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## **Investigating the Effects of Different Factors on Sale Rates of Translated Books in Iran**

### **1. Introduction**

Each year, Iran witnesses the release of a vast variety of books, presenting bibliophiles with an extensive selection to choose from. Among these publications are numerous translations of works originally written in other languages, then translated into Persian. This study, however, focuses exclusively on novels translated from English into Persian in recent years.

The book market faces intense competition, not only between physical and electronic books but also with the internet, which serves as a major platform for the sales of books and music, as noted by Statista (2016). Although e-books and audiobooks, available through various websites and applications, have gained popularity and somewhat overshadowed the prominence of printed books (Lubiana & Gammon, 2004), this research concentrates solely on physical books.

When individuals decide to purchase and read a new book, a significant portion often makes their choice without setting specific criteria in advance. Frequently, their decision about which book to buy is made spontaneously while browsing through libraries and bookstores, skimming through recently published books. On the other hand, some book enthusiasts rely on recommendations from friends and family or explore book-related websites to find books that best align with their interests and preferences.

While certain consumers select books based on specific criteria, others do not follow any particular pattern. Indeed, individuals have unique factors that influence their book-purchasing decisions. Given the vast array of incomparable books available, the selection process can be complex and ultimately reflects one's identity (Leemans & Stockmans, 1992).

Multiple factors can influence the individuals' decision to buy a book and affect their purchasing behavior, including title, author(s), translator(s), publishing

company, book cover design, and recommendations from friends or sales personnel (d'Astous et al., 2006). It is widely acknowledged that capturing readers' attention is one of the foremost goals of publishers when launching new books (d'Astous et al., 2006).

The process of choosing a book typically involves two steps: first, reducing the number of options by eliminating less significant factors, and second, analyzing the remaining options (d'Astous et al., 2006). While Leitao et al. (2018) emphasized the crucial role of the author in promoting a book, other factors should not be overlooked. This study aims to examine the impact of these additional factors on readers' interests and preferences.

Upon the publication of an English literary work, numerous Persian translators may opt to translate it, leading to multiple translations of the same book entering the Iranian book market after a certain period. These translations, although stemming from the same original work, often varied in terms of translators, publishers, covers and titles. Despite these disparities, they share three common elements: the source text, author, and original title.

Another factor that differs amongst these translations and may persuade individuals to purchase a book is the fact that some books experience significantly higher or lower sale rates compared to others. Given that these varying sale rates reflect differences among the various translations, it is essential to identify the factors that prompt readers to choose one translated book over another, even when they are translations of the same original work.

To achieve the objectives of this research, the researchers will employ the Reception Theory, initially introduced by Jauss (1982) and further developed by scholars such as Holub (1984) and Iser (2000). This reader-oriented theory focuses on the interaction between the text and the reader, emphasizing the impact of literature on its audience and the responses it generates.

A key concept in Reception Theory is the "horizon of expectations" (Jauss, 1982), which denotes the set of assumptions and expectations that readers bring to a text.

The reader's personal experiences and perceptions shape this horizon, greatly affecting how they respond to the text (Jauss, 1982).

In summary, Reception Theory offers a framework for exploring the dynamic interplay between texts and readers, accounting for the subjective experiences and interpretations that shape a reader's engagement with literature. By adopting this approach, the current study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how readers' expectations, experiences, and responses influence their decision-making processes when purchasing translated books.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

When an English literary book is published, several Persian translators may decide to translate it, and thus, after a while, some different translations of a book enter the book market of Iran. These books, which are all translations of the same work,

are provided by different translators, different publishers, and different covers and in most cases different titles. Beside all these differences, these products have three shared characteristics of the author, title, and the source text. Another point that differs amongst various translations of a book, and can even persuade some people to buy a book, is the fact that some of these translations may carry significantly higher or lower sale rate than the others. Since these higher or lower sale rate of translated books lie behind the differences amongst different translations of a book, it is urgent to figure out what makes people buy a translated book and skip the other translations of the very same book.

