

## PRESENTING STRUCTURAL MODEL OF FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER ATTITUDINAL AND BEHAVIORAL LOYALTY TO DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN SPORTS BRANDS IN SPORTS CLUBS

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### Abstract

The present research aimed to provide a structural model of factors affecting the attitudinal and behavioral loyalty of consumers to domestic and foreign sports brands in sports clubs in Iran. The research method is a descriptive-survey type and the statistical population was all consumers of domestic and foreign sports brands in the sports clubs of Iran, and due to the unlimited statistical population, 400 people were selected as a sample using structural equations method. In the field of factors affecting loyalty, a researcher-made questionnaire with 33 questions in the dimensions and in the context the loyalty of the standard questionnaire of Gladden and colleagues with 12 questions in two dimensions (attitudinal loyalty, behavioral loyalty) was considered based on the Likert scoring scale (very high = 5 and very low = 1). After collecting the required data, the data were analyzed in two ways. First, descriptive statistics were used to accurately describe the studied population, and Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to determine the normality of the test using SPSS 25 and LISREL. All statistical tests were at a significant level. The findings of the research showed: There is a relationship between brand experience and brand image, product price, brand personality, brand switching cost, ease of brand access, brand experience, brand image, customer satisfaction, and ease of brand access with customer satisfaction in domestic and foreign sports brands. There is no significant relationship between brand quality and brand credibility with customer satisfaction in domestic and foreign sports brands. There is a significant relationship among brand image, social value, and price of brand products, brand quality, and brand credibility with customers' trust in domestic and foreign sports brands. There is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and trust in the brand, between customer satisfaction and attitudinal loyalty, between customer trust and attitudinal loyalty, and between attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty in domestic and foreign sports brands.

**Keywords:** Attitudinal Loyalty, Behavioral Loyalty, National and International Sports Brands

### 1. INTRODUCTION

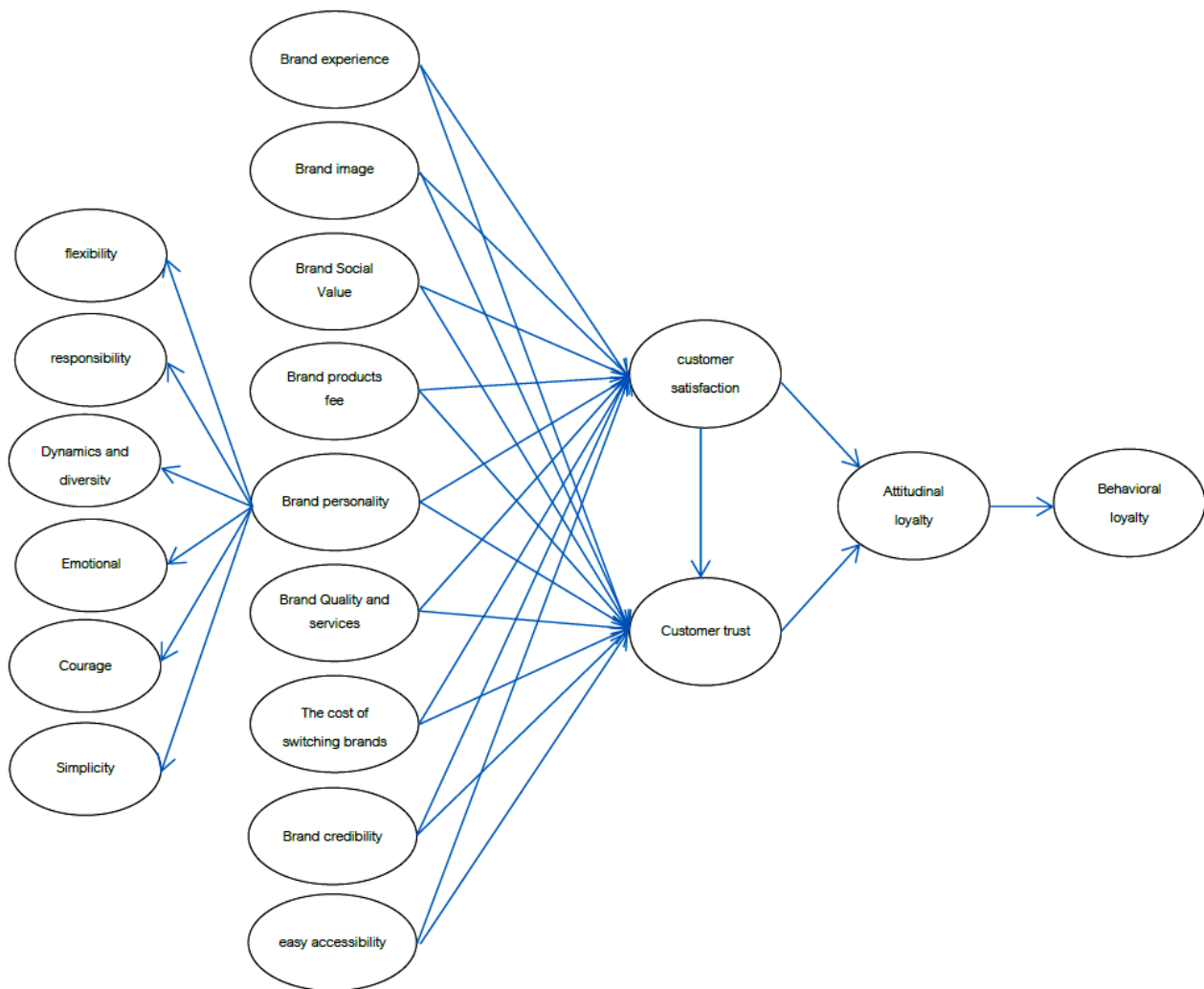
The importance and necessity of addressing the issue of sports brand loyalty is important from the point of view that today there are few organizations that do not care about how to provide goods and services according to the wishes of consumers, because marketers are currently facing markets that are more specialized and competitive than ever before. Therefore, achieving success in this changing environment and formulating a suitable marketing strategy requires the use of the knowledge and creativity of the

