

## Investigation of the effect of cognitive dissonance and customer brand engagement an customer's Luxury brand aspiration

## Investigación del efecto de la disonancia cognitiva y el compromiso de la marca del cliente con la aspiración de la marca de lujo del cliente

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### Abstract

The objective of the present study is investigation of the effect of cognitive dissonance and customer brand engagement on customer's Luxury brand aspiration this study is a quantitative survey and applied and spatial research. The population of this study include kia brand customers in automobile manufacturing industry in the city of Tehran that members were selected by simple random method and without sample placement the tool for data collecting was questionnaire method. The structural partial modeling based on partial least square modeling was used for data analysis. The obtained results indicate that the cognitive dissonance has a significant effect on customer brand engagement and customers luxury brand aspiration. Also there are some evidences that indicate customer brand engagement has a positive and direct effect on the customers Luxury brand aspiration.

**Cognitive dissonance, Customer brand engagement, Customers luxury brand aspiration**

### Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es investigar el efecto de la disonancia cognitiva y la participación de la marca del cliente en la aspiración de marca de lujo del cliente. Este estudio es una encuesta cuantitativa e investigación espacial y aplicada. La población de este estudio incluye clientes de la marca kia en la industria de fabricación de automóviles en la ciudad de Teherán, en la que los miembros fueron seleccionados mediante un método aleatorio simple y sin una herramienta de colocación de muestras para la recolección de datos fue el método de cuestionario. El modelo estructural parcial basado en el modelo de mínimos cuadrados parciales se utilizó para el análisis de datos. Los resultados obtenidos indican que la disonancia cognitiva tiene un impacto significativo en el compromiso con la marca del cliente y en la aspiración de la marca de lujo de los clientes. También hay algunos indicios de que el compromiso con la marca del cliente tiene un efecto positivo y directo en la aspiración de los clientes de la marca Luxury.

**Disonancia cognitiva, Compromiso con la marca del cliente, Clientes, Aspiración de la marca de lujo**

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## Introduction

Nowadays, there are many variables in the field of business and customer behavior. If the customer is dissatisfied with the quality of a product and feels that there is a lot of differences between the actual performance and his expectation, he will experience a cognitive dissonance that will result in his dissatisfaction. According to Festinger's (1957) theory, the cognitive dissonance is a kind of feeling of anxiety and discomfort in a person that is a result of the conflict between cognitive elements in a person between the cognitive elements is the basis of the changing attitudes.

This state occurs when a person has conflicting beliefs or even attitudes and behaviors. (Bedar, Desil and Lamarsh 2002, 109) The field of purchasing behavior also is made when there is a significant difference between the expected performance and the actual performance of the product that causes a person to adjust his future behavior in a manner that less cognitive dissonance arises. (Harmon Jones and Milles, 2009). As a result, if a consumer observes some dissonance in his attitudes, he will go to another product so that to avoid this dissonance. On the other hand, when buying products, the customers will make many decisions about the product and its purchasing and using.

The researchers of consumer's behavior do many efforts for better understanding of such a decision making. There are many effective parameters in purchasing and consuming a product, some of them are as follows: value of perceived brand, the origin country, and luxury products. The fancy consumption is considered as a display of wealth in order to acquire and maintain a position or prestige and social credentials (Heidar Zadeh and Raies Rohani 2014). The fancy consumption is a relatively global phenomenon that has an increasing popularity in the developed countries. This subject is observed in the growing middle class in the developing countries.

It can be said that fancy consumption is more common in the cultures that tend to be materialistic. The luxury products that are purchased on a daily basis are different because they satisfy the individual's need for social prestige and individuals show their personality through the purchases of this kind of products (Heidar Zadeh and Raies Rohani 2014). Also, the cognitive elements can have an effect on the customer brand engagement.

