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Original article

Analysis and investigation of the status of saffron packaging and its position in Iran exports from exporters and experts viewpoints (case study: Torbatjam township)

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A R T I C L E I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Poor system of packaging, marketing and advertising in saffron export sector by Iranian exporters caused importers to buy this product from Iran at lower prices and then sell it at higher prices on the world markets by repackaging and proper advertising. The first importance of packaging is that many customers buy with their eyes, so attractive package has special importance. Considering the fact that Iran is the foremost producer of saffron in the world and produces almost 95 percent of the world's saffron, in the present study we have addressed the role of saffron packaging in its export. Literature review and background research identified some important packaging variables and factors that are important in export of a product. This study is an applied research in terms of purpose. This research has been done by the methods of library, scientific, specialized and field study. Statistical society of this research is composed of saffron exporters to foreign countries that are currently active and specialists and professors of University of Torbatjam who are experts in marketing and business. T-value of all factor loadings is greater than 1.96 and this means that the factor loadings were significant in alpha level of 0.05 and have significant effect on the 5 factors of packaging. These findings show differential validity between latent variables and convergence of indices in

measurement of latent variables. Also combined reliability of all indices is desirable because it is more than 0.6. If the combined reliability index is more than 0.6, it indicates that the indices measure latent variables well and as convergent, and as a result they are reliable indices.

1. Introduction

Iran produces 95 percent of the world saffron, but due to lack of marketing, inappropriate advertising methods and major competitors such as Spain, with its extensive advertising in international markets, did not manage to export saffron as packed with high added value. Iran, due to its favorable climate, has a thousand years of history in production of some crops like saffron, which is among the largest and highest quality producers of this product in the world. However, due to many problems and marketing of this product and considering its high potential of bringing foreign exchange into the country, the expected foreign exchange earnings have not been obtained from its exports yet (Qatmiri and Khavari, 2010).

Lack of marketing of Iranian saffron with Iran's brand caused European countries to seek a way to increase their shares in the world markets of saffron so that bulk exports of Iranian saffron to countries like UAE and Spain has led them to supply it to the markets with high prices after packaging with these countries brand and perhaps this Iranian saffron has been re-imported to our country with brand of other countries (Rahimi, 2006).

Given the difficulties of Iranian saffron in international markets, producing 95 percent of the world's saffron, Iran is still the largest producer and consumer in the world and exports saffron to over 44 countries. Proper packaging of saffron is one of the effective factors in marketing of Iranian saffron in international markets (Donyadideh, 2010). As the target countries like small packaging, preventing the bulk export of saffron and providing appropriate packaging have a huge impact on the marketing of Iranian saffron in international markets. Nowadays, competitive conditions in the market and distribution system as big stores are considered in the retail price and unlike the previous situation of the country, the seller is the person who is requested for item while visit of buyer from the store (Heien, 2011). Poor quality packaging is considered as the biggest problem in food industry of the country. This factor reduces the quality and safety of food and as a result, this industry will face larger and more serious problem of losing target markets for export and gradually removing from the world's market. This weakness in food industry has resulted in decrease in foreign exchange earning from the crops and consequently it refers to fundamental role of food industry in the country economy. According to exporters of saffron, bulk product and poor package are two problems in exporting Iranian saffron (Mookergee, 2008).

Poor system of packaging, marketing and advertising in the export of saffron by Iranian exporters caused importers to buy this product from Iran at lower prices and sell it as higher prices on the world markets after repackaging and proper advertising. Therefore, it seems necessary to pay more attention to implement appropriate policies for better introduction of this product and improve its exports. However, in 2009 and 2012 export of saffron faced a sharp drop, so that saffron export declined 77% in 2009 and nearly 81% drop in 2012 (Khazaei, 2007).

Extensive researches have been conducted in the field of saffron most of which are in relation to food and chemical characteristics of saffron, and only some of which are about marketing and export of saffron. In the conducted researches, any one of the researchers identifies some factors affecting the export of saffron and packaging factor makes up the subject of some researches.

