

HOW CAN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES CONTRIBUTE TO BRAND EQUITY: EVIDENCES FROM ISFAHAN CITY

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ABSTRACT: *Currently, tourism destinations differentiate themselves from other competitors through different factors such as social responsibilities. The reason is that doing social responsibilities results in many considerable outcomes such as tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and etc. This is why the present study aims to investigate the effect of tourism destinations social responsibilities on their brand equity. This study is practical and descriptive research from research goal and methodology perspectives respectively. The statistical population of this study includes foreign tourists who have traveled to Isfahan in the third season of 2016 and also have visited Naghshe Jahan Square in this city. A sample of 200 tourists was selected from this population randomly. For more certainty, 210 tourists were surveyed. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used for collecting the research data, which consists of 40 items. The validity and reliability of questionnaire were measured by Content and Construct Validities and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient respectively. The results of Content and Construct Validities and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient revealed that the questionnaire is a valid and reliable data-collection instrument for our purpose. The research data were summarized and analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics in the SPSS and LISREL respectively. The findings showed that tourism destination social responsibilities affect tourism destination awareness, perceived value, perceived quality, image, and loyalty significantly; perceived value affects tourism destination loyalty significantly; tourism destination image affects tourist loyalty significantly; perceived quality affects tourism destination image and loyalty significantly.*

KEYWORDS: Social Responsibilities, Brand Equity, Brand Loyalty, Brand Image, Tourism Destination

INTRODUCTION

Due to the competition in tourism markets, each tourism destination differentiates itself from other competitive destinations. According to Ghaffari et al. (2014), brand is one of the main factors that can be used for differentiating tourism destinations from other competitors. The reason is that tourism destinations brand plays a determinant role in tourist decision-making process (Ooi, 2004). This is why Zargham Borojeni and Barzani (2013) insist that tourism destination branding is one of the key aspects of tourism destination brand management. Thus, it is inevitable that destination management organizations develop and improve powerful brand for tourism destinations. In addition, such organizations should recognize and reinforce the effective factors on tourism destinations brand. As De. Chernatony and McDonald (2003) indicate, brand equity is considered as one of the key determinants in brand management that can be used by companies and organizations in measuring their brand effectiveness. Many authors point out that corporate social responsibilities have a considerable role in improving their brand equity (Abdolvand and Charsetad, 2013; Ajhdari et al., 2015). In the current

competitive tourism markets, tourism destinations compete to other competitors especially through doing their social responsibilities.

Statement of problem

Broadly speaking, brand plays more important role in services industries such as tourism than other industries. The reason is that services have unique characteristics such as intangibility and inseparability that differentiate them from other industries. As a result, it is necessary to develop and reinforce brand for tourism destinations, which plays an important role in their long-term success. Therefore, tourism marketing professionals and managers should increase their share in the global tourism market through developing a powerful brand for destinations (Ghaffari et al., 2014). This is why tourism academicians and practitioners have focused on brand and its reinforcement in services industries such as tourism in recent decades (Rahimnia and Fatemi, 2012). In addition, it should be noted that brand effectiveness evaluation is one of the main steps in the long-term process of tourism destination success (Ghaffari, 2014). Recently, many authors and researchers have used customer-based brand equity in measuring brand effectiveness especially tourism destinations brand. As Buil et al. (2013) indicated, brand equity includes all assets and liabilities of a brand that add or decrease value of a good or service for a company or its customers. It is necessary to improve brand equity through recognizing and improving its effective factors. According to Torres et al. (2012), Abdolvand and Charsetad (2013), Asgari Khoshoyi et al. (2015), and Ajhdari et al. (2015), corporate social responsibilities are considered as the most effective factors on tourism destination brand equity. In this regard, Asgari Khoshoyi et al. (2015) point out that corporate social responsibilities affect perceived value and satisfaction of customers and also perceived value and satisfaction of customers affect brand equity and satisfaction affect consumer behavioral intentions. According to Ajhdari et al. (2015), social responsibilities not only improve company performance, but also affect its brand equity considerably. The present study aims to answer the following question: how can tourism destinations social responsibilities affect their brand equity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tourism Destination Social Responsibilities

