Export Marketing of Hand-woven Carpet of Kurdistan State in Iran (Assessing Effective Factors and Pathology)

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Abstract

In this study, according to the research findings in the literature and previous studies, the most effective factors which have been taken into consideration in the marketing of exporting hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan State in Iran, include management, environment, strategy, market segmentation and marketing mix of hand-woven carpet. Furthermore, the use of appropriate statistical methods while considering the important role of the hand-woven carpet in the economy of Iran and its non-oil exports, the priority factors which may influence the marketing of exporting hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan State were measured and assessed. Status, importance, and the five aforementioned priorities have been designed based on the process approach and coordination. In terms of developmental objective, the current study is considered as an applied one and on the basis of survey, it is analytical.

Keywords: management, environment, strategy, market segmentation, marketing mix, hand-woven carpet, Iran

1. Introduction

The hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan State which is resulted by outstanding cultural and artistic features of it during past decades and centuries has always been known as one of the most prominent exporting commodities of the state. It has been the first and the highest indicator of earning exchange in the export of the State, and it has also created employment (Iran's official statistics bureau of carpet and handicrafts). Unfortunately due to extreme lack of organizational, managerial and productive structures, trading of the hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan has considerably declined in the domestic and international competition and currently it is experiencing a crisis condition. On the other hand, neglecting the basics and fundamentals of marketing and trading which also encompass the production process, has endangered the competitive advantages of the hand-woven carpet in the domestic and global arena. The successful experiences of the other States and Provinces of Iran indicate the results of their attention to the facts of trading and marketing environment as well as the other effective factors.

The export of hand-woven carpet of Iran has highly declined in the recent years. The value of 1.3 billion dollars in 1994 showed an extraordinary landscape of this art industry. But this trend did not continue and the export of hand-woven carpet had a very tremendous decline respectively in the years 2001; 537 million dollars, 2004; 497 million dollars, 2005; 461 million dollars, 2006; 410 million dollars, and in the year 2007, it declined to approximately 396 million dollars. On the other hand, studying different countries' import from Iran indicates the fact that the producers and exporters of Iran have faced with difficulties in exporting carpet. The Germany's import of Iranian carpet has decreased from 154 million dollars in 2001 to 109 million dollars in 2005. In 2005, in the American market, Iran with 114 million dollars was ranked third after India (190 million dollars) and Pakistan with 120 million dollars (Iran's official statistics bureau of carpet and handicrafts). Considering the leading and supportive effects of National Center of Carpet in this area and also due to decline in the export of this valuable product, we sought to study the pathology of Iran National Center of Carpet so that along with the managers of the center, we can recommend some strategies to create more effects and agility on this organization in different areas of carpet in Iran, as the strong and cognizant presence of the National Center of Carpet in leading and supporting this art-industry would once again lead to the glory of the carpet in Iran. This study has made a survey based on the particular variables which include management, environment, segmentation, strategy

and marketing mix, it has also related these variables to one another. Likewise, the kind of correlations and effects of the variables have been considered in a holistic and systematic form. Furthermore, the process dimensions and coordination are part of outstanding features among the factors which can less be observed in the previous studies. Finally, the effective factors on the export of hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan, as compared with those of the previous groups of survey, possess both stronger theoretical support and practical/experimental dimension. Particularly, the study topic is regarding the hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan in Iran that according to the aforementioned reasons, it enjoys some especial features as comparing with studying the marketing of other products and services.

The methodology of this research is based on descriptive analysis which examines the relation between pathology and effective factors (e.g., managerial, environmental, strategic factors, segmentation and marketing mix) on the hand-woven carpet as an independent variables and the marketing of export of Kurdistan hand-woven carpet as a dependent variable. A questionnaire has been used as a tool for data collection, which is according to the objectives and hypotheses of the study and it contains multiple questions based on Likert Scale. Moreover; in designing and completing this questionnaire, interview has also been made.