In the research of Permeh and Hosseini (2003), tariff and non-tariff barriers of export of Iranian saffron were examined. By tariff classification of countries in the world market, these researchers concluded that the most open markets (easy access to the domestic market) belong to the developed countries and open economies who are the major importers of saffron. Among eight countries that have the largest imports of saffron in international market, the tariff rate of EU, USA, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Taiwan, Japan, Argentina and the United Arab Emirates was low and most importers such as EU and USA have brought saffron with a minimum tariff rate. In contrast, many developing countries and closed economies that have not been major importers of saffron have imposed a high tariff rate. In the world market of saffron, over 45 countries have imposed non-tariff trade barriers on the import

of saffron. This indicates that in addition to input tariff, many countries have imposed non-tariff trade barriers on import of saffron. Only Japan and Europe Union imposed stepped tariffs on the imports of saffron. In the scope of saffron world market imports (MFN) Iran has the highest tariff rate. Although most of global production and export of saffron belongs to Iran and Iran benefits from a high natural and relative advantage in the production and export of this product, Iran has imposed the highest import tariff (100%) on the world market of saffron. Therefore it is necessary to revise and reduce import tariff rate of this product in order to protect competitive advantage of the country in the export of saffron. Pasban (2006) studied factors affecting the export of saffron. The results of estimation of export supply function show that saffron production and real exchange rate have positive impact on the export of saffron and export prices and war have negative effect. On the other hand, statistical analysis shows that saffron export earnings in the period under review was unstable and reason of the instability relates to export demand not to export supply. Finally the researcher suggests that with regard to the processing and marketing stages, together with setting stable and effective foreign exchange and business policies, suitable conditions should be provided for increase in export of saffron in international markets. Also Pezeshki Rad and Feli (2010) in a research entitled "Challenges and Solutions in Processing, Marketing and Export of Saffron" studied challenges and solutions for processing, marketing and export of Iranian saffron, using opinions of experts in saffron market. This research was designed by Delphi technique to achieve a consensus. The panel members reached a consensus in fourteen challenges. Some of the most important challenges are: weakness in e-commerce and e-marketing, lack of trademark for Iranian saffron in the world markets and presence of a lot of brokers and intermediaries in the market. One of other findings of this study was consensus of the experts in a dozen strategies of improving saffron exports. Some of these strategies include: development and introduction of a special trademark for exporting Iranian saffron, proper organization of exporters and applying international standards HACCP, ISO, KODEX in relevant licensing of exporters, proper policy making of the government for offering loan to establish packaging plants, imposing legal barriers to prevent the bulk export of saffron and establishment and development of specialized marketing organizations in order to reduce the marketing margins and increase the producers proportion in the paid price. Rezapour and Mortazavi (2010) did a research on the impact of globalization on supply and demand of saffron export. This study investigated the effects of globalization on supply and demand for saffron exports. For this purpose, a simultaneous equation model of supply and demand for exports and time series data in the period 1982-2005 were used. Trade integration index was used as an index of globalization as well. The results indicate the elasticity of saffron export demand and supply functions to the export price. Also globalization index variable was positive and significant in this functions which indicate positive effect of increasing trade relations with countries and removing trade barriers on supply and demand of Iranian saffron exports. Therefore adopting appropriate prices and production policies will be inevitable for development of export of this product. Brarson et al. (2013), examined the impact of price uncertainty on farm margin to wholesale and wholesale margin to retail of wheat. Their findings show that an increase in uncertainty of product price increases margins and so decision makers are risk averse in wheat marketing channel and benefit from stabilization policies.

1.1. Research theoretical framework

Increase of non-oil exports and resulted revenues have been always considered in the country's macroeconomic policy and wide efforts have been put to achieve this important target by different policy means of monetary, fiscal, trade and currency in order to encourage non-oil exports (Pasban, 2006). In this regard, as an inevitable necessity, it is necessary to have developmental attitude towards farmers' economy and it is tried to pay more and specific attention to this sector as main factor of economic development of the country. Agricultural crops constitute a major portion of proceeds of non-oil exports. (In 2013, traditional and agricultural commodities have constituted about 35 percent of non-oil exports). After horticultural and vegetable crops such as pistachios, dates, raisins, apples, citrus fruits and etc., crops like saffron, cumin and tragacanth have important place in agricultural exports. As the figures in Table 1 show, in the Second Development Plan, the share of saffron export in total value of non-oil exports was 0.3%, in the third plan it was 0.6%, and it was 1% in the 4th plan. The third plan shows 100% positive change compared to the second plan and 4th plan shows 66% positive change compared to the third plan. On the other hand, in the Third Plan, the export of saffron in total export value of agricultural and traditional products was 0.4% and it was amounted to 6.2% by the fourth plan (Iranian Ministry of Agriculture, 2013).