As stated above, different translations of a book may be published under different titles. Title is most often the first feature a book reader tends to pay attention to, and thus, it plays a vital role in attracting a book reader. A question that comes to mind while reading different titles of different translations of a book is that who has chosen that title for the translated book. This issue is the other concern of the current study.

### **1.2. Significance of the Study**

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, this research is underdeveloped in Iran yet and not much has been done in addressing these matters. Thus, the present research can be considered as the first attempt to study factors influencing sale rates of translated books in Iran.

Understanding the importance of each of the four aforementioned factors in persuading readers to buy a book or in dissuading them from doing so, can be truly constructive for translators and publishing companies in Iran. This study would introduce not only the factors, but also the importance of each for the bibliophiles in buying a translated literary book. Knowing them can help translators and publishing companies recognize them and thus, pay special attention to the most important one.

Given the limited research on this subject in Iran, the present study may be the first attempt to investigate the factors that affect the sales of translated books in the country. By examining the influence of these factors on readers' book-buying decisions, this research aims to benefit not only book enthusiasts but also translators, the publishing industry, and anyone interested in book-related topics.

Translators as the key contributors in introducing new books to the market, play a significant role in this context. Their reputation can persuade readers to purchase books translated by them, subsequently increasing sales. Thus, it is anticipated that this study's findings will help translators better understand the importance of each factor, ultimately leading to greater success in their profession.

### **1.3. Theoretical Framework**

In order to achieve the aims of this study, the researchers adopted a mix-mode theoretical framework consisting Reception Theory and Agency Theory.

### 1.3.1. Reception Theory

Although through the recent decades, reception theories have been applied first to literary translation, and then to other relative areas, such as translation studies, reception of translated texts has opened his way into the minds of translation studies' scholars just recently (Gambier, 2019). In order to achieve the goals of this research, the researchers would adopt the Reception Theory.

When Translation Studies was first emerged, translation was considered as a social activity, whose only purpose was to transfer information from a sender to a recipient, by taking into account the cultural elements. Believing so, the translator was thought of as the one and only controller of what the text meant, and the fact that the recipient is the re-translator of that work was totally neglected (Gambier, 2019).

To highlight the role of the recipients of the products, the Reception Theory was firstly introduced by Jauss (1982) and then worked on by other scholars. Reception is investigating how the audiences experience, remember and talk about the products under specific conditions (Gambier, 2018).

In fact, a literary work is not about only one of the two elements of text or reader, but, is the combination of both text and reader (Holub, 1984). There are interactions between these two and in order to show how they interact, the concept of "horizon of expectations" was introduced (Jauss, 1982). This term can refer to the expectations and ideas of a reader about the text he/she reads. The perceptions and the life experiences of the reader build the horizon of expectations, and this horizon can consequently influence the reader's behaviors (Jauss, 1982).

On one hand, reading books for those who are interested in this activity is a part of their daily or at most weekly routine. This habit can form their life experience, and hence, their wide horizons. On the other hand, all the books chosen and investigated in this study are literary works. Thus, it was assumed that the best theory which can cover issues included in this study and lead it towards its aims, is the Reception Theory.

### 1.3.2. Agency Theory

Another issue that would be investigated in this study is the extent to which the translators or the publishers feel free to apply their own ideas in the process of choosing titles for the translated books. To deal with this matter, the researchers would benefit from the Agency Theory.

Recently, the term "agency" has become one of the most frequent concepts of social sciences and translation studies (Inghilleri, 2005). Paloposki (2009) believed that translators' agency has found its way to the center of attentions, especially in recent years, and explained that "translation can be studied from the point of view of the individual translators' choice and decision processes and the effects of these in the target culture" (p.190).

Since social sciences pay their greatest attentions to the people and their behaviors, translation studies scholars also focus on the roles of translators, interpreters, and other people who have the responsibility of transferring cultures. It was for the

same reason that Chesterman suggested adding the branch of “Translator Studies” to the famous map of discipline provided by Holmes (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013). In other words, he tried his best to distinguish translation and translator studies and call the attentions to the study of the agents of translation. According to Khalifa (2014), several different processes are involved in the act of translation. These processes made the translation studies’ scholars think about the sociology of agents.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

Many believe that translators have all the responsibilities of translating a book, but in fact, they are not the only ones who control the results (Aixela, 1996); there are other factors that can affect the results as well. This study would introduce the factors of title, cover, publisher and translator which can influence the purchase of literary translated books and would try to find out what factors book readers take into account in making decisions about which book to choose and which book to ignore. The researchers provide the answers to the following questions:

##### **1.4.1. Research Questions**

To what extent can each factor of title, cover, publisher and translator be persuasive in buying a translated book?

