

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING TOURISM DESTINATION BRAND EQUITY

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ABSTRACT

Brand equity of organizations is measured by various reputable international institutions each year in the world. In many cases, brand equity is higher than physical assets, which indicates the importance of branding and brand categories.

Due to the cultural differences, and social characteristics of tourist destinations, the present study aimed to identify factors affecting tourism destination brand equity in Qazvin city to assess domestic tourists from Qazvin tourism destination brand equity by deploying Konecnik's model(2007).

The statistical population of this study consisted tourists who were available in the period between May25th to June20th in 2013 in the historic and tourist city of Qazvin. Regression coefficient and structural equation modeling methods were used to analyze the results. The results of this study showed that in addition to brand image in the studies of the past 30 years as the most important factor for tourists to enjoy tourism destination as it is, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness and satisfaction also have a direct impact on brand equity; in terms of importance, satisfaction, are known as the most important factor.

Keywords: brand equity, brand loyalty, brand image, perceived quality, brand awareness

INTRODUCTION

Iran is in the world's top ten countries in terms of tourist attractions and in the five top countries in the world in terms of diversity of tourism (World Tourism Organization, 2000). Qazvin is one of the Iran's civilizations which its antiquity based on archaeological findings that reach to 10 thousand years; it's been the capital of Iran around for 100 years in the Safavi period. This province because of its historical and natural attractions has a high position among the other provinces. Qazvin province due to its historical status as well as the characteristics of ecotourism is able to capture a major share of tourist arrivals to the country. Historic buildings in the heart of this area and adjacent to the plurality of Zanzan and Tehran are other factors that can create attractive aspects of tourism that will draw in the international arena. That is why some people believe, Qazvin is a place for all seasons. Qazvin with more than 1,000 historical monuments of which 12% of it, is included all of Iran's monuments; it's the top .

Therefore, identifying factors that can increase the brand value of Qazvin is the major concern of marketing and tourism stakeholders.

For measuring brand equity, there are few tools which are based on the consumer. Given that brand equity is derived from the perceptions of the consumer, it is very important for managers to be able to measure and evaluate brand equity of the customer (Keller, 2003). In this study, we tried to measure brand equity of a tourism destination from the perspective of tourists, but in the examined model, both behavioral and perceptual are considered. Therefore, the present study aims to evaluate Konecnik's model which retrieved from the Aaker's model in Iran, and especially in Qazvin.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question in this research is as follows:

1. What are the main factors affecting brand equity from the perspective of tourists?
2. To what extent each factor is important for tourists once evaluating brand equity?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Brand equity, is the specific value given to a product by its name. One of the important reasons of brand equity is that marketers can gain competitive advantage with the help of brands with high equity. Competitive advantage of companies that possess valuable brands includes: flexibility against promotional pressure imposed by competitors, opportunities for successful brand development, and creating barriers for competitors to enter the market (Farquhar, 1989). Because of the different goals and different methods of evaluating brand equity, it is discussed differently in the meaning and content. However, there is not any common view for all scientists (Keller, 2003). In general, Brand equity valuation practices can be categorized in two general categories; based on consumer behavior (Marketing), and based on financial concept. In this study we took into account customer's perspective.

Tourism destination branding includes a series of marketing activities which have these abilities: 1) It supports the brand graphics and names that form tourism destinations and make them different, 2) Have the ability to exude positive experiences that are uniquely in related to tourism destination, 3) Reinforce the emotional relation between tourist and tourism destination, 4) Decrease research costs and consumer perceptions of risk (Blain et al., 2005).

Although branding is the new area of researches in tourism destinations, there are examples of it in the image of tourist destinations which are under research in the past thirty years ago. Nevertheless, developing an acceptable and coherent overall framework is necessary for using branding theory in tourism destinations. Hem and Iversen in 2004, state that the biggest defect of past researches in phantasm, is the lack of distinction between image functions and branding. According to them the difference is that; image formation is not the branding, although the primer encompasses the core of the branding. In fact, image formation is a step forward, but there is still a missing link; and that link for the development of destination image is brand identity which must be added (Blain et al., 2005).