Table 1
The Share of saffron export value of total exports of traditional and agricultural commodities and non-oil export in the second, third and fourth of Iran development plan (percent).

Program	Traditional and Agricultural Exports	Non-oil Exports	Changes Percent	
			Traditional and Agricultural Exports	Non-oil Exports
1995-1999	0.4	0.3	-	-
2000-2004	1.4	0.6	236	120
2006-2010	6.2	0.1	89	50

Source: Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration.

Iran saffron's foreign trade, away from all the necessary provisions, currently takes place by local dealers. Some companies and real entities, without sympathy and deep outlook for the future of saffron market, tried to export poor quality saffron. This is causing global indifference to Iranian saffron and countries like Greece and Spain offer this product to Arabic and Central Asian countries. Saffron is affected by climate of these areas and its physical and chemical properties change. For example, in Arabic countries due to the warm weather and sun exposure, color and flavor factors can be affected. In Europe and Central Asia, for humid climates, saffron's humidity increases and this leads to the growth of molds and bacteria. If saffron is infected by insects' eggs, being in this situation, the eggs become larvae and insects will be eventually produced. The best way to prevent these contaminations is reducing moisture of saffron by the ways in which its quality and health is not damaged.

Type of packaging is also very important and should be so as to prevent direct contact of air and light with saffron. Attributes that are important to foreign customers are not the strength and intensity of saffron but lack of additives in it. Decrease in the strength of the color of saffron due to inappropriate packaging results in price drop. Today Spain saffron, due to its appropriate packaging, is the main competitor of Iranian saffron. It is necessary to emphasis on the packaging of saffron in order to compete with them. Although abstract review of any of the above relationships is along with certain themes and hints, a comprehensive and holistic approach to these types of relationships and consequently their applications, will follow many benefits. As noted earlier, establishment of these relations leads to the formation of a special kind of packaging. These packages include competitive packaging, law-obedient packaging, social packaging, and technological packaging. According to what was said, the product and its packaging can be successful in today's competitive markets only if related company considers a combination of the above mentioned packaging in its final packaging. In this paper, this kind of packaging is referred to as smart packaging because in this particular type of packaging, in addition to observing the requirements of the particular groups involved in the management of packaging, a flexible and dynamic approach appropriate to environmental changes is considered that less attention has been paid to this case in previous researches. Therefore, smart packaging, by law-obedience and taking advantage of social needs of interest groups, competition and technology, benefits from a much higher chance of competition with other packages. Any research is conducted to address a research gap or to solve a problem or to expand the scope of human understanding of different social, environmental, etc. phenomena. To the best of our knowledge, no comprehensive academic research has been done on importance of packaging in increase of saffron exports (Kiani, 2009).

