

**A Survey on the Extent of Brand and Trademark Effect on Customer Loyalty
(Case Study: Consumers of Chi Toz Chips in Esfahan Province)**

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Abstract

Customer loyalty is one of the elements on which the relation-oriented market has a significant emphasis especially in foodstuffs market. Trademark of a company is one of the factors contributing in the formation of this loyalty. Therefore, the present research surveys the extent of brand and trademark effect on customer loyalty. To fulfill this goal, the relation between satisfaction, resistance to change, emotion, trust and brand equity on customer loyalty was hypothesized based on the conceptual model of research. Necessary data was then collected by using a questionnaire in the statistical society of consumers of Chi Toz chips in Esfahan Province with a sample volume of 150 people on a random basis and was then studied by regression test. The results indicate that from the five studied variables, two of them, namely resistance to change and emotion affect customer loyalty. The effect of three other variables, namely trust in brand, satisfaction and brand equity on customer loyalty was not approved.

Keywords: Brand, Brand Equity, Brand Loyalty, Customer Loyalty, Customer.

Introduction

Today, the extent and speed of development and renovation in different fields are high. Number of commercials broadcasted from different media to draw consumer's attention is so confusing that they need a device to assist them in distinguishing their interested samples so that they can find quick ways to their targets. Trademark and brand serve as quick ways. In other words, they are like a signboard in a crowded market that classify the premium and valuable characteristics of products and show them to the customers. In this way, customers can purchase their necessary products with sufficient trust and confidence. Today, brand and trademark serve as a strategic requirement for organizations assisting them in providing a higher value for customers and establishing sustainable competitive advantages. Establishment of a powerful brand in the market is the essential objective of most of the companies since it can increase customers' confidence upon purchasing goods and services and can help them understand intangible elements better. In other words, it can be said that a powerful brand is considered as a valuable asset for a company.

Statement of the problem

Today, brand management is a field in marketing management with an increasing importance, especially when organizations shift their efforts toward communication of intangible and communicated messages. One of the most important issues with which brand management face today is how to provide and develop a better understanding of the relation between structures such as brand and customer loyalty. Especially, several factors are introduced in the marketing management literature affecting customer loyalty (Seyed Javadain et al., 2010). Trademarks are among the main popular issues in the product-mixed strategy of companies. Companies make long term and extensive investments for their trademarks especially in advertisement, sale promotion and packaging. They

know that the power of their markets arises from establishment of trademarks of their products and that strong trademarks provide them with loyalty of their customers. Maybe one of the most distinguished qualifications of professional companies is their capability of establishing, keeping, maintaining and promoting their trademarks.

(Kaperfer, 2006) Due to increased competition in trade and swift changes in technology and increased power and right to choose by customers, those companies will be successful that they are able to desirably respond to the said cases (Wang and Liao, 2007). Brand characteristics shall affect customer behavior. Today's trade needs branding strategy. (Javanmard and Soltanzadeh, 2009), in case a company considers brand as a name only it shall not perceive deep application of the brand in marketing. The results reveal that brand equity affects the perceptions of customers of quality of products and services. Company credibility is effective on customer perception and loyalty (Esmaeil Pour, 2005). Researches reveal that maintenance cost of loyal customers is less than cost of attraction of a customer (Javanmard and Soltanzadeh, 2009). Considering marketing activities as means for presence in mind of customers and development of an intellectual property under the name of brand is regarded a fresh view in marketing science. Different researches have revealed that real value does not lie inside the products or services. Instead, this value exists in the mind of real and potential customers. This is the brand that creates a real value in mind of customers (Divandari et al, 2009). Higher importance is attached to trademarks and their power in marketing where customer sensitivity is higher and flexibility is less, therefore the most trivial lack of attention results in loss of all marketing efforts (Seyed Javadain et al, 2010). Thus, it is necessary for companies to consider marketing of the role of their trademarks in development of customer royalty for their growth and promotion of their share of market so that they will codify stronger brand at market and competing with competitors for attraction of loyal customers. For this purpose, the researcher is willing to conduct this research aiming at study of the effect