Does any of the demographic information (gender, major, degree, and reading duration) have an effect on buying a translated book?

#### **1.5. Methodology**

To comprehensively achieve the objectives of this descriptive study, a mixed-method approach combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed. This mixed-method design allows for a deeper understanding of the research problem by integrating the insights gained from both methodologies.

##### **1.5.1. Participants**

This study involved 150 participants who volunteered to complete an online questionnaire specifically designed to address the research objectives. The questionnaire was shared on various websites, generating a random sample of potential respondents. The research restricted the participants to completing the questionnaire only once to ensure data integrity.

##### **1.5.2. Instrument**

The research primarily intended to assess the importance of four factors influencing the decision to purchase a translated book. To gather insights into participants’ knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, a questionnaire was selected as the most appropriate data collection method. Questionnaires enable the efficient collection of objective data from a large group of individuals (Sapsford, 1999).

Although utilizing a previously validated questionnaire offers advantages, such as saving time and allowing for comparisons with other studies, no relevant instruments were available. Consequently, the researchers designed a new questionnaire specifically tailored to this study's unique context and objectives.

To develop the questionnaire for this study, a comprehensive process was followed:

A focus group was assembled to identify the factors to be investigated in the study and discuss the questionnaire design. The feedback from this group was used to create a preliminary draft of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in Persian to match the participants' language, ensuring maximum clarity and understandability using simple wordings.

Before publicizing the questionnaire, it was reviewed and revised by experts in the field and then piloted on a small number of respondents. Pretesting allowed for the assessment of question clarity, relevance, and effectiveness in achieving the desired results. This process resulted in a tailored and effective questionnaire addressing the unique objectives of the study and minimizing potential issues related to language barriers, misinterpretation, and ambiguity.

The questionnaire design ensured that all questions had to be answered, preventing the issue of unanswered questions. To facilitate quick responses and easy analysis, 43 questions were multiple-choice, with only one open-ended question. This format aimed to minimize the influence of participants' writing abilities on their answers.

The questionnaire comprised the following sections:

1. Personal Information: The first question and its four sub-questions gathered demographic data on participants' gender, major, degree, and daily reading duration.
2. Book Preferences: 40 questions focused on participants' preferences for various translated books. For each book, two questions were asked: one on the preferred translation and another on the reason for the preference. This structure was consistent across all book-related questions.
3. Title Preferences: The last two questions asked participants about their attitudes towards translated book titles. Question 44, the open-ended question, invited respondents to share their thoughts on the characteristics of an ideal book title.

The questionnaire was designed electronically using the website <https://www.porsline.ir>, which offers versatility in data collection by engaging participants through audio, visual, multimedia, and interactive resources. This approach helped maintain respondents' focus and motivation, encouraging them to complete the questionnaire.

A total of 20 original books published between 2011 and 2013 were selected for the study, with varying numbers of Persian translations ranging from 2 to 4. The study thus encompassed 50 translations. The list of original books and their translations was provided in the questionnaire for participants' reference.

In order to avoid any misinterpretation of the questions by the respondents, and regarding the fact that not everyone can read and comprehend English questions well, the questionnaire was designed in Persian to match the participants' language. The

draft was read from the perspective of the respondents for several times and the points led to errors were revised and modified. Before being publicized, the questionnaire was first subjected to the comments and revision of experts of both fields of statistics and translation studies, and then piloted on a small number of respondents. Through pretesting, the clarity of the questions, their relevance to the aim of the study, and achieving the desired results were ascertained. It was assured that the questions and the directions were so clear that no more explanations or comments were needed beyond what was already presented.

