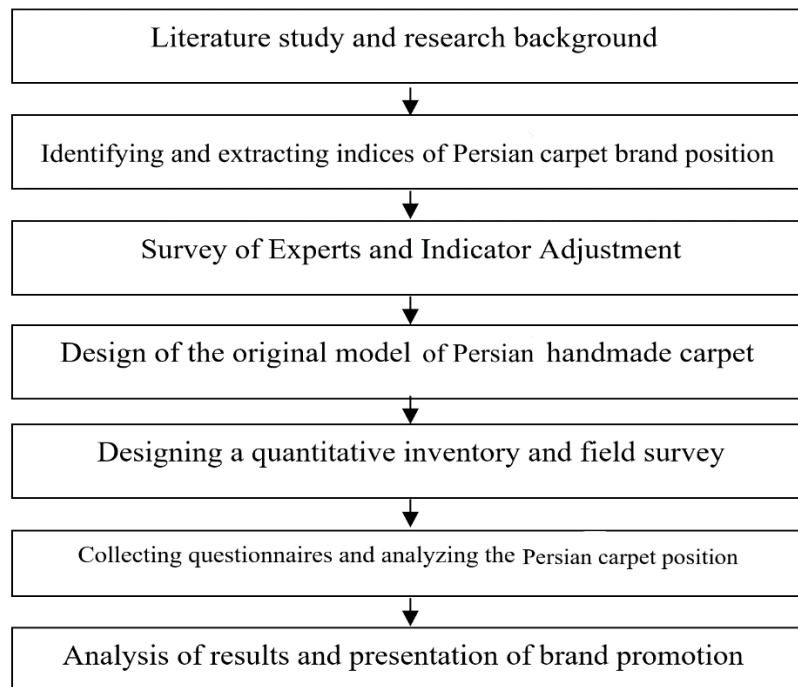


Figure 1: Implementation process in this research

Source: The Table is built by foundings of researcher.

4. Findings of the research

This section analyzes the answers to the questions related to the Persian handmade carpet.

1) What are the proper components for analyzing the position of this carpet brand?

The present study seeks to identify and prioritize strategic indicators affecting the position of Persian handmade carpet brand as a national brand in the global market. In the first step to identify the affecting factors, the literature in the related fields, research library studies and documents, and available reports have been investigated. In these studies, there is no reliable model that can assess brand positioning. The only model that was obtained at the white paper level by the TDC (The Design Channel) Institute and was considered as an input model. The model was, of course, ideally limited to provide a framework for this model. By investigating the model, a new modified model that could be evaluated -and represents the main indicators- was redesigned and validated in consultation with the experts. The prominent feature of this model that qualifies it to evaluate the other models is the two-dimensionality of the model in the brand's assessment path. So that previous research in the field of brand equity assessment has only looked at the brand pillars or brand levels, but in this research both the brand pillars and levels are simultaneously examined. Of course, this research not only has enriched the model content, but also designed the indicators related to the pillars and levels of the designed model to fit the brand of Persian handmade carpet and entered the research space. In the following, we introduce the

dimensions related to the pillars and levels associated with the assessment of the brand position.

4.1. Brand pillars

Recognition of an actual or potential European customer has been questioned in relation to the supposed pillars of the Persian handmade carpet brand, so that each person with a level or layer in which he or she is, can rate the various components of the handmade carpet brand. These pillars are shown in Figure 2.

Credible Brand: How reliable is the Persian carpet brand.

Ownership: How much does one feel that the Persian carpet brand is owned by itself?

Uniqueness: How unique is the Persian handmade carpet brand in the individual's mind?

Telegraphic: How much does a person communicate with the Persian handmade carpet brand?

Benefit-oriented: How beneficial is the handmade carpet brand to the individual?

Dynamics: How modern is the handmade carpet brand?