So this research, while helping to remove existing research gap and expanding our understanding of agricultural products packaging, provides corporate planners and institutions practicing in saffron export with results that help them to more successfully engage in exports of this product and create more added value. This study aimed at analyzing packaging status of saffron and its role in exports (case study: Torbatjam city) (Figure 1).
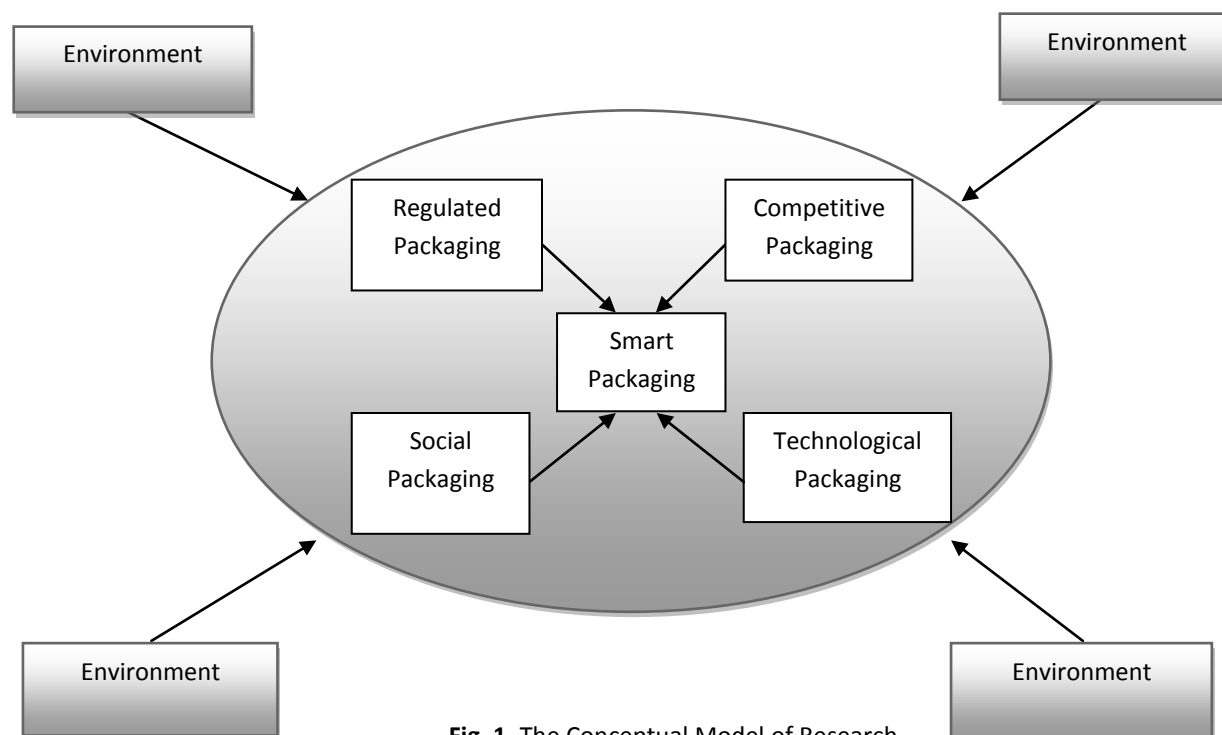
Fig. 1. The Conceptual Model of Research.

2. Materials and methods

This research is an applied research in terms of purpose because it searches for ways to increase exports of Iranian saffron. Also, it is a survey study in terms of data collection method because using questionnaire and questioning of experts and specialists, it tries to classify opinions and views of experts and professionals in order to identify the effect of packaging in increase of saffron exports from the respondents' viewpoint through this process. The research method is scientific and specialized and library and field study. In this study, the researcher collected required data and information using questionnaire.

Statistical society of this research is composed of saffron exporters to foreign countries who are currently active. Specialists and professors of University of Torbatjam who are experts in marketing and trading are a part of this research as well.

Statistical sample has been obtained using Cochran's sampling formula. Based on the overviews about 62 companies are active in the processing and export of saffron. One person from each company as marketing specialist and one of the senior managers and marketing professionals of these companies are statistical samples of the research. Total managers and professionals of these companies are 124 persons. Also, about 25 marketing professors and specialists are teaching at public and private universities who are considered as the research samples.

95 persons of 124 professionals and executives from companies exporting saffron were estimated based on Cochran formula and 23 persons of university professors and specialists were estimated based on Cochran formula.

Totally 118 persons make up statistical samples of this research, 20 percent of the whole samples are university professors and 80% of which are professionals and managers of companies exporting saffron.

In this study, stratified random sampling was used because people respond to the survey are not identical in terms of jobs and they are working in different positions and, therefore stratified random method was used. Researcher uses this method when statistical society is composed of different classes. In this method, the differences between groups are greater than the differences within each group.

2.1. Data collection methods and measurement tools

One of and perhaps the most common tools for data collection is questionnaire. In this study, required data were collected using questionnaire as well.

2.2. Methods of data analysis

In order to analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were used as follows:

1 - Descriptive statistics: descriptive statistics includes frequency tables and statistics such as mean and standard deviations were used to describe the research variables and to report on demographic variables of the research.

2 - Inferential statistics: Inferential statistics was used to generalize the results and for testing hypotheses.

