

The Role of National and Religious Factors in the Willingness to Buy Foreign Stationery

Running title: National and Religious Factors in the Willingness

Abstract

One of the issues raised in the literature related to international marketing is consumer attitudes towards foreign products. As the global platform for the supply of products and services for various countries is present, naturally religious, national and generally attitudinal issues affect the way consumers behave. In general, for different reasons, including political or religious differences, consumers sometimes refuse to buy certain products or ethnic groups, which represent the role of people's feelings and attitudes toward the final choice of the product.

This research aims to investigate the role of national factors (nationalism and patriotism) and religious factors on product judgment and willingness to buy foreign stationery. The results suggest the effectiveness of national factors (nationalism and patriotism) and religious factors on product judgment and willingness to buy foreign stationery. Regarding the research findings, marketing managers can consider religious factors in making their policies in marketing and selling their products and services.

Keywords: National and religious factors, willingness to buy, foreign stationery, product judgment

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization of markets has provided significant opportunities and threats for both domestic and international markets. Globalization is forming the markets and developing the global consumption market. With trade liberalization, consumers face different choices of foreign products more than ever. On one hand, globalization provides a flow of opportunities for employees of large international companies, and on the other hand, it is a challenge for marketing employees in perceiving different behaviors of consumers. To survive in the global economy, domestic businesses should become prepared for more intense competition; because the designed and produced products and services can move beyond the countries' boundaries by order chains. Globalization of markets refers to the distinct combination of national markets with a global market and it decreases the obstacles to border trade in international sales (Anet et al., 2013). Since the mid of 19th century, the Iranian economy has moved toward import as a result of the colonial policies of England and India, and since the early 20th century, the import was accelerated with the exploration of oil resources. Although importing capital and intermediate goods is justifiable in every industry, a major deal of the increasing import in Iran is related to the consumption goods. It can be observed in the consumption of dairy goods such as snacks and stationery or electrical and luxury goods (Najibzadeh & Ahmadi, 2018). Due to its resistance to the dominating systems, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been exposed to frequent invasions. One of these invasions is the economic sanction. So, the Supreme Leader of Iran has

mentioned a resistive economy as the best strategy. According to him, one of the best solutions is to support the national production and Iranian capital and labor (Aboutalebi, 2013). The tendency to high-quality products and brands in developing countries is a fact that is also observed in Iran. So, domestic products of developing countries such as Iran should effectively compete with imported products. It is so necessary for manufacturers to recognize and perceive the factors that affect the consumers' purchasing intention. Nowadays, many concepts in marketing should be paid attention to by domestic manufacturers. Some of these concepts are defined in the following.

1.1 Nationalism

Nationalism refers to the consumers' tendency to domestic products and their avoidance of purchasing foreign products. Due to their patriotism and loyalty to their country, nationalist consumers are not willing to use foreign products and services and they prefer domestic products (Pourslaimi et al., 2017). Consumer nationalism is an economic form of nationalism that forms the consumers' belief about the morality of purchasing foreign products (Mirabi & Goli, 2016).

1.2 Patriotism

Consumers' patriotism is beyond nationalism and it shows their strong emotions and loyalty to their country without any enmity with other countries. This factor is so effective in the selection and acceptance or rejection of domestic and foreign products (Erdoğan & Burucuoğlu, 2017). Meanwhile, consumer patriotism is a phenomenon that affects the consumers' behavior and leads to significant marketing

consequences for international companies that are being globalized. Sumner first proposed a definition of patriotism as the following: "Patriotism is a special attitude to the phenomena so that the persons consider their group as the basis of all the phenomena and prioritize the other phenomena on this basis. Every group is proud of its honors and transcendence and humiliates the persons out of the group" (Khodadad Hosseini et al., 2015).

1.3 Religion

Religion is one of the most important symbols that affect the personal and social attitudes of the audience. Researchers believe that religion indicates an integrated system of actions and beliefs about the holy phenomena. Meanwhile, religious belief refers to the level of commitment to a set of values. Religious beliefs are so effective in people's daily life (Safdar, 2015). Religion is integrated into people's lives and it has a wide extent. Due to the close relationship of religion with life and its important role, it is necessary to study the relationship between religion and consumers' behavior (Khajeh Nouri et al., 2012).