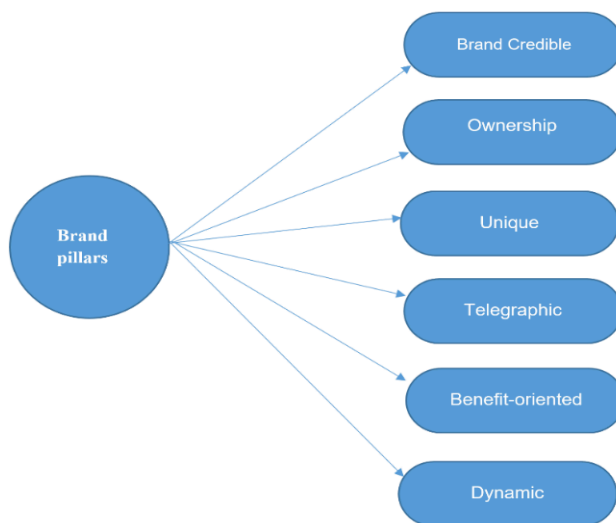


Figure 2: Brand pillars of Persian handmade carpet

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

4.2 Brand Levels

The Brand Levels of Persian handmade carpet are shown in Figure 3.

Brand Recognition: The consumer recognizes it as a brand.

Experience: The consumer has experienced this brand. Brand

Brand Specialization: The consumer is specializing in this brand.

Brand Leadership: Brand Leadership, Consumer Acceptance.

Brand Quality of care: The consumer has a technical knowledge of the brand.

Brand Innovation: Consumer confirms Brand Innovation.

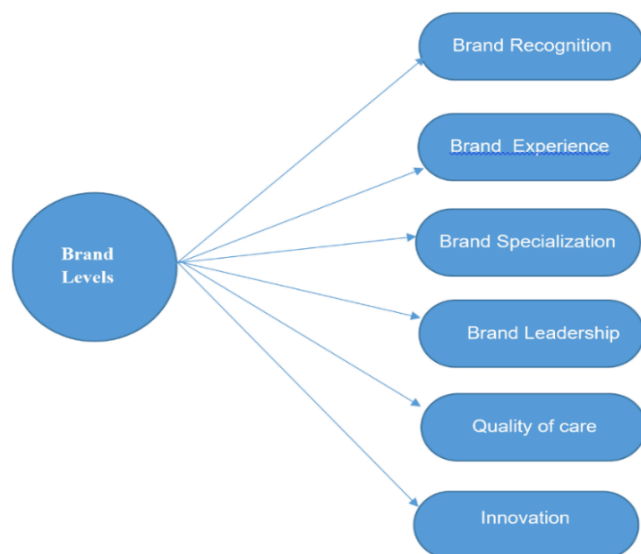


Figure 3: Brand Levels of Persian handmade carpet

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

At this stage, the logical communication between various components of brand pillars and levels of Persian handmade carpet brand is explained. What is the brand credibility of a Persian handmade carpet from the point of view of someone who has just the ability to recognize this brand? At the next level, who has had previous experience with Persian carpets (bought or saw this carpet in Museums or at exhibitions), what credit does it play? What credit (positive, negative or neutral) for this particular brand can be imagined from someone who has expertise and is familiar with different international carpet brands? In terms of one who is studying the level of brand leadership in the market and is important to him, what credit is there for this particular brand? What is the credit of this particular brand, in the sense of the customer or the researcher whose brand quality is important to him? And finally what credit is imaginable for this brand in mind of who is focusing on innovation level of products and brands? The second pillar is the brand ownership. From the point of view of someone who only recognizes this brand, someone who has a previous experience with the brand, someone who specializes in handmade carpet crafts, someone who owns a market in a particular industrial or special place, someone who qualitatively examines the brands, and finally someone who cares about the level of innovation of the brands, what does he feel about this brand? Does he know it or does he feel strange? The third pillar is the brand's uniqueness feature. That is, for a person at one of the six levels above, how uniqueness can be imagined for this brand in the international market. The fourth pillar, the brand's connectivity, and its relationship with the six levels of the above will be examined in the relevant tables. The level of interest is the fifth pillar that will be investigated with its six levels. The final pillar, dynamics and modernity of the Persian

handmade carpet will be analyzed from the point of view of the people who are at each of these levels and positions.

2) What is the relationships between the components and what model is it structured?