Accordingly, the intensity of the cognitive dissonance is depended on the unique characteristics of the customer and the variables that lead to a cognitive conflict in the consumer (Harmon Jones and Milles 2009). In the previous studies, the consumer's purchase behavior such as the fear of product inaccuracy, the level of a structuralism of the individual life, pessimism and optimism of the consumer are some of the factors that influence on the cognitive dissonance (Pins, Amons Larsen and Griffin 1985, Riff and Kais, 1995) and Beck Rush Shaw and Amar 1979). One of the other effective factors on the cognitive dissonance is customer's mental involvement. The customer's mental involvement is defined as the quantity product importance or the individual's interest for selection, consumption and avoiding of the products or services.

The rate of consumed energy, money and time for doing a purchase may be the results of the consumer's mental engagement (Bity and Cale 1988). One of the important aspects of the consumer's mental involvement is the formulation of the purchasing decision which is a cognitive response to the control of uncertainty or duplicity as a result of purchasing (Mittal, 1989)).

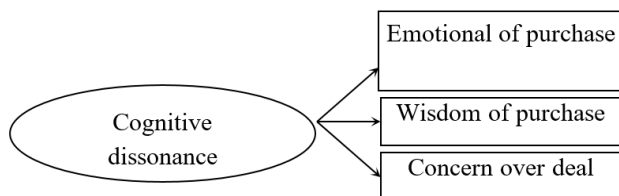
In other words, purchases with less mental involvement in comparison to high mental involvement result in more cognitive dissonance (Badamsi, 2009). Considering the symbolic performance of the brands in consumer identity creation, the present study was conducted to investigate the effect of the cognitive dissonance and custom brand engagement on customer's luxury brand aspiration.

## Literature review

### Cognitive dissonance

The cognitive dissonance theory states that a person has different cognitive elements such as cognition of himself, environments, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. In the literature of consumer's behavior, the dissonance accrues when, after an important purchase, the individual obtains new information that is in conflict with his previous experiences and information (Kan, Buck & Lee 2007, Kasser, Janz and Kahn 1965). Also, they describe the process of creating dissonance in the consumer's mind as follows: when a purchase is made, the buyer's mind analyzes its positive and negative aspects, and this reaction results in creating conflict thoughts in the purchaser's mind.

The positive aspects of purchase are forgotten and the negative aspect create an increasing stress in the buyer's mind that result in the changing of buyer's decision about purchasing and creating dissonance( Ozma and Rashma 2012, Sountar & Sweeney (2003) categorized the dissonance in to three levels of emotional, wisdom of purchase and concern over deal. This model is showed in the following figure :



**Figure 1** The cognitive dissonance model  
Santar & Sweeney, 2003

### Customer brand engagement

consumer's mental involvement is a psychological social concept and generally is a basis for mental involvement recognition in the consumer's behavior (Michaildo and Dib, 2006) The consumer's mental involvement is defined as the perceived personal importance of the interest associated with the acquisition , consumption and avoiding of products, services and ideas (Moone and Minor, 2001). Moone and Minor believe that the level of consumer's mental involvement after perception is the second most important factor that influence on the information process.

Indeed when the consumer's mental involvement increases the motivation of consumer will increase considering the understanding and analysis of information that is important in purchasing a product, Generally, the consumer's mental involvement describe this subject that why the consumers are interested in purchasing more than other activities and how they receive different messages from commercial advertising and during purchasing communications. In many of studies, mental involvement is considered as an internal situation of motivation that has three attributes as follows:

1. Intensity.
2. Direction.
3. Stability and durability (Broderick, 2007).

Among these three attributes the “intensity” refers to the rate of mental involvement and arousal which encompasses a spectrum of maximal and minimal consumer's mental involvement. The “direction” is defined as a purpose that results in arousal of consumer (i.e., advertisements and finally the” stability and durability” refers to the time of consumer’s mental involvement time of consumers mental involvement (Broderick, 2007).

The researchers identified two different Kinds of mental involvement (Moone and Minor 2007):

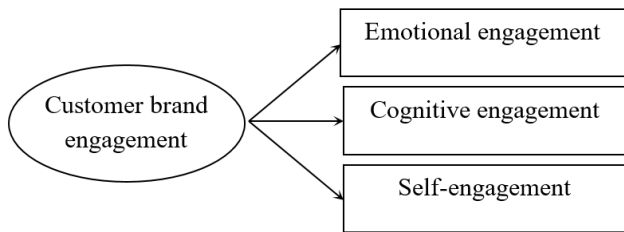
- A. Situational involvement.
- B. Enduring involvement.