Review of literature by authors of this paper revealed that there is not any comprehensive definition for concept of social responsibilities. However, Wang et al. (2015) define corporate social responsibilities as a kind of corporate behaviors in terms of business ethics that include corporate obligations and commitments toward society. Areekul et al. (2015) indicate that adoption of social responsibilities strategy is one of the main prerequisites of societies development at macro level. As Chu and Yang (2009) indicated, the companies, which do their social responsibilities in the best way, improve their image and thereby will be able to improve their performance. Since tourism destinations compete with other competitors, they should be able to do their social responsibilities so appropriately that can improve their brand equity. Golja and Nižić (2010) indicate that tourism destinations should differentiate themselves from other competitors through providing tourist with sustainable tourism products and services.

H1: tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination awareness significantly.

H2: tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived value of destination significantly.

H3: tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination image significantly.

H4: tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived quality of destination significantly.

H5: tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination loyalty significantly.

Tourism destination brand equity

Brand equity has been suggested by many thinkers and authors as one of the most challenging concepts in the customer-based approaches of marketing literature (Yoo and Donthu, 2000). Nowadays, brand equity is characterized as the most effective factor on development of competitive advantage for companies (Chang and Liu, 2009; Ha et al., 2010). Especially, brand equity is important for services companies such tourism destinations than others. Yoo et al. (2000) point out that tourism destination brand equity is a complex concept and this is such complexity that make its dimensions management more difficult. Konecnik and Gartner (2007) hold that tourism destination brand equity consists of five dimensions. These include destination awareness, image, perceived quality, perceived value, and loyalty. Many authors such as Torres et al. (2012), Abdolvand and Charsetad (2013), Asgari Khoshkhoyi et al. (2015), and Ajhdari et al. (2015) indicate that social responsibility is one of the main factors that affect tourism destination brand equity. Also Esmailpour and Barjoei (2016) point out that social responsibilities improve companies brand equity and thereby improve their performance considerably. In order to review the literature of social responsibilities and their effect on brand equity, it is necessary to study brand equity dimensions and the effect of social responsibilities on them separately. For this purpose, categorization of Konecnik and Gartner (2007) was used in which it is supposed that tourism destination brand equity consists of five dimensions including destination awareness, perceived quality, perceived value, image, and loyalty. These dimensions and social responsibilities effect on them have been discussed in the following section.

Tourism destination brand awareness: Tong and Hawley (2009) refer to brand awareness as one of the main dimensions of brand equity. According to Tong and Hawley (2009), brand awareness is the power of brand existence in the minds of target customers. Given the importance of tourism destination brand awareness, this concept have been studied in different studies frequently (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007). Tourism destination marketing academicians and practitioners indicate that a unique brand of destinations can develop and reinforce brand awareness for them (Jago et al., 2003). Tourism destination brand awareness has been considered as one of the main dimensions of tourism destination equity in different studies (Lee and Back, 2008). Mattera et al. (2012) indicate that corporates social responsibilities can be helpful in improving their brand awareness in the minds of target customers. Iqbal (2013) states that the companies, which do their social responsibilities in the best way, can improve their position in the minds of target customers. As a result, tourism destination brand awareness will be improved. Accordingly, it is supposed in this study that tourism destination awareness affects tourism destination loyalty. Also it is supposed that tourism destination social responsibilities affect tourism destination awareness significantly.

H6: tourism destination awareness affect destination loyalty significantly.

Perceived value of tourism destination: generally, perceived value is the customer perception of costs and benefits of a given product (Ranjbarian et al., 2012). Many authors such as Yoo et al. (2000), Low and Lamb (2000), and Nam et al. (2011) hold that perceived value of services is a key factor in developing powerful brands and it affects many behavioral aspects of customers. According to Tsai (2005) and Boo et al. (2009), customer perceived value is one of the main dimensions of brand equity that has a significant relationship with future behavioral intentions of customers. Boo et al. (2009) and Nam et al. (2011) indicate that tourist perception of value is considered as one of the main dimensions of tourism destination brand equity. As Pelozo and Shang (2011) indicate, customers perceive more value from products of companies that do their social responsibilities in the best way. Staudt et al. (2014) and Semuel and Chandra (2014) found that corporate social responsibilities affects customer perceived value significantly. Accordingly, it is supposed in this study that tourist perceived value affects tourism destination image and loyalty significantly. It also is supposed in this study that tourism destination social responsibilities affect tourist perceived value significantly.