In the next step, using the questionnaire of effective factors measurement as well as analytical hierarchy analysis, the relationship between the indices obtained on the rank of the national brand of Persian handmade carpet and the achieved strategies are discussed. By studying the literature of the research background, the original model of the rank of Persian handmade carpet brand was considered hierarchically in this research. The structure of the relationships between the components is in the form of the model in Table 1, which is the basis for the analysis in this research.

Table 1: The logical pillar-level relationship model of Persian handmade carpet brand



Source: From a white paper by TDC Co. (www.TheDesignChannel.com)

What is the position of the Persian carpet brand in the European consumer market for the proposed model? In order to investigate the research question, it must first be determined whether each of the levels of the Persian carpet brand has been in good condition among the European customers. In the next step, the rates of each level have been tested on the basis of their own pillars to determine the status of this brand among them.

4.3 The Brands Levels Evaluation

To determine the ratings of handmade carpet for each level, the average of each level was calculated and the average score of the questions for each level was obtained. For example, for the first level, the average score of questions 1 to 6, for the second level, the average score of questions 7 to 12 and for the other levels are also obtained. By comparing the means for brand positioning levels in Table 2, it is concluded that the level of “brand quality of care” with an average of 3.780 has the highest position among the European customers. The levels of “brand recognition”, “brand leadership”, “brand experience”, and “brand specialization” with averages of 3.662, 3.613, 3.603, and 3.464 are in the next ranks. The lowest rank among the levels of this brand with an average of 3.371 belongs to “brand innovation” level. According to the Table 3, it can be said that the respondents believed that the brand levels scores was higher than the average (3) ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the responses to all levels of the brand are focused on “strongly agree” and “agree”. Since the values of t are positive and also the sig values are less than 0.05, the brand levels are approved and the respondents believe that the levels of Persian carpet brand are in a good condition.

Table 2: Comparable statistics in relation to the brand levels

Indicator	Number of points	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Brand Levels					
Brand Recognition	6	2	5	3.662	0.51
Brand Experience	6	2	5	3.603	0.57
Brand Specialization	6	2	5	3.464	0.51
Brand Leadership	6	2	5	3.613	0.54
Brand Quality of care	6	2	5	3.780	0.54
Brand Innovation	6	1.5	5	3.371	0.50

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

Table 3: One-sample T test for examining the status of the brand levels

Brand Levels	t	Degree of freedom	Sig	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Low	High
Brand Recognition	454.21	270	000.0	662.0	601.0	723.0
Brand Experience	363.17	270	000.0	603.0	534.0	671.0
Brand Specialization	892.14	270	000.0	464.0	402.0	525.0
Brand Leadership	598.18	270	000.0	613.0	548.0	678.0
Brand Quality of care	613.23	270	000.0	780.0	715.0	845.0
Brand Innovation	12.132	270	0.000	0.371	0.311	0.431

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

4.4 The Brand Pillars Evaluation

To determine the ratings of the Persian handmade carpet for each pillar, the average of each pillar was calculated and the average score of questions for each pillar was obtained.

For example, for the first pillar, the average score of questions 1,7,13,19,25,31 and for the second pillar, the average score of questions 2,8,14,20,26,32 and for the other pillars are also obtained.

Table 4: Comparable statistics in relation to the brand pillars

Indicator	Number of points	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Brand Pillars					
Brand Credibility	6	17.2	67.4	655.3	46.0
Brand Ownership	6	2	5	627.3	46.0
Brand Uniqueness	6	83.1	5	595.3	48.0
Brand Telegraphic	6	83.1	5	437.3	50.0
Brand Benefit-oriented	6	2	5	736.3	48.0
Brand Dynamics	6	2.17	5	3.442	49.0

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

By comparing the means for brand positioning pillars in Table 4, it is concluded that the “Benefit-oriented” pillar with an average of 3.736 is in highest position among the European customers. The pillars of “brand credibility”, “brand ownership”, “brand uniqueness”, and “brand dynamics” with averages of 3.655, 3.627, 3.595, and 3.442 are in the next ranks. The lowest rank with an average of 3.437 belongs to the “brand telegraphic” pillar.