The situational involvement occurs in a short term and is associated with individual situation such as need to replacing a damaged commodity( i.e., a car ) .On the other hand the enduring involvement State a longer commitment, associated with the product class (Moone and Miner, 2007). The enduring involvement occurs when a consumer spend his time on thinking about a commodity.

The combination of situational involvement leads to mental involvement responses. The involvement responses depend on the complexity of information processing and decision making of consumer, the main feature of the enduring involvement is having desire for product or brand which is always along with enjoyment and special interest (kapferer & lauvents, 1993). On the other hand the situational involvement (in contrast to the enduring involvement that shows an stable interest) indicates a short term desire that is aroused by a special cause such as the perceived risk (Michaildo & Dib 2006) what happens when a person who has enduring involvement toward a commodity and suddenly needs to buy that product? The research show that in such a situation the effects of situational and enduring involvement come together. As a result many of involvement responses will occur.

Because a total amount of mental involvement is equal to the sum of the rate of situational involvement and enduring involvement (Moone and Minor 2001). In addition, the levels of mental involvement leads the consumers toward a wider decision making process and in passing of each of decision making process stages they proceed with a more complete method. he difference in the type of decision making process in the context of the high and low mental involvement is an important discussion of two groups of decision making.In other words the limited decision making occurs in low mental involvement.

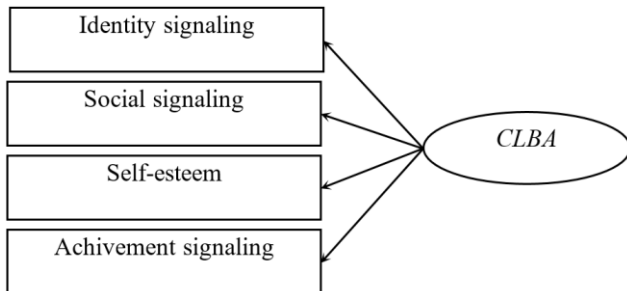
Moon and minor (2001), Apnes Solm (2016) presents a theoretical model of the concept of customer brand engagement that includes conceptions of the emotional engagement, the cognitive engagement and self-engagement. The following figure show his theoretical models:



**Figure 2** Customer brand engagement  
*Apnes Solm, 2016*

**Customer's Luxury brand aspiration model (CLBA)**

Sreejesh et al. (2016) developed a measuring device with four components of identity signaling Social recognition, self-esteem and achievement signaling for measuring the customer's Luxury brand aspiration (CLBA). This model has been shown in the following figure:



**Figure 3** Customer's luxury brand aspiration (CLBA)  
*Sreejesh .et al 2016*

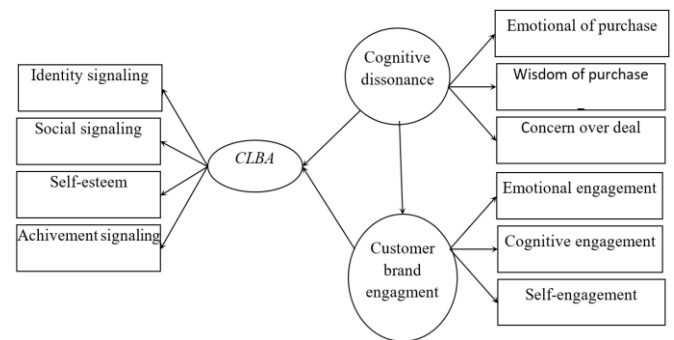
Customer's Luxury brand aspiration (CLBA): Refers to aspiration to luxury brand consumption that show some characters for showing the purposes and special desires, personal identity, achievement and self-esteem of customer and creates the social recognition of customer in other person's mind (Sreejesh et al 2016). Identity signaling: Refers to this concept that how much using a luxury brand cause his distinction and credibility in the community (Sreejesh et al, 2016).