H7: perceived value of tourism destination affects destination loyalty significantly.

H8: perceived value of tourism destination affects destination image significantly.

Tourism destination image: all in all, brand image is the customers' perceptions of brand, which is reflected from mental associations of customers (Ammari and Zaendedel, 2012). Brand image is a fundamental factor that differentiate a company and its products from other competitors and their products. Faircloth et al. (2001) hold that brand image can contribute to brand equity. Michell et al. (2001) and Chen and Tsai (2007) indicate that brand image affects perceived value and brand loyalty significantly. According to Rodrigues et al. (2011) and Semuel and Chandra (2014), corporate social responsibilities can affect brand image considerably. The reason is that the companies, which do their social responsibilities in the best way, have better reputation in their target customers. In other words, customers have better attitude toward companies that do their social responsibilities in the best way. As a result, corporate image will be improved. Accordingly, it is supposed in this study that tourism destination brand image affects tourism destination loyalty significantly. Also it is supposed that tourism destination social responsibilities affect tourism destination image significantly.

H9: tourism destination image affects destination loyalty significantly.

Perceived quality of tourism destination: Grönroos (2007) indicates that services quality refers to the comparison between customers expected services and received services. According to Can (2013), three main factors determine tourist loyalty including product, price, and infrastructures. He also holds that these factors affect tourist loyalty considerably. It can be said that quality of tourism products can affect destination image and also affect tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Ghaffari et al., 2014). As Staudt et al. (2014) indicate, customers have better image from corporates that do their social responsibilities in the best way. Accordingly, it is supposed in this study that perceived quality of tourism destination affect tourism destination image and loyalty significantly. It also is supposed in this study that tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived quality of tourism destination.

H10: perceived quality of tourism destination affects destination loyalty significantly.

H11: perceived quality of tourism destination affects destination image significantly.

Tourism destination brand loyalty: Aaker (1991) defines brand loyalty as customer attachment to a certain brand. In other words, brand loyalty is customer deep commitment to repurchase a preferred brand in future or recommend its purchase to others. Many authors such as Aaker (1991), Gil et al. (2007), and Gilaninia and Mousavian (2010) conceptualize brand loyalty as one of the main dimensions of brand equity. Opperman (2000) indicates that the authors, who study tourism destination brand, should focus on the brand loyalty particularly. Njiru (2012) holds that companies should improve their contribution in terms of social responsibilities, as such responsibilities affect their customers loyalty significantly. Chai et al. (2015) and Vahdati et al. (2015) found that corporate social responsibilities affect customers future behavioral intentions and their loyalty. Accordingly, it is supposed in this study that tourism destination social responsibilities affect tourist loyalty significantly.

The conceptual model of this study is shown in figure 1.