Table 5: One-sample T test for examining the status of the brand pillars

Brand Pillars	t	Degree of freedom	Sig	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Low	High
Brand Credibility	22.155	270	0.000	0.655	0.599	0.711
Brand Ownership	22.170	270	0.000	0.627	0.571	0.683
Brand Uniqueness	20.239	270	0.000	0.595	0.537	0.652
Brand Telegraphic	14.362	270	0.000	0.437	0.377	0.497
Brand Benefit-oriented	25.045	270	0.000	0.736	0.678	0.794
Brand Dynamics	14.707	270	0.000	0.442	0.383	0.501

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

According to the Table 5, it can be said that the respondents believed that the brand pillar scores was higher than the average (3) ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the responses to all pillars of the brand is focused on “strongly agree” and “agree”. Since the values of t are positive and the sig. values are less than 0.05, the

brand pillars is approved and the respondents believe that the pillars of Persian carpet brand are in a good condition.

4.5. Evaluation of questionnaire questions (composition of brand pillars and levels)

At this stage, each level is examined separately. In Tables 6 through 11, the scores (averages) related to the structure of the relationships between the components (brand levels and pillars) are displayed.

Table 6: Abundance and percentage distribution of responses to the brand recognition pillars

Row	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	agree	Mean
1	I have greater confidence in the quality of a rug when I realise it has been handmade in Iran.	Abundance	5	3	27	164	72	088.4
		Percent	8.1	1.1	0.10	5.60	26.6	
2	I believe that the best weavers are the ones who produce handwoven Persian carpets.	Abundance	3	4	67	145	52	881.3
		Percent	1.1	5.1	24.7	53.5	19.2	
3	I consider handwoven Persian carpets as being of the top two handwoven carpet brands.	Abundance	3	5	48	143	72	018.4
		Percent	1.1	8.1	7.17	8.52	6.26	
4	I am able to recognize and distinguish a handwoven Persian carpet.	Abundance	28	119	69	43	12	601.2
		Percent	10.3	43.9	5.25	9.15	4/4	
5	I consider handwoven Persian carpets to be synonymous with the notion of excellence	Abundance	6	6	46	149	64	956.3
		Percent	2.2	2.2	0.17	0.55	/6 23	
6	Within different eras, the handwoven Persian carpet renews and revises its strategy.	Abundance	0	20	132	102	17	428.3
		Percent	0.0	4.7	7.48	6.37	3.6	

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

From Table 6 it can be seen that at the brand recognition level, “brand credibility” pillar has the highest score with an average of 4.088. The pillars of “brand uniqueness”, “brand benefit-oriented”, “brand ownership” and “brand dynamics”, with averages of 4.018, 3.956, 3.881 and 3.428 have the next ranks, respectively. Finally, “brand Telegraphic” pillar, with an average of 2.601 has the lowest score among respondents' comments.

Table 7: Abundance and percentage distribution of responses to the brand experience pillars

Row	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	agree	Mean
7	I have experienced the renowned authenticity and reputation of the handwoven Persian carpet.	Abundance	19	45	69	101	37	339.3
		Percent	0.7	6.16	5.25	2.37	7.13	
8	I have feel that handwoven Persian carpets are elite in the global market.	Abundance	3	10	45	152	61	952.3
		Percent	1.1	7.3	6.16	1.56	5.22	
9	In the global carpet market there is no competitor for Iran with regards to extent of production and reputation.	Abundance	7	30	122	95	17	314.3
		Percent	6.2	1.11	0.45	1.35	2.6	
10	The feeling of using a handwoven Persian carpet must be experienced.	Abundance	4	9	60	142	56	874.3
		Percent	5.1	3.3	1.22	4.52	7.20	
11	I am satisfied with my confidence and assurance in handwoven Persian carpets.	Abundance	7	19	94	120	31	550.3
		Percent	6.2	0.7	7.34	3.44	4.11	
12	I am satisfied with my confidence and assurance in handwoven Persian carpets.	Abundance	1	8	111	133	18	587.3
		Percent	4.0	0.3	0.41	1.49	5.6	

Source: The Table is built by foundings of researcher.

