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## Original Article

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# The Impact of Marketing and Operational Capabilities on Performance of Financial Companies (Evidence from Tehran Stock Exchange)

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the effect of marketing and operational capabilities on performance of the listed financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE). The research was conducted based on a descriptive-correlational design. Data analysis was performed in the EViews environment. The TSE-listed financial companies (24, in total) formed the statistical population in this study, whose data (in year-firm) for the period 2009 through to 2013 was subjected to panel/pooled data analysis using regression models. The overall significance of the fit model was verified using Fisher test (F-test) statistic, and for the fixed-effects model Chow test was used. The research results indicated a positive and significant association between operational capability and return on assets (ROA), but no significant association between operational capability and return on equity (ROE). The findings, conversely, indicated a positive and significant association between marketing capability and ROE, but no significant association between marketing capability and ROA. Further, a positive and significant relationship was found between importance of marketing and ROE, but no significant relationship between importance of marketing and ROA. Finally, there was consistently a significant association between importance of operation and ROA, whereas this significant relationship was not present between importance of operation and ROE.

**KEYWORDS:** Operational Capability; Marketing Capability; Return on Assets; Return on Equity; Importance of Marketing; Importance of Operation

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Within the market, this is marketing capability that distinguishes professional firms from non-professional ones. Competitive advantage, in the long run, is created for companies in possession of superior competencies and capabilities. For continuance and sustained competitive advantage, the organization needs to furnish the necessary mechanisms and infrastructures for continuous product improvement in line with new products and markets, and speedy use of opportunities. The company's capabilities determine give it the opportunity to sustain its competitive advantage. A distinct capability or competence can be described as an important feature which places the company or organization in a leading position. These capabilities, in turn, may bear important competitive advantages – the advantages that companies do not possess, and companies do not have to respond to competitive perils by developing the respective capabilities (Usman Ahmad et al, 2014).

Elaborating on this view, Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006) maintain that these arguments are valid in the context of marketing capability. They argue that a competitive industry environment can cause firms to pursue innovative ways of creating superior value for their customers by requiring development of differentiating capabilities (Weerawardena et al. (2006), especially marketing capabilities. On the other hand, operational capability is defined as the firm's ability to create integration and coordination among a set of functions through which the resources available to it (inputs) are deployed to achieve the desired objectives (outputs) (Dutta et al, 1999, p. 551).

Considerable research has shown that various operational technologies, such as quality practices, are essential in explaining corporate performance and achieving its strategic goals (Shah & Ward, 2003, 2004).

Yet, despite the crucial role of marketing and operational capabilities in business performance and value creation for the firm (Nath et al, 2010), relatively few studies have shown their impact on corporate performance (Hsu et al, 2009; Robb et al, 2008).

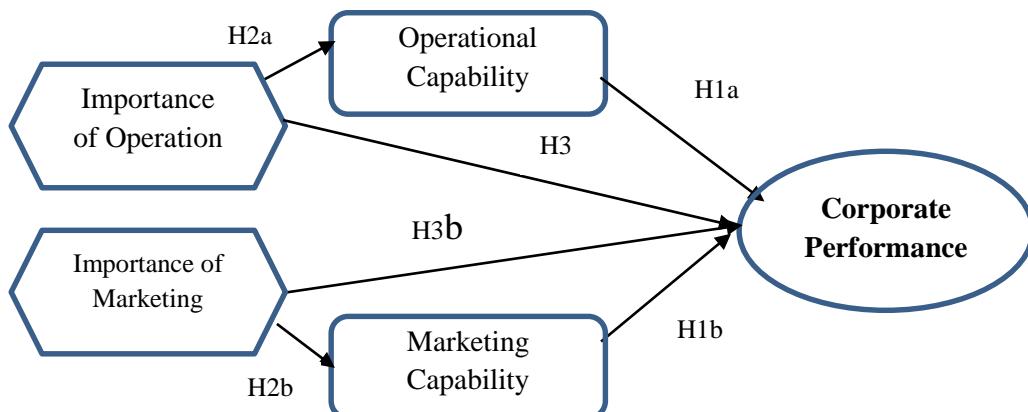
Due to the increased environmental complexity and competition intensity, organizations need to think on building their competitive advantage. A competitive advantage implies superior performance relative to competitors that makes sure of profitability in short term and continuance and growth in long term. A long-term competitive advantage is built for a company with superior capabilities relative to competitors. Opportunities for the company to sustain its competitive advantage are determined by its capabilities and competencies. A distinct capability or competence can be described as one of the significant features which ensure superiority of the company or organization. Marketing capability is among such capabilities. Marketing capability can be viewed as the organization ability to understand market and customer relationship (Day, 1994). Marketing capability is an integrated process in which companies employ tangible and intangible resources to get insight into the complexity of customer specific needs, achieving a relative product differentiation for a competitive edge and finally, realizing a superior brand quality (Day, 1994; Dutta et al, 1999; Song et al, 2005; Benedetto et al, 2007).