Aaker was the first person, who present a model based on behavioral and perceptual dimensions (Aker, 1991). He considered five things for evaluating brand equity from costumer's perspective; knowledge of brand, brand's loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations and other assets such as loyalties, patents and etc.

The advantage of this method is the combination of two dimensions as an index for measuring brand equity. Because there are many documentations and evidence which show that observation by itself is a weak index for market behavior and the combination of perceptual and behavioral dimensions cause increasing strength assessment. However,

customers' perception is a prerequisite for detecting behavioral dimension of brand equity. One of the other advantages of this method is convenience and few numbers of dimensions, and also this fact that many theorists experimentally test it (Cobb-Walger et al, 1995).

Per Dimanche (2002) "brand equity is all brand's assets (or liabilities) in relation to tourism destination's name and symbol, which adds to (or reduce) the value of services and experiences that are provided there" (Boo, 2006). According to Yoo and colleagues (2000), output of brand equity is customers' preferences to buy that product with compare to its competitors. As it was described earlier, brand equity is a multi-dimension and complicated concept; and in this research, attention is given to the most important parts which are tested experimentally. In this research, among the different models which are proposed for evaluating brand equity, Konecnik's model which has been tested is adopted.

Brand Awareness

People tend to buy familiar brands; so awareness has an important role in purchasing brands. People must be familiar with brands in a way that these names have been included in brands which are being evaluated for purchase by people. In fact, brand awareness is the basement of all sale activities. For example, consider the AIDA advertising rule; its goals are attention, interest, demand creation and at the final, action. Awareness shows brand power in customers' mind; customers should remember its name because of the reasons which eager them. In other words, the aim must be increased familiarity with the brand via its repeated display. Brand awareness shows brand's visualization rate in customers' minds, and it could be measured in deferent levels (Aaker, 1991, Keller, 1993 and Kapferer, 2008). Brand awareness often provides brand recognition and brand recall (Keller, 1993).

Other methods which evaluate brand awareness make brand recall criteria. First step is brand recognition (have you ever seen this brand?), and the next is brand recall (how many products of this brand do you remember?), and the third step is top of mind (what is the first brand in your mind?), and the final step is dominant brands (what is the only brand in your mind?) (Aaker, 1996).

The role of brand awareness in brand equity depends on the background and level of awareness. The lowest level of recognition is based on recalling non-auxiliary test which respondents identify after seeing the brands of one product category that are seen or heard.

Brand recognition is the lowest level of awareness. Next level is calling or readout (recalling non-auxiliary). In recalling non-auxiliary, it is asked from person to name brands which are in one category. Here the respondents don't catch any help. Recalling non-auxiliary is more complex than recognition. The first brand which comes in the costumers' minds has its own special position in costumers' minds. In fact, it is the top or dominant brand (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Pyramid of Awareness

Brand Image

Among the identified dimensions of brand equity, brand image is the one which has been interpreted in many ways. Brand image, as an important concept in marketing, has been the topic of many researchers (Konecnik, 2006). Image is defined as beliefs, ideas and perceptions of a person about an object. So, about tourism destinations, there is also a similar definition about tourism destinations image as beliefs, ideas and perceptions about an object (Hankinson, 2006). Thus, it is not surprising to see a lot of work in the field of tourism destination brand image, especially in the tourism marketing field (Walmsley and Young, 1998). Researches in this field focus on the properties that create tourism destination brand image. There are some researches about identifying tourism destination brand image properties; others are about general properties. (Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; Walmsley and Young, 1998).

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is defined as costumers' perception of general quality or superiority of one product to another (Zeithaml, 1988). Perceived quality is a competitive necessity; and nowadays most companies pay attention to customer-driven quality as a strategic weapon (Atilgan et al., 2005). Kaller (2003) paid attention to the relationship between product and service quality, costumers' satisfaction and company's profitability.