In this study single-sample t-test was designed to test the research hypotheses and also Friedman test was used for ranking of packing factors. Kolmogoroff –Smirnoff test was used to check the status of variables for normality of data. Also confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to examine the construct validity of the questionnaire.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Education of the respondents

Table 2 shows distribution of respondents according to their education. As you can see, five of the respondents (2.4%) have diploma of High School. 22 persons (19%) have an Associate's Degree and 34 respondents (28.6%) have a Bachelor's Degree. Also, 32 persons (27.1%) have a Master's Degree and 25 persons (21.1%) have a Doctorate's Degree.

Table 2
Distribution of respondents according to level of education.

Level of Education	Frequency	Frequency Percent	Cumulative Percent
Diploma of High School	5	4.2	4.2
Associate's Degree	22	19	23.2
Bachelor's Degree	34	28.6	51.8
Master's Degree	32	27.1	78.9
Doctorate's Degree	25	21.1	100
Total	118	-	-

Source: research findings.

3.2. Job experience of the respondents

Table 3 shows distribution of the respondents according to their job experience. As you can see, 12 respondents (10.3%) had been working for 1 to 5 years. 20 persons (17%) had 6 to 10 years of professional experience and 21 respondents (17.7%) has a career record of 11 to 15 years. Also, 26 persons (22%) had a career record of 16 to 20 years and 25 persons (1.21%) had a career record of 21 to 25 years and finally, 14 respondents (11.9%) had a career record of more than 25 years.

3.3. Descriptive statistics of the research variables

Table 4 shows descriptive statistics of the research variables including number of respondents, minimum score range, maximum score range, mean, standard deviation, skewness and elongation. As it can be seen, average score of packaging design variable is equal to 3.52 and its standard deviation is 0.8. Low standard deviation indicates homogeneity of the respondents' score.

Also average score of packaging color is equal to 2.53 and its standard deviation is equal to 0.88. Average score of packaging materials is equal to 2.9 and its standard deviation is equal to 0.9. The results show that packaging labels score is equal to 3.28 and it standard deviation is equal to 0.85. Finally, the average score of packaging quality is equal to 3.17 and it standard deviation is 0.92. The minimum score of each variable is 1 and

the maximum score of the variables is equal to 5. As well, the number of respondents is 118 persons. Low skewness and elongation scores show normality of the variables data.

Table 3
Distribution of respondents according to job experience

Job Experience (years)	Frequency	Frequency Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5	12	10.3	10.3
6-10	20	17	27.3
11-15	21	17.7	45
16-20	26	22	67
21-25	25	21.1	88.1
> 25	14	11.9	100
Total	118	100	-

Source: research findings.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of research variables.

Items	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Elongation
Packaging Design	118	1	5	3.52	80	-54	62
Packaging Color	118	1	5	3.53	80	-54	-42
Packaging Materials	118	1	5	2.90	88	-23	-42
Packaging Labels	118	1	5	3.28	58	-12	20
Packaging Quality	118	1	5	3.17	92	12	-26

Source: research findings.

3.4. Kolmogoroff –smirnoff test

Table 5 shows the results of Kolmogoroff –Smirnoff test. This test which is performed to check the normality of variables data is one of important assumptions of parametric tests for normally distributed variables of research. Normality or lack of normality of time distribution is sensitive to small size of sample. In other words, with large sample size, parametric tests are robust against non- normality and the results of parametric tests is superior to non-parametric tests (Hooman, 1994). According to the results, as shown in Table 5, as value of z is not significant in the variable alpha level higher than 0.05, therefore, the data is normalized and thus the use of parametric statistical tests is allowed.

Table 5
Statistics of Kolmogroff- Smirnoff test (k-s).

	Design	Color	Material	Label	Quality
Number	118	118	118	118	118
Mean	3.25	3.52	2.90	3.28	3.17
Standard Deviation	80	88	90	85	92
Z Value of Kolmogroff- Smirnoff test	1.018	1.136	782	922	790
Two-tailed Significance Level	251	151	574	362	560

Source: research findings.

3.5. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

The research variables are shown in the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). As it can be seen, factor loadings of all variables observed on the hidden factors were high and all the observed variables are loaded over latent variables. T-values of all factor loadings is more than 1.96 and this means that the factor loadings are significant in alpha level of 0.05 and have significant effect on the 5 factors of packaging. These results show differential validity

between the latent variables and indices convergence in measurement of latent variables. Also combined reliability of all indices is desirable because it is more than 0.6. If the combined reliability index is more than 0.6, it indicates that the indices measure latent variables well and as convergent, and as a result they are reliable indices. Table 6 shows factor loadings, latent factors, combined reliability and the extracted variance average.

