

# **Designing an innovative model of influencing factors on the buying behavior of customers (case study: central region of Iran)**

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## **Abstract**

Studying, understanding, and predicting human behavior has been the focus of many researchers for years and is the basis of many researches in the field of consumer behavior. The current study was conducted to provide a model of factors affecting purchasing behavior in a mixed method. In the qualitative part, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts. In the quantitative part, four standard questionnaires were completed on Cloninger's personality, ordered pair, AHP, DNAP, and shopping behavior. In qualitative data analysis, using Maxqda software, 198 primary codes, 38 concepts, 25 components, and six main categories were identified. DEMATEL and ANP techniques were used to determine the weights and check the mutual relationship between the criteria extracted from the qualitative method. The results of DANP for screening dimensions, components, and categories and determining their importance indicated that environmental and climatic factors are influential, as well as purchasing behavior, personality, economic, marketing, and brand excellence.

**Keywords:** buying behavior, climate, personality, foundational data theorizing

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## **1- Introduction**

As long as businesses were focused on product understanding, production, sales, and marketing to develop marketing, consumer wants and needs were unimportant (Durmaz & Dag, 2021). In the wake of globalization and intensified competition between businesses (Gharachorloo et al., 2021), efforts to understand customer satisfaction and, as a result, consumer behavior became the focus of companies and organizations (Yokoyama et al., 2022). The main goal of any business is to create value, and consumers are the fulcrum on which all business activities are based.

Marketers usually devote most of their activity to researching and finding their target markets by examining information such as age and income to culture and buying behavior and interpreting consumer psychological information (Paro et al., 2021). While demographic information is widely used in market activities (Su & Chu, 2021), a factor in consumer market measurement has received less attention (Keith, 2019). This critical factor is called consumer personality, one of the most important individual factors, and is a reliable basis for market segmentation (Hermes & Raidel, 2021). Personality can be defined as internal psychological characteristics that influence a person's product choice (Rawat & Manen, 2016). Psychological studies of researchers such as Costa and McCree (1992) in the review of the revised questionnaire of the neo-personality theory and the five-factor theory of personality; Woods et al. (2018) in the study of innovative work behavior and personality traits and Balta et al. (2019) in the study of personality traits, attachment and individual differences in smartphone use, showed that individual behavior is significantly under the influence of personality. In order to understand consumer buying behavior, researchers have not only relied on various theories such as Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, neo-Freudian theories led by Carl Jung, and trait theory, and other theories such as behavioral theories, humanistic theory, and socio-cognitive theory. have benefited (Szmelter-Jarosz et al., 2024).

Therefore, this article is organized as follows: firstly, in the introduction, the main topic of the research was explained in general; in the next part, the theoretical literature of the research was reviewed, taking into account the influencing factors on consumer buying behavior. Based on that, the research model was developed. After that, the data collection and analysis methods were explained in the research methodology section. The findings section presented the results of the foundation data method based on the Strauss and Corbin (1990) paradigm model, the DNAP method. Finally, the discussion, conclusions, and presentation of theoretical and practical concepts, along with the study's limitations, were discussed.

## **2- Literature review**

Globalization and new marketing and sales tools have made researchers and specialists more interested in better understanding people's behavioral aspects. This has led to new dimensions such as behavioral economics, behavioral marketing, and behavioral operations management. For this reason, behavioral theories are widely accepted and used in social sciences (Nozari et al., 2022).

Consumer behavior is an essential and consistent decision-making process in searching, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing products and services (Nozari, 2024). Social issues

create macro consumer behavior, but individual factors are studied to determine the factors of consumer behavior (Solomon, 2016). Flatters and Wilmott (2009) state that consumers maximize their utility, satisfaction, or happiness by purchasing consumer goods. Personality is one of the most fundamental concepts of psychology. However, psychologists have differences and disagreements in the definition of personality (Bergner, 2020). However, most of them agree that the root of the word personality is the Latin word "persona," which refers to the mask or mask that was used by the art of dramatists in ancient Greece. Psychologists use the word personality because, sometimes, People play more than one role (Nozari & Szmelter-Jarosz, 2024).