### 1.5.3. Data Collection & Analysis Procedures

The data needed to draw a reliable conclusion was collected through one questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to rank the book readers' priorities in choosing a translated book. As mentioned above, since there was not any questionnaire consisting of questions that could help the researchers accomplish the goal of the study, the researchers themselves designed one.

As regards the objectives and the research questions addressed in the first chapter, it was necessary to study and analyze the answers given to the questions. As previously mentioned, 150 individuals answered the questionnaire, each containing 44 questions. The data obtained from the questionnaire was initially given by the website in which, the questionnaire was designed. However, this basic data was not classified and thus sufficiently advantageous. So, the SPSS software was used to extract and categorize the data. Using this software could effectively provide the researchers with every details of the answers to the questions.

At the early stages, the researchers extracted the most important parts of the answers, which could meet the objectives of the study.

By combining the insights from the questionnaire responses, the researchers aimed to draw comprehensive conclusions that would effectively address the research objectives and provide valuable insights into the factors influencing book readers' preferences for translated books.

## 2. Literature Review

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, exploring the factors that influence an individual's decision to purchase a translated book has been relatively unexplored by Iranian researchers. Only one study addressing a similar issue was discovered, indicating a significant gap in this research area. However, reception theory has been applied in several other studies, including:

1. Sharifiyan and Noori (2012) utilized reception theory to examine the definition of life in Nima's poems, uncovering previously unnoticed dimensions.
2. Zolfaghari (2013) employed reception theory to analyze Baraheni's postmodern poems, concluding that readers interpret a poem's central nuclei based on perceived signals.

3. Vakili Azghandi, et al. (2015) investigated the most influential factors in book-buying decisions among teenagers aged 12 to 16 in Kashmar's urban and rural areas. The study concluded that while rural teenagers prioritized book prices, urban teenagers were more influenced by content, emphasizing the need to consider regional differences in reader preferences.
4. Shafagh and Azarpira (2017) studied interpretations of Nima's poem "Ay Adam-ha," revealing two distinct reader reactions, thus highlighting reception theory's main concept.

Several researchers from around the world have explored different aspects of how people choose and buy books. Some of the key findings from these studies include:

Leemans (1988) studied various factors that affect book-purchasing decisions. The results showed that a substantial number of participants prioritized author reputation, while many also preferred books published by well-known publishers.

In 1991, Kamphuis aimed to identify and rank factors that people consider while buying books. The study revealed that the author was the most crucial factor for readers, followed by other elements like theme, writing style, and appearance.

Leemans and Stokmans (1992) conducted a similar study, examining the book-buying behaviors of various readers. Their findings suggested that readers first assess whether a book aligns with their needs and interests before gradually narrowing down their choices based on the author's reputation and content.

Stokmans and Hendricks (1994) focused on the impact of book covers in attracting readers. They found that book covers play a significant role in encouraging readers to explore summaries and eventually buy a book, emphasizing the importance of this factor in book selection.

Collectively, these studies highlighted the complexity of book selection and purchasing decisions, indicating the need for a deeper understanding of the factors influencing readers' preferences and choices.

Three years later, Piters and Stokmans (1997) conducted another study examining the influence of book covers on purchasing decisions. Their findings indicated that readers use book covers to categorize books, enabling them to make more informed choices based on their preferences.

In a more recent study, Leitao et al. (2018) explored essential factors in book-buying decisions through an online questionnaire with 487 participants. They discovered that women purchase and read more books than men read. Additionally, individuals with higher education levels and older age were found to buy more books. This research also revealed that book titles were the most significant feature influencing book selection.

In summary, while various factors contribute to readers' decisions to buy books, three key attributes can be identified: author reputation, publisher reputation, and book cover. Author reputation functions as a brand name, significantly impacting readers' choices (Kamphuis, 1991), while publisher reputation serves as an indicator of quality and potential success (Kirmani, 1990).

Furthermore, reputable publishers are perceived as willing to take commercial risks only when they are confident in a book's potential success (Kirmani, 1990). Book covers, in addition to their role in attracting readers (Peters & Stokmans, 1997), also assist in categorizing books for easier selection. As a result, understanding these influential factors can provide valuable insights into readers' preferences and the publishing industry.