Therefore, marketing and operational capabilities are the right tools that help companies to achieve a better market performance, where understanding of how marketing capability affects the corporate market performance is crucial.

Given the reviewed literature, and as far as the domestic research concerns, no research has been so far conducted in Iran on the impact of marketing capability of corporate performance, and even in other countries, such research has never been conducted among financial institutions and insurance firms. Therefore, present research, examining the likely effect of marketing and operational capabilities on performance of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange, while contributes to the existing related literature, attempts to fill the existing research gap in this regard.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses

In this research, consistent with the scientific theories and theoretical findings, the two factors of operational and marketing capabilities are proposed as the key determinants of corporate performance. Hence, they are considered as the research independent variables (predictors), and the corporate performance as the dependent (or outcome) variable. Thus, given the proposed and expected impact of marketing and operational capabilities on corporate performance, the research conceptual model can be drawn as follows:



**Figure 1** – Research conceptual model (Usman Ahmad et al, 2014: 62)

Based on the research model, the following hypotheses were made:

**Hypothesis 1:** Operational and marketing capabilities have impact on performance of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.

**Hypothesis 1.1:** Operational capability has impact on performance of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.

**Hypothesis 1.2:** Marketing capability has impact on performance of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.

**Hypothesis 2:** Importance of operation and marketing has impact on operational and marketing capabilities of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.

**Hypothesis 2.1:** Importance of operation has impact on operational capability of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.

**Hypothesis 2.2:** Importance of marketing has impact on marketing capability of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.

**Hypothesis 3:** Importance of operation and marketing has impact on performance of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.

**Hypothesis 3.1:** Importance of operation has impact on performance of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.

**Hypothesis 3.2:** Importance of marketing has impact on performance of financial companies on Tehran Stock Exchange.



The regression models used in this study were derived from the research of Usman Ahmad et al (2014) as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} ROA_{it} &= \alpha + \beta_1 IO_{it} + \beta_2 IM_{it} + \beta_3 OC_{it} + \beta_4 MC_{it} + \beta_5 SIZE_{it} + \beta_6 LEV_{it} + \varepsilon \\ ROE_{it} &= \alpha + \beta_1 IO_{it} + \beta_2 IM_{it} + \beta_3 OC_{it} + \beta_4 MC_{it} + \beta_5 SIZE_{it} + \beta_6 LEV_{it} + \varepsilon \\ OC_{it} &= \alpha + \beta_1 IO_{it} + \beta_2 SIZE_{it} + \beta_3 LEV_{it} + \varepsilon \\ MC_{it} &= \alpha + \beta_1 IM_{it} + \beta_2 SIZE_{it} + \beta_3 LEV_{it} + \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

Where the indicators return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE) are dependent variables, operational capability (OC), marketing capability (MC), importance of operation (IO), and importance of marketing (IM) are independent variables, and firm size (SIZE) and firm leverage (LEV) control variables.

The variables are defined and measured as follows:

Marketing capability (MC) represents integrated processes designed for application of collective skills, knowledge and corporate resources, and for identification of the company-related needs and requirements (Tuominen et al, 1997). It is measured in terms of *sales, general and administrative expenses, intangible assets, cost of receivables, sales growth, and turnover* (Nath et al, 2010, p. 324).

Operational capability (OC) is defined as the firm's ability to create integration and coordination among a set of functions through which the resources available to it (inputs) are deployed to achieve the desired objectives (outputs) (Dutta et al, 1995: 551). This capability is measured by *tangible assets, remunerations, and cost of sales* (Nath et al, 2010, p. 324).