Despite the ability of different personality models to explain individual differences in behavior and personality, there has never been an agreement about the number of personality dimensions or its content in the fields of psychiatry and behavioral sciences (Rahmay et al., 2023). Although many personality models are based on the assumption that the phenotypic and genotypic structures of personality are similar, it seems that some personality dimensions, such as extraversion, which have been considered genetically heterogeneous, contradict this hypothesis (Nozari, 2023); therefore, it is essential to have a comprehensive theory of personality structure that takes into account both genetic and environmental influences (Nozari, 2024). The biological approach to personality is based on solid scientific foundations, which could not have been possible without the efforts and persistence of people such as Allport (1975), Eysenck et al. (1985), McCrae and Costa (1985), Cloninger (1987, 2013) and others. to form (Ghahremani-Nahr et al., 2023). Cloninger's (1986, 1987, 1998, 2003) integrated model of biological psychology has significantly impacted psychology and psychometrics over the last 20 years (Aluja et al., 2016; Garcia et al., 2021). As one of the biological theorists of personality, with an emphasis on biological parameters, he created a solid theoretical framework about personality, which included both normal and abnormal personality and had two components: nature and character (Szmelter-Jarosz et al., 2023). According to the psychological model, temperament refers to the inherent differences in people's responses to essential emotional stimuli that form habits and emotional reactions (Kloninger, 2004). According to Cloninger et al. (1994), temperament refers to automatic emotional responses and is somehow inherited and stable throughout life (Abdi & Nozari, 2023).

Nahr et al. (2023) research showed that all five personality traits affect experiential consumption, and a person's openness and conscientiousness help determine his behavior towards the product or service provided. Nozari and Rahmaty (2023) stated that the personality trait of adaptability is considered an essential factor in their purchase decision due to the influence of the social position of customers. Research by Rafezi and Yeganeh (2018) showed that the personality traits of extroversion and openness have a positive and significant relationship with the desire to shop online. Movahed et al. (2024) showed in research that personality, psychological characteristics, and social factors affect young students' purchase intentions and behavior in Iranian culture. Sarkar et al. (2013) researched the factors causing personality problems in consumer purchasing decisions using nine variables, which, according to the neo-Freudian theory, are adaptive, aggressive, and isolated variables. The variables of bigotry, need for uniqueness, social personality, consumer innovation, ethnocentrism, and determinism were evaluated for trait theory. The results showed that some factors such as adaptive, isolated, and aggressive for the neo-Freudian theory and ethnocentrism, bigotry for the trait theory have a significant contribution to creating personality crises in clients. Also, in a study, Madhavi and Lakshmi (2021) examined personality as an important psychological factor influencing how a person responds to a marketer's efforts. The

results showed that personality is expressed through traits, characteristics, and specific behaviors that each person shows and manifests under different conditions. A person's personality affects not only the choice of the place of supply and the type of product but also the behavior after purchase. In addition, Nozari et al. (2023) research measured actual behaviors using experimental interventions and the Shift framework to categorize behavior change strategies based on five psychological factors. The results showed that habit (consumers' cooperation to create new value-based practices that help reduce food waste), emotions, and cognition (e.g., anticipated guilt) reduce unethical features in customized products.) influence consumer buying behavior. Therefore, this research will help marketers to be informed of the main factors that cause personality problems and to take necessary precautions to solve these problems.

The current research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the factors affecting the buying behavior of consumers?
- What is the importance of each factor affecting consumers' buying behavior?
- What is the relationship between the factors affecting the purchasing behavior of consumers?

### **3- Research methodology**

The current research aims to identify the factors affecting consumer buying behavior and provide a comprehensive model. In terms of the purpose of the present research, it is part of basic research, its method is combined (exploratory and descriptive survey), and in terms of data collection, it is field-library research. In the first part, the foundational data theorizing and the "systematic" approach of Strauss and Corbin (1990) have been used because these methods introduce practical guidelines and strategies according to the systematic framework employed. The research will open the way for the researcher to emerge and create a theory.