Social recognition: Means being recognized and respected by community due to using a luxury brand.

Self-esteem: Refers to this concept that by using a luxury brand how much a person achieve a sense of respect, pride and achievement of goals.

Achievement signaling: This variable shows this concept that how much using a luxury brand shows it's consumer achievement of goals.

**Conceptual model on research:**



**Figure 4** Conceptual model

**Research assumptions:**

1. The cognitive dissonance has a significant effect on the customers luxury brand aspiration.

First sub- hypothesis:

- 1.1. The emotional dimension of purchasing has a significant effect on customer's Luxury brand aspiration.
- 1.2. Wisdom of purchase has a significant effect on the customer's Luxury brand aspiration .
- 1.3. Concern over deal has a significant effect on the customer's Luxury brand aspiration.
2. Customers brand engagement has a significant effect on the customers luxury brand aspiration.
  - 2.1. Emotional engagement has a significant effect on the customer's luxury brand aspiration.
  - 2.2. Cognitive engagement has a significant effect on the customers Luxury brand aspiration.
  - 2.3. Self-engagement has a significant effect on the customers luxury brand aspiration.
3. The cognitive dissonance has a significant effect on the customer brand engagement.
  - 3.1. The emotional dimension of purchase has a significant effect on the customer brand engagement.
  - 3.2. The cognitive engagement has a significant effect on the customer brand engagement.
  - 3.3. Concern over deal has significant effect on the customer brand engagement.

## Literature Reviews

Heydarzadeh ,et al. (2014) in an exploratory study under the title of the investigation of the effect of demographic factors and brand perception on the desire to buy luxury cars among the consumers tried to explain why the consumers have more desire to by luxury car.

The obtained results indicate that the variables of the value of enjoyment, the value of uniqueness and the quality of value play a more important poet than two variable of luxury value and Social value in the formation of perception of luxury brand from Iranian consumers point of view. Molla Hoseini and Tajedini (2015) in a Similar study under the title of the investigation of the effect of distribution canal variability of foreign luxury brands on brand value and consumer loyalty in Kerman garment market have tried to study the value of brand and consumers loyalty the existing luxury brands and distribution canals for luxury brands. The obtained results indicate that the participants examine the brand value in a different way the depends on distribution canal.

Alhoseini Almedaresi and Abravi (2017) in a descriptive survey under the title of the effect of psychological characteristics on the attitude and purchase intention toward luxury brand, investigated the effect of psychologic characteristics on the attitude and purchase intention of the consumers of luxury cars. The present research that its population includes 150 members of the owners of luxury cars in Isfahan city was done in a simple random method and the needed data was gathered using questionnaire.

The obtained results indicate that brand equity and brand leadership have a positive and significant effect on the attitude and purchase intention of the luxury brand consumers Salim and Ali (2012) studied the effect of consumer's mental engagement about the product and suddenly purchases (without planning) on the cognitive dissonance in this study , data analysis about 422 student was performed. The obtained results indicate that consumers mental engagement about the product and unplanned purchased has important role in the cognitive dissonance that the first one has a invers and the second one has a direct relationship with the cognitive dissonance.

Bus and Sarker (2012) investigated the effect of the cognitive dissonance on the purchase intention among the buyers of the consuming goods in the kholena metropolitan of Bangladesh .The data gathering tool in this study was a 10 items questionnaire that measured the effective factors on creating dissonance in purchase decision. The studied factors were beliefs, norms, traditions, family status, political thinking emotional response, personal performance, culture, spiritual value and the influence of peer group. The obtained results showed that there are several effective factors on the cognitive dissonance such as norms spiritual values, culture and traditions.

## Research Methodology

The present study is a descriptive -applied and quantitative and sectional study from purpose point of view. The population of this research includes all of the customers of kia brand in automotive industry in Tehran. It should be mentioned that the total number of the studied population is not certain and actually is regarded as an unlimited population. Using Morgan table, 384 people were selected by means of a simple random method as sample.