### 3. Discussion

As the title suggests, the subsequent sections will present the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire responses, providing insights into participants' preferences and attitudes towards translated books.

| Participant | Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Male        | 35        | 23.3%              |
| Female      | 115       | 76.7%              |
| Total       | 150       | 100%               |

Table 4.1. *Frequency and Relative Frequency of Gender of Participants*

Participants were categorized into four groups based on their majors: English language translation, English language and literature, Persian language and literature, and other majors. The frequency and relative frequency of each major are shown in Table 4.2:

| Major                           | Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| English language translation    | 19        | 12.7%              |
| English language and literature | 2         | 1.3%               |
| Persian language and literature | 4         | 2.7%               |
| Other majors                    | 125       | 83.3%              |
| Total                           | 150       | 100                |

Table 4.2. *Frequency and Relative Frequency of Major of Participants*

The decision to focus on the majors of English language translation, English language and literature, and Persian language and literature stemmed from the assumption that individuals in these fields may have greater exposure to translated books as a result of their academic requirements. As expected, the largest group of participants, apart

from those with other majors, consisted of individuals who had chosen English language translation as their major.

To encompass the diverse educational backgrounds of participants, degrees were classified into the following four categories:

| Degree                       | Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| High school diploma or lower | 21        | 14%                |
| Associate diploma            | 6         | 4%                 |
| Bachelor's degree            | 74        | 49.3%              |
| Master's degree or higher    | 49        | 32.7%              |
| Total                        | 150       | 100%               |

Table 4.3. *Frequency and Relative Frequency of Degree of Participants*

Grouping participants by these categories allows for a comprehensive analysis of the influence of educational attainment on participants' preferences and attitudes toward translated books.

According to an interview with Salehi, the then Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Islamic Republic of Iran, the average per-capita book reading time in Iran is approximately 13 minutes (Mehr News, 2018). Participants in this study were asked to specify their average daily book reading duration. Interestingly, the results indicated that most participants read for less than 13 minutes per day. The detailed findings are presented in Table 4.4:

| Reading Duration per Day | Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| More than 13 minutes     | 67        | 44.7%              |
| Less than 13 minutes     | 83        | 55.3%              |
| Total                    | 150       | 100                |

Table 4.4. *Frequency and Relative Frequency of Reading Duration per Day of Participants*

This study examined 20 distinct books, each with varying numbers of translations. The questionnaire was structured to progress from books with the highest number of translations to those with the fewest. Accordingly, the first four books had four translations each, the next two had three translations each, and the remaining books had two translations each. In total, these 20 books accounted for 50 translations.

Although some books may have had more than four translations according to the National Library of Iran, it was challenging to obtain comprehensive information

and cover images for all translations. Consequently, the study focused on the accessible data for these 50 translations. This approach allowed for a thorough analysis of participants' preferences and attitudes towards translated books while considering the practical limitations of data availability.

The analysis of participants' responses regarding the most important factor in selecting a particular book translation yielded the following insights:

Women were more likely to prioritize the title, with 45% of female participants choosing it as the primary factor. In contrast, only 12.3% of male participants considered title as the most important factor. After the title, cover was the second most significant factor for women, with 18.8% of female participants selecting it. Men also deemed cover as the second most important factor, though to a lesser extent (4.7%). Publisher was the third most important factor for both women (6.8%) and men (3.7%). Translator was the least important factor for both women (5.9%) and men (2.4%).

54.7% of women and 14% of men acknowledged that they focused solely on the Persian title and did not consider the original title or its translation quality. They were presented with six characteristics of a good title and asked to select the one that attracts them the most:

1. 43.3% preferred a title that communicates effectively with readers and is easily understood.
2. 17.3% favored a title that catches attention and encourages readers to purchase the book.
3. 16% valued aesthetic qualities in titles.
4. 14.6% believed a title that conveys the same information as the original title is more persuasive.
5. 5.3% selected a distinctive, non-repetitive title as the most persuasive.
6. 3.3% preferred a title with strong structural similarity to Persian titles.