In this research, both in the data discovery section and in the extraction of factors affecting purchasing behavior, the following steps have been taken to analyze the content of the interviews qualitatively:

- 1) conducting in-depth interviews (data exploration)
- 2) extraction of oral evidence (key points)
- 3) Conceptualization
- 4) Categorization
- 5) Presentation of the research model

The statistical population of the research in the qualitative part was selected for interviews with 12 academic experts and business activists in the fields of marketing, psychology, psychiatry, and climatology using the theoretical and purposeful sampling method. Also, the statistical population in the quantitative part, 420 people, was selected as a statistical sample from consumers living in Iran's hot and dry climate using the available cluster sampling method.

Since the foundational data theory is essentially a two-way process, the validity of the data is confirmed in the process of coding and construction of concepts and validation in future and previous interviews and observations. The best reference for data validity is the confirmation of codes, concepts, components, and categories by selected experts who conduct interviews simultaneously.

In the second phase, which was carried out to prioritize and determine the importance of the variables of the model, questionnaires obtained from the results of the qualitative analysis conducted in the first phase to identify the importance of the factors and prioritize them by experts and determine the relationships between each of them by the consumer. Suppliers were prepared. In the next step, to determine the validity of the research questionnaire, the opinions of experts and experts were first used, and after making the necessary adjustments in the questionnaire, content validity was used to determine the validity. Also, to check the structural validity (fit of the measurement model), Convergent validity (average variance selected), divergent validity, and internal consistency (composite reliability) were used. In this research, the instrument's reliability was investigated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient, and the results showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all variables was above 0.7, indicating the appropriate reliability of each construct. The current study used two quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data. In the qualitative part, data was collected using in-depth and semi-structured interviews, and in the quantitative part, Cloninger's standard questionnaires, developed by DEMATEL, were used. Network analysis (DANP with five Likert options) was used. To analyze the data, MAXQDA software was used in the qualitative part to code and determine the categories, and in the quantitative part, DEMATEL and ANP techniques were used.

#### **4- Research Finding**

Using three types of open, central, and selective coding, the data obtained from interviews, observations, and reviews of documents and everything else obtained in the data collection stages were examined and analyzed. After conducting the interviews, open coding was done in three stages, and during these stages, the concepts, features, categories, and scope of each were identified.

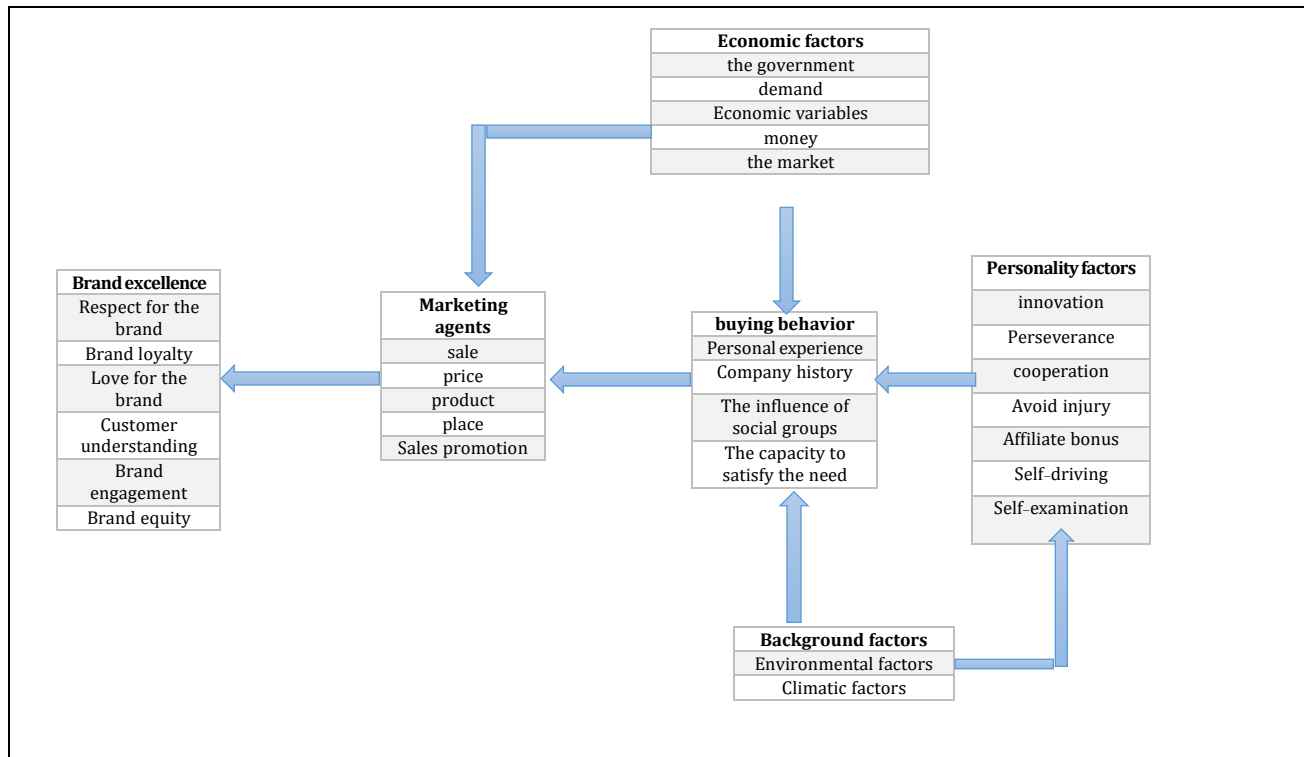
In the phase of core coding, consumer buying behavior is selected as the core category or phenomenon according to the research subject. In the phase of selective coding, the categories are merged and combined, and presented according to their characteristics and dimensions. The relationship between the central category and other categories was identified.