Aaker (1996) suggested that perceived quality related to the different brands, could be measured directly. Aaker (1996) stated evidence from the past researches which show that there is a relationship between 80% of changes in perceived equity and perceived quality. Perceived quality is not the real one; but costumers' mental evaluation of a product, like brand image, perceived quality also provide equity for costumers to have a reason for buying a brand by distinguishing among competitors. Essentially, consumers' perception of quality principle relates to understand the intrinsic and external qualitative features. Zeithaml defines perceived quality as costumers' subjective judgments about excellence and superiority of a product. Personal experiences with the product, special needs and status of consumption could be effective on costumers' mental evaluation of quality (Zeithaml, 1988). High perceived quality is created by long-term experiences which relate to brand and costumers' recognition of brands being different and excellence; Zeithaml defines that the perceived quality is a part of brand equity, so high perceived quality leads costumers to choose one particular brand. Therefore, as much as costumers understand brand's quality, brand equity will be increased. Euro Monitor showed that costumers' trust in brands with 70% quality is much more than their trust in products and services with weak quality. In addition to the value added, retailers also expand their powerful brands (Chernatony, 1991).

The dimensions of perceived quality depend on the level of products. Zeithaml and Berry presented eight dimensions of quality for service quality which some of them overlap with product quality:

1. Tangible features; physical facilities, equipment, staff appearances.
2. Reliability; ability to fulfill promised services.
3. Accountability; willingness to help costumers and provide prompt services.
4. Competence; knowledge and skills of employees and their ability to convey trust and honesty.
5. Credit/ honesty; being honest and trustworthy in dealing with costumers.
6. Empathy; special attention and empathy with costumers.

7. Politeness and courtesy; friendly behavior in dealing with customers.
8. Communications; customer awareness of the language that they understand and listen to customers.

Brand Loyalty

Forth group of brands' asset is brand loyalty; that is deferent from other conceptual frameworks of brand equity. However, there are two reasons which confirm the inclusion of brand loyalty in the conceptual framework of brand equity. First, brand equity is the result of costumers' loyalty to a brand. In brand valuation, brand loyalty is one of the most important factors that should be considered. Because, a base of loyal customers can guarantee sales and profits of one brand the brand owner (Aaker, 1996). A loyal costumer may see some unique values in one particular brand, so he tends to pay price premium for the product. Second, considering loyalty as an asset, leads to something that increases loyalty and this causes an increase in brand equity. (Aaker, 1996)

Loyalty is a key aspect of equity. The number of costumers is important; because it leads to economics of scale. Current customers are means for brand advertising and assuring new customers. The ability to create loyal customers is the main advantage of branding. Brand loyalty is measured by repurchase. Loyalty causes an increase in sustainability target. Some advantages of brand loyalty are less marketing costs, increasing leverage of traveling business and word of mouth repetition. In this regard, Gestelson and Crompton in their studies achieved five factors which cause return to a destination: 1) Reduce the risk experiencethat may not meet satisfaction, 2) Knowledge of fact that they meet some people like themselves at that destination, 3) Emotional dependency, 4) Opportunity to visit some aspects of the destination that they have not experienced before, 5) Displaying to others that their last experience was satisfactory (Pike, 2004).

Brand Satisfaction

According to the many past researches that are about tourism, a few number of them studied satisfaction topic. Reynolds and Beatty (1999) believed that interpersonal relations is a very important factor in services; researches show that creation of a link between customer and service provider, make positive impact on this relationship. Actually, by confidence and social benefits, this kind of relationship leads to value creation, and directly and indirectly make customer's loyalty possible via his role of satisfaction. They also show that there is a direct relation between customer's satisfaction and repurchasing. Studies conducted by Bolton and Lemon (1999) show that customers' satisfaction has an important role on repurchasing. Also, studies of Hallowell (1996) show that customers' satisfaction indicates high level of variety of loyal customer behavior. Gremler and Gwinner (2000) show that there is a direct relationship between customers' satisfaction and loyalty. Remleer et al (2001), find some statistical relationships between these two factors. Therefore, theories related to the relationship between recipients of services and general satisfaction is presented. Barnes (1997) found that if the relationship between customers and personnel gets stronger, customers' satisfaction will increase more.

It is necessary to give a summary of tourism destination; Qazvin.

Qazvin City

Because of these factors, some believe that Qazvin is a place for all seasons. Qazvin, with more than 1000 monuments, 12% of all monuments in Iran, ranks first in the country. Qazvin, which is known as a gate of heaven, is one of the most important parts of Iran that has a major role in historical, natural, economic, cultural, industrial and tourism field of it.