1.4 Background

Mira et al. (2018) investigated the effect of religious beliefs of Iranian consumers on their willingness to buy agricultural products from opposing countries. Their findings suggest the direct relationship of religious beliefs with enmity and nationalism and its reverse relationship with the willingness to buy American products in the Iranian consumers.

Pourslaimi et al. (2017) investigate the effect of cosmopolitanism on the attitude to domestic products affected by consumer nationalism (based on the theory of social identity). Their findings showed that cosmopolitanism in consumers from Mashhad has a significant negative effect on their consumption nationalism, while nationalism has a significant positive effect on their attitude to domestic products.

Khast (2017) investigated the effect of patriotism and the manufacturer country's image on intention to purchase domestic products rather than foreign products. The results showed that patriotism has a significant positive relationship with purchasing domestic products. However, the relationship between the manufacturing country's image and purchasing foreign products is stronger.

Mirabi and Goli (2016) investigated the relationship between ethnicity and the global thought of consumers and their willingness to buy foreign products with the mediating role of judgment about domestic products. Their findings showed that ethnicity has a negative relationship with the willingness to buy foreign products. However, it had a positive relationship with global thought. Judgment about domestic products was effective in the relationship between ethnicity, consumer global thought, and willingness to buy foreign products. Also,

it was found that the moderating variable cannot moderate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Alhosseini Almodaresi et al. (2015) investigated the effect of religion, materialism, and demographic characteristics of consumers on their mental involvement in clothing fashion. They found that religion and materialism are significantly effective in the consumers' mental involvement in clothing fashion and involvement has a significant positive effect on fashion decisions. Meanwhile, mental involvement in clothing fashion and mental knowledge has a significant positive effect on fashion decisions.

Khodadad Hosseini et al. (2015) investigated the effect of the dimensions of patriotism on the attitude to domestic and foreign products with the mediating role of perceived economic threat. According to their findings, the effect of ethnic dependency, national identity, nationalism, and prejudice on consumer patriotism was approved. However, the effect of cultural openness on consumer patriotism was not approved. Meanwhile, the effect of patriotism on the consumer's attitude to domestic and foreign products was approved.

Prince et al. (2018) investigated the effect of patriotism on the willingness to buy a national automobile in Malaysia. In this study, it was found that there is a positive relationship between patriotism and the willingness to buy Malaysian automobiles. Also, it was proved that the Malaysian consumers' attitude has a positive relationship with the intention to buy Malaysian automobiles.

Shoham and Gavish (2016) investigated the purchase behavior resulting from racism, nationalism, enmity, and patriotism of consumers. They found that judgment about the product quality mediates the relationship between racism, nationalism, enmity, and the patriotism of customers and purchase intention.

Erdoğan and Burucuoğlu (2017) investigated the effect of patriotism, globalization, and nationalism on product assessment in Turkey. Racism, patriotism, and globalization can be considered the factors involved in consumers' negative reactions. The findings showed that racism, patriotism, and globalization lead to the consumers' negative attitudes to foreign products.

Jin et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between consumer nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and the attitude to domestic and foreign products among the young consumers regarding the moderating role of the country's development status. The results showed that cosmopolitanism has a significant positive effect on the attitude to foreign products. Meanwhile, there is a significant positive relationship between consumers' nationalism and their attitude to domestic products, and there is a significant negative relationship

between consumers' nationalism and their attitude to foreign products.

Tong and Li (2013) investigated the effect of brand character and consumers' nationalism on the clothes market in China. They found that brand character has a significant effect on quality assessment and willingness to buy domestic and foreign products. Chinese consumers' nationalist attitudes do not have any significant effect on their intention to buy domestic or foreign brands. Nevertheless, Chinese nationalist consumers reported a positive evaluation of the quality of domestic brands and a negative evaluation of the quality of foreign brands.

Ahmed et al. (2013) investigated the role of religious factors, enmity, and patriotism among Malaysian consumers. According to the results, enmity has a mediating role in the consumers' purchase intention, ethnic attitudes have a mediating role in the consumers' enmity, religious factors have a mediating role in the consumers' ethnicity, religious factors have a mediating role in the consumers' enmity, and ethnic attitudes have a mediating role in the judgment of foreign products, purchase intention, enmity, and racism.

According to studies, the conceptual model of the research is developed as the following (Table 1).