From Table 7 it can be seen that at the brand experience level, “brand ownership” pillar has the highest score with an average of 3.952. “Brand telegraphic”, “brand dynamics”, “brand benefit-oriented” and “brand credibility” pillars, with averages of 3.874, 3.587, 3.550 and 3.339 have the next ranks, respectively. Finally, “brand uniqueness” pillar, with an average of 3.314 has the lowest score among respondents' comments.

Table 8: Abundance and percentage distribution of responses to brand specialization pillars

Row	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	agree	Mean
13	Traders in the handwoven Persian carpet industry have expertise and are competent.	Abundance	4	11	98	124	34	638.3
		Percent	1.5	4.1	36.1	45.8	12.5	
14	I forsee Persian carpet sales progressing and advancing day by day.	Abundance	3	30	135	89	14	299.3
		Percent	1.1	11.1	49.8	32.8	5.2	
15	When considering technical components, Persian carpets are unrivalled.	Abundance	2	12	129	110	18	478.3
		Percent	0.7	4.5	47.6	40.6	6.6	
16	I can connect and relate well with the designs and compositions presented on handwoven Persian carpets.	Abundance	9	49	78	109	26	347.3
		Percent	3.3	18.1	28.8	40.2	9.6	

17	I am mindful and very aware of the reasons behind my choice of purchasing a handwoven Persian carpet.	Abundance	7	20	91	119	34	564.3
		Percent	2.6	7.4	33.6	43.9	12.5	
18	A variety of clients can connect and relate to handwoven Persian carpets.	Abundance	5	26	105	111	24	454.3
		Percent	1.8	9.6	38.7	41.0	8.9	

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

From Table 8 it can be seen that at the brand specialization level, “brand credibility” pillar has the highest score with an average of 3.638. The “brand benefit-oriented”, “brand uniqueness”, “brand dynamics” and “brand telegraphic” pillars, with averages of 3.564, 3.478, 3.454 and 3.347 have the next ranks, respectively. Finally, “brand ownership” pillar, with an average of 3.229 has the lowest score among respondents' comments.

Table 9: Abundance and percentage distribution of responses to brand leadership pillars

Row	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	agree	Mean
19	Persian carpets are qualified to lead in the carpet market.	Abundance	0	7	63	138	63	948.3
		Percent	0.0	6.2	3.23	9.50	2.23	
20	In addition, I have heard from others that handwoven Persian carpets are the leaders of the market.	Abundance	3	24	73	123	48	697.3
		Percent	1.1	9.8	9.26	4.45	7.17	
21	The handwoven Persian carpet is unique in its way of leading and advancing the market.	Abundance	1	12	111	110	37	627.3
		Percent	4.0	3.4	0.41	6.40	7.13	
22	The handwoven Persian carpet has no other competitor in leading the market.	Abundance	4	40	127	82	18	258.3
		Percent	5.1	7.14	9.46	3.30	6.6	
23	The handwoven Persian carpet, as a pioneer, is an advantage to this industry's market.	Abundance	0	13	88	132	38	719.3
		Percent	0.0	8.4	5.32	7.48	0.14	
24	Within different eras, the handwoven Persian carpet renews and revises its strategy to lead the market.	Abundance	0	20	132	102	17	428.3
		Percent	0.0	4.7	7.48	6.37	3.6	

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

From Table 9 it can be seen that at the “brand leadership” level, “brand credibility” pillar has the highest score with an average of 3.948. The “brand benefit-oriented”, “brand ownership”, “brand uniqueness” and “brand dynamics” pillars, with averages of 3.719, 3.697, 3.627 and 3.428 have the next ranks, respectively. Finally, “brand telegraphic” pillar, with an average of 3.258 has the lowest score among respondents' comments.