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of trademarks on customer royalty for Chi Toz Chips. Nowadays, we live in an era where tendencies toward production, products and sale could not any longer guaranty survival of a company at market. Customers and competitors are smarter and all companies that are willing to maintain their survival in such environment and they should knowingly or unknowingly turn to marketing tendency and even social marketing. This case can be realized by spending a litter care in the recent acts and measures of local companies in our nation because major of our market has been competitive and parts of it are being competitive (Hosseini and Rezaee, 2011). In fact, brand is a summary of the company's line of activity that connects customers to the company. In case a company is willing to establish a profound and meaningful relation with its customers through its trademark, it inevitably has to seek for common points and unique tendencies and interests. Brands play a prominent role in customer relation management during a long period. Moreover, it is used as a means seeking for satisfaction of customers and promoting the quality of services. In today's competitive world where arrival of new competitors to market and providing different services is so high and considering high costs for finding new customers, it is very important to keep the present customers (Divandari et al, 2011). For this purpose, it is very important to establish a deep relationship with customers through which we can achieve this goal by benefiting from the brand credibility. Customer relation and commitment of the obligations that we claim through our brand shall result in meeting satisfaction and eventually customer royalty. Such loyalty persuades our customers to act as our advertisers and recommend others use our products. Development of this type of loyalty that brings about a certain type of emotional commitment persuades our customers to show a great stability to

use the products of our company and do not turn toward other products. This long-term relation will be really helpful for a company (Fallah Shams et al, 2010). Thus, in this research we try to study the role and importance attached to brand and trademark of companies for achieving customer loyalty. Thus, an empirical test is conducted in Esfahan.

Research Hypotheses

Main Hypothesis: Brands affect customer loyalty.

Sub Hypotheses:

1. Satisfaction affects customer loyalty.
2. Resistance against change in customer loyalty.
3. Emotions affect customer loyalty.
4. Brand equity affects customer loyalty.

Research Background

In their article entitled "The importance of brand equity in customer royalty", Taylor et al (2004) presented a model for customer royalty affected by trademarks by considering Baldinger and Robinson's viewpoints. In that model, they have considered customer loyalty as a function of behavioral and attitude loyalty. They consider satisfaction as resistance against change, emotion, trust and equity brand including the elements associated with brands that affect customers' loyalty. Figure 5.2 shows the relation between these elements and their effects on customer loyalty. Measurement of the relations between components of this model has been used as the conceptual model of research to review the role of brands in formation of customer loyalty.

Trust, change resistance, brand equity, satisfaction, emotions, customer loyalty.

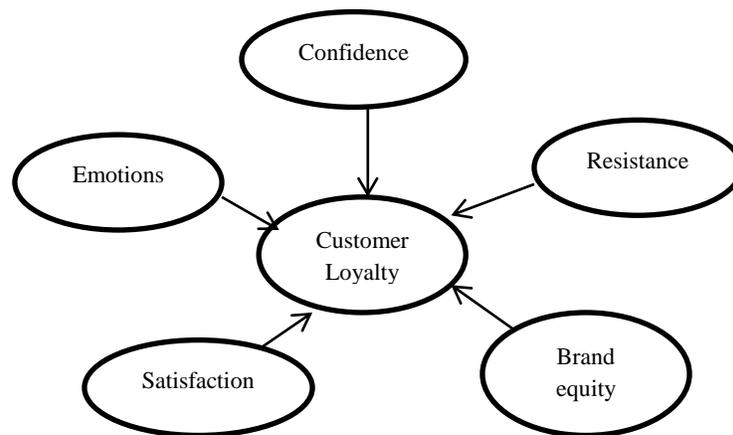


Figure 1) Conceptual model of research; source: (Seyed Javadain et al., 2010)

Satisfaction: Satisfaction is one of the other relevant concepts such as quality, loyalty and different attitude. In literature, it means having a direct effect on customer loyalty and purchase behaviors and objectives of repurchase (Seyed Javadain et al., 2010).

Change resistance: Generally, commitment is the main axis of relation-oriented marketing. Zhiliand and Blew (2002) offer a model which links commitment to trust and loyalty taking this

presumption in the mind that trust is an introduction for a loyal commitment. Prichard et al. (1999) defines commitment as emotional and psychological attachment to a brand. These authors generalize their attentions to commitment with change resistance. In addition, they argue that change resistance is an introduction to loyalty (Seyed Javadain, et al., 2010).

Emotions: Researches indicate that customers' evaluation of services has had a high correlation with their emotions in their interactions. Moreover, emotion can affect consumer's attitudes

even in the absence of belief in the product. Generally, emotions are present in all marketing issues and can be identified through indirect reactions to persuasive requests, measurement of effects of marketing motives, emergence of target-oriented behaviors and evaluation of consumer's welfare. However, the role of emotions in marketing interactions and relations has been ignored by the marketers (Seyed Javadain et al., 2010).

Trust: It defines the expectations developed in a society with specifications such as law-centeredness, honesty and a cooperation-based behavior based on the common norms shared among the members of that society. Sing and Serdeshmookh (2000) provide a model according to which trust is an introduction for satisfaction followed by an introduction to loyalty (Seyed Javadain et al., 2010).