Table 6
Loading factors, latent factors, final mix and the extracted average variance.

Factor	Representative	Loading factor	T value	Combined Reliability	Extracted Variance Average
Packaging Design	Design1	0.75		0.88	0.60
	Design2	0.83	8.88		
	Design3	0.73	7.78		
	Design4	0.83	7.96		
	Design5	0.71	7.53		
Packaging Color	Color1	0.78		0.91	0.63
	Color2	0.85	9.96		
	Color3	0.82	9.42		
	Color4	0.85	9.87		
	Color5	0.76	8.68		
Packaging Materials	Material1	0.83		0.90	0.63
	Material2	0.80	9.85		
	Material3	0.82	10.21		
	Material4	0.77	9.29		
	Material5	0.76	9.28		
Packaging Label	Label1	0.68		0.88	0.55
	Label2	0.75	7.18		
	Label3	0.72	6.92		
	Label4	0.72	6.88		
	Label5	0.77	7.29		
	Label6	0.81	7.66		
Packaging Quality	Quality1	0.78		0.93	0.70
	Quality2	0.88	10.72		
	Quality3	0.91	11.2		
	Quality4	0.88	10.79		
	Quality5	0.76	8.86		
	Quality6	0.78	9.16		

Source: research findings.

The model fitness indices indicate that the model has desirable and acceptable fitness. The smaller X^2, the greater fitness of the model. In the implemented model, ratio of X^2 to degree of freedom is 1.67 which indicates a good fitness of the model.

X^2 should be used with caution because X^2 is sensitive to the sample size and further it is assumed that the model is fully fit with the statistical society. In X^2 test, small sample may be not sufficient enough for X^2 distribution and in a society with a large n, positive degree of freedom is generally significant. Almost most models are rejected (Kalantari, 2009).

Index value of X^2 is 523 which is significant with 314 degree of freedom P. value = 0.01 and 523 divided by 314 equals to 1.67 which indicates optimal value of the model with the existing data. Therefore, indices other than X^2 must be examined as well to assess overall fitness of the model. RMSEA criteria equal to 0.076 that shows poor performance of the remainders of the model. This criterion is acceptable from 0.05 to 0.08. CFI comparative fitness index is based on the correlation between the variables in the model so that high correlation among variables will lead to high levels of CFI index.

The value of this index for the present model is 0.96 and shows good fitness of the model with the data. Also TLI Index or NNFI equals to 0.96 and the more this index is close to 1, it shows good fitness of the model. Evaluation of different indices of the model fitness indicates fitness of the designed conceptual model with the experimental data that have been collected and we can say that the model has good fitness with the experimental data.

Measurement part of the model that is the same observed variables has required adequacy to measure the model variables. Table 7 shows the model fitness indices.

Table 7
Model fit indices.

Index	P-Value	X^2	D.F	CFI	R.M.S.E.A	IFI	RMR	NNFI
Index Value	0.001	523	314	0.96	0.076	0.96	0.08	0.96
Allowable Value	$\frac{X^2}{d.f} < 3 = \frac{523}{314} = 1.67$			> 0.9	0.05<X<0.08	> 0.9	Close to Zero	> 0.9

Source: research findings.

Based on the results obtained from single-sample t-test that can be seen in Table 8, as t calculated for packaging design is 6.69 and absolute value of t calculated in confidence level of 99% (a=0.01) and degree of freedom (df)=115 is greater than critical value of t (t=2.358) in distribution table, considering obtained data and evidences, average score of the packaging design is 3.52 from respondents' viewpoint and packaging design is effective in more marketing and export of saffron in respondents' opinion.

Table 8
T-test statistic of hypothesis in Packaging design.

Packaging Design	Mean of Hypothesis				
	Mean	t	df	Significant Level	Differences in Mean
	3.52	6.985	115	0.01	0.52

Source: research findings.

Based on the results obtained from single-sample t-test that can be seen in Table 9, as t calculated for packaging color is 6.458 and absolute value of t calculated in confidence level of 99% (a=0.01) and degree of freedom (df)=115 is greater than critical value of t (t=2.358) in distribution table, considering obtained data and evidences, average score of the packaging color is 3.53 from respondents' viewpoint and packaging color is effective in more marketing and export of saffron in respondents' opinion.