Table10: Abundance and percentage distribution of responses to brand quality of care pillars

Row	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	agree	Mean
25	In the public's view, the sale of handwoven Persian carpets is considered a pleasant commodity.	Abundance	0	10	77	147	37	778.3
		Percent	0.0	7.3	4.28	2.54	7.13	
26	The quality of handwoven Persian carpets has always been excellent.	Abundance	1	8	69	121	72	941.3
		Percent	4.0	0.3	4.25	6.44	6.26	
27	Based on elements of quality, handwoven Persian carpets are unique and unrivalled.	Abundance	2	19	73	127	50	753.3
		Percent	7.0	0.7	9.26	9.46	5.18	
28	The qualitative attraction of handwoven Persian carpets can be easily understood.	Abundance	1	25	74	131	40	679.3
		Percent	4.0	2.9	3.27	3.48	8.14	
29	Customers purchase handwoven Persian carpets due to their high quality.	Abundance	1	3	35	165	67	085.4
		Percent	4.0	1.1	9.12	9.60	7.24	
30	The quality of manufacturers of Persian carpets are a concern of mine.	Abundance	9	36	96	86	44	443.3
		Percent	3.3	4.13	4.35	7.31	2.16	

Source: The Table was built by foundings of researcher.

From Table 10 it can be seen that at the “brand quality of care” level, “brand benefit-oriented” pillar has the highest score with an average of 4.085. The “brand ownership”, “brand credibility”, “brand uniqueness” and “brand telegraphic” pillars, with averages of 3.941, 3.778, 3.753 and 3.679 have the next ranks, respectively. Finally “brand dynamics” pillar, with an average of 3.258 has the lowest score among respondents' comments.

Table 11: Abundance and percentage distribution of responses to brand innovation pillars

Row	Questions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	agree	Mean
31	In terms of innovation, indicators of change in the sale of handwoven Persian carpets are visible.	Abundance	10	22	172	55	12	136.3
		Percent	7.3	1.8	5.63	3.20	4.4	
32	The marketing of handwoven Persian carpets offers the innovation I have been waiting for.	Abundance	9	44	164	48	6	992.2
		Percent	3.3	3.16	5.60	7.17	2.2	
33	It is appealing to the customer if innovation offered in the Persian carpet is detected.	Abundance	5	21	126	105	14	376.3
		Percent	9.1	7.7	5.46	7.38	2.5	
34	How customers feel in relation to handwoven Persian carpets is important for the manufacturers.	Abundance	2	12	64	136	57	863.3
		Percent	7.0	4.4	7.23	2.50	0.21	

35	Innovations presented in Persian carpets have beneficial effects on customers.	Abundance	2	19	111	108	31	542.3
		Percent	7.0	0.7	0.41	9.39	11	
36	Innovations in Persian carpets are unpredictable and dynamic.	Abundance	7	21	149	68	26	314.3
		Percent	2/6	7.7	0.55	1.25	6.9	

Source: The Table was built by foundings of researcher.

From Table 11 it can be seen that at the “brand innovation” level, “brand telegraphic” pillar has the highest score with an average of 3.863. The “brand benefit-oriented”, “brand uniqueness”, “brand dynamics” and “brand credibility” pillars, with averages of 3.542, 3.376, 3.314 and 3.136 have the next ranks, respectively. Finally, “brand ownership” pillar, with an average of 3.258 has the lowest score among respondents' comments.

The mutual scores of the Persian handmade carpet brand position in this research is summarized in Table 12. Now we hold a “T test” for each question (elements in Table 1). The results is shown in Table 13.

Table 12: The mutual scores of the Persian handmade carpet brand position

Pillars Levels	Credible Brand	Ownership	Uniqueness	Telegraphic	Benefit-oriented	Dynamics
Brand Recognition	4.088	3.881	4.018	2.601	3.956	3.428
Brand Experience	3.339	3.952	3.314	3.874	3.550	3.587
Brand Specialization	3.638	3.299	3.478	3.347	3.564	3.454
Brand Leadership	3.948	3.697	3.627	3.258	3.719	3.428
Quality of care	3.778	3.941	3.753	3.679	4.085	3.443
Innovation	3.136	2.992	3.376	3.863	3.542	3.314

Source: The table was completed by foundings of reaserchers

In Table 13, three different results is obtained as follows. The first result shows that according to the respondents, the scores of all questions in the questionnaire except for questions 4 and 32 was higher than the average (3) ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the answers of respondents to these questions are significantly focused on “agree” and “strongly agree” options. The second result shows that according to the respondents, the score of question 4 was lower than the average (3) ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the answers of the respondents to question 4 are significantly focused on “disagree” and “strongly disagree” options. The third result indicates that in the case of question 32, the mean difference from the

average (3) is not significant ($p > 0.05$). For further understanding, the results of Table 12 is applied in the proposed model in Table 14.