organization's people, and based on this, it can be said that the marketing of an organization is the responsibility of all the people of the organization and not a specific unit.

In the buying decision process of consumers, an important point is the habit of repurchasing the product. The main goal of marketers is to encourage consumers to be loyal to a particular product or brand (Esal, 1998).

Consumers who are loyal to a particular brand are a means to gain more market share. Also, these consumers are the company's intangible assets. Brand loyalty can be defined as the degree to which a customer has a positive attitude towards a brand, the degree of his adherence to the said brand and the intention to continue buying it in the future. Loyalty to a brand is directly affected by satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it over time as well as the quality of the product (Temporal, 2018). In a period with rapid advancement of technology and equality of products, the range of options available to organizations to attract customers is decreasing. In the face of fierce competition, companies have recognized the need for a value strategy. Customers have become increasingly disloyal. For organizations, this refers to a position that should emphasize more on the individual needs of customers and expect heavy investment in advertising. One way to compete in volatile markets and increasingly homogenous products is to adopt a corporate branding strategy. The results of this research can be useful for domestic and foreign sports brands because the issue of customer loyalty (attitude and behavior) is very important in sports brands and it can be said that the most important assets of many companies are their loyal customers. Empirical research shows that the cost of attracting a new customer is 25 to 400% higher than the cost of retaining existing customers. Therefore, by adding 5% to the costs related to maintaining your current customers, you can increase the company's profitability by 75%.

The conceptual model of the current research consists of eleven hypotheses, which are drawn in the form of the figure below:



## 2. METHODOLOGY

The research method is a descriptive-survey type and the statistical population was all consumers of domestic and foreign sports brands in the sports clubs of Iran, and due to the unlimited statistical population, 400 people were selected as a sample using structural equations method. In the field of factors affecting loyalty, a researcher-made questionnaire with 33 questions in the dimensions and in the context the loyalty of the standard questionnaire of Gladden and colleagues with 12 questions in two dimensions (attitudinal loyalty, behavioral loyalty) was considered based on the Likert scoring scale (very high = 5 and very low = 1). After collecting the required data, the data were analyzed in two ways. First, descriptive statistics were used to accurately describe the studied population, and Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to determine the normality of the test using SPSS 25 and LISREL. All statistical tests were at a significant level.

## 3. FINDINGS

### Hypothesis testing using linear structured relationships

In order to evaluate the conceptual model of the research and also to ascertain the existence or non-existence of a causal relationship between the research variables and to check the fit of the observed data with the conceptual model of the research, the research hypotheses were also tested using the structural equation model. The results of the hypothesis test are reflected in the graph.