This province is one of the beautiful, cultured and civilized areas, which has beautiful nature, and significant historical and cultural richness. Probe rivers, beautiful and famous mountains, hot springs, wildlife, vegetation, lakes and eye-catching landscapes, besides numerous works of historical, architectural, cultural, archaeological and art-loving, hard-working and civilized people create unparalleled collection in this area of country; so visiting of this area is appealing for all groups of people. In terms of natural and ecotourism attractions, Qazvin is so versatile. Natural attraction like Alamout area, Avan Lake, Hasan Sabah castle and Lambsar castle, are some of the natural monuments. (Wikipedia, 2013)

1. The image of tourism destination of Qazvin has a direct relationship with its brand equity.
2. Perceived quality of tourism destination of Qazvin has a direct relationship with its brand equity.
3. Awareness of tourism destination of Qazvin has a direct relationship with its brand equity.
4. Loyalty to tourism destination of Qazvin has a direct relationship with its brand equity.
5. Satisfaction tourism destination of Qazvin has a direct relationship with its brand equity.

Therefore, conceptual model of research is presented as figure 2;

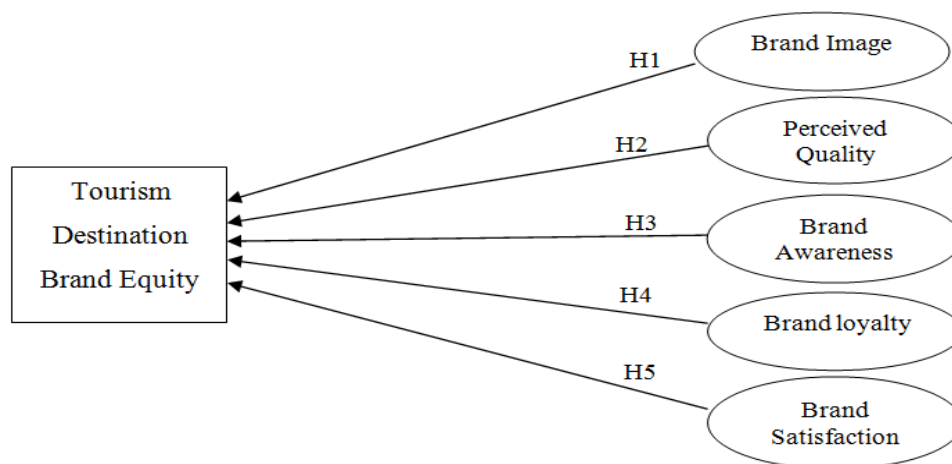


Figure 2. The Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The sample of this research was selected via random sampling in Azadegan terminal and historical and tourist spots of Qazvin which are full of tourists. The sample size was determined 384 people by Cochran formula; with the possibility of error (4%), 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 393 of them were well and analyzable.

The questionnaire measured different things of variables tourism destination brand value in 40 questions. The questions were five-options.

FINDINGS

Validity and Reliability of Measurement Tools

In this research, to determine the reliability test, Cronbach's alpha method is used. In this case, reliability coefficient is calculated using data obtained from the questionnaires and