The research data were gathered by means of library method and questionnaire. In the present research the standard questionnaire of Cognitive dissonance of Satter and Svoni (2003),customer brand engagement of Apnes Solm (2016) and customer's luxury brand aspiration (CLBA) of Sreegish ,et al (2016) were used in order to validity examination of the questionnaire after questionnaire distribution the factor validity by means of factor analysis was used. In the first step the rate of KMO index and Bartlett index significance should be considered.

Statistics KMO	0/773
Chi-squar rate	1923/604
Degree of freedom	36
Sig level	0/000

**Table 1** Estimation of KMO index and Bartlett statistics for the cognitive dissonance questionnaire

statistics KMO	0/642
Chi-squar rate	434/393
Degree of freedom	36
Sig level	0/000

**Table 2** Estimation of the KMO index and Bartlett Statistics for customer brand engagement questionnaire

statistics KMO	0/810
Chi-squar rate	2354/138
Degree of freedom	66
Sig level	0/000

**Table 3** Estimation of the KMO index and Bartlett statistics for customer's Luxury brand aspiration questionnaire

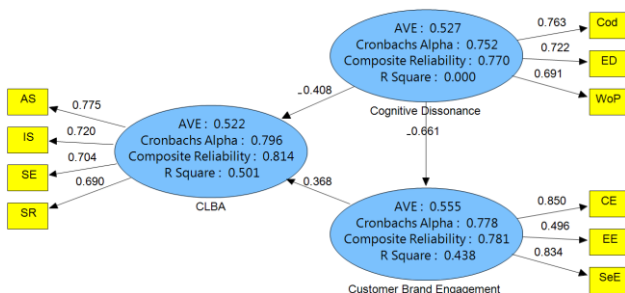
As the obtained results indicate the KMO statistics rate is near one and significance level of Bartlett statistics is less than 0/05. These rates show that the rate of the obtained sample is sufficient for factor analysis performing. The researcher select the Cronbach's alpha method among the methods of determining the variability since the alpha coefficient for all of the three questionnaire is more than 0/7 ,it has an acceptable reliability (Momeni and Faal Byoomi 2010, 212).

**Results Analysis**

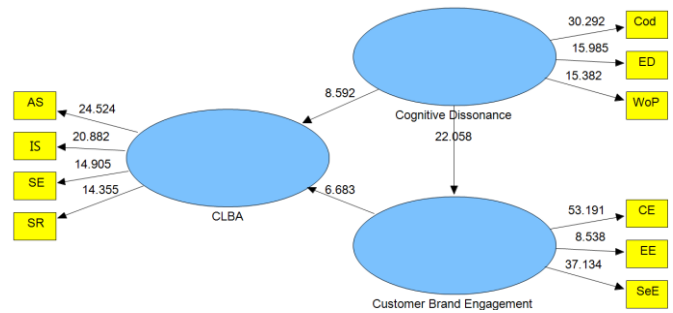
The descriptive and inferential statistics were used by means of the SPSS and smart PLS statistics software in order to data analysis. The obtained results indicate that the age mean of the participants in the present study is 35/37 that 55,5% of them were male. 69,3% of the studied Sample members were married and 114 people of them. i.e. 29/05% were single. The chi-square test was used in order to examining the normality of the used sample data distributions since the significance level of the research variables is less than the assumed rate of 0/05, the normality of their Sample is not accepted. Accordingly the structural route modeling with minor least squares that is not sensitive to normality of the variables distribution is used. This method is performable by means of the Smart PLS software.

The research main hypothesis test:

In the following graphs the main hypotheses of the research in two states of path Coefficient and significance coefficients are presented.