2. Literature Review

The hand-woven carpet is the only commodity as an old antiquity, which has been related to Iran as one of the most important and prominent goods. It is such that mentioning the name of it is augmented by Iran, and the new emerging competitors of Iran hand-woven carpet (China, India, Pakistan, etc.) sell a chief part of their production on the basis of using noble design and popular and famous styles of the Iranian carpet. What has caused decrease in the market share of Iran's carpet and increase in its competitors' market share, is Iran's negligence, and competitors' application of using principles and innovative approaches of marketing, not the advantages and superiority of the competitors in producing a noble carpet. In the Table 1, some of the statistics and numbers which indicate the eminent position of this art in Iran's industry are shown.

Table 1. Social position of Iranian hand-woven carpet industry

Indicators	Status of Hand-woven Carpet Industry (2011)	Description
Employment	1727546 weavers	Work average: 167 days per year, 5 hours per day. Employees of the activities before weave: designers, painters, dyers, supervisors.
	261500 people before and after weaving activities	Employees of the activities after weave: labours, experts of completion and brine sector, packing experts, traders, exporters and marketers.
Stabilization of Rural Population	65% of weavers of the hand-woven carpet are from villages	Their activities do not cover their cost of living.

Parts of the year are unemployed.

Complementary activities of animal farms. Complementary activities of agriculture and gardening. |

Source: Iran's official statistics bureau of carpet and handicrafts

Table 2. Economic position of the hand-woven carpet industry of Iran

Indicators	Status of Hand-woven Carpet Industry of Iran (2011)
Production volume	7.8 million square meters
Approximate value of production	420 million dollars
GNP Share	1-1.5 %
Exchange	490 million dollars
Non-oil Export Share	11.4 %
Relation between carpet industry with agriculture	Consumption of productive wool (90%)
	Consumption of productive silk (90%)

Source: Iran's official statistics bureau of carpet and handicrafts

Having a deep look into the hand-woven carpet industry of Iran and according to the findings of this study and also the survey which was made to realize more about the experts' points of view in a broad area of studying the hand-woven carpet of Iran, the following hypotheses regarding its marketing relation were declared:

Managerial and structural gap has led to a shortage in the marketing management of this industry.

Neglecting the environmental factors affecting the marketing and exporting of hand-woven carpet in a complex and competitive condition of the global market of hand-woven carpet of Iran.

Focus on the traditional markets and lack of planning and management in identifying and determining new markets according to the social, economic, cultural and political changes occurred in the human geography and political world.

Lack of segmenting buyers and consumers in the target markets based on the principles and scientific and experienced approaches in international marketing.

Lack and extreme gap in applying marketing strategies for marketing and exporting hand-woven carpet of Iran.

Based on the factors mentioned, there are a lot of weaknesses and failures in relation to the marketing mix which include commodity and its various quantitative and qualitative factors (e.g., innovation, conformity, interests, demand, customers' needs, etc.), distribution channels, delivery to the customers, pricing, and the price of hand-woven carpet of Iran which depends on different elements (Azizi, 2003; Sabouri, 2003).

2.1 Effective Factors on the Export Marketing of Kurdistan's Hand-woven Carpet of Iran

Increasing of competition in a global scale has led to a growth in rivals who are seeking opportunities in international markets to achieve their desired objectives and to protect and preserve survival situations of their markets. Doing exports is considered as one of the most common approaches to enter the international markets, which is especially desired by small and medium scale firms. In the basic form of exports, including exports of carpet, there is a need at least to the limited financial resources, human and other necessities such as low investment and financial risks to let the structural and strategic flexibility be created. However, success in export markets is not a simple task and it is dependent on changing nature and people attitude in international environments. Neglecting the above principles and fundamentals of marketing and business which also contains its manufacturing process has made the hand-woven carpet of Iran face with a sort of danger in the competitive advantage in both inside and global market. Based on a little marketing researches in the field of hand-woven carpet of Iran which have been carried on Kurdistan in Iran, shortcomings such as the lack of updating information in trends and demands of consumers, the absence of strategic planning for carpet exports, devaluation of quality, poor advertising, poor management and planning to recognize different tastes of countries and nations, lack of familiarity with the target market, and weaknesses in participation or establishment of exhibition of hand-woven carpet have been indicated (Khosro, 2003).

As it was pointed out in a research**,** the common practice in the field of advertising and marketing of hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan in Iran is still traditional which is not appropriate in the global markets while the hand-woven carpet of Iran which was always traded in the market requires advertising to maintain its high position, and it should also realize the needs of coordination in all aspects of advertising, focusing on sensitivity and customers' demands, paying attention to changes of purchaser groups, controlling competitors behaviour and use of modern methods of exchange (Azizpanah, 2001).