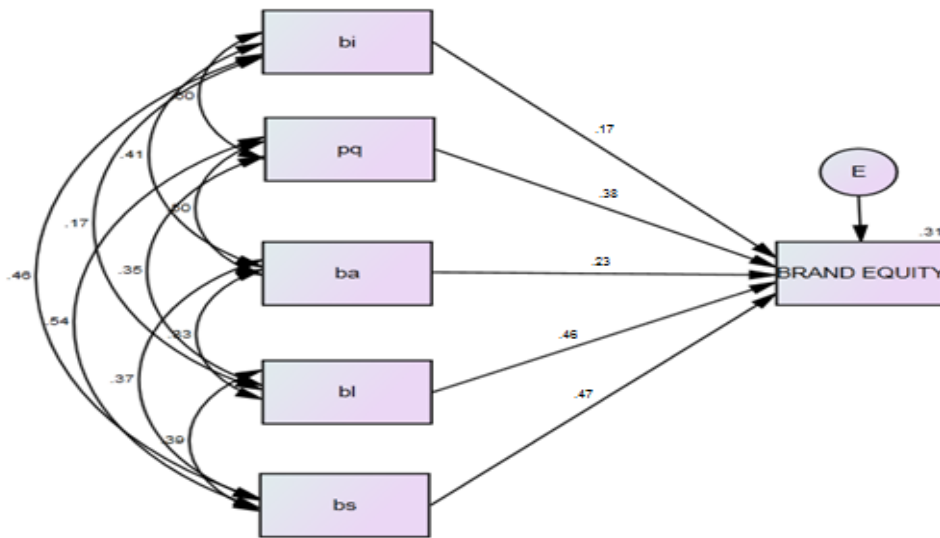
SPSS software using Cronbach's alpha; for all questions which are related to brand equity (brand awareness, brand's image, perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand satisfaction and brand equity), it is 91.10 %. For each of variables, it is respectively; brand awareness: 75.0%, brand image: 83.0%, perceived quality: 80.0%, brand loyalty: 81.0%, brand satisfaction: 75.0%, brand equity: 82.0%. These numbers show that the questionnaire has reliability. Also, in order to analyze the internal structure of the questionnaire and discover the constituent elements of each construct, construct validity was tested, using load factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis of structures is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Factor Loading

<i>BS</i>	<i>BE</i>	<i>BL</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>PQ</i>	<i>BI</i>	<i>Question Code</i>	<i>Construct</i>
					1.51	BI1	Brand Image
					1.67	BI2	
					2.31	BI3	
					1.90	BI4	
					2.35	BI5	
					1.83	BI6	
					1.23	BI7	
					0.84	BI8	
					1.33	BI9	
					2.15	BI10	
					1.14	BI11	
					0.43	BI12	
					1.00	BI13	
				0.95		PQ1	perceived quality
				1.11		PQ2	
				0.85		PQ3	
				1.08		PQ4	
				0.68		PQ5	
				1.18		PQ6	
				0.87		PQ7	
				1.36		PQ8	
				0.90		PQ9	
				1.00		PQ10	
			1.04			BA1	brand awareness
			0.96			BA2	
			1.00			BA3	
		1.18				BL1	brand loyalty
		1.21				BL2	
		1.08				BL3	
		1.00				BL4	
	1.17					BE1	brand equity
	1.26					BE2	
	1.16					BE3	
	1.00					BE4	
1.05						BS1	brand satisfaction
1.07						BS2	
0.90						BS3	
0.65						BS4	
0.86						BS5	
1.00						BS6	

Factors Affecting Brand Equity Measurement Model Using Path Analysis

As can be seen in figure 3, model parameters indicate that the model is valid. Chi-square with three degrees of freedom is smaller than 3. P-value is smaller than 0.05 and the RMSEA is smaller than 0.05.



Chi-Square= 2.15, df= 1, P-Value= 0.000, RMSEA= 0.0328

Figure 3. A model study based on path analysis model

As it was noted, all variables influence brand equity directly. Figure 3 shows the extent to which each element impacts brand equity of Qazvin. Brand satisfaction compare to other factors, has the highest level of impact on brand equity of Qazvin. A unit change in brand satisfaction standard deviation causes a change as big as 0.47 in standard deviation of brand equity. Brand loyalty is in the second place. Per one unit change in brand loyalty standard deviation, in the line with it, standard deviation of brand equity will change 0.46 of unit in the same direction. In the third place, it is the perceived quality. Per one unit change in perceived quality standard deviation, in line with it, standard deviation of brand equity will change 0.38 of unit in the same direction. The forth place is devoted to brand awareness. Per one unit change in brand awareness standard deviation, in line with it, standard deviation of brand equity will change 0.23 of unit. And finally, the fifth position is devoted to brand image. Per one unit change in brand image standard deviation, in line with it, standard deviation of brand equity will change 0.17 of unit.

Also, other measures of fitness and their acceptance range are presented in table 2 which shows proper and high fitness of the model.