In this study, corporate performance is measured at the hand of two indicators:

1. Return on assets (ROA) which is obtained from dividing the company's net income by its (average) total assets.
2. Return on equity (ROE) is calculated by dividing the company's net income by its total equity.

Importance of marketing (IM) is measured based on the expenses made by the company on marketing during the research period (Usman Ahmad et al, 2014, p. 62).

Importance of operation (IO) is measured based on the expenses made by the company in operational areas during the research time interval (Usman Ahmad et al, 2014, p. 62).

The control variable *financial leverage* (Lev) is equal to the ratio of total debt to total asset. And firm size (SIZE) is defined as the natural logarithm of the number of the firm's employees.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In this research, all the data analysis and the inferential statistics and finally, the research model estimation were performed in EViews environment. The research statistical population included the TSE-listed companies from the financial industry (24 companies, in total) during 2009-2013. In this study, the noted regression models were estimated using the pooled data (in year- firm) pertaining to 24 TSE-listed financial companies. Before the model estimation using the pooled data, first it should be made a choice of the right method for application of such data in the estimation. That is to say, it should be first determined if there is basically a need for considering a panel structure for the data (due to the firm-specific differences and effects) or the data regarding different companies can be pooled and used in the model estimation. In single-equation estimation, to make a decision on the use of the right method, F-test is performed. Based on the results of this test, it is decided whether to accept or reject the hypothesis on equality of the firm-specific fixed effects and whether eventually to choose the classical pooled method or the panel data method.



#### 4. FINDINGS

In the table below, the amount of correlation between the research variables at 0.01 and 0.05 significances is given. For instance, the correlation coefficient between ROA and OC is -0.212 which is significant at 0.05.

**Table 1. Research variables correlation matrix**

		ROA	ROE	OC	MC	IM	IO	SIZE	LEV
ROA	Pearson Correlation	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)								
	N	120							
ROE	Pearson Correlation	.474**	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000							
	N	120	120						
OC	Pearson Correlation	.512*	.021	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.821						
	N	120	120	120					
MC	Pearson Correlation	-.138	.316*	.406**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.132	.000	.000					
	N	120	120	120	120				
IM	Pearson Correlation	.214*	.235**	.501**	.537**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.009	.000	.000				
	N	120	120	120	120	120			
IO	Pearson Correlation	.255**	.034	.463**	.281**	.528**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.710	.000	.002	.000			
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120		
SIZE	Pearson Correlation	-.358**	.062	.451**	.514**	.414**	.401**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.500	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	
LEV	Pearson Correlation	-.667**	.038	.226*	-.270**	.213*	.142	.378**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.677	.013	.000	.019	.122	.000	
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120

Table 2 shows the results of Chow test (F-statistic) for the research hypotheses.

**Table 2 . The results of Chow test (F-statistic)**

Model	H <sub>0</sub>	F-statistic	df	p-value	Final decision
1 <sup>st</sup> model	Firm-specific effects are not significant	3.2755	23	0.0000	H <sub>0</sub> is rejected (panel data method chosen)
2 <sup>nd</sup> model	Firm-specific effects are not significant	1.5230	23	0.0833	H <sub>0</sub> is confirmed (pooling method chosen)
3 <sup>rd</sup> model	Firm-specific effects are not significant	15.6415	23	0.0000	H <sub>0</sub> is rejected (panel data method chosen)
4 <sup>th</sup> model	Firm-specific effects are not significant	0.1696	23	1.0000	H <sub>0</sub> is confirmed (pooling method chosen)

As is seen in table 2, at 95 percent confidence, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> models, the null hypothesis was confirmed, suggesting the use of pooling method. But in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> models, the null hypothesis was rejected, implying the use of panel data model. As a result, a choice should be made between fixed effects and random effects model. For this purpose, Hausman test was performed.



The results of Hausman test for the first and third models were summarized in table 3. The results in table 3 suggest that in the 1<sup>st</sup> model, random effects method and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> model, fixed effects model should be used.