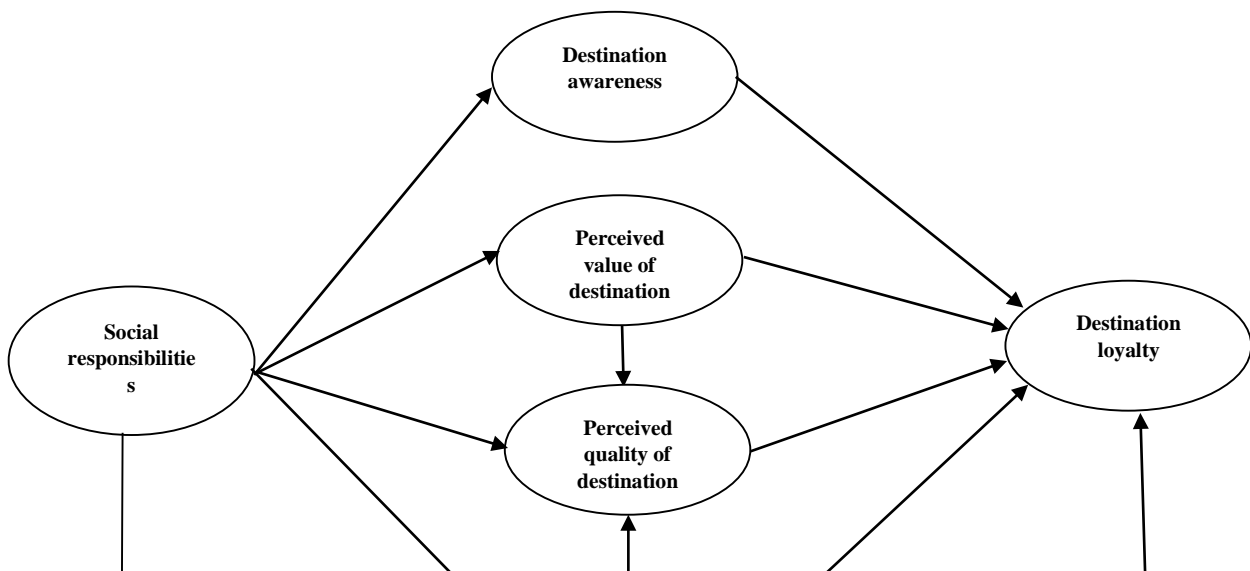


Fig. 1: the conceptual model of study

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is considered as a descriptive research from data-collection method perspective. It also is considered as a practical research from its goal perspective. The statistical population of this study includes foreign tourists who have traveled to Isfahan in the third season of 2016 and also have visited Naghshe Jahan Square in this city in data-collection period. A sample of 200 tourists was selected from this population randomly. The sample size was determined based on the sampling principle of Kline (2005). He holds that the sample size should be $5Q < n < 15Q$. Since the questionnaire of this study consists of 40 items, the sample size should be $200 < n < 600$. As a result, sample size was determined 200. For more certainty,

210 tourists were surveyed. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used for collecting the research data, which consists of 40 items. Also 6 questions was developed for measuring demographic characteristics of respondents. Distribution of questionnaire items is shown in table 2. In order to measure the validity of questionnaire, both content and construct validities were used. For this purpose, the academicians and practitioners of tourism marketing were asked to read and correct the questionnaire. The corrections were done and thereby content validity of questionnaire was confirmed. Also construct validity of questionnaire was measured that its results are presented in table 1. For this purpose, factor loadings of question were measured. If factor loading of a question is more than 0.5, it can be said that the question is reliable.

Table 1: factor loadings of questionnaire

Item	factor loadings	Item	factor loadings	Item	factor loadings
Q1	0.874	Q15	0.732	Q29	0.751
Q2	0.854	Q16	0.834	Q30	0.849
Q3	0.832	Q17	0.761	Q31	0.850
Q4	0.854	Q18	0.795	Q32	0.801
Q5	0.790	Q19	0.805	Q33	0.815
Q6	0.821	Q20	0.804	Q34	0.772
Q7	0.848	Q21	0.691	Q35	0.744
Q8	0.816	Q22	0.838	Q36	0.776
Q9	0.830	Q23	0.824	Q37	0.744
Q10	0.660	Q24	0.815	Q38	0.776
Q11	0.670	Q25	0.685	Q39	0.777
Q12	0.809	Q26	0.720	Q40	0.726
Q13	0.778	Q27	0.789		
Q14	0.855	Q28	0.812		

Also Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used for measuring reliability of questionnaire. The total coefficient was 0.971 for our questionnaire. The coefficient tells us that our questionnaire is a reliable data-collection instrument. Also the coefficient was measured for each variable individually. The results have been presented in table 2. Based on the results of table 2, it can be said that the questionnaire and its variables have acceptable reliability (the coefficient should more than 0.7 to confirm reliability of questionnaire). In order to analyze the research data and test the hypotheses, both descriptive statistics (such as means, frequencies, and percentages) and inferential statistics (path analysis) were used in the SPSS and LISREL respectively.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Tourism destination awareness	4	0.863
Perceived quality of tourism destination	6	0.887
Tourism destination loyalty	9	0.865
Perceived value of tourism destination	5	0.879
Tourism destination social responsibilities	8	0.922
Tourism destination image	8	0.912

FINDINGS

The descriptive findings (demographic characteristics of respondents) have been presented in table 3.