#### Results of confirmatory factor analysis of influencing variables of brand personality

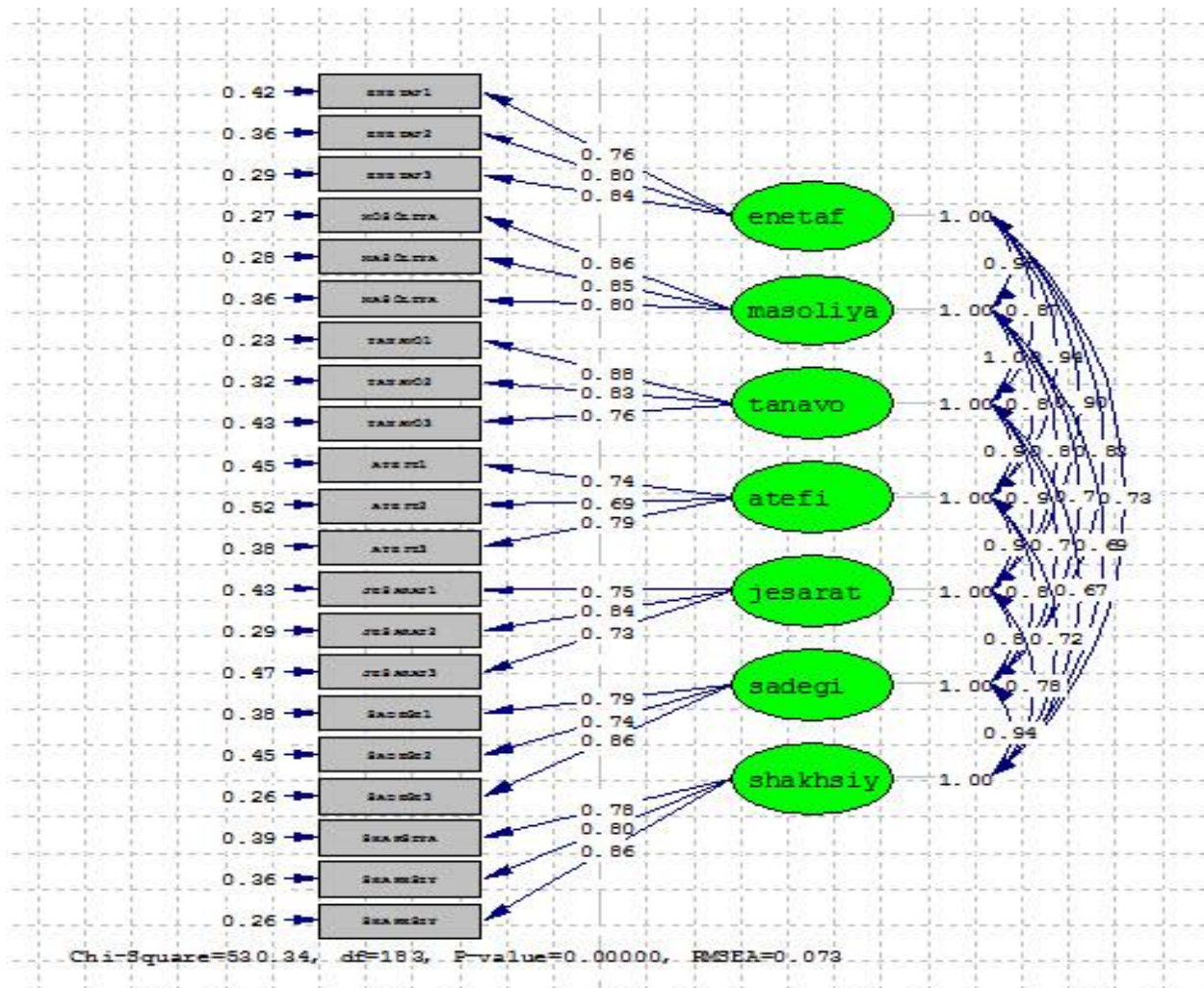


Figure 1. Measurement of the general model and the results of confirmatory factor analysis in the standard mode