Table 2. Model Fitness

<i>Reported Value</i>	<i>Acceptance Range</i>	<i>Measures of Fitness</i>
2.163	1-3	$\frac{x^2}{df}$
0.964	>0.9	NFI
0.976	>0.9	TLI
0.965	>0.9	CFI
0.944	>0.9	GFI
0.947	>0.9	AGFI
0.032	<0.05	RMSEA

Tourism destination brand image of Qazvin has a direct relationship with brand equity of it.

By regression analysis we found that brand image affects brand equity of Qazvin. Assuming all other variables constant, for one unit change in brand image standard deviation, brand equity standard deviation changes to 0.20. Using confirmatory factor analysis, the differences in impact factors (0.17) was proved, which this difference amount could be justified by the reason that in confirmatory factor analysis for assessing the amount of independent variable effect on the dependent one, the other side effect of variables will be considered.

Brand image and indicators can influence on brand equity in 3 ways:

1. Indicators help data processing and recovery. Indicators make a multitude of information, indicative of products offered; so costumers simply analyze and recover information. This amount of information specially could be useful for analyzing and recovering information of brand, regarding to its complex nature. And also it could help marketing sector to establish visual relationship between products and costumers. (Woodward, 2000)
2. Indicators could provide points of distinction of brand in product category. Differentiation acts as a barrier against competitors and so this creates a sustainable competitive advantage. Differentiated services can be differentiated commodities easier. For example, although a physical part of the attractions of a theme park, it can be copied, however, creating the same place, with the same staff, the atmosphere and the spirit, is almost impossible. That is why providing this "experience" similar to the "whole sale service" is like almost impossible. (Woodward, 2000)
3. Indicators which are currently in their minds, could influence on product using experience; so costumers understand product differently. Indicators of brand which is understand by customers, likely, the experience of using the services towards intangible and heterogeneous goods is more effective. (Woodward, 2000)

The Results of Hypothesis 2

Perceived quality of tourism destination of Qazvin brand has a direct relationship with brand equity of tourism destination.

Through the Regression analysis we found that perceived quality affects brand equity of Qazvin. Assuming all other variables constant, for each unit change in brand image standard deviation, brand equity will change to 0.44 of unit. by using confirmatory factor analysis, this impact factor with the amount difference of 0.38 was confirmed which this difference amount could be justified by the reason that in confirmatory factor analysis for assessing the amount of independent variable effect on the dependent one, the other side effects of variables will be considered.

Perceived quality can create value in 5 ways: 1) A reason for buying, 2) Make a distinct position, 3) Overpayment, 4) Tenderness in members of distribution channel in using products with high perceived quality, and 5) Brand development.

The Results of Hypothesis 3

Qazvin tourism destination brand awareness has a direct relationship with brand equity.

Through the Regression analysis we found that the brand awareness affects brand equity of Qazvin. Assuming all other variables constant, for each unit change in brand image standard deviation, brand equity will change to 0.28 of unit. by using confirmatory factor analysis, this impact factor with the amount difference of 0.23 was confirmed which this difference amount could be justified by the reason that in confirmatory factor analysis for assessing the amount

of independent variable effect on the dependent one, the other side effects of variables will be considered.

In fact, the effect of brand awareness on the tourism destination brand equity can be studied in three different ways:

Firstly, when a consumer wants to purchase a brand, the first action is retrieving information that is already in his mind; thus a lot of brands could be compared with each other. According to hierarchy effects model, the role of marketing is to find a place for the brand in the collection of the brand, so people can test the product (Light, 1993). In any case, brand should bring a lot of awareness among the target customers to be considered to purchase.

Secondly, brand awareness can create values for the brand. For example, customer recognition of a brand can create a familiar feeling about the brand. Brand familiarity, could be a sufficient factor for customers' feeling to purchase, especially in decision making that a person has low levels of intellectual engagement and also when a lot of motivation for getting involved in evaluating a product is not available. As the services due to their complex nature to the goods, tend to be further examined, so familiarization can play an important role in persuading the customer to buy the service brand. (Woodward, 2000)

Finally, brand awareness, by creating the initial node that is splicer of indicators and brands, could influence on brand equity. It is proved that people who have background knowledge and indicators related to a particular product category, remember ideas of that brand nearly twice more than others that have not any knowledge of them. Also, the nature of the created point by indicators which connect to the brand's junction, cause development of clear image of brand.