**Graph 5** The rate of the path coefficient of the main hypotheses



**Graph 6** The significance coefficient (T values) of the main hypotheses

As you can see in the obtained graphs, the cognitive dissonance has an effect of -0/408 on the customers Luxury brand aspiration. Also the customer brand engagement has an effective effect of 0/368 on the customer's luxury brand aspiration. The cognitive dissonance has a significant effect of - 0/661 on the customer brand engagement. The Tvalue Statistics rates Confirm its significance since this model in reliability level of 0/95 and the error rate of 0/05 is performed and tested and it's rate should be more than 1/96. According to these findings it can be said that the evidences based on the rejection of the research main hypothesis have not been observed and can be accepted.

result	t-value	Total effect	Indirect effect	Direct effect	main hypothesis
confirmed	592/8	651/0-	243/0	408/0-	Cognitive dissonance←CLBA
confirmed	683/6	368/0	000/0	368/0	Customer brand engagament←CLBA
Confirmed	058/22	661/0-	000/0	661/0-	Cognitive dissonance←Customer brand engagament

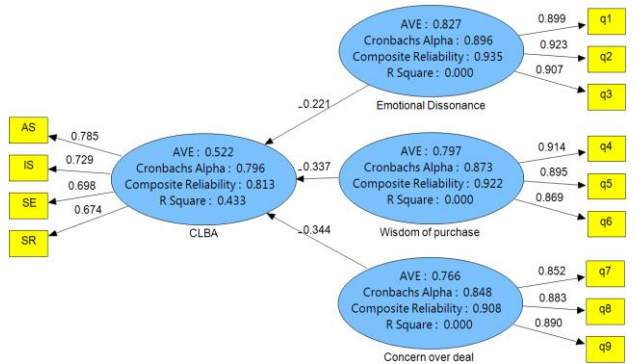
**Table 4** Tvalue rate and the coeffniets of the research. Structural path model for the main hypothesis

After interpreting the research hypothesis test the adequacy of the estimated model should be examined. In the method based on the minor Least squares the indices for external model evaluation (measurement model), internal model (structural models) and total model (external and internal ) were introduced the have been examined as follows:

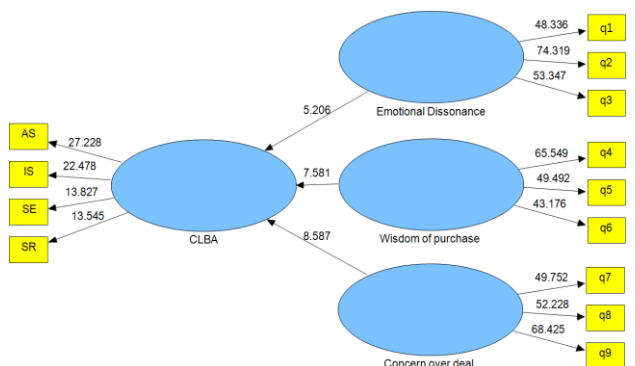
Model quality indices			Internal model indices		External model indices			متغيرها
GOF	Red	Com	$^2Q$	$r^2$	AVE	$\rho$	$\alpha$	
/500	/1890	/5220	/2570	/5010	/5220	/8130	/7950	CLBA
	---	/5270	/5270	---	/5270	/7690	/7520	Cognitive dissonance
	/2430	/5540	/2430	/4380	/5540	/7800	/5780	Customer brand engagement

**Table 5** Investigation of the indices of the internal and external model and all of the main

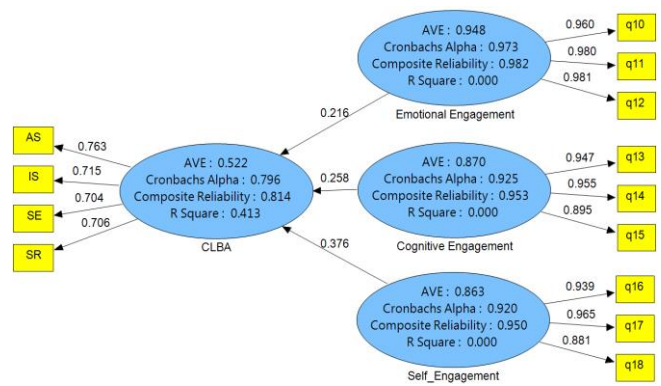
As you can see the rates of the Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability more than the recommended rates of 0/7 and AVE index are higher than the expected rate of 0/5. Therefore the external models have a good fit. Also r2 index show that the predictor variables have been able to predict the dependent variable to a high limit. Since the Q2 index is higher than zero it can be said that there is predictor relationship. Also the subscription index is higher than the expected rate of 0/5 and the redundancy index is not Zero. This indicates the goodness of fit of the research model for the first Sub-hypothesis. Gof index show that this model has 50% predictability.