In this section, the data obtained from the interviews with experts were analyzed. Data were extracted from 21 in-depth interviews with experts. In this way, first, the interviews were recorded, and the audio files were implemented verbatim. With the conceptual naming of spoken evidence, 878 initial codes were obtained, codes with similar meanings were combined, and each one was named as a final code. Table 1 shows the final 198 codes from the interviews, along with the frequency of each code. 38 concepts were selected from 198 codes based on the principles of repetition, emphasis, and importance (theoretical basis or researcher's understanding). In other words, the concepts mentioned by several interviewees (repetition) or were subject to the particular emphasis of one person, and the research literature, determined the importance of that concept or

the researcher's diagnosis was selected for the final model resulting from the interview. While refining concepts, some concepts were merged due to the difference in their level of abstraction or the possibility of combining them to summarize, which is done continuously in the process of code analysis.

After open coding of data, identification of concepts, subcategories, characteristics, and dimensions of categories to classify categories in the framework of the central coding pattern, 38 concepts were re-examined. Finally, 25 components and six main categories were obtained. Since the interviewees directly or indirectly stated the factors that have permanently and effectively affected the consumer's buying behavior, buying behavior was considered the central category and representative of all identified categories.

In this research, after identifying the central phenomenon and relating the other categories in the form of a systematic paradigm of foundational data theorizing, by integrating the concepts and combining the components in the form of selective coding of the relationships of the six main categories, Personality factors, economic factors, marketing factors, climatic and environmental factors, brand excellence and purchasing behavior were investigated. The final model of the research was obtained. A model that organizations and commercial institutions can use to design and apply appropriate, effective, and practical marketing programs due to the knowledge of factors affecting purchasing behavior with the approach of personality and climate.



**Figure 1:** Factors affecting purchasing behavior

Continuous comparative coding was used to ensure the verifiability of the research and the simultaneous collection and analysis of data during the process. For this purpose, the researcher

recorded and maintained all the raw data, including the essential points of documents, interviews, thoughts, and analyses, regularly so that it was possible to return and review them at any time.

Also, the process audit method can be used to evaluate reliability in qualitative research. The results are auditable when another researcher can follow the decision process used by the principal researcher during the interview and show the consistency of the study (Downing, 2004). Therefore, in the current research, the decision implementation process, as well as all the data, codes, categories, study process, goals, and questions, are at the disposal of three experts who, in addition to being in the field of business management, especially purchasing behavior. The customers are experts and have had sufficient mastery over the foundation's data method, and it was confirmed by a careful audit of all the steps taken. In addition to the auditing method, the internal agreement method (within the subject) was also used. In this method, the considered experts were asked to code three randomly selected interviews as coders.