Table 3: summary of demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics	Distribution	Frequency	%	Demographic characteristics	Distribution	Frequency	%
Age	<20	27	12.90	Past travels to Isfahan	First time	39	18.60
	20-30	26	12.40		Second time	64	30.50
	30-40	44	21.00		Third time	53	25.20
	40<	83	39.50		More times	31	14.80
	No response	30	14.30		No response	23	11.00
Gender	Male	119	56.70	Fellow travelers	Single	21	10.00
	Female	72	34.30		1-2	41	19.50
	No response	19	9.00		3-4	84	40.00
Education	Primary or secondary	13	6.20	Marital status	5<	31	14.80
	High school	31	14.80		No response	33	15.70
	M.Sc.	74	35.20		Single	76	36.20
	M.A. of Ph.D.	53	25.20		Married	104	49.50
	No response	39	18.60		No response	30	14.30

Before conducting path analysis, it is necessary to measure and investigate goodness of model fit (RMSEA= 0.038; NFI= 0.97; CFI= 0.99; GFI= 0.96). Now that indices support goodness of model fit, we can proceed to present and discuss results of path analysis.

It is claimed in the first hypothesis that tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination awareness significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis

is 8.88. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination awareness significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.57 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 57% of variations of dependent variable (destination awareness) can be explained by independent variable (tourism destination social responsibilities). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in the tourism destination social responsibilities will result in improvement in tourism destination awareness. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Mattera et al. (2012) and Iqbal (2013). Mattera et al. (2012) indicate that corporate social responsibilities affect brand awareness in the minds of target customers.

The second hypothesis states that tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived value of destination significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 14.27. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived value of destination significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.74 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 74% of variations of dependent variable (perceived value of destination) can be explained by independent variable (tourism destination social responsibilities). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in the tourism destination social responsibilities will result in improvement in perceived value of tourism destination. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Peloza and Shang (2011), Staudt et al. (2014), and Semuel and Chandra (2014). They indicate that the companies, do their social responsibilities in the best way, offer more value to their customers.

It is claimed in the third hypothesis that tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination image significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 2.43. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination image significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.25 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 25% of variations of dependent variable (destination image) can be explained by independent variable (tourism destination social responsibilities). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in the tourism destination social responsibilities will result in improvement in tourism destination image. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Rodrigues et al. (2011) and Semuel and Chandra (2014). According to Rodrigues et al. (2011) and Semuel and Chandra (2014), corporate social responsibilities affect its image considerably. The reason is that customers have better attitude toward companies that do their social responsibilities in the best way.

The fourth hypothesis states that tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived quality of destination significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 10.39. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived quality of destination significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.63 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 63% of variations of dependent variable (perceived quality of destination) can be explained by independent variable (tourism destination social responsibilities). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in the tourism destination social responsibilities will result in improvement in perceived quality of tourism destination. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Staudt et al. (2014). As Staudt et al. (2014) indicate, customer tend to evaluate products of companies, which do their social responsibilities, better than other competitors.

It is claimed in the fifth hypothesis that tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination loyalty significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 2.19. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination loyalty significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.16 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 16% of variations of dependent variable (destination loyalty) can be explained by independent variable (tourism destination social responsibilities). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in the tourism destination social responsibilities will result in improvement in tourism destination loyalty. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Njiro (2012), Chai et al. (2015), and Vahdati et al. (2015). They point out that companies should pay more attention to social responsibilities, as doing such responsibilities affects customers loyalty to companies.

The sixth hypothesis states that tourism destination awareness affect destination loyalty significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 6.20. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that tourism destination awareness affect destination loyalty significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.30 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 30% of variations of dependent variable (tourism destination loyalty) can be explained by independent variable (tourism destination awareness).

Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in the tourism destination awareness will result in improvement in tourists loyalty to tourism destination. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Iranzade et al. (2012).

It is claimed in the seventh hypothesis that perceived value of tourism destination affects destination loyalty significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 9.10. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that perceived value of tourism destination affects destination loyalty significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.42 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 42% of variations of dependent variable (destination loyalty) can be explained by independent variable (perceived value of tourism destination). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in perceived value of tourism destination will result in improvement in tourism destination loyalty. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Tsai (2005) and Boo et al. (2009). Indeed, tourist prefer to travel repeatedly to a destination that is economical for them.