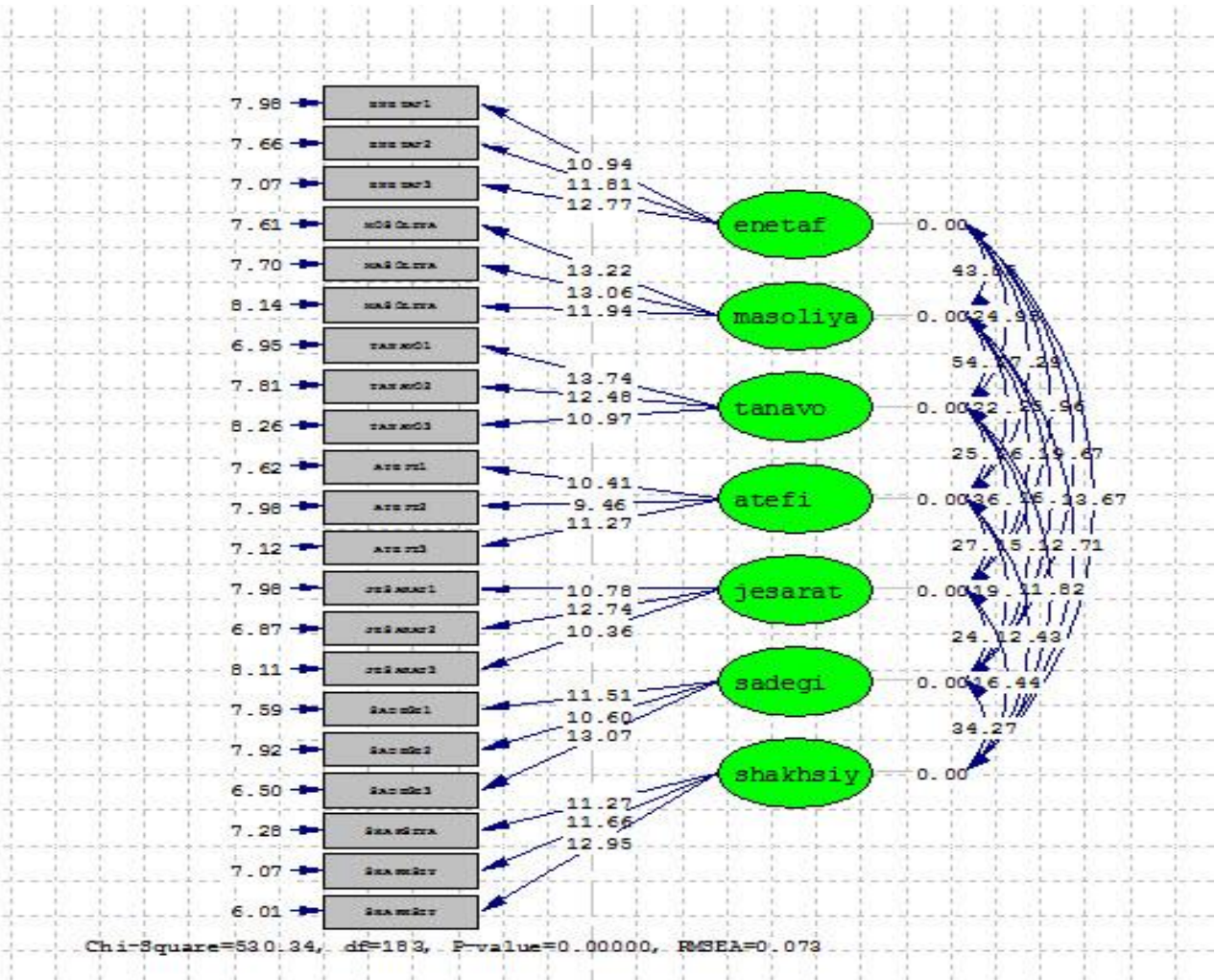


Figure 2. Measuring the model of the results of confirmatory factor analysis in the significant model

The results of confirmatory factor analysis of variables affecting customer satisfaction and trust:

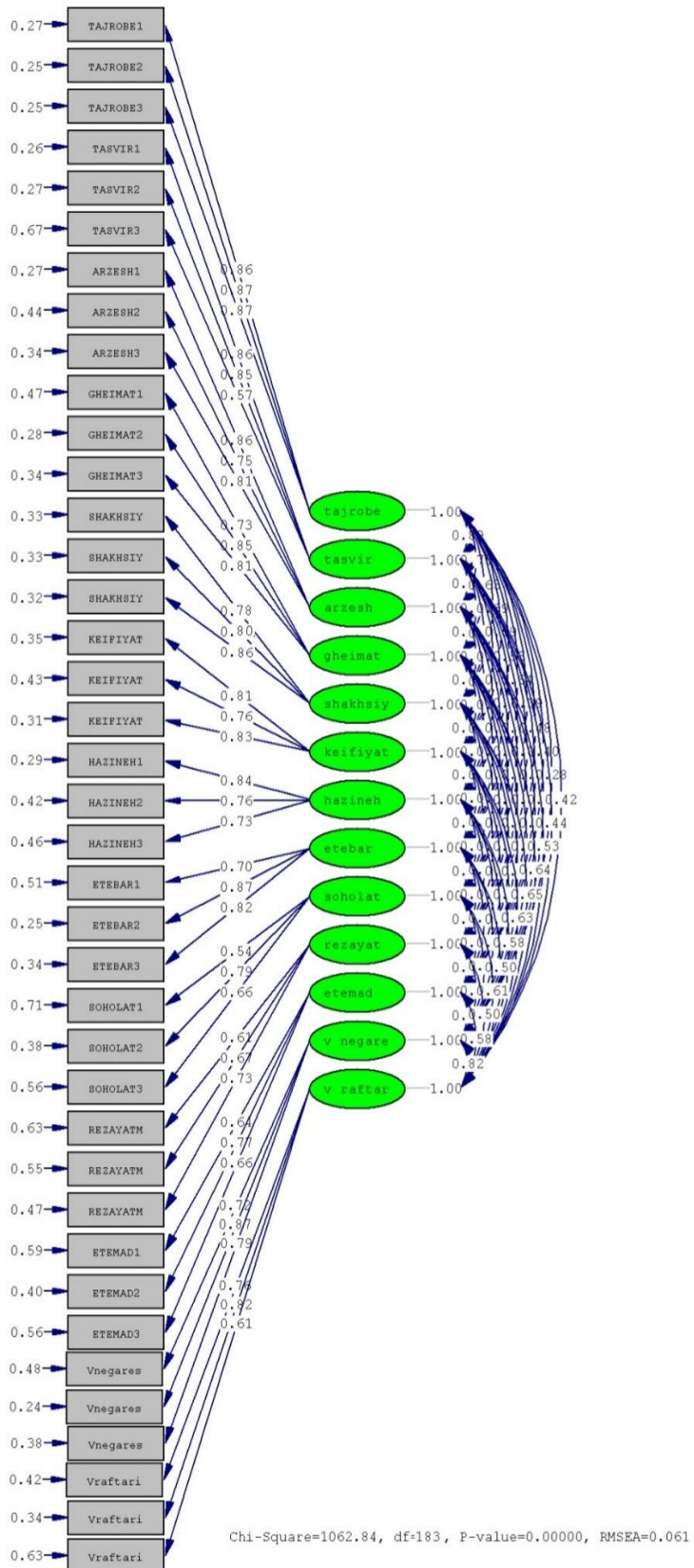


Figure 3. Measuring the results of confirmatory factor analysis in standard mode

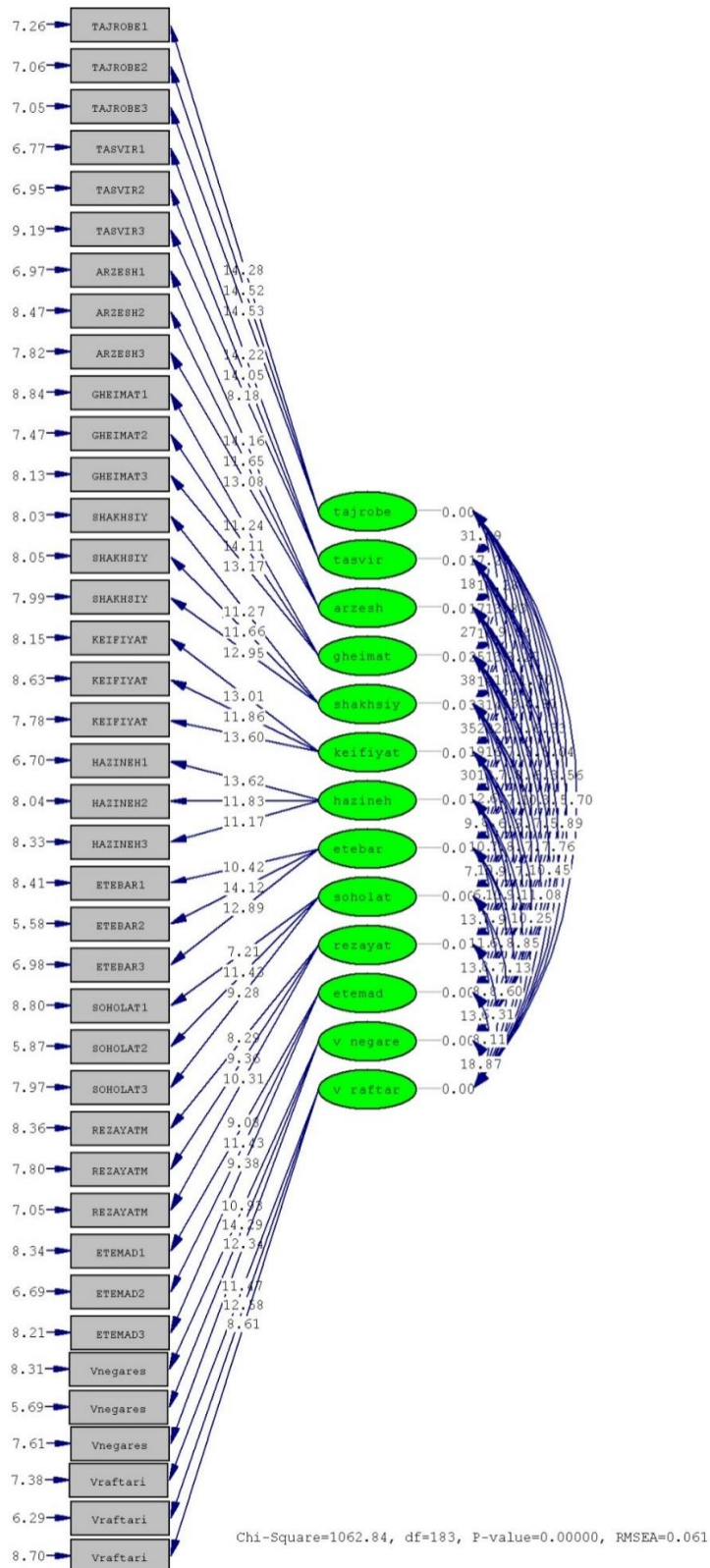


Figure 4. Measuring the model of the results of confirmatory factor analysis in the significant mode