**Table 3.** The results of Hausman test on the choice of the right model for the panel data method

Model	H <sub>0</sub>	$\chi^2$	df	p-value	Final decision
1 <sup>st</sup> model	Random effects model is the appropriate method	0.9685	6	0.9868	H <sub>0</sub> is confirmed: random effects model
3 <sup>rd</sup> model	Random effects model is the appropriate method	8.4748	3	0.0372	H <sub>0</sub> is rejected: fixed effects model

In the next step of the model estimation, presence/absence of variance heteroscedasticity is examined. For this purpose, Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg Test for Heteroscedasticity was used the results of which are summarized in table 4.

**Table 4.** The results of Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg on variance heteroscedasticity

Model	H <sub>0</sub>	$\chi^2$	p-value	Final decision
1 <sup>st</sup> model	Variances are homoscedastic	50.49	0.0000	H <sub>0</sub> rejected
2 <sup>nd</sup> model	Variances are homoscedastic	0.87	0.3499	H <sub>0</sub> accepted
3 <sup>rd</sup> model	Variances are homoscedastic	119.57	0.0000	H <sub>0</sub> rejected
4 <sup>th</sup> model	Variances are homoscedastic	67.42	0.0000	H <sub>0</sub> rejected

According to the obtained results from this test, as presented in table 4, only in model 2 there is no variance heteroscedasticity, given the calculated probability or p-value which is greater than 0.05. But, in the other models the problem of variance heteroscedasticity, since the calculated probabilities or p-values are smaller than 0.05. Therefore, in order to satisfy the variance homoscedasticity assumption and solve the problem of variance heteroscedasticity, the final estimation of these models will be carried out using the ordinary least square (OLS) testing.

The following model (the first model) will be used for test of the ROA-related hypotheses:

$$ROA_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OC_{it} + \beta_2 MC_{it} + \beta_3 IM_{it} + \beta_4 IO_{it} + \beta_5 SIZE_{it} + \beta_6 LEV_{it} + e$$

The results of the first model estimation are presented in table 5.

**Table 5.** Summary test results of the first model

VIF	Prob.	t-Statistic	Std. Error	Coefficient	Variable
-----	0.0000	5.4683	0.0246	0.1344	C
2.27	0.0000	4.1228	0.4488	1.8501	OC
1.53	0.3170	1.0051	0.0427	0.0429	MC
2.62	0.8434	-0.1980	0.1333	-0.0264	IM
1.55	0.0352	2.1319	0.2937	0.6260	IO
2.26	0.6942	-0.3942	0.0036	-0.0014	SIZE
1.32	0.0000	-4.8280	0.0233	-0.1123	LEV
		2.0302	Durbin-Watson stat		13.4708 (0.0000)
		0.3860	Adjusted R-squared		R-squared

**Determining existence of multicollinearity:** the last column in table 5 gives a VIF of less than 5 (VIF < 5) for all the independent variables, which indicates absence of collinearity among the independent (predictor)



variables. Thus, it could be inferred that all the 4 models are valid. As the last precondition prior to test of the research hypotheses, it should be made sure of accuracy of the obtained results for which overall significance of the model is examined using F-test. Given the calculated F-statistic, the fit regression model is significant.

The first model's coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates that 42 percent of changes in the dependent variable (ROA) can be explained by the independent variables.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable OC in the above table indicates a positive and significant relationship between operational capability (OC) and return on assets (ROA) at an error level of 5%, since the calculated p-value for MC coefficient is smaller than the threshold of 0.05 (p-value < 0.05). Thus, it could be inferred that at 95 percent confidence interval there is a positive and significant relationship between OC and ROA in the TSE-listed financial companies.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable MC in the above table indicates lack of significant association between marketing capability (MC) and return on assets (ROA) at an error level of 0.05, since the calculated p-value for MC coefficient is greater than the critical threshold of 0.05 (p-value > 0.05). Thus, we may infer that at 95 percent confidence interval there is no significant relationship between MC and ROA in the understudy TSE-listed financial companies.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable IM in the above table indicates absence of significant relationship between importance of marketing (IM) and return on assets (ROA) at an error level of 0.05, since the calculated p-value for IM coefficient is greater than the critical threshold of 0.05 (p-value > 0.05). Thus, we may infer that at 95 percent confidence interval there is no significant relationship between IM and ROA in the understudy TSE-listed financial companies.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable IO in the above table indicates a negative and significant relationship between importance of operation (IO) and return on assets (ROA) at an error level of 5%, since the calculated p-value for IO coefficient is smaller than the threshold of 0.05 (p-value < 0.05). Thus, it could be inferred that at 95 percent confidence interval there is a significant relationship between OC and ROA in the TSE-listed financial companies.