Table 9
T-test statistic of hypothesis in Packaging color.

Packaging Color	Mean of Hypothesis				
	Mean	t	df	Significant Level	Differences in Mean
	3.53	6.548	115	0.01	0.53

Source: research findings.

Based on the results obtained from single-sample t-test that can be seen in Table 10, as t calculated for packaging materials is -1.254 and absolute value of t calculated in confidence level of 95% (a=0.05) and degree of freedom (df)=115 is smaller than critical value of t (t=1.98) in distribution table, considering obtained data and evidences, average score of the packaging materials is 2.90 from respondents' viewpoint and packaging materials are not so effective in more marketing and export of saffron in respondents' opinion.

Table 10
T-test statistic of hypothesis in Packaging materials.

Packaging Materials	Mean of Hypothesis				
	Mean	t	df	Significant Level	Differences in Mean
	2.9	-1.254	115	0.212	-0.1

Source: research findings.

Based on the results obtained from single-sample t-test that can be seen in Table 11, as t calculated for packaging label is 3.532 and absolute value of t calculated in confidence level of 99% (a=0.01) and degree of freedom (df)=115 is greater than critical value of t (t=2.358) in distribution table, considering obtained data and evidences, average score of the packaging label is 3.28 from respondents' viewpoint and packaging label is effective in more marketing and export of saffron in respondents' opinion.

Table 11
T-test statistic of hypothesis in Packaging label.

Packaging Label	Mean of Hypothesis				
	Mean	t	df	Significant Level	Differences in Mean
	3.28	3.532	115	0.01	0.28

Source: research findings.

Based on the results obtained from single-sample t-test that can be seen in Table 12, as t calculated for packaging quality is 1.99 and absolute value of t calculated in confidence level of 95% (a=0.05) and degree of freedom (df)=115 is greater than critical value of t (t=1.98) in distribution table, considering obtained data and evidences, average score of the packaging quality is 3.17 from respondents' viewpoint and packaging quality is effective in more marketing and export of saffron in respondents' opinion.

Table 12
T-test statistic of hypothesis in Packaging quality.

Packaging Quality	Mean of Hypothesis				
	Mean	t	df	Significant Level	Differences in Mean
	3.17	1.99	115	0.01	0.17

Source: research findings.

Friedman test was used to test this hypothesis and determine the significance of each of the factors affecting the export of saffron. The test results are shown in Table 13 and 14. The test results indicate that color of the packaging with an average score of 3.63 is the most important factor in saffron export from the respondents' view point and so it has the first rank among other factors. Package Design and form factor with an average score of 3.6 is located in the second rank of importance and variable of packaging label with an average score of 2.91 is located in the third level and variable of packaging quality with an average score of 2.7 is located in the fourth level and finally, variable of packaging materials with an average score of 2.16 is located in the latest ranking of importance from the respondents' view point regarding the export of saffron.

The results of Chi-square test indicate that calculated value of chi-square is equal to 78.058 that is significant at degree of freedom= 4 at significance level of 0.01. Therefore it can be said that from the respondents' viewpoint, the importance and rank given to the variables is significant and the mentioned factors have different importance in development of saffron export.

Table 13

Friedman test for ranking factors.

Factors	Average Rating	Rank
Packaging Color	3.63	1
Packaging Design	3.6	2
Packaging Label	2.91	3
Packaging Quality	2.7	4
Packaging Materials	2.16	5

Source: research findings.

Table 14

Summary of results in Friedman test.

Number	118
Chi-square	78.058
df	4
Significant Level	0.000

Source: research findings.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The results showed that most managers and professionals believe that color used in the packaging is very important and effective; therefore, it is recommended to use appropriate color in saffron product packaging in accordance with different tastes and cultures. The results showed that design and form of packaging is very important in increasing export of saffron. Therefore, it is recommended that graduates of Graphic and related fields are used to design appropriate and attractive packages in accordance with different tastes and cultures. Also the results showed that having a label as identity of the product is very important in its export. Therefore, it is recommended to use a label containing all the information required by customers about the product in saffron packaging. Also it is recommended that the product labels contain exact information about the product.

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