Brand equity: Keler (1998) considers brand equity different from customer loyalty and defines that as different effects of brand knowledge on the reaction of consumer to marketing of that brand. He believes that customers give a better response to a brand product as compared to a product which is offered without any brand. This occurs once the brand equity of that product is positive. Keler adds that one of the characteristics of brands with strong equities is brand loyalty (Seyed Javadain et al., 2010). Javanmard and Soltanzadeh (2009) conducted a study entitled "A survey on the characteristics of internet brands and websites and their effects on customer trust and loyalty (case study: purchase of cultural products through internet. Two objectives are followed in this paper. The first objective is to find out how websites assist in promoting the messages of a brand and in addition, they define the opportunities offered by internet to electronically serve the companies in order to communicate with customers and also assist marketing programmers in promoting and succeeding in branding strategies based on internet. The results indicate that characteristics of websites and internet brand in general and also any of their elements have a positive effect on the positive attitude and trust of customers. Haji Karimi (2005) conducted a research entitled "Effective factors in customer loyalty to brand". The goal of that research was to identify the factors affecting customer loyalty to a specific brand especially in foodstuffs. This research is an applied one with respect to type of objective and it is a descriptive research with respect to research type. Its statistical society included all the customers of foodstuffs in Shahrvand chain stores and finally 100 questionnaires were distributed among the sample members and final analysis was made from the data of the 100 questionnaires. The results indicate that customer loyalty to a certain trademark in food industries is influenced by reputation, access, standard sign, suitable packaging and flavor and taste of that trademark. Seyed Javadain et al. (2010) conducted a research entitled "Evaluation of the effect of brand on loyalty of industrial customers". The goal of that research was to survey the relation of customers' loyalty and effective factors of trademarks. To fulfill that goal, based on the conceptual model of research, the relation between satisfaction, value, change resistance, emotion, trust, brand equity and customer loyalty was hypothesized and the necessary information was collected by using a questionnaire from the statistical society, namely printing and Xerox offering centers throughout the 22 districts of Tehran with a sample volume of 150 centers and was then tested by using Spearman correlation and SEM tests. The results

indicate that brand equity and trust are the most important effective factors in behavioral and attitude models of customer loyalty. Moreover, the effective factors between behavioral loyalty as compared to attitude loyalty may be different in various research fields. Dehdashti et al. (2012) conducted a study entitled "A survey on the social identity approach of brand and its effect on development of brand loyalty". The goal of that study was to review the effect of brand identity on the development of brand loyalty in the industry of foodstuffs. Kaleh which is a known brand throughout Iran was selected for study. In this way, all the customers of Kaleh products in Tehran metropolis were selected as the statistical society of research and a sample consisting of 475 people was selected for study. SEM and factor analysis methods were used for data analysis and model confirmation. Research findings indicated the positive effect of brand identity on brand loyalty and their direct relation. A brand with a strong identity is the origin of formation of long term between customer and company and will be followed by loyalty. Ebrahimi et al. (2012) conducted a research entitled "A study on the effect of psychological processes of brand identity and character on brand loyalty". The goal of the research was to survey the effect of psychological process of brand identity and character on the traditional model of brand loyalty (perceived value, satisfaction and trust) and to refer to the intermediary role of brand character in the offered model. Walt et al. (2012) conducted a study entitled "The effect of brand and sale promotion on brand equity". In their study, they achieved a positive relation between brand character and the negative relation of sale promotion and brand equity. Therefore, brand equity results in creation of brand equity. Lin (2010) conducted a study entitled "The relation between consumer personality, brand character and brand loyalty". The results of this research showed that there is a positive significant relation between competence and sophistication of brand character and effective loyalty as well as competency, peacefulness and sophistication dimensions on practical loyalty.

In the present study, the researches related to the effect of brand and trademark on customer loyalty are evaluated. On this basis, the main goal of the present study is to survey the extent of brand and trade name on customer loyalty. Conceptual model was used to access to the research goal and specification of important factors and variables.

Research Methodology

This research is among applied researches with respect to objective and is a descriptive research with respect to methodology. In these studies, library study method, review of texts and contents of the subjects and also field methods such as questionnaire, interview and observation are used. Statistical society of this research includes all the customers of Chi Toz chips in Esfahan province. Random cluster sampling method has been used in this research. Thanks to the nature of research and subject of the present study and in consideration of research goals, statistical society in this study includes all customers of Chi Toz chips in Esfahan province. Since the exact number of customers is not specified and it is statistically very high if it is specified, statistical society of this study is an unlimited statistical society. Therefore, number of statistical sample is calculated by the formula for an unlimited statistical society.