Table 13: - one-sample T test for questionnaire questioning

Questions	t	Degree of freedom	Sig	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Low	High
question 1	738.23	270	0.000	1.088	998.0	179.1
question 2	965.18	270	0.000	0.882	790.0	973.0
question 3	324.21	270	0.000	1.018	924.0	112.1
question 4	454.6	270	0.000	0.398	520.0	277.0
question 5	881.18	270	0.000	0.956	856.0	055.1
question 6	774.9	270	0.000	0.428	342.0	514.0
question 7	989.4	270	0.000	0.339	205.0	473.0
question 8	615.19	270	0.000	0.952	856.0	047.1
question 9	086.6	270	0.000	0.314	212.0	415.0
question 10	452.17	270	0.000	0.874	776.0	973.0
question 11	286.10	270	0.000	0.550	444.0	655.0
question 12	269.14	270	0.000	0.587	506.0	668.0
question 13	996.12	270	0.000	0.638	542.0	735.0
question 14	337.6	270	0.000	0.299	206.0	392.0
question 15	981.10	270	0.000	0.480	394.0	566.0
question 16	759.5	270	0.000	0.345	228.0	465.0
question 17	376.10	270	0.000	0.564	457.0	672.0
question 18	743.8	270	0.000	0.454	352.0	556.0
question 19	720.20	270	0.000	.9480	858.0	038.1
question 20	742.12	270	0.000	.6970	590.0	805.0
question 21	117.13	270	0.000	.6270	0/533	721.0
question 22	044.5	270	0.000	.2580	157.0	359.0
question 23	549.15	270	0.000	.7190	628.0	811.0
question 24	774.9	270	0.000	.4280	342.0	0/514
question 25	754.17	270	0.000	.7780	692.0	0/865
question 26	916.18	270	0.000	941.0	843.0	039.1
question 27	383.14	270	0.000	753.0	650.0	856.0
question 28	150.13	270	0.000	679.0	577.0	780.0
question 29	673.26	270	0.000	085.1	005.1	165.1
question 30	147.7	270	0.000	443.0	321.0	565.0
question 31	920.2	270	0.000	136.0	044.0	228.0
question 32	162.0	270	0.000	007.0	097.0	082.0
question 33	960.7	270	0.000	376.0	283.0	469.0
question 34	316.17	270	0.000	863.0	765.0	961.0
question 35	959.10	270	0.000	542.0	445.0	640.0
question 36	6.086	270	0.000	0.313	0.212	0.415

Source: The Table is built by findings of researcher.

Table 14: European customers' perspective to the Persian handmade carpet brand

Pillars Levels	Credible Brand	Ownership	Uniqueness	Telegraphic	Benefit- oriented	Dynamics
Brand Recognition	agree	agree	disagree	agree	agree	agree
Brand Experience	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree
Brand Specialization	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree
Brand Leadership	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree
Quality of care	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree	agree
Innovation	agree	agree	agree	agree	neutral	agree

Source: The table is completed by findings of researchers

Discussion and conclusion

The results show that the level of “brand quality of care” with an average of 3.780 is the highest position among the European customers. The levels of “brand recognition”, “brand leadership”, “brand experience”, and “brand specialization” with averages of 3.662, 3.613, 3.603, and 3.464 are in the next ranks. The lowest rank among the levels of Persian carpet brand with an average of 3.371 belongs to the level of “brand innovation”. According to the respondents, the brand level score was higher than the average (3) ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the responses to all levels of the brand is focused on “strongly agree” and “agree” in ways that they believe the levels of Persian carpet brand have been in a good condition. “Brand benefit-oriented” pillar with an average of 3.736 is the highest position among the European customers. The pillars of “brand credible”, “brand ownership”, “brand unique”, and “brand dynamics” with averages of 3.655, 3.627, 3.595, and 3.442 are in the next ranks. The lowest rank among the pillars of Persian carpet brand with an average of 3.437 belongs to the Pillar of “brand telegraphic”. According to the respondents, the brand level score was higher than the average (3) ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the responses to all pillars of the brand is focused on “strongly agree” and “agree” in ways that they believe the pillars of Persian carpet brand have been in a good condition. Regarding the above results, we find that for European consumers, the Persian handmade carpet brand is weak in terms of communication and innovation

pillars. It suggested that more attention and effort to be paid to these pillars by Persian handmade carpet brand experts.