These findings indicated that readers' preferences for titles vary considerably, with effective communication and ease of understanding being the most appealing characteristics. However, factors such as attention-grabbing qualities, aesthetic appeal, and faithfulness to the original title, distinctiveness, and cultural relevance also play a role in attracting different readers.

#### **4. Answers to the Research Questions**

The information extracted from the questionnaire revealed that the title of the book was the most and the translator was the least important factor for Iranian book readers. It is worth mentioning that much of the book readers did not pay attention to what the original title was, and just considered the Persian title without comparing it with the source one.

Definitely, title played the most important role in persuading book readers to buy a book. After the title, the cover of the book was the most persuasive characteristic of that book. In other words, a book with a more attractive cover could be sold much

more than a book published by a well-known publisher or translated by an experienced and successful translator. The third position was occupied by the publishing company, and the translator was the last factor one paid attention to. Summarily, the most persuasive factor in buying a translated book was its title, and the least persuasive one was its translator.

Regarding the socio-demographic information, the percent of women who chose these two items was more than the percent of the men who chose so. However, the statistics revealed that for the other two factors of publisher and translator, the percent of men who chose them was higher than that of women.

Trying to find out the effect of the demographic information of the participants, asked in the first question of the questionnaire, on each of the four factors of title, cover, publisher and translator the following results were gained:

Since most of the men and women who answered the questions admitted that they paid the greatest attention to the title of a translated book while buying it, it could be stated that gender did not have any effects on the factors that one might find effective in choosing a book. To generalize the information obtained, title could be the most important factor for everyone who intended to buy a translated book.

Although it was assumed that participants who had studied English Language Translation might consider the translator of a work as its most important characteristic, they chose the title as their most important factor. However, for participants who had studied English Language and Literature, Persian Language and Literature, and other majors, cover of a book played the most effective role in choosing a translated book.

Considering the relation between the degree one had and his/her most important factor in choosing a translated book, the researchers got into the point that all the participants who participated in this research, chose a translated book based on its title, no matter what their degrees were. The second most important factor for all of them was the cover of the translated book.

The amount of time one spent reading books each day did not necessarily have impacts on what they believed to be the most important factor in choosing a translated book. All the participants, no matter how much time they used to spend on reading books daily, stated that title was their first priority in deciding which translation of a book to buy. The cover of the book was the second factor that could persuade them to buy a translated book.

## **5. Conclusion**

Guided by Jauss (1982) reception theory, this research focused on the roles of readers and texts, prioritizing them over authors and their works. In line with Jauss's concept of the "horizon of expectations," the study aimed to explore readers' preferences and experiences regarding the four title attributes.

Participants were asked to rank these attributes based on their personal perspectives and experiences, reflecting their unique horizons of expectations. The questionnaire

results and subsequent analysis formed the central part of this research, offering valuable insights into how readers perceive and engage with translated book titles. This reader-centered approach aligns with Jauss's reception theory, emphasizing the significance of individual readers' perspectives in the interpretation and evaluation of literary works.

The study investigated the potential influence of participants' demographic information on their preferences for title, cover, publisher and translator when selecting translated books. The findings were as follows:

**Gender:** Gender did not significantly impact participants' preferences, as both men and women identified title as the most crucial factor in selecting a translated book. Therefore, it can be concluded that title plays a vital role in the decision-making process for all individuals when purchasing translated books.

**Major:** Contrary to assumptions, participants majoring in English Language Translation also prioritized title over translator when selecting translated books. Cover emerged as the second most influential factor for those majoring in English Language and Literature, Persian Language and Literature, and other majors.

**Degree:** Regardless of degree level, all participants considered the title as the primary deciding factor when selecting a translated book. Cover was consistently identified as the second most important factor across all degree levels.

**Reading Duration:** The amount of time participants spent reading daily did not affect their preference for the most important factor in selecting a translated book. Both avid and casual readers alike ranked title as the first priority and cover as the second priority.

In conclusion, these results suggest that the title holds universal importance for readers when choosing translated books, followed by the cover. Demographic factors such as gender, major, degree, and reading habits do not appear to significantly influence these preferences.