1.5 The Research Hypotheses

1. Religious factors are effective in consumers' judgment about foreign stationery.
2. Religious factors are effective in consumers' willingness to buy foreign stationery.
3. Consumer nationalism is effective in judgment about foreign stationery.
4. Consumer nationalism is effective in willingness to buy foreign stationery.
5. Patriotism is effective in judgment about foreign stationery.
6. Patriotism is effective in willingness to buy foreign stationery.
7. Product judgment is effective in willingness to buy foreign stationery.

2. MATERIALS & METHODS

This research is an applied study and its population includes the students from the universities of Mashhad who are willing to buy foreign stationery. As the sample members, 40 students of the universities of Mashhad were asked if they were willing to buy foreign stationery, and 25% of them reported that they were willing to buy foreign stationery. So, this rate was generalized to the whole population. The sample size was determined by Cochran's formula and 377 people were selected by convenience sampling. The following table presents the population and sample (Table 1).

In terms of gender, men constituted 87.9% of the sample and women constituted 12.1% of the sample. In terms of age, most of the participants were 20-25 years old and a few of them were

35-40 years old. In terms of education level, 5.8% of the samples were the students of an associate program, 60.4% were BA students, 29.4% were MA students, and 4.4% were the students of Ph.D. or higher programs.

2.1 The Research Tools

Religious factors, patriotism, consumer nationalism, and purchase intention were measured by the questionnaires designed by Haque et al. (2018) and Ahmed et al. (2013) that included 21 items. A literature review was done by the library method (referring to the library, using a paper database, thesis database, credited websites, etc.). For field studies, the researcher referred to the students of Mashhad universities or sent them a questionnaire by email or via social networks. Then, the filled questionnaires were collected (Table 2).

Descriptive statistics (mean, dispersion, frequency, etc.) were analyzed by SPSS and the research hypotheses were analyzed by structural equation modeling. Smart PLS was used due to the non-normality of data distribution.

3. RESULTS

In the inferential data analysis, the first non-normality of data distribution was approved by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Then, data analysis was done by Smart PLS. The results of the data analysis are presented in the following (Figures 2, 3).

3.1 The First Hypothesis

Religious factors are effective in judgment about foreign stationery

The coefficient of the effect of religious factors on product judgment is equal to -0.160. Since this value is negative, it suggests the negative effect of religious factors on product judgment. According to Figure 2 (significance coefficient), the t statistic is reported as 3.073. Since this value is more than 1.96, it can be concluded that religious factors have a significant positive effect on product judgment at the confidence level of 95%. So, the first hypothesis is approved.

3.2 The Second Hypothesis

Religious factors are effective in willingness to buy foreign stationery.

As seen in Figure 3, the coefficient of the effect of religious factors on willingness to buy foreign stationery is equal to -0.071. Since this value is negative, it suggests the negative effect of religious factors on willingness to buy foreign stationery. According to Figure 2 (significance coefficient), the t statistic is reported as 1.971. Since this value is more than 1.96, it can be concluded that religious factors have a significant positive effect on willingness to buy foreign stationery at the confidence level of 95%. So, the second hypothesis is approved.

3.3 The Third Hypothesis

Consumer nationalism is effective in judgment about foreign stationery.

As seen in Figure 3, the coefficient of the effect of consumer nationalism on product judgment is equal to 0.112. Since this value is positive, it suggests the positive effect of consumer nationalism on product judgment. According to Figure 2 (significance coefficient), the t statistic is reported as 1.823. Since this value is less than 1.96, it can be concluded that consumer nationalism has no effect on product judgment at the confidence level of 95%. So, the third hypothesis is rejected.

3.4 The Fourth Hypothesis

Consumer nationalism is effective in the willingness to buy foreign stationery.

As seen in Figure 3, the coefficient of the effect of consumer nationalism on willingness to buy foreign stationery is equal to 0.329. Since this value is positive, it suggests the positive effect of consumer nationalism on willingness to buy foreign stationery. According to Figure 2 (significance coefficient), the t statistic is reported as 1.513. Since this value is less than 1.96, it can be concluded that consumer nationalism does not affect willingness to buy foreign stationery at the confidence level of 95%. So, the fourth hypothesis is rejected.

3.5 The Fifth Hypothesis

Patriotism is effective in judgment about foreign stationery.

As seen in Figure 3, the coefficient of the effect of patriotism on product judgment is equal to 0.101. Since this value is positive, it suggests the positive effect of patriotism on product judgment. According to Figure 1 (significance coefficient), the t statistic is reported as 1.627. Since this value is less than 1.96, it can be concluded that patriotism has no effect on product judgment at the confidence level of 95%. So, the fifth hypothesis is rejected.