References

Aaker, D. A., & Shansby, J. (1982). Positioning your product. *Business Horizons*, 25(May/June), 56-62.

Arnott, D. C. (1993). Positioning: Redefining the concept. *Warwick Business School Research Papers*, 81, 24-25.

Arnott, D. C., & Easingwood, C. J. (1994). Positioning in services: A hypothetical typology of competitive bases. In 23rd EMAC Conference Proceedings (pp.1-3). Maastricht, the Netherlands: University of Limburg.

Blankson, C., & Kalafatis, S. P. (2004). The development and validation of a scale measuring consumer/customer-derived generic typology of positioning strategies. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 20, 5-43.

Dollich, I.J. (1969), Congruence relationships between self-images and product brands, *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 6, pp. 80-4.

Dovel, G. P. (1990). Stake it out; positioning success, step by step. *Business Marketing*, (July), 43-51.

Farhangi Ali Akbar. (2015) . Effect of media mix on brand equity (case study of Bank Sinai), *Marketing Management: Spring 2015, Cycle 10, No. 26*, from page 47 to page 74.

Fill, C. (1999). *Marketing communications, context, contents and strategies*. (2nd Ed.). Hemel Hempstead, UK: Prentice-Hall.

Fishbein, M. (1967). *Readings in attitude theory and measurement*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Beliefs, attitude, intention and behaviour: an introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

Hooley, G., Greenley, G., Fahy, J., & Cadogan, J. (2001). Market-focused resources, competitive positioning and firm performance. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17(5-6), 503-20.

Kapferer, J. N. (2004). *The strategic brand management – creating and sustaining brand equity long term*. London: Kogan Page.

Kotler, P. (1997). *Marketing management: analysis, planning, implementation and control*. Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Prentice-Hall International.

Kotler, P. (2003), *Marketing Management*, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs.

Kumar, S. R. (2007). *Marketing and branding – The Indian scenario*. Patparganj, Delhi, India: Dorling Kindersley Pvt. Ltd. *International Marketing Review*, 24 (3):271-96

Park, C. W., Jaworski, B. J., & MacInnis, D. J. (1986). Strategic brand concept – Image management. *Journal of Marketing*, 50, 621-35.

Pecotich, A. & Ward, S. (2007). Global branding, country of origin and expertise: An experimental evaluation.

Porter, M. E. (1996). What is strategy? *Harvard Business Review*, (Nov/Dec), 61-78.

Rao, V. R., & Steckel, J. H. (1998). *Analysis for strategic marketing*. Reading, MA: Addison- Wesley.

Ries, A., & Trout, J. (1986). *Positioning, the battle for your mind*. (Rev. Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Shafiee, M. & Davoodi, Z (2018). Investigation of Persian Handmade Carpet Brand Positioning in the view of European Customers. Volume 4, Issue 3 - Serial Number 11, autumn 2018, Page 50-79. *Journal of 'Brand Management'*, Alzahra University.

Soundararaj, J. J., & Rengamani, J. (2002). The inevitability of 'Positioning' in the present marketing scenario. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 32, 3-5.

Sweeney, J. C., & Soutar, G. N. (2001). Consumer perceived value, the development of a multiple item scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 77, 203-20.

Zinkhan, G.M. & Balazs, A.L. (2014). International brand-name standardization. Adaption: antecedents and consequences. *Journal of International Marketing*, 10 (3): 22-48.

Webster Jr., F. E. (1991). *Industrial marketing strategy*. (3rd Ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Wong, H.Y. & Merrilees, B. (2002). Closing the marketing strategy to performance gap, the role of brand orientation. *Journal of strategic Marketing*, 14 (3).

www.thedesignchannel.com