## **6. Implications of the Study**

This study aimed to provide valuable insights to authors, translators, and publishers on how to make their books more appealing to potential readers, particularly in the context of translated English literary works in the Persian market. Due to the wide array of available books and the ease of accessing them without purchasing (e.g., through libraries and borrowing from friends), it is crucial to understand readers' preferences to enhance the marketability of translated books.

One of the difficult tasks of authors, translators, and publishers is making book readers buy their books. This difficulty initially comes from the wide range of options book readers had, and the other source of this difficulty is the fact that book readers could easily read books without having to buy them, by borrowing them from the libraries or their friends for example. The results obtained from this study could help these three groups by giving them insights regarding what book readers preferred. The books they provided should be persuasive enough to get consumers to purchase

them. According to what was understood through this study, to provide a book that was of a high probability of success, the authors, translators, and publishers should be very aware of what characteristics they should pay their greatest attention to.

## **7. Suggestions for Further Research**

This study scrutinized four factors of title, cover, translator's and publisher's reputations, influencing the sale rates of literary books that were translated from English into Persian. For further research, one could investigate the effects of some other factors on the sale rates of English literary translated books. Factors such as the recommendation from family and friends, books with discount/ on sale, synopsis, public exposure, and on-the-spot display, author information on the cover, and so on.

Some other research also could be done on the effects of these four factors on other genres of the books, ex. fictional, scientific, documentary, etc., which were translated from English into Persian. As another suggestion for further research, one could work on books that were translated from other languages into Persian, to check if the same conclusions could be made for other literary books originally written in other languages than English, and then translated into Persian by different translators.

The current study was limited to printed books only. Due to the emerging of other types of books, such as e-books and audiobooks, applying the same procedures to these two types of books might be another demanding subject of study. Further research could be conducted and it could be checked out whether interviewing with translators and publishers lead to the same results or not.

Moreover, examining the preferences of readers for translated books originally written in languages other than English could provide valuable comparative insights and contribute to a broader understanding of the translated book market. As digital formats gain prominence, conducting research on the relevance of these factors in the context of e-books and audiobooks may offer additional perspectives on reader preferences in the digital age.

## **8. Limitations of the Study**

To conduct research, it seemed necessary to interview several translators and publishers, but, the extent to which the interviewees would cooperate with the researchers could be predicted. Besides having doubts about the level of their cooperation, even finding a way to communicate with them seemed challenging. Visiting the translators and publishers is both difficult and time-consuming. Thus, the researchers ignored it.

As previously mentioned, this research moves forward on the basis of analyzing books that have been translated by different translators. Although there may be so many books meeting this requirement, it seems difficult to detect all of them, so the researchers would regard twenty original books as sufficient. Each of these original

books has at least 2 and at most 4 different translations. The translated books had totally different titles, translators, publishers, and covers.

One may present several other factors he/she pays attention to while buying a book, but the influencing factors investigated in this research were restricted to only four ones. One of the factors that play a primary role in the selection and purchase of a book is its price. However, how much a book costs is not encountered as an effective factor in this research. These books are published through different years and under different economic circumstances and obviously vary in their prices. The researchers did not have the knowledge to compare and analyze the prices, and consequently, put this factor aside.

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### Data availability statement

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article (and/or its supplementary materials).

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### **Abstract**

This study explored the primary factors Iranian book readers consider when selecting translated books, focusing on title, cover, publisher and translator. Drawing upon Jauss's Reception Theory, a questionnaire with 44 questions administered to a random sample of 150 participants to examine the influence of these factors on book sales. Participants were presented with multiple book covers and asked to choose their preferred book, identifying the factor that most influenced their decision. The results revealed that the title was the most significant factor, while the translator was the least influential in the selection of translated books in the Iranian market. These findings provided valuable insights for translators, cover designers, publishers, highlighting the importance of prioritizing high-quality book titles and conducting targeted research to identify the most appealing titles for specific audiences. Further investigation into additional factors, such as price, and alternative book formats like e-books and audiobooks, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of Iranian readers' preferences.

### **Keywords**

Reader preferences, Reception theory, Titles, Covers, Publishers, Translators