3.6 The Sixth Hypothesis

Patriotism is effective in the willingness to buy foreign stationery.

As seen in Figure 3, the coefficient of the effect of patriotism on willingness to buy foreign stationery is equal to 0.059. Since this value is positive, it suggests the positive effect of patriotism on the willingness to buy foreign stationery. According to Figure 2 (significance coefficient), the t statistic is reported as 0.990. Since this value is less than 1.96, it can be concluded that patriotism does not affect willingness to buy foreign stationery at the confidence level of 95%. So, the fifth hypothesis is rejected.

3.7 The Seventh Hypothesis

Product judgment is effective in willingness to buy foreign stationery.

As seen in Figure 3, the coefficient of the effect of product judgment on willingness to buy foreign stationery is equal to 0.516. Since this value is positive, it suggests the positive effect of product judgment on willingness to buy foreign stationery. According to Figure 2 (significance coefficient), the t statistic is reported as 11.715. Since this value is more than 1.96, it can

be concluded that product judgment has a significant positive effect on willingness to buy foreign stationery at the confidence level of 95%. So, the seventh hypothesis is approved.

4 DISCUSSION

This hypothesis is consistent with the results of studies performed by Alhosseini Almodaresi et al. (2015) who reported that religious factors have a significant effect on mental involvement and product judgment. So, there is a negative relationship between religious factors and willingness to buy foreign stationery. This hypothesis was approved based on the negative effect of religious factors on willingness to buy foreign stationery. The influence coefficient of religious factors on willingness to buy foreign stationery approves the negative effect of religious factors on willingness to buy. So, it can be stated that the more religious is a person, the more significant will be this effect. As seen in the studies performed by Rahman et al. (2017) and Haque et al. (2018), in the third hypothesis, it was found that there is no relationship between consumer nationalism and product judgment. So, this hypothesis was not approved. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumer nationalism did not affect purchasing of foreign stationery among the students of the universities of Mashhad. This hypothesis is inconsistent with the studies performed by Mirabi and Goli (2015) who reported that there is a significant relationship between nationalism and product judgment. Also, it was concluded that there is no relationship between consumer nationalism and willingness to buy foreign stationery. So, this hypothesis was not approved. The results suggest that consumer nationalism did not affect the willingness to buy foreign stationery among the students of Mashhad universities. This hypothesis is consistent with the study performed by Tong and Li (2013) who reported that the consumers' nationalistic attitudes do not have any effect on their tendency toward domestic and foreign brands. However, it is inconsistent with the study performed by Prince et al. (2018) in which, the relationship between consumer nationalism and product judgment is approved. It was concluded that there is no relationship between consumer patriotism and product judgment, and this hypothesis was not approved. This hypothesis is inconsistent with the study performed by Erdoğan and Burucuoğlu (2017) who reported that consumer patriotism harms consumers' patriotism, their attitude to domestic and foreign products, and their perception from the product quality. According to the analyses, there is no relationship between consumer patriotism and willingness to buy foreign stationery, and this hypothesis was not approved. This finding is inconsistent with studies performed by Khast (2017) and Khodadad Hosseini et al. (2017) who reported that consumer patriotism is effective in willingness to buy foreign products and perception of product quality is effective in

purchase intention. Finally, it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between product judgment and purchase intention, and this hypothesis was approved. It can be stated that product judgment has a significant positive effect on the willingness to buy foreign stationery. The significant positive relationship between product judgment and purchase intention is consistent with the findings reported by Dehdashti Shahrokh et al. (2014). They found that cognitive dimension and product judgment have a significant effect on the consumers' purchase intention. Regarding the role of religious factors in product judgment and purchase intention, marketing managers can observe religious factors in making their policies in marketing and sale of products and services. For example, a part of the selling revenue can be allocated to charities and increase the sale in this way. In this research, the effect of consumer nationalism and patriotism on product judgment was not approved. It suggests that consumer nationalism and patriotism cannot be effective in product judgment and purchase intention.

In this regard, sellers can focus on other factors such as quality and product brand. Regarding the positive relationship between product judgment and purchase intention, it is suggested to pay attention to factors such as using appropriate places for presenting the products, attaching discount labels on products, and attractive packs that can influence the consumers' perception of the product and judgment and consequently, their willingness to buy the product

5 CONCLUSION

According to the analyses, it was concluded that there is a negative relationship between religious factors and product judgment. This hypothesis was approved based on the negative effect of religious factors on product judgment. The coefficient of the effect of religious factors on product judgment approves the negative effect of religious factors on product judgment. It can be stated that the more religious is a person the worse is his/her attitude to foreign stationery.