By using the obtained information in order to develop the theoretical foundations of buying behavior and because the output of qualitative research is a combination of achieving a hypothesis with the research strategy. Therefore, with more and more detailed analysis and by confirming the validity and reliability of the research data, the following propositions have been obtained based on the components of the core coding stage:

1. Inquisitiveness, perseverance, cooperation, harm avoidance, dependence reward, self-direction, and self-processing are causal conditions for purchasing behavior.
2. Environment and climate are the primary conditions for buying behavior.
3. The government, economic power, market, demand, and economy are considered to interfere with buying behavior.
4. Sales, price, product, place, and sales promotion are considered strategies of buying behavior.
5. Background conditions, intervening conditions, and strategies will lead to brand respect, loyalty, love, customer understanding, interaction, special value, and, finally, brand excellence.

In order to use the DEMATEL and ANP methods, 25 effective indicators of purchasing behavior were obtained from the qualitative model by 12 experts through a questionnaire based on a 1-5 Likert scale (1=very little importance, 2=low importance, 3= Moderate importance, 4 = high importance, 5 = very high importance) were scored. The data was measured through the DEMATEL test, and because the average of all indicators was higher than 3, it was approved by the experts. In the next step, using the DNAP method, the research factors' effectiveness is first examined, and then the importance and weight of the factors are determined.

#### 1- Calculation of direct communication matrix

In this step, in order to evaluate the relationship between criteria (the effect of one criterion on another criterion) using the opinion of experts based on the spectrum of the table, 36 experts were used to check the criteria, and an arithmetic mean was taken to consider the opinion of all experts.

#### 2- Normalize the decision matrix

In this step, we normalize the direct communication matrix using Equations 3-3 of Appendix 1. The results are given in Table 15-4 of Appendix 1. In order to normalize, we first obtain the sum of the rows and columns of the direct communication matrix. We chose the most significant number among the total numbers, and each row of the direct communication matrix was divided by this number. In this research, the largest number of rows and columns equals 107.

### 3- Calculation of complete communication matrix ( $T_c$ )

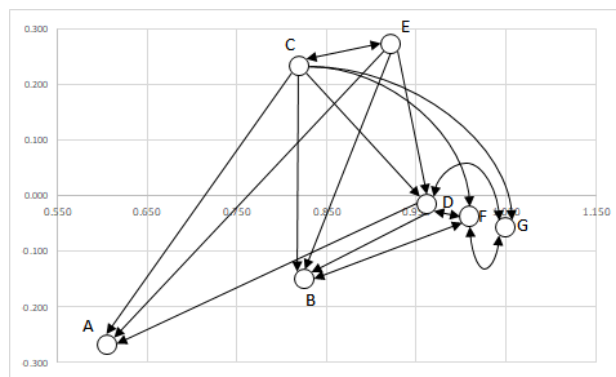
To calculate the complete correlation matrix based on equation 4-3 of Appendix 1, first the same matrix ( $I_{29 \times 29}$ ) is formed. Then, we subtract the same matrix from the standard matrix and invert the resulting matrix. Finally, the standard matrix was multiplied by the inverse matrix.

### 4- Influence and effectiveness of sub-criteria

In this step, the sub-criteria are determined using the relationship of influence and effectiveness; the influential sub-criteria are causal criteria, and the influenceable sub-criteria are of the effect type. Also, the cause-and-effect diagram of the indicators was drawn in the diagram.

### 5- Forming the complete correlation matrix of dimensions ( $T_D^\infty$ ) and its normalization

In this step, the dimensions were created using the matrix of complete communication. This determined the effectiveness of the main criteria, and then the matrix of this relationship was normalized. The results showed that the environmental factors have the highest value of D, so the most effective and excellent brand has the highest value of R and has the most influence.



**Figure 2:** Causal diagram of main factors

According to the diagram above, environmental factors have the highest D+R value and the highest relationship with other system factors. Also, the criteria that have a positive D-R, i.e., are located above the X-axis, are the cause factors, and the factors that have a negative D-R, i.e., are located at the bottom of the X-axis, are the effect factors.