Equation

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 \times \delta^2}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.14}{0.06^2} \geq 150$$

Based on the above formula, sample of statistical volume includes 150 people. Therefore, 150 questionnaires were distributed among Chi Toz customers who had been selected by simple random method. The obtained data was analyzed by SPSS software. Data collection method in this study is a library and field method. Descriptive statistics analysis, inferential statistics analysis and multi regression test are used to analyze the data.

Analysis

In order to analyze the findings, research data (which had been collected in the field operations by questionnaires) was first extracted. The data was then analyzed by using SPSS 18 software. In descriptive survey of data, statistical indexes related to each of the research variables were calculated. Regression

model tests were used in the inferential section to test research hypotheses.

First hypothesis: Tradename affects customer loyalty.

Testing the hypothesis in multi linear regression:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_1=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_1 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_0=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_0 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

This test determines if there is any linear relation between the variable answer y and independent variable x1.

Rejection of assumption H₀ means that the independent variable significantly contributes in the model.

Table 1) Results of variance analysis for testing the first hypothesis of research

Model	Total squares	Freedom degree	Average squares	F	Significance level
Regression	2.209	1	2.209	20.914	.000 ^a
Residual	15.631	148	.106		
Total	17.839	149			

a. Predictors: (Constant), trade name
 b. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Table 2) Results of test coefficients for the first hypothesis of research

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	fixed	1.663	.450	3.700	.000
	Trade name	.547	.120	.352	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_1=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_1 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_0=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_0 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

This test determines if there is any linear relation between the variable answer y and independent variable x1.

Rejection of H₀ hypothesis means that independent variable contributes significantly in the model.

Table 3) Results of variance analysis for testing the first hypothesis of research

Model	Total squares	Freedom degree	Average squares	F	Significance level	
1	Regression	.000	1	.000	.002	.969 ^a
	Residual	17.839	148	.121		
	Total	17.839	149			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction
 b. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Table 4) Results of test coefficients for the second hypothesis of research

Model	non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Fixed	3.703	.324	11.419	.000
	Satisfaction	.003	.086	.003	.969

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Based on the results of ANOVA table and the amount of 148.1 for model 1 and the amount obtained for P – amount obtained for p-value as well as statistic F with a freedom degree with a confidence level of 95% which is higher than a

significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ (sig. = 0.96 has been obtained), we see that observations strongly reject research hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, regression equation with a variable that predicts satisfaction is significantly not related to the dependent variable customer loyalty.

Third research hypothesis: Change resistance affects customer loyalty.

Testing the hypothesis in multi linear regression:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_1=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_1 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \\ H_0: b_0=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_0 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

This test determines if there is any linear relation between the variable answer y and independent variable x_1 .

Rejection of H_0 hypothesis means that independent variable contributes significantly in the model.

Table 5) Results of variance analysis for testing the third hypothesis of research

	Model	Total squares	Freedom degree	Average squares	F	Significance level
1	Regression	1.009	1	1.009	8.870	.003 ^a
	Residual	16.831	148	.114		
	Total	17.839	149			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Change resistance

b. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Table 6) Results of test coefficients for the third hypothesis of research

	Model	non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Fixed	3.183	.181		17.589	.000
	Change resistance	.142	.048	.238	2.978	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Based on the results of ANOVA table and the amount obtained for p-value as well as statistic F with a freedom degree of 148.1 for model 1 and the amount obtained for P – amount with a confidence level of 95% which is lower than a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ (sig. = 0.003 has been obtained), we see that observations strongly confirm research hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, regression equation with a variable that predicts change resistance is significantly related to the dependent variable customer loyalty.

Fourth research hypothesis: Emotions affects customer loyalty.

Testing the hypothesis in multi linear regression:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_1=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_1 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \\ H_0: b_0=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_0 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

This test determines if there is any linear relation between the variable answer y and independent variable x_1 .

Rejection of H_0 hypothesis means that independent variable contributes significantly in the model.

Table 7) Results of variance analysis for testing the fourth hypothesis of research

	Model	Total squares	Freedom degree	Average squares	F	Significance level
1	Regression	1.893	1	1.893	17.574	.000 ^a
	Residual	15.946	148	.108		
	Total	17.839	149			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotions

b. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Table 8) Results of test coefficients for the third hypothesis of research

	Model	non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Fixed	2.944	.186		15.825	.000
	Emotions	.205	.049	.326	4.192	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Based on the results of ANOVA table and the amount obtained for p-value as well as statistic F with a freedom degree of 148.1 for model 1 and the amount obtained for P – amount with a confidence level of 95% which is lower than a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ (sig. = 0.000 has been obtained), we see that observations strongly confirm research hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, regression equation with a variable that predicts

emotions is significantly related to the dependent variable customer loyalty.