Considering the results gained from studying of the available patterns in the theatrical principles and background research regarding export marketing (Kotler 2003; AzizPanah, 2001), documentary studies and referring to the marketing experts, the exporters and sellers of hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan, out of different factors

influencing production and trading process of hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan, particularly its export marketing, the following five factors are considered as the effective items on export marketing of hand-woven carpet.

2.1.1 Management

Nowadays, the world is experiencing a highly complex era of change and developments which is beyond expectation. In such a condition, the organizations and companies which encounter with the changes using management team and qualified and competent managers and finally come out successfully will be able to maintain their position. Many experts consider success and failure of organizations and institutions according to their different approaches of management. According to Drucker the key member of any organization is its management (Drucker, 1977). Management as the most important context of human activity and believes that the main task of managers at all levels and all social institutions is to design, create and maintain an environment in which the members of organization have the ability to achieve their specific goals and objectives by cooperating and working in group. In this study, different components related to management variables of hand-woven carpet have been considered and in the investigation of effective factors on export marketing of Kurdistan's hand-woven carpet has been taken in the centre of the study, the methodology and statistical analysis (Burke, Warner, George, & Burke-Litwin, 1992).

2.1.2 Environment

By looking systematically through the organization and considering it as a regular set, it is understood that neither a company nor an organization is self-sufficient and self-inclusion, but it exchanges resources and it is dependent on the external environment. Thereby, the organization obtains raw material, money, labour and energy as input or input data from external environment and converts them to goods or services, and then sends them to the external environment as output or output media. External environment is formed by factors which effect on the organization directly or indirectly (Kotler, 2003).

2.1.3 Marketing Strategies

Strategy is a comprehensive program that shows how a company achieves mission and goals. Strategy increases the competitive advantages and decreases the competitive deficits. From the point of vaster decision making and planning, the need of connection to strategic and tactical issues associated with export marketing decision is being felt gradually. Strategic decisions are usually related to factors such as countries selection, product markets, sectors target, the manner and timing (the time) to enter the market (Mohammad, 2007). In contrast, some other items such as product location, product compatibility, advertising, imitation, selection of specific sale promotion media, pricing and distribution decision are related to tactical decisions. An essential first step in planning and development strategy includes the need to assess the company's readiness to enter into foreign markets. Primary goal of any company is to become a leader in the world while it is not enough, but it is also very important to maintain this position (Khosro, 2003). In today's markets, achieving this position is required to come up with a different approach in global marketing of strategic development. Global strategy is a method under which a company competes in global market. Development of global marketing strategy occurs in order to achieve competitive advantage by designing ways for unique resources adaptation of company with opportunities for international marketing company. Decisions about the global marketing strategy are complicated and also require the relevant tools and methods for analyzing and understanding target country and appropriateness of the company and the market. Of course, in this case, the decision makers face with many challenges in dealing with complex and uncertain environment (Li & Davies, 2001).

2.1.4 Marketing Mix

Applying marketing mix techniques helps company to make desirable decisions about product features, pricing, method selection, procedures distribution and promotion and upgrading channels, and also to utilize the adopted marketing strategy based on environmental conditions and the determined and defined parts more successfully (Drucker, 1977).

2.1.5 Segmentation and Determination of Target Markets

Market segmentation is one of the most basic concepts in marketing, and the selection of segmentation method will effect on business directly. If the market segmentation is made correctly, it is about understanding customers' needs, and therefore this issue is related to the subject, according to which they demand for a commodity or another. This insight forms a group of customers who have the same understanding, or identical criteria. A company should be able to understand what sort of customers are the most appropriate and what kind of goods and services cover the needs of selected groups. Therefore, the primary goal of segmentation should be to obtain and retain the customers whom we intend to offer services (Yaser, 2008).