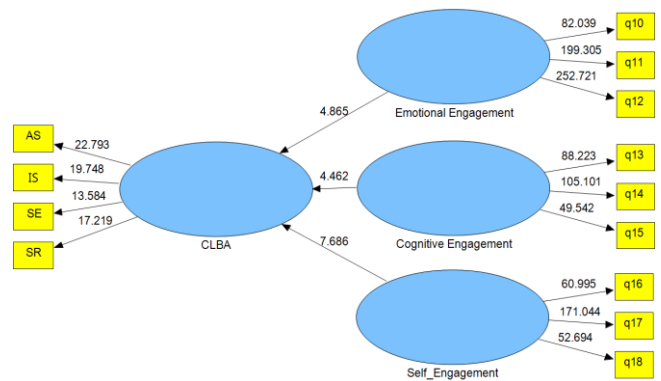
**Graph 7** The path coefficient's on the first sub\_hypotheses of the research



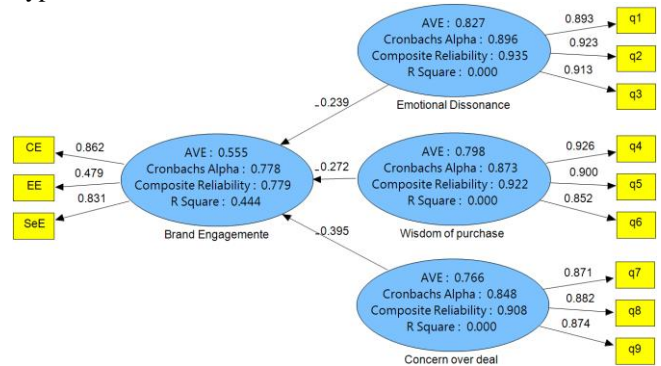
**Graph 8** Significance efficiencies (T-value) of the first sub-hypotheses of the research



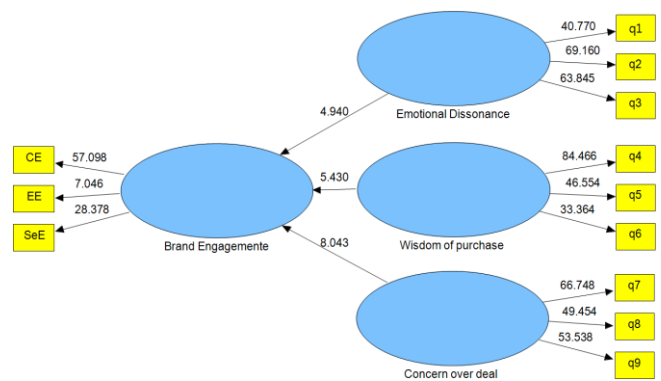
**Graph 9** Estimation of the path coefficients for the second sub-hypotheses



**Graph 10** Estimation of Tvalues rates of the second sub-hypotheses



**Graph 11** Estimation of the path coefficient o for the third sub-hypotheses



**Graph 12** Estimation of Tvalues rates of the third sub-hypothesis of the research

## Conclusion

The obtained results of the examination of the main hypothesis by means of the PLS method show that the cognitive dissonance has a significant effect of the rate of ( $n=384$ ,  $T\text{-values} > 1/96$ ,  $0/5\%$ ,  $p=95\%$ )- $0/408$  an luxury brand aspiration. According to the path coefficient rate the explained variance can be calculated. In such a way that if the path coefficient be squared we will obtain the explained variance or  $r^2$  (determination coefficient Accordingly we have  $r^2 = 0/77$ . In other words 17% of changes in variable of luxury brand aspiration is explained by cognitive dissonance.