Fifth research hypothesis: Trust on brand affects customer loyalty.

Testing the hypothesis in multi linear regression:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_1=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_1 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_0=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_0 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

Rejection of H_0 hypothesis means that independent variable contributes significantly in the model.

This test determines if there is any linear relation between the variable answer y and independent variable x1.

Table 9) Results of variance analysis for testing the fifth hypothesis of research

	Model	Total squares	Freedom degree	Average squares	F	Significance level
1	Regression	.058	1	.058	.480	.490 ^a
	Residual	17.782	148	.120		
	Total	17.839	149			

a. Predictors: (Constant), trust on brand
b. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Table 10) Results of test coefficients for the fifth hypothesis of research

	Model	non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Fixed	3.479	.343		10.132	.000
	Trust on brand	.063	.090	.057	.693	.490

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Table 11) Results of test coefficients for the fifth hypothesis of research

	Model	non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Fixed	3.479	.343		10.132	.000
	Trust on brand	.063	.090	.057	.693	.490

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Based on the results of ANOVA table and the amount obtained for p-value as well as statistic F with a freedom degree of 148.1 for model 1 and the amount obtained for P – amount with a confidence level of 95% which is higher than a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ (sig. = 0.49 has been obtained), we see that observations strongly confirm research hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, regression equation with a variable that predicts trust on brand is significantly not related to the dependent variable customer loyalty.

Sixth research hypothesis: Brand equity affects customer loyalty.

Testing the hypothesis in multi linear regression:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_1=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_1 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{cases} H_0: b_0=0 & \text{Sig.} \geq 0.05 \\ H_1: b_0 \neq 0 & \text{Sig.} < 0.05 \end{cases}$$

This test determines if there is any linear relation between the variable answer y and independent variable x1.

Rejection of H_0 hypothesis means that independent variable contributes significantly in the model.

Table 12) Results of variance analysis for testing the sixth hypothesis of research

	Model	Total squares	Freedom degree	Average squares	F	Significance level
1	Regression	.453	1	.453	3.857	.051 ^a
	Residual	17.386	148	.117		
	Total	17.839	149			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand equity
b. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Table 13) Results of variance analysis for testing the sixth hypothesis of research

	Model	non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Fixed	3.132	.298		10.500	.000
	Brand equity	.157	.080	.159	1.964	.051

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalt

Based on the results of ANOVA table and the amount obtained for p-value as well as statistic F with a freedom degree of 148.1 for model 1 and the amount obtained for P – amount with a confidence level of 95% which is higher than a

significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ (sig. = 0.051 has been obtained), we see that observations strongly reject research hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, regression equation with a variable that predicts

brand equity is significantly not related to the dependent variable customer loyalty

Discussion

Seyed Javadain e al. (2010) conducted a study entitled "Evaluating the effect of brand on the loyalty of industrial customers". The results indicated that all variables related to trademarks with strength and weakness affect customer loyalty. In this regard, the role of brand equity and trust in formation of customer loyalty is more than other variables. However, researcher in the present study achieved different results. Two variables, namely change resistance and emotion have a significant effect on customer loyalty, but the effect of three other variables, namely trust, satisfaction and brand equity was not recognized and this does not conform to the results of the study conducted by Seyed Javadain et al. Javanmard and Soltanzadeh (2009) conducted a study entitled "A survey on the characteristics of internet brand and websites and their effects on customer trust and loyalty". The results indicated that elements of internet brand such as emotion, security, being free from error, etc. have a positive effect on positive attitude and trust of customers. The researcher achieved the same results in the present research, in the manner that change resistance and emotion have a positive effect on customer loyalty. Ranjbarian and Barari (2009) conducted a study entitled "The effect of foundations of relation-oriented market on customer loyalty: Comparison of public and private banks". The findings indicated that preparing the grounds for trust by the bank is associated with customer loyalty. This is while the researcher in the present study showed that trust on brand has no effect on customer loyalty. Therefore, the results of the present study do not conform to those of the research conducted by Ranjbarian and Barari. Haji Karimi (2005) conducted a study entitled "Factors affecting the loyalty of customers to brand". The results showed that customer satisfaction is one of the factors affecting customer loyalty to brand which do not conform to the results of the present study. Another result of the study conducted by Haji Karimi was the identification of variable *Emotion* as one of the factors affecting customer loyalty to trade name which conforms to the results of the present study.

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