The eighth hypothesis states that perceived value of tourism destination affects destination image significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 1.53. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is rejected

It is claimed in the ninth hypothesis that tourism destination image affects destination loyalty significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 2.14. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that tourism destination image affects destination loyalty significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.12 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 12% of variations of dependent variable (destination loyalty) can be explained by independent variable (tourism destination image). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in tourism destination image will result in improvement in destination loyalty. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Michel et al. (2001) and Chen and Tsai (2007). The reason is that tourism destination image is one of the main effective factors on tourism destination revisit decision.

The tenth hypothesis states that perceived quality of tourism destination affects destination loyalty significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 6.94. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that perceived quality of tourism destination affects destination loyalty significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.27 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 27% of variations of dependent variable (destination loyalty) can be explained by independent variable (perceived quality of tourism destination). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in perceived quality of tourism destination will result in improvement in destination loyalty.

It is claimed in the ninth hypothesis that perceived quality of tourism destination affects destination image significantly. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, t-value of this hypothesis is 3.86. The coefficient tells us that the hypothesis is supported and it can be said that perceived quality of tourism destination affects destination image significantly. According to table 4 and figure 3, beta is 0.30 for this hypothesis. The coefficient tells us that 30% of variations of dependent variable (destination image) can be explained by independent variable (perceived quality of tourism destination). Based on the results of this hypothesis, it can be said that increase in perceived quality of tourism destination will result in improvement in destination image. The result of this hypothesis is supported by past studies such as Ghaffari et al. (2014).

Table 4: summary of hypotheses test

Hypotheses	t-value	β	Result
H1: tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination awareness significantly.	8.88	0.57	Supported
H2: tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived value of destination significantly.	14.27	0.74	Supported
H3: tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination image significantly.	2.43	0.25	Supported
H4: tourism destination social responsibilities affect perceived quality of destination significantly.	10.39	0.63	Supported
H5: tourism destination social responsibilities affect destination loyalty significantly.	2.19	0.16	Supported
H6: tourism destination awareness affect destination loyalty significantly.	6.20	0.30	Supported
H7: perceived value of tourism destination affects destination loyalty significantly.	9.10	0.42	Supported
H8: perceived value of tourism destination affects destination image significantly.	1.53	0.16	Rejected
H9: tourism destination image affects destination loyalty significantly.	2.14	0.12	Supported
H10: perceived quality of tourism destination affects destination loyalty significantly.	6.94	0.27	Supported
H11: perceived quality of tourism destination affects destination image significantly.	3.86	0.30	Supported