The results of the second model estimation are summarized in table 6. The following model (the second model) will be used for test of the ROE-related hypotheses:

$$ROE_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OC_{it} + \beta_2 MC_{it} + \beta_3 IM_{it} + \beta_4 IO_{it} + \beta_5 SIZE_{it} + \beta_6 LEV_{it} + e$$

**Table 6.** Summary results of the second model testing

VIF	Prob.	t-Statistic	Std. Error	Coefficient	Variable
-----	0.5202	0.6450	0.0569	0.0367	<i>C</i>
2.27	0.1052	1.6333	19.2961	31.5168	<i>OC</i>
1.53	0.0000	7.9793	0.0321	0.2567	<i>MC</i>
2.62	0.0224	2.3161	1.7189	3.9811	<i>IM</i>
1.55	0.2850	-1.0742	3.0241	-3.2485	<i>IO</i>
2.26	0.1737	1.3690	0.0174	0.0238	<i>SIZE</i>
1.32	0.9816	-0.0231	0.1440	-0.0033	<i>LEV</i>
1.5841	Durbin-Watson stat			5.3117 (0.0000)	<i>F-statistic</i> <i>Prob(F-statistic)</i>
0.4360	Adjusted R-squared			0.4463	<i>R-squared</i>



The second's model's coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates that 45 percent of changes in the dependent variable (ROE) can be explained by the independent variables.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable OC in the above table indicates absence of significant relationship between operational capability (OC) and return on equity (ROE) at an error level of 0.05, since the calculated p-value for OC coefficient is greater than the critical threshold of 0.05 (p-value  $> 0.05$ ). Thus, we may infer that at 95 percent confidence interval there is no significant relationship between OC and ROE in the understudy TSE-listed financial companies.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable MC in the above table indicates a positive and significant relationship between marketing capability (MC) and return on equity (ROE) at an error level of 5%, since the calculated p-value for MC coefficient is smaller than the threshold of 0.05 (p-value  $< 0.05$ ). Thus, it could be inferred that at 95 percent confidence interval there is a positive and significant relationship between MC and ROE in the TSE-listed financial companies.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable IM in the above table indicates a negative and significant association between importance of marketing (IM) and return on equity (ROE) at an error level of 5%, since the calculated p-value for IM coefficient is smaller than the threshold of 0.05 (p-value  $< 0.05$ ). Thus, it could be inferred that at 95 percent confidence interval there is a significant relationship between IM and ROE in the TSE-listed financial companies.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable IO in the above table indicates absence of significant relationship between importance of operation (IO) and return on equity (ROE) at an error level of 0.05, since the calculated p-value for IO coefficient is greater than the critical threshold of 0.05 (p-value  $> 0.05$ ). Thus, we may infer that at 95 percent confidence interval there is no significant relationship between IO and ROE in the understudy TSE-listed financial companies.

The results of the third model estimation are summarized in table 7. The following model (the third model) will be used for test of the OC-related hypotheses:

$$OC_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IO_{it} + \beta_2 SIZE_{it} + \beta_3 LEV_{it} + e$$

**Table 7.** Summary results of the third model testing

VIF	Prob.	t-Statistic	Std. Error	Coefficient	Variable
-----	0.0000	-5.2138	0.4714	-2.4576	<i>C</i>
1.20	0.7072	0.3768	0.0003	0.0001	<i>IO</i>
1.52	0.0000	10.1595	0.0611	0.6211	<i>SIZE</i>
1.30	0.0000	10.0683	0.0374	0.3762	<i>LEV</i>
1.5374		<i>Durbin-Watson stat</i>		32.4048 (0.0000)	<i>F-statistic</i> <i>Prob(F-statistic)</i>
0.7728		<i>Adjusted R-squared</i>		0.8006	<i>R-squared</i>

The third's model's coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates that 80 percent of changes in the dependent variable (OC) are explained by the independent variables.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable IO in the above table indicates absence of significant relationship between importance of operation (IO) and operational capability (OC) at an error level of 0.05, since the calculated p-value for IO coefficient is greater than the critical threshold of 0.05 (p-value  $> 0.05$ ). Thus, we may infer that at 95 percent confidence interval there is no significant relationship between IO and OC in the understudy TSE-listed financial companies.