This rate of the determination coefficient is small and is the most important and the most significant result of this study. The rates of the determination coefficient are equal to  $0/67$ ,  $0/33$  and  $0/19$  that are high, average and low respectively. Accordingly the determination coefficient for the main hypothesis of the present research is considered in high level. In the interpretation it can be said that the obtained results indicate that this level of relationship is in higher level of 1% and is significant that indicate a high relationship between two variables. It can be expected that by increasing one unit in the cognitive dissonance variable a decrease of 11% be occurred in the customer's Luxury brand aspiration.

Thus, it can be said that any evidence for rejection of this hypothesis was not observed. According to the obtained results of the structural path model method, the cognitive dissonance separately has an inverse and significant effect on the customer's luxury brand aspiration. The emotional dimension of purchasing has an effect of  $T\text{-value} = 5/206$  and  $-0/221$  the wisdom of purchase has an effect of  $T\text{-values} = 7/581$ ,  $-0/337$  and concern over deal has an effect of  $T\text{Value} = 8/587$  on the customer's Luxury brand aspiration. The examination of the obtained results of the second main hypothesis indicate that the customer brand engagement has an effect of ( $n=384$ ,  $T\text{-value} > 1/96$ ,  $0/5\%$ ,  $p=95\%$ )- $0/368$  on the customer's Luxury brand aspiration.

The calculation of the determination coefficient indicates that 14% of the changing the variable of customer's luxury brand aspiration explain the customer brand engagement. This is a very small rates but because of its significance is very important.

This subject shows that with improving the customer brand engagement to one unit, a  $0/14$  improvement will occurs in the customer's luxury brand aspiration. By considering the results of the structural path model estimation of the paths of emotional engagement, cognitive engagement and self-engagement on the customer's luxury brand aspiration it can be said that the emotional engagement ( $B=0/276$ ,  $n=384$   $d\text{-value} > 1/96$ ) cognitive engagement ( $B=0/258$ ,  $n=384$   $t\text{-values} > 1/96$ ) and self-engagement ( $B=0/376$ ,  $n=384$ ,  $t\text{-value} > 1/96$ ) are estimated.

According to the obtained results of testing these hypotheses it is recommended to the marketing managers that evaluate the consumer's mental engagement profile that help them to can focused on the more important dimensions and achieve to attractive clues for creating difference and company advertisement strategies planning. The customer brand engagement is the customer brand engagement is used for partitioning of the used company because this variable has the ability of description and prediction of the consumer's behavior The estimation of the structural path model indicate that the cognitive dissonance effect on the customer brand engagement is equal to ( $n=384$ ,  $T\text{value} > 1/96$ ,  $0/5\%$ ,  $p=95\%$ )-  $0/667$ .

Determination coefficient show that the cognitive dissonance can explain 44% of the changing in the customers brand engagement. This rate of the determination coefficient is large and significant and has an important role in communities and because of its significance it is important. this subject predicts that with an one unit increasing in the cognitive dissonance a 44% decrease can be observed in the customer brand engagement. considering the obtained results of the structural path model of the effect paths of the emotional dimension of purchasing the wisdom of purchasing and the concern over deal on the customer brand engagement it can be said that the emotional dimension of purchasing ( $B=0/239$ ,  $n=384$   $t\text{-value} > 1/96$ ) the wisdom of purchase ( $B=0/272$ ,  $n=384$ ,  $t\text{-value} > 1/96$ ) and concern over deal ( $B=-0/395$   $n=384$ ,  $t\text{-value} > 1/96$ ) have a significant and inverse effect on the customer brand engagement These rates of the effect are high and significant, the obtained evidences of the examination of this hypothesis indicate that the cognitive disharmony has an inverse and significant effect on the customer brand engagement.



Thus it is recommended that the marketing managers try to decrease the customers cognitive dissonance. At this regard the following measures are recommended.

1. Decrease the number or importance of the disparate elements
2. Increase the number or the importance of the harmonious cognitions.
3. Decrease dis orientation: In other words one of the disparate elements should be changed so that the be consistent with other cognitions.
4. Challenge the validity of the incompatible information source.
5. Make doubts about the validity of information.

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