2.2 Previous Study

Sham (2007) explained that business environment is changing and developing under the effects caused by different factors. Continuous study of environmental developments and other effective factors on commodities' marketing and exporting, services, transmission and its reflection to superlative managers is one of the most important missions of marketing. In respect of support to hand-woven carpet's developing and exporting, besides patterning coordinator and processing marketing, five factors: management, environment, strategy, segmentation and marketing mix have been evaluated as the most important effective factors on hand-woven carpet of Iran in the two available and desirable situations. The designed questionnaire regarding five of the abovementioned factors, fifteen key variables and 78 associated factors and explaining variables, have considered four statistic research groups including: experts, exporters, Iranian carpets importers outside and vendors inside and outside of the country. The results show a significant relationship between the five main factors in the study and the hypotheses which have been investigated. The findings illustrate that the five mentioned factors are the most important ones (Sham, 2007). The priority of effectiveness of these factors include: environment, marketing mix, market segmentation, strategy and exporting marketing management of hand-woven carpet. Pathology of hand-woven carpet also shows that according to the responders' point of view about the five key factors, there is a significant difference between the available and desirable situation which demonstrates a failure in the available situation of export marketing in Iran's hand-woven carpet. The results of the study are used for the topmost recommendations and basic solutions for planners and policy makers to produce and export hand-woven carpet (Sham, 2007).

In addition, a previous study in Iran was carried on based upon the aim of compiling pathology key factors of Iran National Center of Carpet, and also their role in the export of carpets was further investigated. The desired pattern to render pathology (Six-box model of Viz-board) was selected among 14 confirmed pathology patterns. The study was descriptive and of a correlational type. A total of 89 personnel of the National Center for carpet and hand-woven carpet exporters- 40 stuff and 49 exporters were selected randomly. The results showed that according to indigenous patterns of Six-box model of Viz-board in the National Carpet Center, the organizational rewards and salary components generate the highest damage and the helpful mechanism components (software factors), the destination and organizational goals, organizational structure, organizational communications and finally leadership failures are significant respectively. Also, there is a meaningful relationship between carpet exporting and damages of the National Carpet Center (Compiling the main components of Organizational Pathology of the Iranian National Carpet Center and investigating its role in exporting hand-woven carpet, 2009).

3. Research Methodology

In the present study which is considered as an applied one, and it terms of survey, it is analytical, in addition to use previous researches and their positive aspects, it has been tried some innovative and further aspects to be aggravated. Statistical population consist of experts (those who are considered as carpet experts and specialists in terms of functions and practices with management affairs, expertise, research and scientific work on carpet)**,** Exporters (those who are wholesalers of hand-woven carpet, and who have been members of Kurdistan hand-woven carpet exporters of Iran), Importers (those who import Iranian hand-woven carpet to one of its market targets in different States or countries such as German, Italy and etc. and distribute them to retailers as wholesale) and Sellers (those who as retailers sell hand-woven carpet to the final consumer).

Data collections for this study were mainly questionnaires. The questionnaire regarding objectives and research hypotheses were designed in the two current desired situations and based on 5 multiple-choice questions in Likert scale. Moreover, in completing and designing the questionnaire, interview was also made. In order to determine the validity and reliability of the questions, firstly necessary indices were extracted by using the research literature for each of the components mentioned in the hypothesis, then the proposed amendments were made and the questionnaire was finalized by a group of hand-woven carpet industry experts and also faculty members familiar with marketing issues. To investigate the internal stability of the questionnaire items, Cronbach's alpha coefficient technique was used to measure stability.

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1}\left(1 - \frac{\sum s_i^2}{\sum s_{sum}^2}\right)^n = 0.76$$

K: Number of questions

S_i^2: Variance Questions

$S_{Sum2:}^2$ Sum of matrix, variance and covariance of the questions

Cronbach's alpha coefficient between zero and one will change; zero means lack of internal stability of the questions and one is an indicator of internal stability of total set of the questions related to an infrastructural concept. According to the number obtained (α =0.76), the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed. Besides; in the current study, after collecting and classifying the required data, the statistical methods which were used, were in accordance with the data analysis, hypotheses test, and the correlation among the five factors e.g. management, environment, strategy, market segmentation and marketing mix and 10 sub-variables correlated with the aforementioned elements. The Figure 1 shows the Research Framework of this study.
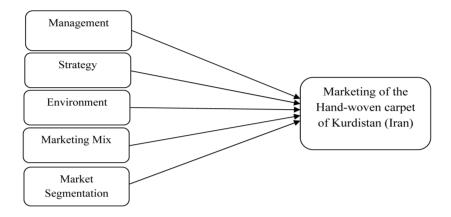
Figure 1. Research Framework

3.1 Hypotheses Development

In this study, the researcher's purpose of effective factors on the market includes:

-Management factors (including planning, organizing, goal setting and control).