The results of the fourth model estimation are summarized in table 8. The following model (the fourth model) will be used for test of the MC-related hypotheses:

$$MC_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IM_{it} + \beta_2 SIZE_{it} + \beta_3 LEV_{it} + e$$

**Table 8.** Summary results of the fourth model testing

VIF	Prob.	t-Statistic	Std. Error	Coefficient	Variable
-----	0.0120	-2.5514	2.1944	-5.5990	<i>C</i>
1.63	0.0004	3.6416	0.2979	1.0850	<i>IM</i>
2.01	0.0016	3.2233	0.3146	1.0142	<i>SIZE</i>
1.31	0.0000	-4.2702	0.3775	-1.6121	<i>LEV</i>
	2.0994	<b>Durbin-Watson stat</b>		23.3536 (0.0000)	<b>F-statistic</b> <b>Prob(F-statistic)</b>
	0.3604	<b>Adjusted R-squared</b>		0.3765	<b>R-squared</b>

The third's model's coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates that 38 percent of changes in the dependent variable (MC) are explained by the independent variables.

The estimated coefficient of the independent variable IM in the above table indicates a positive and significant association between importance of marketing (IM) and marketing capability (MC) at an error level of 5%, since the calculated p-value for IM coefficient is smaller than the threshold of 0.05 (p-value < 0.05). Thus, it could be inferred that at 95 percent confidence interval there is a significant relationship between IM and MC in the TSE-listed financial companies.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the obtained results in this research, the following practical suggestions are made:

1. The obtained results from test of the first main hypothesis imply that managers of the understudy institutions can by employing active workforce, establishing strong public relations, and creating differentiation for the companies make their marketing efforts more effective, while profiting from marketing research for having insight into the customer needs and wishes, and weaknesses and strengths of their competitors improve the corporate market performance.
2. Given the obtained results from test of sub-hypothesis 1.1, to develop their operational capability, the companies need to facilitate the use of electronic services by creating the necessary infrastructures and virtual branches for provision of these services, along with timely and accurate prediction of the customer needs.
3. Considering the results on test of sub-hypothesis 1.2, marketing capability seems to have more effect on the corporate market performance. This suggests that management by paying adequate attention to such aspects as creation of a superior customer value could significantly boost the corporate market performance.
4. Given the results on test of the second main hypothesis, by implementation of an organization-wide employee marketing training, motivation, talent building, and marketing culture, management could extend and institutionalize marketing throughout the organization. In other words, marketing will not be limited to specialized marketing department and all employees will be given the opportunity to participate and engage in this area.
5. Given the obtained results from test of sub-hypothesis 2.1, it is the responsibility of the management in these companies to make effort to resolve the poor performance regarding the customer relationship in the area of operational capability by informing itself of the customer's views, close



collaboration with customers, and building organizational commitment and trust towards customers.

6. The results on test of sub-hypothesis 2.2 suggests an emphasis on cross-sectional coordination allowing contribution of different sections and departments to composition an formulation of plans and strategies, balanced resource sharing among the organization sections, distribution of the obtained information and knowledge from the customer experience among sections, and awareness of all sections about providing superior customer value.
7. The results on test of the third main hypothesis knowledge of environment highlights the importance of the management knowledge of environment and the opportunities it offers which could be used to improve the corporate profitability, as well as the customer relationship management to strengthen the bonds with customers and identify their needs and desires. This also involves brand name differentiation, customer complaint handling, market segmentation, enhanced technical know-how and service delivery to customers.
8. Considering the results on test of sub-hypothesis 3.1, the company, applying liquidity control, improved human resources proficiencies, information technology, diversified banking services, would secure customer satisfaction which itself is a kind of advertising.
9. And lastly, in light of the obtained results from test of sub-hypothesis 3.2, a greater use of marketing research which helps acquiring better and deeper insight into the customer needs and wishes, competitor's weaknesses and strengths, and optimization of marketing activities is recommended.



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#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Authenticity of the texts, honesty and fidelity has been observed.

#### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

Mohammad Gholampour and Ali Asghar Rajabi contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Author/s confirmed no conflict of interest.