### 6- Normalization of the complete correlation matrix ( $T_c$ )

In this step, the relationships were normalized using the relationship of the complete relationship matrix.

7- Formation of unbalanced supermatrix

In this step, the standard matrix of complete connections is transformed, and this transition matrix is the same as the original unbalanced matrix.

8- Formation of balanced supermatrix

In this step, it was multiplied in the unbalanced supermatrix based on the relation of the transposed  $T_D^\alpha$  normal correlation matrix.

9- limiting the balanced supermatrix

In this step, the balanced super matrix must be brought to the power to converge. In this research, the balanced matrix has been converged to the power of 3.

The final weights of the criteria and sub-criteria are extracted from the restricted supermatrix and are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Final weights of criteria and sub-criteria

CRITERION NAME	RELATIVE WEIGHT	FINAL WEIGHT	RANK
PERSONALITY FACTORS (A)	0.1362		
INNOVATION		0.01381	29
PERSEVERANCE		0.02198	22
COOPERATION		0.02166	23
AVOID INJURY		0.02064	24
AFFILIATE BONUS		0.01876	28
SELF-DRIVING		0.02016	25
SELF DEVELOPMENT		0.01918	27
ECONOMIC FACTORS (B)	0.1521		
ECONOMY		0.02781	19
DEMAND		0.03698	6
THE MARKET		0.03580	9
ECONOMIC POWER		0.03193	14
THE GOVERNMENT		0.01959	26
CLIMATIC FACTORS (C)	0.0936		
CLIMATE		0.09359	2
PURCHASE BEHAVIOR (D)	0.1611		
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE		0.04708	3
COMPANY HISTORY		0.03625	8
THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL GROUPS		0.04546	4
CAPACITY TO SATISFY PRODUCT NEEDS		0.03227	11
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS (E)	0.1083		
THE ENVIRONMENT		0.10826	1
MARKETING FACTORS (F)	0.1703		
SALES PROMOTION		0.03467	10
PLACE		0.02935	17

CRITERION NAME	RELATIVE WEIGHT	FINAL WEIGHT	RANK
PRODUCT		0.03051	
PRICE		0.03643	15
SALE		0.03934	7
BRAND EXCELLENCE (G) BRAND EQUITY	0.1785	0.02925	5
BRAND LOYALTY		0.03215	18
LOVE FOR THE BRAND		0.02743	12
RESPECT FOR THE BRAND		0.03010	21
CUSTOMER UNDERSTANDING		0.02751	16
BRAND ENGAGEMENT		0.03204	20
			13

According to Table (1), among the main criteria of brand excellence, it has won the first rank with a weight of 0.1785. Marketing factors, with a weight of 0.1703, have won the second rank, and purchasing behavior, with a weight of 0.1611, has won the third.

## 5- Discussion and conclusion

The current research was conducted to design the model of factors affecting purchasing behavior with Cloninger's personality theory approach. Based on the foundational data theory and the three-level coding technique, 198 initial codes were identified; after applying changes (deletion and integration), 38 concepts were obtained and finally led to the achievement of 6 main categories and 25 sub-dimensions, including personality factors, economic factors, Marketing factors, climatic factors, environmental factors and brand excellence were considered as purchasing behavior as the central category, personality factors as the main category of causal conditions, climatic and environmental factors as the main category of background conditions, economic factors as the main category of intervention conditions. However, marketing factors were recognized as the main category of strategies, and brand excellence was the main category of results in the model obtained. In the next step, the DANP technique determined that climate and environment factors are the cause and other factors are the effect. Among the main criteria of brand excellence, with a weight of 0.1785, it ranks first; marketing factors, with a weight of 0.1703, ranks second; and shopping behavior, with a weight of 0.1611, ranks third. It was also found that climatic factors positively and significantly affect personality, environmental, marketing, economic, and purchasing behavior. Environmental factors positively and significantly affect personality, purchasing behavior, and economic factors. Personality factors affect buying behavior, economic factors affect marketing factors, and buying behavior and marketing factors positively and significantly affect brand excellence. In addition, the positive and significant impact of shopping behavior on marketing factors and brand excellence was also confirmed.

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