-Environmental factors (including competitive environment, economic environment, social and cultural environment and technology environment).

-Strategic factors: (a differentiation and cost leadership).

-Market Segmentation: (including demographic, psychographic, and geographical dimensions).

-Marketing mix factors (including product, place, price, and promotion).

Dependent variable used in the study of marketing of Kurdistan State's hand-woven carpet is influenced by the independent variable**s** (i.e., management, environment, Strategy, Market segmentation and marketing mix factors).

Therefore, the hypothesis of this study can be summarized as follows:

H1: Managerial factors affect the marketing of Kurdistan hand-woven carpet

H2: Environmental factors affect the marketing of Kurdistan hand-woven carpet

H3: Strategic factors affect the marketing of Kurdistan hand-woven carpet

H4: Marketing mix affects the marketing of Kurdistan hand-woven carpet

H5: Segmentation affects the marketing of Kurdistan hand-woven carpet

4. Results

300 respondents were selected in this study, out of whom 130 (43.3%) were female and 170 (56%) were male. The age group of 140 respondents (46.7%) was between 30-35 years old which shows the highest percentage, the minimum age group was between 45-60 that includes 40 (13.3%) of the respondents, and the other groups which are under 30, and 35-45 years old, each includes 60 (30%) of the population size.

Furthermore, the results indicate that the majority of respondents which are 120 (33.3%) have passed their academic education only up to foundation course and associate diploma. And the respondents holding Master Degrees and Higher were the least (3.3%).

As shown in Table 3 and Chart 1, the findings illustrate that there is a big difference about the management factors on the marketing of hand-woven carpet. 30 (10%) of the respondents found the situation "fairly desirable", while 80 (26.7%) of them evaluated it as "less desirable", and 60 (20%) of the respondents believed that the situation is "very desirable". Moreover, based on the 70 respondents' point of view, the impact of environmental factors on the marketing of hand-woven carpet is "fairly desirable", 60 of them believed that the impact is "very desirable", and the other 60 respondents found it "very undesirable".

Respondents' opinion about the impact of differentiation strategy on the marketing of hand-woven carpet is as follows: for 70 (23.3%) of them, it was "fairly desirable", while for 60 of the respondents, it was "less desirable, and 40 of them found it "very desirable", furthermore, the aforesaid impact was declared "undesirable" by 40 of the respondents.

100 (33.3%) of the respondents believed that the effect of cost leadership on the marketing of hand-woven carpet is "desirable", 30% (90) found it "fairly desirable", while 20 of them believed that the effect is "very undesirable", and finally 60 (20%) of the respondents found it "very desirable". According to the respondents' point of view, product mix in terms of likeness with customer tastes was evaluated "very desirable" and "fairly desirable" for 120 (40%) of the respondents, while 20 (6.7%) of them believed that it is "less desirable". And also, while 120 of the respondents believed that it is "desirable", 40 of them found it "very undesirable". The price mix in terms of finished cost for 110 respondents (37%) was "fairly desirable", and for 30 (10%) of them, the effect was "very desirable", moreover; 80 (27%) of the respondents found it "less desirable" and "desirable". As in the Table 3; the findings indicate that on the basis of place of distribution and considering the delivery time of product, 100 (33.3%) of the respondents believed that it was "very desirable", and for 50 (16.7%) of them it was assessed as "less desirable" and "very undesirable". In this respect, 60 (20%) of the respondents believed that it is "desirable". Table 3, shows that in terms of promotion mix and taking direct sales into account, 140 (47%) of the respondents found it "desirable", while for 50 of them, it was assessed as "fairly desirable", however 45 (13.3) of the respondents believed that it was "very desirable", moreover; 75 (23%) of them were declared as "less desirable" and " very undesirable". Finally, the impact of market segmentation on the marketing of hand-woven carpet was evaluated and according to 20% of the respondents, such an impact is "very desirable", 20% found it "fairly desirable" and 26.7% of the respondents believed that it is "desirable".