The Results of Hypothesis 4

Qazvin tourism destination brand loyalty has a direct relationship with its brand equity. Through the Regression analysis we found that the brand loyalty influence on brand equity of Qazvin. Assuming all other variables constant, for each unit change in brand image standard deviation, the standard deviation of brand equity will change to 0.51 of unit. by using confirmatory factor analysis, this impact factor with the amount difference of 0.46 was confirmed which this difference amount could be justified by the reason that in confirmatory factor analysis for assessing the amount of independent variable effect on the dependent one, the other side effects of variables will be considered.

Effect of brand loyalty on brand equity of Qazvin can be found in these categories; as it was mentioned, although brand loyalty is one of the resources of brand equity, it is also one of the outcomes of brand equity; and maybe, this is the cause of the greatest impact on brand equity.

The Results of Hypothesis 5

Brand satisfaction of Qazvin has a direct relationship with brand equity.

Through the analysis we found that the satisfaction with a brand influences on the brand equity of Qazvin. Assuming all other variables constant, for each unit change in brand image standard deviation, the standard deviation of brand equity will change to 0.48 of unit. by using confirmatory factor analysis, this impact factor with the amount difference of 0.47 was confirmed which this difference amount could be justified by the reason that in confirmatory factor analysis for assessing the amount of independent variable effect on the dependent one, the other side effects of variables will be considered.

Brand satisfaction creates value in four ways and influences on brand equity: 1) The main elements of the goods or services, 2) Support services, 3) Process of modification when faced with adverse records, and 4) Special services.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the present study, according to the discussions and the results that were obtained from the data analysis, we propose some recommendations for the development of this field of study:

1. According to the first hypothesis that indicates the effect of tourism destination brand image on brand equity, managers, marketers and others in this area are proposed to develop their promotional activities in order to emphasize a different and distinct personality of their tourist destination camper to tourist destinations of competitors based on tourists' brand image. Further features of the image should be entirely indicative of the unique characteristics that can distinguish them from their competitors, and encourages visitors to this tourist destination.
2. The results of the second hypothesis that refers to the effect of perceived quality on tourist destination brand equity, it can be concluded that the managers, marketers and others in this area should identify the factors affecting these variables first, and ultimately strengthen the perceived quality in the tourists view; because, they can upgrade brand equity and cause more income for this tourism destination.
3. Hypothesis three refers to the effect of brand awareness on brand equity, and also regarding to the weak advertising, it is recommended that managers, marketers and other practitioners of this field, for increasing brand equity, use advertising (the national media and installing billboards on the road and so on), and promotional tools such as public relations, interviews and so on. It is also better to use beautiful and appropriate advertising that introduces banner and logo of Qazvin city.
4. While hypothesis four refers to the effect of brand loyalty on brand equity, it is suggested that managers, marketers and other practitioners of this field, for creation of loyalty, practice different marketing activities such as marketing communications, sales promotion, effective public and social relations and providing a very good service.
5. And result of hypothesis five refers to the effect of brand awareness on the brand equity, there is a considerable overlap between trust and satisfaction if they both show the feeling and attitude of the other party in connection with a general assessment. Therefore it is recommended to the managers, marketers and other practitioners of this field to develop and create an exact understanding of customers' expectations at each stage of promotion and advance of brand equity of Qazvin, by providing supportive approaches and utilization of evaluation methods and stimuli in order to achieve customer satisfaction. Also, in order to increase the number of customers, their loyalty, revenue, profit and market share which result in their survival; they must evaluate customer satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHES

Future researches can study other variables like social factors and cultural factors that can overshadow the brand equity. In future researches, researchers can study the near and far variables of tourism destination, and evaluate its effect on tourists' view of the tourism destination. Future researches may study brand equity of Qazvin city with other external examples. It is also recommended to study the effects of previous visits of tourism destination

on their understanding of brand equity and for reinforcement of brand equity, the researchers can study other brand equity models of tourism destination.

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