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Tables

Table 1. The statistical population and sample.

University	Number of students	Statistical Society	The statistical sample
Imam reza	6000	1500	31
ferdowsi	25330	6333	131
Azad	31500	7875	162
sajad	5000	1250	26
khayyam	5260	1315	27
total	73086	18271	377

Table 2. Factor loading (reliability), convergent validity, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability.

Variable	Question	Factor load	Convergent validity (AVE)	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)
Religious Factors	Q1	0.321	0.476	0.636	0.760
	Q2	0.836			
	Q3	0.925			
	Q4	0.496			
Nationalism	Q5	0.709	0.439	0.773	0.822
	Q6	0.687			
	Q7	0.476			
	Q8	0.703			
	Q9	0.737			
	Q10	0.628			
Patriotism	Q11	0.624	0.515	0.846	0.879
	Q12	0.643			
	Q13	0.657			
	Q14	0.559			
	Q15	0.894			
	Q16	0.805			
	Q17	0.870			
Product judgment	Q18	0.591	0.380	0.612	0.741
	Q19	0.698			
	Q20	0.720			
	Q21	0.290			
	Q22	0.680			
Willingness to buy	Q23	0.636	0.434	0.569	0.751
	Q24	0.705			
	Q25	0.749			
	Q26	0.522			