The results of the general model of research hypotheses

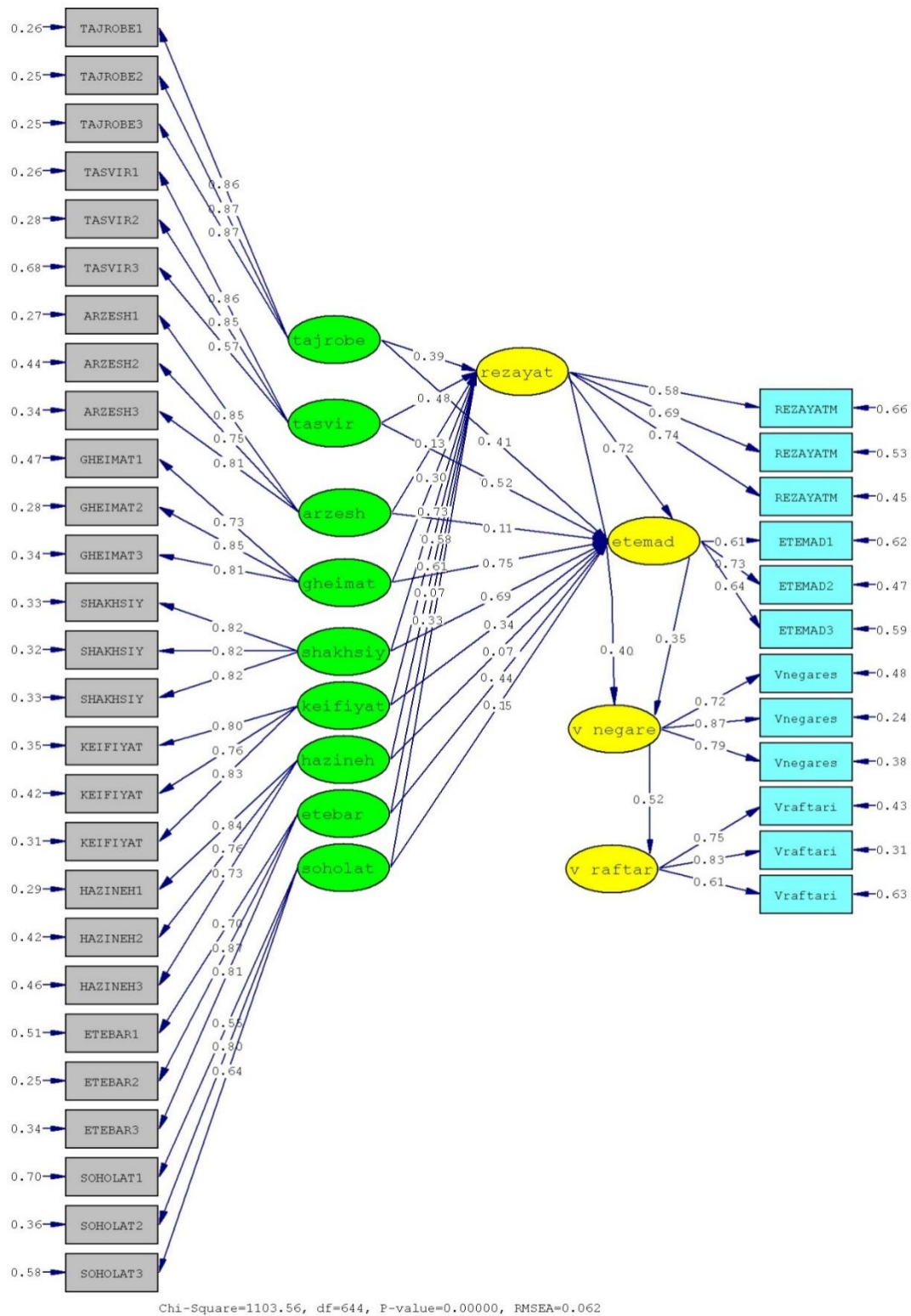
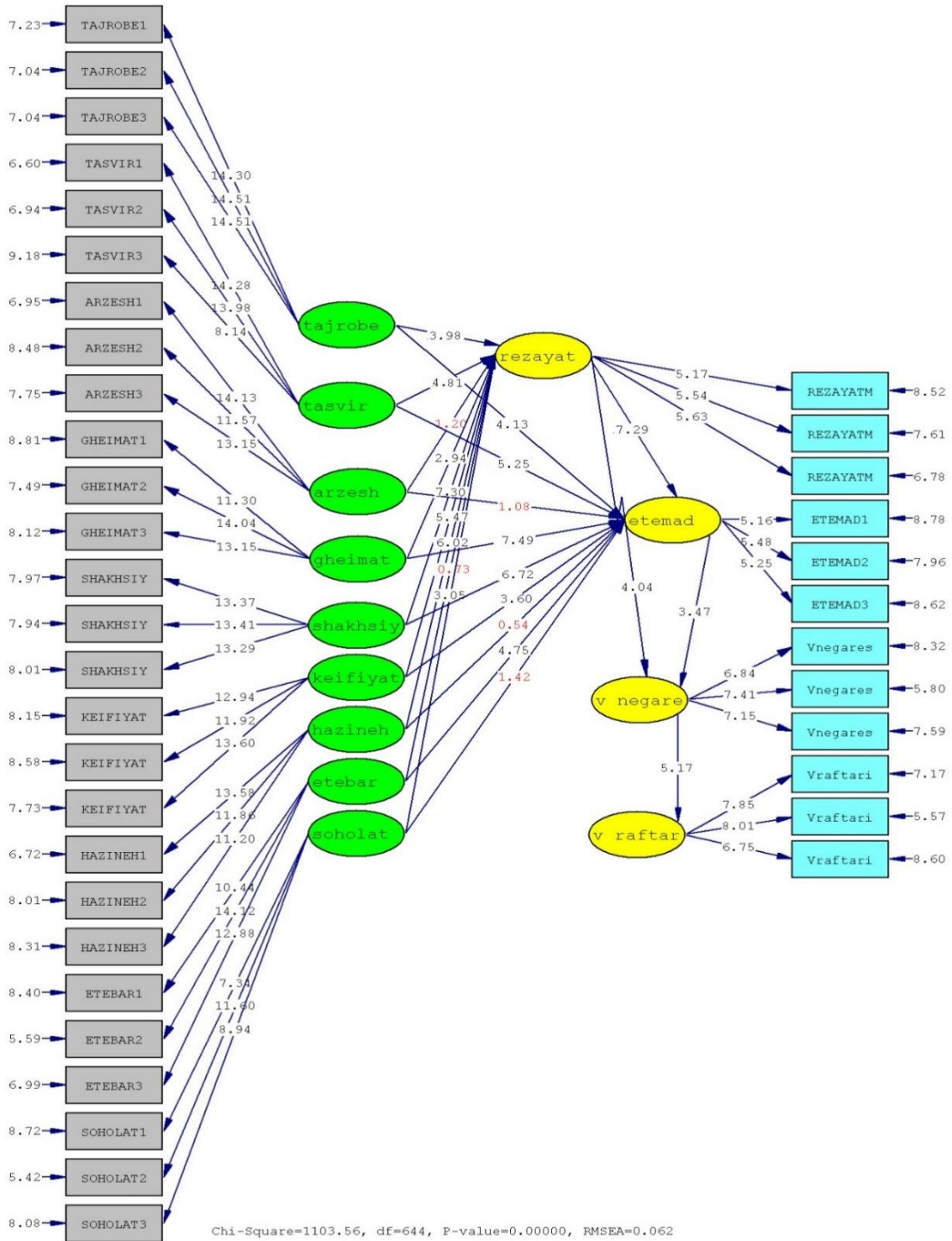