Table 3. Respondents' opinion about the impact of marketing mix, market segmentation managerial, environmental, and strategic, factors on the marketing of hand-woven carpet (based on %)

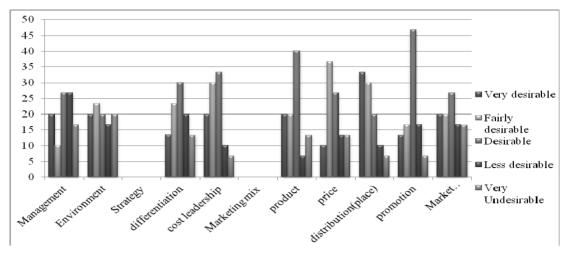| Dominions	Very desirable	Fairly desirable	Desirable	Less desirable	Very Undesirable
Management	20	10	26.7	26.7	16.7
Environment	20	23.3	20	16.7	20
Strategy					
differentiation	13.4	23.3	30	20	13.3
cost leadership	20	30	33.3	10	6.7
Marketing mix					
product	20	20	40	6.7	13.3
price	10	36.7	26.7	13.3	13.3
distribution(place)	33.3	30	20	10	6.7
promotion	13.3	16.7	46.7	16.7	6.7
Market segmentation	20	20	26.7	16.7	16.6

Chart 1. Respondents' opinion about the impact of marketing mix, market segmentation managerial, environmental, and strategic, factors on the marketing of hand-woven carpet (based on %)

The regression was used to examine the correlation among Management, Environment, Strategy, 4Ps marketing and Segmentation as independent variables with the marketing of carpet in Kurdistan province as dependent variable. The results of the regression analysis in Table 4, show that independent variables contribute significantly to the dependent variable. They also indicate that there is a strong positive association between independent variables and dependent variable at 5 per cent significance level. Among the all independent variables, management has the highest correlation value of 0.723, followed by environment (0.712), segmentation (0.701) price (0.698), product (0.692), promotion (0.689) place (0.676) cost leadership (0.672) and differentiation (0.668). Likewise, and given the representativeness of the sample, it is fair to conclude that all independent factors significantly influence on marketing of carpet in Kurdistan province.

Table 4. Correlation test between the factors (management, environment, strategy, marketing mix and market segmentation) and marketing of hand-woven carpet

Variables	Beta Coefficients	(P Value)
Constant		(0.000)
Management	0.723	(0.000)
Environment	0.712	(0.000)
Strategy		
Differentiation	0.688	(0.012)
cost leadership	0.672	(0.023)
Marketing mix		
Product	0.692	(0.000)
price	0.698	(0.000)
distribution(place)	0.676	(0.011)
promotion	0.689	(0.000)
Market segmentation	0.701	(0.000)

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study was carried out entitled as "Export marketing of hand-woven carpet of Kurdistan State in Iran with emphasis on its pathology" in the city of Sanandaj. The subject area is the affecting factors on the marketing of Kurdistan State's hand-woven carpet. Furthermore the study place of the territory was Kurdistan State in Iran in 2011. This study was carried out on the aim of investigating issues and problems related to the marketing of Kurdistan State's hand-woven carpet and effective factors on the marketing export of Kurdistan State's hand-woven carpet, to compare with the previous survey groups, which has a strong theoretical base and farther applied and experimental design is the new aspect and innovation of the research. In the study, management,

environment, strategy, market segmentation and marketing mix as the five main effective factors on the marketing of Iran's hand-woven carpet have been surveyed in two available and desired situations. The result confirmed significant relationships between the five main factors in the present study, and the hypotheses were approved. There is a significant positive relationship between all independent variables and the dependent variable. Furthermore, a stronger relationship between cost leadership and management of carpet industry rather than differentiation exists and the importance scale of the marketing mix elements in the carpet industry includes price, product, sales promotion, and place of distribution respectively.

In addition, it is recommended that the best way to work on this subject is to use qualitative research methods such as deep interviews and to analyse the secondary data. Besides that, at first, it is better to investigate each of the four statistical society groups in separate research for more accuracy. Finally, it is recommended to focus on some main variables instead of several variable factors to obtain more scientific and accurate results.

Acknowledgement

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