Figures

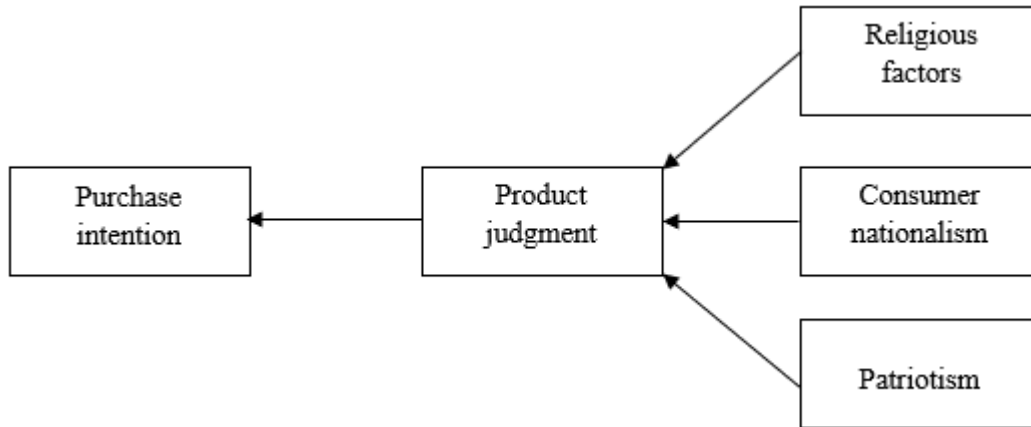


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

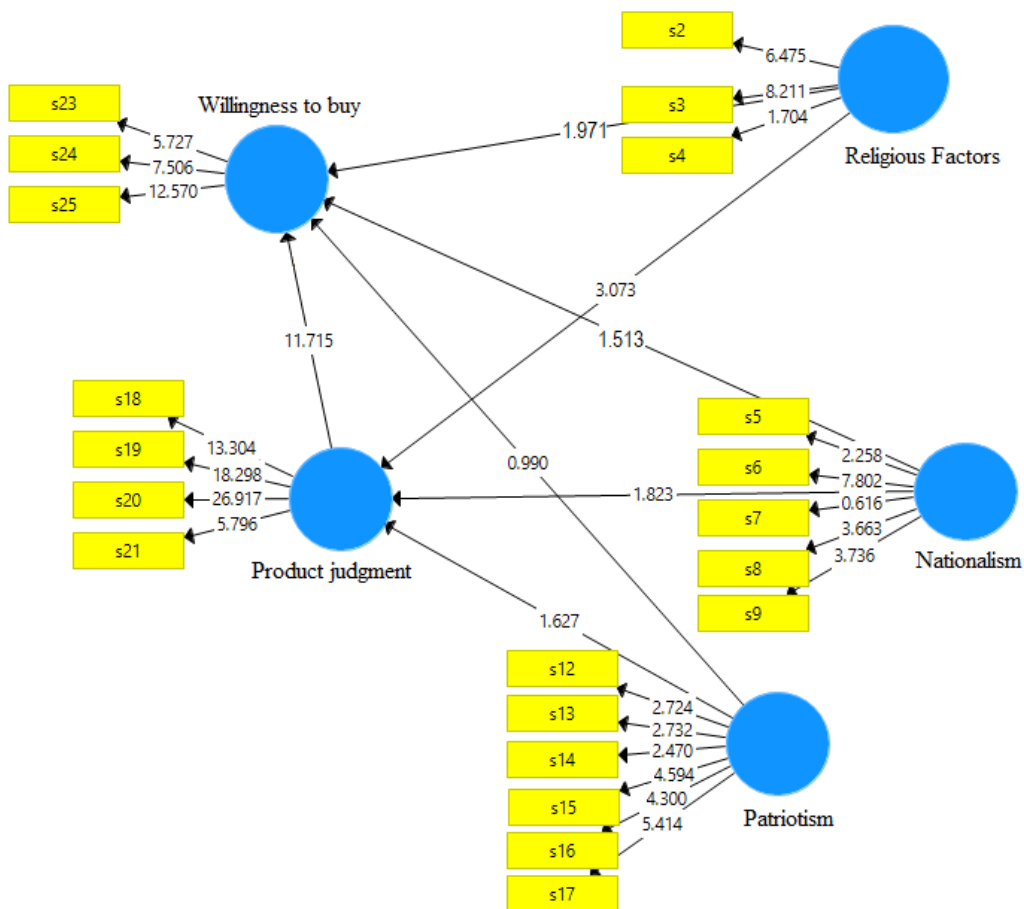


Figure 2. Significance of the path coefficients (t-statistic).

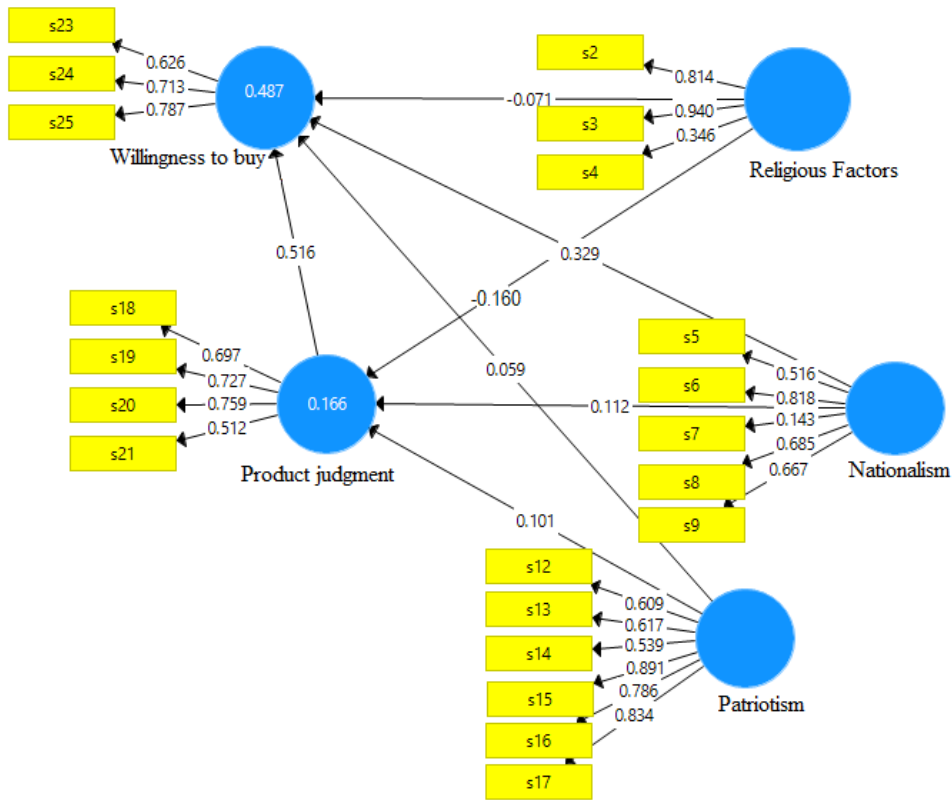


Figure 3. Structural path coefficients.