Figure 5. Measurement of the general model and the results of the hypotheses in the standard mode





## Assessment of model fit

**Table 1. Values of model fit indices and fit result**

Pattern value	Optimum	Fit Index
1.77	<3.00	$\chi^2/df$
94/0	>0.90	GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)
96/0	>0.90	AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)
0.047	<0.05	RMR (Root Mean square Residual)
0.97	>0.90	NFI (Normed Fit Index)
0.93	>0.90	NNFI (Non-Normed Fit Index)
0.99	>0.90	IFI (Incremental Fit Index)
0.97	>0.90	CFI (Comparative Fit Index)
0.074	<0.08	RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)

The results of this part can be considered valid and statistically analyzable. Because the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom for this model is reported to be 1.77.

The value of GFI and AGFI reported for this model is higher than 9/., which confirm the results of chi-square test.

The value of RMR in this research (0.047) indicates the proper explanation of covariances.

To check how well a model works in terms of explaining a set of observed data, especially compared to other possible models, from the values of NFI, NNFI, IFI, CFI were used, which according to Brown and Kodak (1992), values above 0.9 of these indexes indicate a very good fit of the designed model compared to other possible models.

The index value RMSEA for fit models is less than 0.08.

## 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To check how well a model works in terms of explaining a set of observed data, especially compared to other possible models, from the values of Normal Fit Index (NFI), Non-normal Fit Index (NNFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were used, which according to Brown and Kodak (1992), values above 0.9 of these indexes indicate a very good fit of the designed model compared to other possible models.

The index value (RMSEA) for good models is less than 0.08.

There is a significant relationship between brand experience and customer satisfaction in domestic and foreign sports brands. In explaining this research finding, it should be said that the brand experience is a collection of all contact points that is transferred to the customer through all channels such as social networks, websites, sales forces, etc. The ability of an organization to convey a meaningful brand experience is very complex, but if the organization succeeds in achieving it, it will guarantee the satisfaction of its customers forever.

There is a positive and strong relationship between customers' trust in the brand and their satisfaction, and trust is considered a prerequisite for loyalty. However, customers who are very satisfied have very little desire to use other products in the market. Many researchers have investigated the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer trust. This relationship is two-way, meaning that each has a direct effect

on the other. These results are in line with findings of Azizi et al. (2012), Mirabi and Pournam (2021) and Polony(2009).

There is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and attitudinal loyalty in domestic sports brands. In explaining this research finding, it should be said: satisfaction is an effective response and an expected and uncertain experience is obtained as a result, which includes an observation process. After evaluating the performance, customers compare the results with their expectations before purchasing or using again, and any discrepancy leads to persistence. These results are in line with findings of Allameh and Noktehdan (2018), Hamidizadeh and Ghamkhari (2020), Taylor (2010), and Baradaran et al. (2016).

There is a significant relationship between customers' trust and loyalty in domestic sports brands. This research finding seems logical because trust is the expectation of regular, correct and helpful behaviors in a society that is formed based on the common standards of some of the members of that society. and plays an important role in creating a competitive advantage in services. According to the conducted researches, the trust of the brand can be considered as one of the influential factors in creating customer loyalty. The degree of trust that consumers have towards the brand affects their purchasing and advertising decisions. Nowadays, customers are looking for complete and honest information about products (price, quality, etc.). Consumers' satisfaction from providing transparent and honest product information can increase the overall trust and loyalty of the organization. This is in line with research of Nazari and Bahrinezhad (2015), Hamidizadeh and Ghamkhari (2020).

There is significant relationship between attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty in domestic sports brands. This finding of the research seems logical because loyalty is a type of positive attitude towards a product that arises as a result of its repeated use, the reason of which can be explained as psychological processes. In other words, repeat purchase is not only a voluntary reaction, but the result of psychological, emotional and normative factors. This result is in line with research of Allameh and Noktehdan (2018), Hamidizadeh and Ghamkhari (2020) and contrary to research of Leda Oatmeal (2012) and Taylor (2010).

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