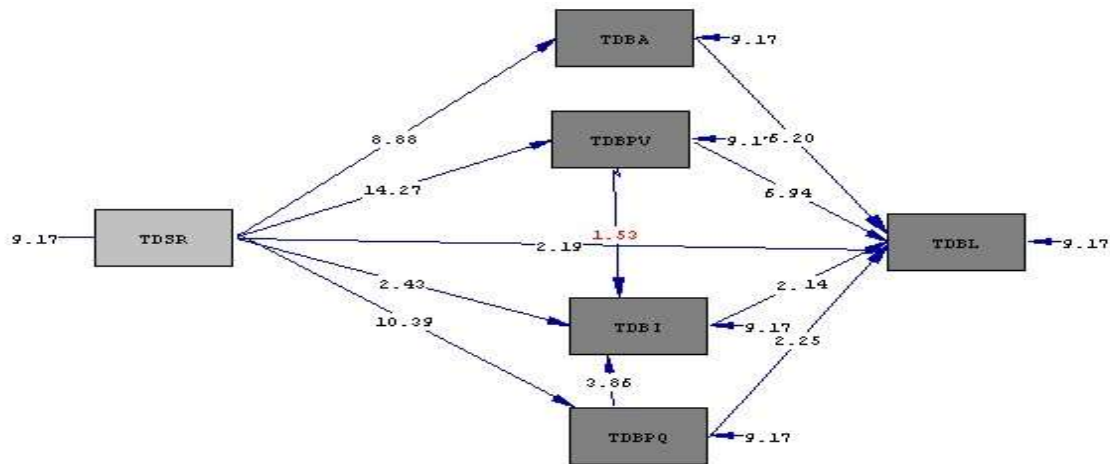


Fig. 2: the model of t-value

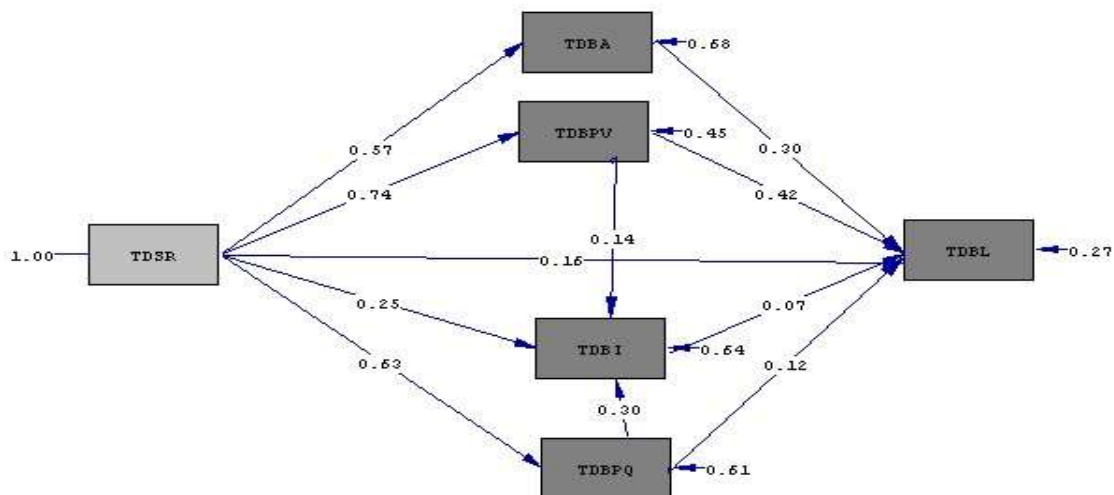


Fig. 2: the model of β

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND EMPIRICAL SUGGESTIONS

The results of this study revealed that tourism destination social responsibilities affect tourism destination awareness, image, perceived value, perceived quality, and loyalty significantly. These findings tell us that doing social responsibilities by Isfahan affects this tourism destination awareness, image, perceived value, perceived quality, and loyalty significantly. As a result, brand equity of Isfahan will be improved. Another part of results of this study revealed that Image of Isfahan affect tourist loyalty to this destination. Since brand image is tourist perceptions of destination, comprehensive introduction of this city to potential tourists can be helpful in improving image of this city. The field experience of authors of this paper in

datacollection period showed that tourists only visit well-known attractions of this city such as Naghshe Jahan Square and Chehelsoton Palace. Another part of our findings showed that tourist perceived quality affects image of Isfahan and tourists loyalty to this destination significantly. Finally, it should be noted that questionnaire, as the main data-collection tool of this study, is the main limitation of this study. Although this type of questionnaires has several advantages such as fast data analysis, but it has its limitations. Such questionnaires are closed and the respondents cannot express their own opinions that may not be included in questionnaire. The solution maybe providing respondents with an opportunity to express their own opinions in the form of open questions. It is suggested in terms of social responsibilities that tourism marketing planners and managers of Isfahan attempt to recognize the most important social responsibilities of this destination from tourists perspectives. Field experience of authors this paper in data-collection period showed that a large part of tourists, who have traveled to Isfahan in this period, were European aged ones that have different expectations from social responsibilities than other youngsters. They also use different media. Such differences should be identified and were considered in marketing planning. Identification and conduction of social responsibilities will be helpful in improving brand equity of Isfahan. Also it is suggested that such responsibilities are communicated in target tourists so that it is possible to introduce Isfahan as a socially responsible destination. It is suggested in terms of perceived value of tourists that tourism marketing planners and managers of Isfahan attempt to provide tourists with more value. It is suggested in terms of tourism destination image that less-known attractions such as Sayyed Mosque are introduced for tourists. As a result, image of Isfahan, as tourism destination, will be improved considerably. Finally, it is suggested that quality of services is controlled periodically to ensure that tourists have good perception of services in this city.

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